

Press release: Series of inspections to focus on children living with neglect

A new set of inspections will examine how local partner agencies – including local authorities, health and probation services and the police – are working together to protect children living with, or at risk of, neglect.

The series of six joint targeted area inspections (JTAI) involving Ofsted, Care Quality Commission (CQC), HMI Constabulary and HMI Probation will begin in May this year.

JTAI assess how effectively agencies are working together in their local area to help and protect children. Each set of joint inspections also evaluates the multi-agency response to a particular issue or theme.

Following feedback from key stakeholders, the four inspectorates decided that the latest series of JTAI should look at local support services for children living with neglect. In particular, the inspections will focus on the experiences of children aged between seven and 15 years old, who may be at higher risk of going missing or being exploited, or who exhibit challenging behaviours in adolescence

Uniquely for this JTAI, inspectors will also speak with school leaders and staff to get a wider picture of how neglect is identified and referred.

HM Chief Inspector Amanda Spielman said:

Identifying signs of neglect in middle childhood and adolescence can be very complex, as children at this age experience and respond to neglect differently from younger children. However, at any age, the impact of childhood neglect can be lifelong.

It's crucial that local partner agencies understand the long-term effects of neglect and recognise the need for early and appropriate intervention.

These inspections will provide valuable insight into the local area response to neglect. And importantly, they will highlight good practice that others can learn from.

Professor Steve Field, Chief Inspector of General Practice at the Care Quality Commission, said:

Neglect is a terrible and far-reaching problem that can present itself in many aspects of a child's life. We all have a

responsibility to safeguard those children who find themselves at risk of neglect, and that means understanding where these risks might be and also where services are doing great work to support children in their area.

By focusing on individual children's experiences and tracking them across services, these inspections will provide an invaluable chance to see how agencies are working together and the impact this has on the welfare of young people.

HM Inspector of Constabulary, Wendy Williams, said:

It is important that all police officers have the correct knowledge to fully understand the signs of neglect. As HMIC has said previously, although the protection of the vulnerable is not just the responsibility of the police, police officers will often be the first point of contact for vulnerable victims.

These inspections aim to provide an understanding of how the police works with partner agencies not just to identify child neglect, but also to provide the best possible support and protection to keep children safe.

HM Chief Inspector of Probation, Dame Glenys Stacey, said:

Many of the children of adult offenders may be experiencing neglect. This programme will give us the opportunity to examine and report on the work of probation providers in improving the lives of children and young people living in very difficult circumstances. Youth offending teams supervise many children and young people who have experienced and continue to experience neglect in childhood and towards adulthood.

We will identify the extent to which youth offending teams work with these children and young people to reduce the impact of neglect and improve their life chances.

Guidance published [today](#) sets out how the inspections will work in practice.

Each inspection report will include narrative findings, clearly setting out what local partners are doing well and what they need to do to improve.

In 2014, Ofsted produced a report on local arrangements to safeguard neglected children under the age of 10. This multi-agency review of the experiences of older neglected children will build on that evidence base.

When all six inspections are complete, an overview report will be published to highlight learning and good practice on the theme of childhood neglect.

Notes to editors:

1. Joint targeted area inspections were launched in January 2016. The first series focused on children at risk of sexual exploitation and those missing from home, school or care. The individual inspection reports are all available on the Ofsted website and a thematic overview report will be published in the autumn.
2. The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), academies, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.
3. The Care Quality Commission (CQC) is the independent regulator of health and social care in England. It makes sure health and social care services provide people with safe, effective, caring, well-led and responsive care, and encourages care services to improve. It monitors, inspects and regulates services to make sure they meet fundamental standards of quality and safety and publishes what it finds to help people choose care.
4. HMIC is an independent inspectorate, inspecting policing in the public interest, and rigorously examines the efficiency and effectiveness of police forces to tackle crime and terrorism, improve criminal justice and raise confidence. HMIC inspects all 43 police forces in England and Wales, together with other major policing bodies.
5. HMI Probation is an independent inspectorate, sponsored by the Ministry of Justice, and reporting directly to the Secretary of State on the effectiveness of work with adults, children and young people who have offended, aimed at reducing reoffending and protecting the public. Further information about the work of HMI Probation is at www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprobation.