

Joint Targeted Area Inspections

The Joint Targeted Area Inspection is a process which began in 2015. It looks at the effectiveness of services for vulnerable children and young people. In a JTAI, Ofsted will work jointly with the Care Quality Commission (CQC), Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation (HMIP) to jointly assess how local authorities, the police, health, probation and youth offending services are working together to support and protect vulnerable children and young people.

The inspection team will usually include three inspectors from each of Ofsted, HMIC and the CQC, and two from HMI Probation. An Ofsted social care inspector will lead the inspection.

The inspections will have two elements. Inspectors will visit contact and referral teams, in a process similar to the old short inspections of Contact, Referral and Assessment. In a second strand of the inspection, inspectors will target specific areas of interest and concern. This strand of the inspection is called the 'Deep Dive'.

The deep dive is an evaluation of the experiences of children and young people at risk of a specific type (or types) of harm, or the support and care of children looked after and/or care leavers. Inspectors will identify areas for improvement and highlight good practice from which others can learn. This part of the JTAI will regularly change to investigate different themes.

During the deep dive, inspectors will always assess the effectiveness of joint working, and the effectiveness of the Local Safeguarding Children Board's (LSCB) support of safeguarding activity.

A new theme for Joint Targeted Area Inspections has been published. Inspectors will be focussing on the experiences of children and young people aged from 7 – 15 who are living, or who have lived, with neglect. Inspections will begin under this theme in May 2017, and the theme is expected to be in place until December 2017. During that time 6 JTAs will be conducted.

What will happen during a JTAI inspection?

Inspectors will be examining the practice of the Department and our partners to investigate how well we meet the needs of children experiencing neglect. In particular, inspectors will be looking at how well our contact, referral and assessment processes meet the needs of neglected children, and inspectors will be exploring the support that is available to neglected children in the education system. Inspectors will speak to schools and education providers as well as social work staff and our partners in the health and criminal justice services.

Although housing and education services aren't being inspected as such, they will be within the scope of inspection in as much as housing and education providers will be interviewed and the support being offered to any children whose cases the inspectors review in detail. This will include meeting RSC safeguarding leads and local authority schools safeguarding officers. Representatives from alternative

provision will be interviewed. Work carried out in schools is included in the evaluation criteria.

It is explicitly stated that when inspectors consider Early Help, they will be considering the Troubled Families programme alongside the rest of Early Help provision.

Inspectors will:

- Read through case files and discuss these with workers and managers.
- Meet the children whose case files they have read, and their parents and carers and ask them about their experience of our services.
- Meet social workers and other professionals and ask them about the work they carried out with children and young people.
- Sit in on multi-agency meetings for the children whose case files they have read, such as Strategy Meetings or Initial Child Protection Conferences (ICPC's), as an observer.

What will Inspectors be looking for?

Inspectors will be looking for evidence that:

- risks to children living with neglect are prevented and reduced. The needs of the child and their family are met at an early stage through timely access to effective help
- children living with neglect receive the right help and protection because of application of appropriate thresholds, effective information sharing and timely intervention
- agencies work together to identify children who are neglected, intervene to reduce risk and monitor effectively the impact of interventions so that risk is reduced
- the impact of neglect on children is reduced because they and their families can access a sufficient range of local services, including therapeutic help that improves children's emotional well-being and safety. This may include help provided by community and voluntary services
- professionals and support staff are well trained, confident and knowledgeable. They understand the impact of neglect on children's daily lives as well as the long-term and cumulative impact on their health and well-being. This enables them to identify how to help and protect children and to take action to do so
- children who are neglected experience a child-centred approach from all professionals. The risks to them and their needs are assessed effectively and responded to appropriately. Assessments consider family history and the cumulative impact of neglect, and show that there is a clear understanding of the ways in which different forms of neglect affect children. The views of the child are clearly recorded and central to the work with the family
- professionals have a clear understanding of how the behaviour of parents and carers affects children. They assess any strengths and risks in parenting and the extended family. Where changes in parents' and/or carers' behaviour are

required, clear timescales for change are agreed. These timescales are based on the child's needs, and improvements in parenting are closely monitored

- professionals challenge each other appropriately to ensure good practice, and they challenge and support parents/carers where poor parenting is resulting in neglect
- children living with neglect benefit from evidence-based approaches, tools and services that reduce risks and meet their needs
- children and their families feel that their views have been heard and understood. This leads to improvements in the help and support that they receive
- the police work in partnership with other agencies to appropriately identify and address the needs of children who have been or are neglected. They investigate effectively cases of neglect in families with children
- schools have effective systems to identify children at risk of or subject to neglect. They make timely referrals to early help or children's social care where appropriate and children receive support within the school and/or from external agencies where required
- schools contribute effectively to inter-agency working to improve outcomes for children who are being or have been neglected. This includes contributing to a coordinated offer of early help or inter-agency plans for children in need of help and protection
- leaders and managers in the council and our partners understand the experiences of children living with neglect that live locally. This leads to effective action to meet children's needs and improve the help and support provided to children and their families
- leaders and managers in the council and our partners recognise the challenges involved in responding to neglect and provide effective support, training and challenge to practitioners
- the LSCB actively monitors, promotes, coordinates and evaluates the work of the statutory partners that help and protect children at risk of neglect, including working effectively with other multi-agency groups that have responsibility for responding to neglect.

Further Resources

[Guidance on Joint Targeted Area Inspections on Neglect](#)

[Bolton's Early Help Guidance](#)

[Bolton's Framework for Action](#)