

Adult Social Care, Children's Services and Education Committee



Reading
Borough Council

Working better with you

02 July 2025

Title	Response to the Joint Targeted Area Inspection of the multi-agency response to children who are victims of domestic abuse in Reading
Purpose of the report	To note the report for information
Report status	Public report
Executive Director/ Statutory Officer Commissioning Report	Lara Patel, Executive Director Children's Services
Report author	Lara Patel, Executive Director Children's Services
Lead Councillor	Cllr Wendy Griffith, Lead Councillor for Children
Council priority	Safeguard & support the health & wellbeing of Reading's adults & children
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. To note the findings of the Joint Targeted Area Inspection2. To note the delivery of the single and multi-agency action plans to address the findings of the inspection (Appendices 1 & 2)3. To note the governance arrangements (Appendices 3 & 4)4. That Committee receives an update on progress and impact for children at the next Committee

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. A Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI) took place in Reading from 24 February to 14 March 2025. It was an inspection of the partnership, carried out by inspectors from Ofsted, the Care Quality Commission (CQC), His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) and His Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation (HMIP).
- 1.2. This JTAI focused on the multi-agency response to unborn children and children aged 0 to 7 years who are victims of domestic abuse. Inspectors' evaluation of strategic arrangements in Reading considered the multi-agency response to children of all ages.
- 1.3. The inspection was conducted over three weeks, the first two weeks being offsite. The third week involved fourteen inspectors, based at the Council's Civic Offices and attending other settings across the partnership in Reading.
- 1.4. Inspectors selected six children for in-depth single and multi-agency audits. These audits were conducted by the partnership and submitted to inspectors with accompanying child level documentation, as prescribed by inspectors.
- 1.5. Inspectors from all four inspectorates:
 - Met with practitioners and managers across the partnership to understand our strategic and operational arrangements at the front door and how we respond to domestic abuse.

- Met with leaders across Brighter Futures for Children, the Council, health, probation, police and Berkshire West Safeguarding Children's Partnership to understand how we work together to safeguard children, including children who are victims of domestic abuse.
- Met with staff across social work teams, schools, children's centres, probation, health and police.
- Met with staff and managers delivering specialist domestic abuse services across the partnership including voluntary/community sector providers.
- Held focussed partnership discussions with staff working with the six audited children.
- Spoke to children and families.

1.6. JTAI's are ungraded partnership inspections that result in a letter identifying strengths and areas for improvement. Ofsted guidance sets out that this can include an area of priority action if inspectors '*identify a serious weakness that is placing children at risk of inadequate protection or significant harm.*'

1.7. The findings of the inspection were [published](#) on the 6 May 2025.

1.8. The final letter included the following Areas of Priority Action for the partnership:
Inconsistent information-sharing between partners resulting in delays for children, poor-quality risk assessments that fail to address the experiences and needs of children and often weak decision-making for children.

1.9. The report identifies the following strengths:

- 1.9.1. *Family help and children's centres provide a valued multidisciplinary response for vulnerable children and their families who are or may be victims of domestic abuse. This makes a positive difference to their lives.*
- 1.9.2. *The multi-agency vulnerable people pre-birth panel identifies risks for unborn children and offers early protective interventions and assessments pre-birth. Regular review of these unborn babies' circumstances allows the partnership to give early support and consider interventions to reduce risks. This includes a valued specialist midwifery team, which provides additional support to families pre- and post-birth.*
- 1.9.3. *Health professionals have good access to support from the specialist domestic abuse nurse, who provides advice and input to support families who are experiencing domestic abuse*

1.10. The report outlines the following areas that need to improve:

- 1.10.1. *How well children's voices are listened to and the experiences of individual children who have been exposed to domestic abuse are acted on by practitioners across the partnership.*
- 1.10.2. *How effectively professionals challenge and escalate concerns about children that are not receiving an adequate response.*
- 1.10.3. *The timeliness of strategy and other safeguarding meetings relating to children's well-being and the involvement of all relevant safeguarding partners when concerns arise.*
- 1.10.4. *The timeliness and consistency of information-sharing about risks, needs and plans for children.*

- 1.10.5. *How well thresholds of need are understood across the partnership to meet children's needs and minimise risks.*
- 1.10.6. *Practitioners' and managers' understanding of the importance of consistent consideration of the cumulative impact on children from repeated incidents of exposure to domestic abuse.*
- 1.10.7. *How well the Safeguarding Children Partnership is informed by comprehensive detailed relevant data to sufficiently understand the experiences of children who are victims of domestic abuse and the prevalence of the issue in their area.*
- 1.10.8. *The effectiveness of commissioning of support services for children and their families based on a clear understanding of local need.*
- 1.10.9. *The oversight and effectiveness of multi-agency risk assessment conferences (MARAC).*
- 1.10.10. *The effectiveness of strategic governance arrangements to ensure priorities are set and aligned with the other strategic partnerships, with a focus on those children subject to domestic abuse*
- 1.11. Decisive action was taken by the partnership during the JTAI, whereby both multi and single agency action plans were implemented at pace to address child level, operational and strategic areas of weakness.
- 1.12. Comprehensive and robust single and multi-agency action plans, governance and scrutiny are being implemented. Escalation processes are well understood and there is clear evidence of escalations taking place and having a positive impact on practice across the partnership.
- 1.13. A Partnership Action Plan in response to the findings is required to be submitted to Ofsted by 13th August 2025. This will be signed off by the Strategic Partnership Group prior to submission, in consultation with the Chair of the Berkshire West Children's Safeguarding Committee and the Independent Scrutineer.

2. Policy Context

- 2.1. Incorporated on 5 April 2018 and operational since 3 December 2018, Brighter Futures for Children (BFFC), a company limited by guarantee, delivers children's services on behalf of Reading Borough Council (RBC). The company is wholly owned by but independent of the Council and is governed by an independent Board to ensure operational autonomy.
- 2.2. On the 28 January 2025 Council agreed not to extend its contract with Brighter Futures for Children Ltd and to bring its Children's Services back in-house. The transition back into the Council will take place in the Autumn.
- 2.3. Following the JTAI of the multi-agency response to children in Reading who are victims of domestic abuse, the Department for Education (DfE) has indicated that it will issue a non-statutory Improvement Notice to the Council, followed by the appointment of a DFE Improvement Advisor. Consequently, monitoring visits by Ofsted are expected to commence in the Autumn - the dates and the frequency of these visits is not yet known.
- 2.4. The DfE Improvement Advisor will sit on the Brighter Futures for Children's Quality Assurance and Improvement Committee and then the RBC Children's Services Improvement Board (see 3.5.1).

3. The Proposal

- 3.1. Following the JTAI both single and multi-agency action plans have been implemented across the partnership.
- 3.2. Children's Services' Single Agency Action Plan (Appendix 1):

3.2.1. The Children's Services Rapid Improvement Plan details the actions needed to improve performance indicators and outcomes for children across eight priority areas:

- Timeliness of strategy meetings
- Children being seen regularly
- Safety plans
- Timeliness of s47 child protection investigations and single assessments
- Timeliness of Initial Child Protection Conferences
- Timeliness of Core Groups
- Regular high-quality supervision and management oversight
- Timeliness of Care Proceedings

3.2.2. By taking an approach that covers all children open to Children's Social Care the impact will, by necessity, be wider than on children who are victims of domestic abuse. In taking this approach, the Plan will also address areas of improvement identified in the 2024 Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services (ILACS) where insufficient progress has been made.

3.2.3. The Rapid Improvement Plan outlines detailed actions under each area, key performance indicators, milestones and how our quality assurance framework will work to triangulate impact and outcomes for children based on actions taken to improve compliance and performance.

3.2.4. The success of the Rapid Improvement Plan will be supported by a functional change in practice. Currently children move from the Children's Single Point of Access (front door) to the Together for Families Service. Together for Families undertake an initial assessment and a wide range of short to long-term work with children, including those on a child in need plan, child protection plan, going through court proceedings or becoming cared for.

3.2.5. We know from our data that our Together for Families' social workers' caseloads are too high. This is attributed to a high number of assessments impacting on social workers' ability to develop relational practice with children and on their ability to conclude their work with families in a timely way. We also know that the demands and complexity of court work impacts on social workers' ability to progress new assessments in a timely way.

3.2.6. It is therefore our intention to establish a separate assessment team, removing this element from Together for Families. This shift is in line with practice in other local authorities and staff have told us that this is what will make a real difference to their ability to deliver timely and high-quality services to children and families.

3.2.7. Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 (statutory guidance on multi-agency working to help, support and protect children) removed the requirement for the lead practitioner for Children In Need to be a social worker. It introduced the option for alternatively qualified practitioners to undertake this role, with the oversight of a social work qualified manager. This is also in line with changes in practice under the government's Families First programme. We are therefore also progressing our plans to adopt this practice, plans that predated the JTAI. Following consultation with a cohort of Family Support Workers, these skilled staff will become lead practitioners for Children In Need. This shift will also contribute to the required reduction in social workers' caseloads.

3.2.8. Reporting and governance of the Plan is outlined in section 3.5.1.

3.3. Multi-agency Action Plan (Appendix 2):

3.3.1. The partnership has implemented a Priority Action Improvement Plan that details the multi-agency actions required across the partnership broken down by the ten areas of improvement identified in the JTAI:

- Voice and experience of individual children
- Strategy meetings
- Information sharing
- Threshold of need
- Cumulative impact of domestic abuse
- Use of data
- Commissioned services
- MARAC arrangements (Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences)
- Challenge and escalation
- Strategic governance arrangements

3.3.2. Each of the ten areas has an accountable lead from across the partnership. Key performance indicators measure progress and impact and a multi-agency audit on children who are victims of domestic abuse will be undertaken in September 2025 to assess impact.

3.4. Progress to date:

3.4.1. As outlined above plans are being implemented across the partnership as is governance of the improvement work (see 3.5.2).

3.4.2. Requirements regarding timeframes for safeguarding processes have been reinforced both within Brighter Futures for Children and across the partnership, enabling professionals to hold each other to account.

3.4.3. Escalation processes and procedures have been reviewed and reinforced across the partnership. There is now evidence of an increase in the use of challenge and escalation across the partnership. This includes escalation when partner agencies are unable to attend strategy meetings, with evidence of these escalation procedures preventing or reducing the length of delays.

3.4.4. Streamlined processes have been introduced in setting up strategy meetings, facilitating both an improvement in timeliness and the ability to report on timeliness. Further work on Mosaic reporting capabilities is underway to reduce the reliance on manual reporting.

3.4.5. There is evidence of increased use of safety plans in work with children and families, including those who are victims of domestic abuse. Where new children referred to the service require an initial safety plan this is now completed at the front door. For children open to the service a new safety plan template has been completed, and workshops are being run throughout June to strengthen understanding and practice in this area. Audits of safety plans will happen over the summer to assess the impact of this work on outcomes for children.

3.4.6. Berkshire West Safeguarding Children's Partnership has approved its priorities for 2025-28. This includes Priority 3: Safeguarding Children from Domestic Abuse. The Executive Director for Children's Services is the accountable lead for the delivery of this priority across the next three years.

3.5. Governance of the single and multi-agency improvement work is outlined in Appendix 3:

3.5.1. Progress against the Children's Services Rapid Improvement Plan is scrutinised weekly by the Children's Services Senior Leadership Team, chaired by the

Executive Director for Children's Services and monthly by the Quality Assurance and Improvement Committee, chaired by the Chair of the Brighter Futures for Children's Board. The RBC Chief Executive is now a member of the Quality Assurance and Improvement Committee and, once appointed, the DfE Improvement Advisor will join the Committee. Following transition into the Council the Quality Assurance and Improvement Committee will transition into the independently chaired Children's Services Practice Improvement Board.

3.5.2. Progress against the Multi-Agency Priority Action Improvement Plan is overseen by the weekly multi-agency Operational Group, currently chaired by the Director of Family Help and Safeguarding and scrutinised fortnightly by the multi-agency Strategic Group, chaired by the Executive Director for Children's Services.

3.6. Domestic Abuse Strategic Governance is outlined in Appendix 4.

3.6.1. The Community Safety Partnership has sub-groups that report into it, this includes the Domestic Abuse Partnership Board, which has a Children's Working Group. This Working Group, reporting to the Domestic Abuse Partnership Board will formally link with Berkshire West Safeguarding Children's Partnership to ensure that the work of both groups is aligned. This will be facilitated through joint membership of the Domestic Abuse Partnership Board Children's Working Group and the BWSCP Priority 3: Safeguarding Children from Domestic Abuse workstream group.

3.6.2. An external review of the Domestic Abuse Partnership Board is in the process of being commissioned by the Director of Communities and Adults' Social Care. This will include a Strategic Needs Assessment that will be used to identify needs, set priorities and drive delivery and commissioning of specialist domestic abuse services. The review will also identify best practice for a partnership dataset moving forward. The review will take three months, concluding by the end of August and reporting into the Community Safety Partnership.

3.7. The findings of the JTAI evidenced that we need to be doing more and doing things differently, as a partnership, to recognise and respond to children who are victims of domestic abuse in Reading. This is not good enough. We have responded at pace and taken swift action to improve safeguarding practice across the partnership.

3.8. We have an agreed plan with partners and a rapid improvement plan that have reset our focus on getting the basics right. We can see green shoots of these plans working, including escalations to police regarding strategy discussions and these now being resolved the same day for children; improved attendance by health partners; changes to the recording system which mean it is easier for social workers to book and record strategy discussions, which are now also reportable for leaders to maintain a clear line of sight. Timeliness of Initial Child Protection Conferences is improving, and all plans are now reviewed and signed off by the Service Manager as an additional quality assurance measure. There has been an increase in the use of safety plans and workshops to improve practice in this area are underway.

3.9. It is critical that all the activity outlined above continues to be delivered at pace to ensure improvement in the delivery of children's safeguarding services to Reading's children.

4. Contribution to Strategic Aims

4.1. The Council Plan has established five priorities for the years 2025/28. The priorities that response to the inspection findings contribute to are:

- Promote more equal communities in Reading
- Safeguard and support the health and wellbeing of Reading's adults and children
- Ensure Reading Borough Council is fit for the future

4.2. In delivering these priorities, we will be guided by the following set of principles:

- Putting residents first
- Building on strong foundations
- Recognising, respecting, and nurturing all our diverse communities
- Involving, collaborating, and empowering residents
- Being proudly ambitious for Reading

5. Environmental and Climate Implications

5.1. None.

6. Community Engagement

6.1. Ofsted spoke to children and families impacted by domestic abuse and other agencies providing services to Reading's children and families as part of the inspection process. This included providers of specialist domestic abuse services across Reading.

6.2. To fully assess the impact of the improvement work underway, children and their families will be engaged both to understand their views on the work we are undertaking to improve services and to hear from them on their experience of receiving our services.

7. Equality Implications

7.1. Under the Equality Act 2010, Section 149, a public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to -

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

7.2. An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) is not required as the report itself does not have a differential impact on people with protected characteristics these are: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex (gender) or sexual orientation. However, it is important to recognise the intersectionality between protected characteristics and domestic abuse and the impact on children. This includes care experienced young people, a protected characteristic in Reading.

8. Other Relevant Considerations

8.1. None noted

9. Legal Implications

9.1. If an area for priority action is relevant to the local authority, the inspection framework requires Ofsted to inform the Department for Education (DfE). Following Ofsted informing the DfE, it has indicated that it will issue a non-statutory Improvement Notice to the Council, followed by the appointment of a DfE Improvement Advisor.

9.2. Non-statutory intervention includes: the provision of external consultancy, advisory or peer support, often from another council; the establishment of improvement boards (with or without an independent chair); enhanced monitoring and challenge; and the issuing of non-statutory Improvement Notices which have often been used to underpin a package of intervention (made up of some or all of the above). The Council has powers to establish an Improvement Board and appoint an Independent Chair under the General Power of Competence (Localism Act 2011). As the Improvement Board will be comprised of officers, councillors, and independent persons, it cannot be a formal Committee or Sub-Committee of the Council (section 101 Local Government Act 1972). This means that the Improvement Board is advisory and assists the executive powers of the Council, through the powers delegated to the Executive Director, and the political

and scrutiny powers of the Council, through the powers delegated to Policy Committee and the ACE Committee (Adults, Social Care and Education Committee).

9.3. The Council is in the process of setting up an Improvement Board, a Council requirement of the decision to transition Children's Services back into the Council. A report recommending the Terms of Reference and appointment process for an Independent Chair was presented to Council in June. The DfE Improvement Advisor will be a member of the Improvement Board.

10. Financial Implications

10.1. To deliver improvement work at pace additional short-term capacity is required to ensure children in Reading are safe and that practitioners have manageable workloads. A business case has been developed to authorise short term funding through a combination of new grant funding, use of Brighter Futures for Children's reserves and the Council's Delivery Fund.

11. Timetable for Implementation

11.1. Both the Single Agency and Partnership Action Plans have been implemented and will continue to be reported on and scrutinised as outlined in the governance arrangements in section 3.5.

11.2. A Partnership Action Plan will be submitted to Ofsted by 13th August 2025.

12. Background Papers

12.1. There are none.

Appendices

- 1. Single Agency Action Plan**
- 2. Multi-Agency Action Plan**
- 3. JTAI Improvement Plan Governance Structure**
- 4. Domestic Abuse Strategic Governance Structure**

Appendix 1 Single Agency Action Plan

Priority Area	Impact for Children	KPI *target for Sept 2025	QA Measure
Timeliness of strategy meetings	All children where there is a concern about significant harm have a multi-agency Strategy meeting convened to ensure their safety and protection	100%	Quality assurance and dip sampling of strategy discussions, including checks that all partners are present. Check actions are undertaken, and safety plans are in place. Check SEND needs are recognised and SEND team involved.
Children being seen regularly	That children are seen alone regularly, in response to their needs and that those visits are purposeful and lead to clear planning and improved outcomes That children can build trusted relationships with the workers that visit them - children feel seen and heard	75%	Quality assurance review & audits of visits to ensure they are written to the child, and that the child's voice is clearly recorded. Visits are linked to an action on the child's plan to ensure the visit is purposeful.
Safety plans	That Risk Assessments are child focussed, timely, effective and dynamic responding to changing needs and circumstances. That Risk Assessments keep children safe	N/A	Quality assurance, dip sampling and audits of the quality, effectiveness and child focus of Safety Plans and not placing a burden on survivors
Timeliness of s47 child protection investigations and single assessments	To ensure that we understand the needs of our children, the risks and strengths in their family network, and provide timely and purposeful help/support to ensure the child is safe and improve outcomes for the child To ensure children who need our protection are protected without delay	S47's 75% Single Assessment 72%	Quality assurance, dip sampling and audits of Single Assessments/S47 (are they holistic, are the focussed, are they child focussed and evidencing child voice, pathways to support, etc). Specific monitoring of contacts coming back in within 3 months of closure, and re-referrals
Timeliness of Initial Child Protection Conferences	Children have clear, specific, measurable multi-agency plans that are focussed on impact on outcomes within 15 days of their assessment completing	80%	Quality of every child protection plan is reviewed by the Service Manager; with Head of Transformation & QA oversight
Timeliness of Core Groups	That children are well supported to have effective, timely, driven plans to ensure that managers have a clear line of sight of children's needs, strengths and	85%	Minutes signed off by managers with a view as to how these meetings are improving outcomes for children and driving forward the child protection plan

	plans, avoiding drift and delay. That together we are ambitious for improved outcomes for children		
Regular high-quality case supervision and management oversight	Work with children and families is purposeful and outcome focused, driven through regular, consistent, reflective and high-quality supervision of staff	85%	Quality of supervision in addition to regularity and quality of management oversight is scrutinised through performance reporting, audits of children's files and supervision audits and observations.
Timeliness of Care Proceedings	Giving families and their wider significant other networks the best opportunity to care effectively for their child/children. Good quality and timely decision making for children who need to be protected from harm	85%	Quality and sufficiency of child-centred care planning monitored and audited through weekly pre-proceedings and legal gateway meetings.

Appendix 2 Multi-Agency Action Plan

Joint Targeted Area Inspection: Reading
24th February - 10th March 2025

Multi-Agency Improvement Plan

Area for priority action:
Shortfalls in the multi-agency strategic safeguarding partnership leading to systemic weaknesses in multi-agency safeguarding practice. This includes inconsistent information-sharing between partners resulting in delays for children, poor-quality risk assessments that fail to address the experiences and needs of children and often weak decision-making for children.

Improvement Objectives - SUMMARY	Characteristics of good:
SUMMARY OF CHANGE REQUIRED The JTAI identified the following areas of Improvement, this plans lists the actions that will contribute to one of more of these areas under each theme: 1. The voice and experience of individual children exposed to domestic abuse, so they are listened to and acted on by practitioners across the partnership. 2. Strategy meetings and other safeguarding meetings involving children should involve all relevant partners and happen in a timely manner. 3. Issues with timely and consistent information sharing relating to risk, needs and plans for children. 4. Understanding of threshold of need across the partnership to meet the children's needs. 5. Consideration of the cumulative impact of repeated experience of domestic abuse and cumulative impact on the child. 6. Children's safeguarding partnership use and insight of detailed and relevant data to help understand the impact on children who are victims of domestic abuse. 7. Commissioning of support services for children and families. 8. Oversight and effectiveness of MARAC arrangements. 9. Ensuring effective challenge and escalation when an appropriate response is not received. 10. Strategic governance arrangements to ensure they are aligned with other partnerships for children who are victims of domestic abuse.	Children's voices are clearly articulated and their lived experience of domestic abuse and its impact is well understood. This understanding, informed by a comprehensive local problem profile, informs operational and strategic responses to domestic abuse that are delivered to a high standard across the local partnership in a coordinated way. Risk management, safeguarding thresholds and responses are well understood by all agencies and where issues arise/standards are not met, partners adopt a solution focused, collaborative approach to problem-solving which includes the appropriate & timely use of formal escalation processes. MASA priorities are child focused and progress against outcomes is informed by a partnership data set. MASA governance is aligned across other partnerships, including those where children are not the sole focus.

KEY

Blue	Completed
Green	On track
Amber	Emerging possibility that action will not be completed on time, attention needed
Red	Highly likely action will not be completed on time, urgent action needed

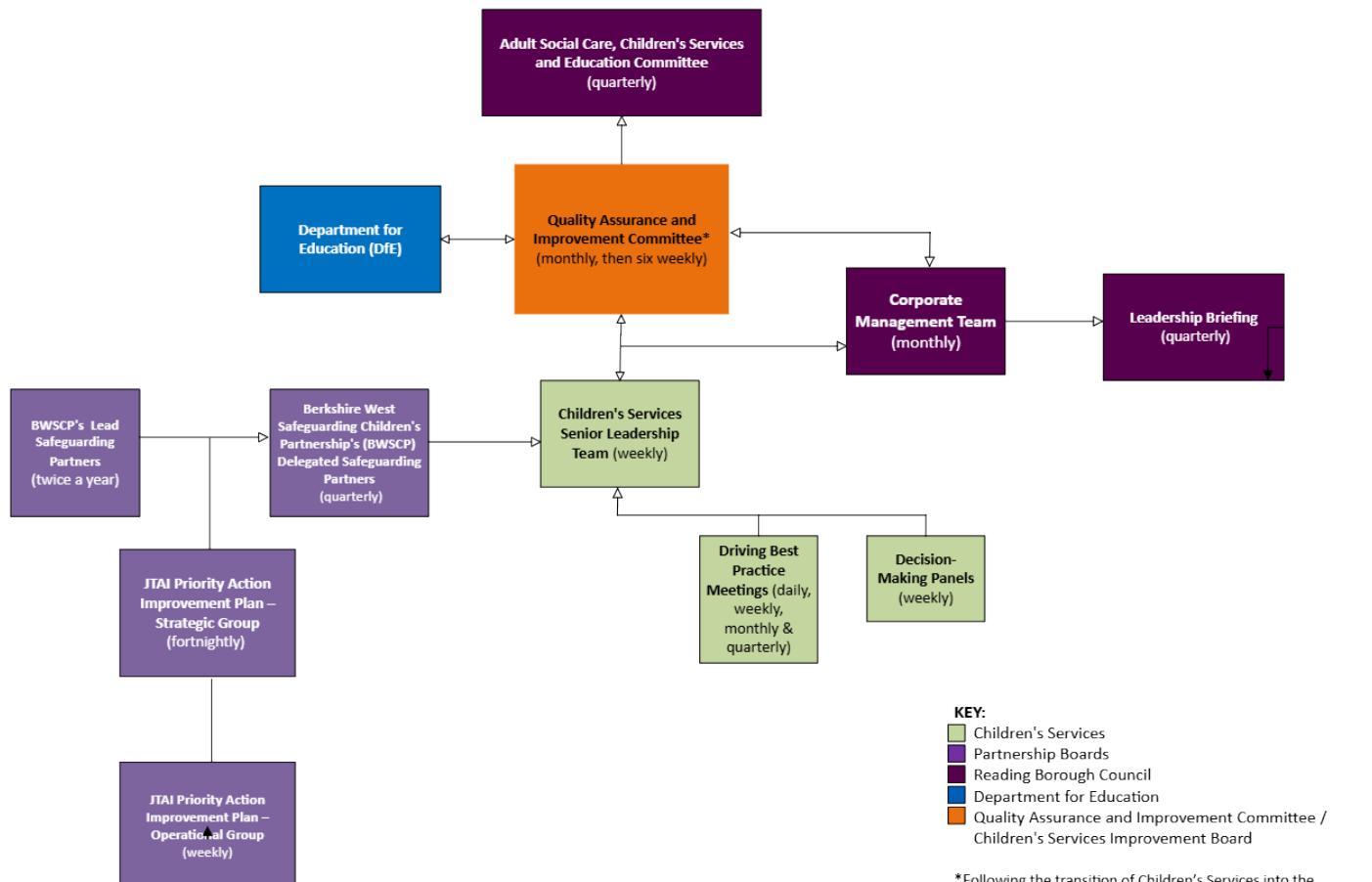
Improvement Objective 1: VOICE AND EXPERIENCE OF INDIVIDUAL CHILDREN		Moderate risk: Activity is necessary	Characteristics of good:	
Accountable lead: TVP		Children's voices are listened to and the experiences of individual children who have been exposed to domestic abuse are acted on by practitioners across the partnership.		
REF	Action	Complete by	Owner	Theme
1.1	MULTI-AGENCY: ABE Interviewing with police is in place – to upskill social workers and police officers when undertaking Sect 47 enquiries.	In place	Police and CSC	Service Delivery and Design
1.2	MULTI-AGENCY: All partners across the Reading partnership can evidence that they collectively listen to the voices of children who have been exposed to domestic abuse, and understand their lived experiences, and then act on that evidence.	30.06.2025	BWSCP	Service Delivery and Design
1.3	MULTI-AGENCY: Undertake a multi-agency audit of domestic abuse that includes hearing the voice and understanding the experience of children	30.09.2025	BWSCP	Service Delivery and Design

Improvement Objective 2: STRATEGY MEETINGS		High risk: Urgent activity required	Characteristics of good:	
Accountable lead: BFPC		Strategy and other safeguarding meetings relating to children's well-being are timely and includes the involvement of all relevant safeguarding partners when concerns arise.		
REF	Action	Complete by	Owner	Theme
2.1	MULTI-AGENCY: Multi-agency safety planning as practice standard: Clear expectations to be set in respect to child-centred and individual safety plans as an outcome of strategy meetings; when a strategy meeting is not in place within 1 working day and before an ICPC.	30.05.25	BFPC with partners	Learning and Training
2.2	MULTI-AGENCY: Multi-agency workshop to socialise and embed practice expectations. Any delay to be escalated in line with the BWSCP procedure and a log to be kept that is reported on at the MASH Operational Group and escalated to the Berkshire West MASH Strategic Oversight Group.	30.06.25	BFPC with partners	Learning and Training
2.3	MULTI-AGENCY: Peer Review in BFPC CSPoA being undertaken by Kent to assess effectiveness of CSPoA – this will be informed by all JTAI findings, including a focus on strategy meetings.	underway	Partnership and Kent CC	Service Delivery and Design
2.4	MULTI-AGENCY: Checklists to be in place to ensure all professionals involved with a child, or significant adults involved with the child, are considered at strategy meetings. In CSPoA, to provide reassurance that Probation is contacted to check their involvement with an adult, as routine practice. This to be confirmed through a dip sample of cases that came in over the next 2 months and to feedback to the monitoring group mid May 2025.	15.05.25	BFPC	Service Delivery and Design
2.5	MULTI-AGENCY: MASH practitioners to ensure that the recommendation for a strategy meeting made to the Assessment Team is more robust with clear timescales to minimise drift and the impact of cumulative delays upon a child and family.	30.05.25	BFPC	Service Delivery and Design

Improvement Objective 3: INFORMATION SHARING		Moderate risk: Activity is necessary	Characteristics of good:	
Accountable lead: BFPC		There is timely and consistent information-sharing about risks, needs and plans for children.		
REF	Action	Complete by	Owner	Theme
3.1	MULTI-AGENCY: Multi-agency practice expectations to be discussed, socialised and embedded through a workshop to address practice relating to: - Improving the safeguarding notification processes and develop effective and timely information sharing with all partners, especially GPs. - Ensure communication and co-ordination at the earliest opportunity when information becomes known about children in different households linked to the same adults and associated risks. - Capture the voice of the child, wishes, feelings and lived experiences as standard by all agencies - Distribute and socialise the consistent and informed use of DASH forms in all agencies to provide consistent benchmarking of risk. Health to ensure DASH form is completed, and risks known by HV and GP around DA to be shared with their service even if the pregnant mother does not disclose this.	30.06.25	BFPC	Learning and Training
3.2	MULTI-AGENCY: Audit the quality, consistency and timeliness of information-sharing between the partner agencies involved in safeguarding children and domestic abuse.	30.07.25	BWSCP	Information Sharing

Improvement Objective 4: THRESHOLD OF NEED		High risk: Urgent activity required		Characteristics of good:				
Accountable lead: BFRIC		Thresholds of need are well understood across the partnership to meet children's needs and minimise risks.						
REF	Action	Complete by	Owners	Theme	Plan	Progress RAG	Impact RAG	
4.1	Multi-agency: Action is taken to consider how well thresholds of need are understood across the partnership to meet children's needs and minimise risks.	30.05.2025	BFRIC	Service Delivery and Design	Operational	Green		
Improvement Objective 5: CUMULATIVE IMPACT		Moderate risk: Activity is necessary		Characteristics of good:				
Accountable lead: TVP		Practitioners and managers understand of the importance of consistent consideration of the cumulative impact on children from repeated incidents of exposure to domestic abuse.						
REF	Action	Complete by	Owners	Theme	Plan	Progress RAG	Impact RAG	
5.1	MULTI-AGENCY: Males identified as potential perpetrators of Domestic Abuse must be considered by front line practitioners as to what involvement and understanding they have regarding the impact of their behaviour	30.06.2025	TVP with support from BFRIC	Service Delivery and Design	Operational	Green		
Improvement Objective 6: USE OF DATA		High risk: Urgent activity required		Characteristics of good:				
Accountable lead: BFRIC		The Safeguarding Children Partnership is well informed by comprehensive detailed relevant data to sufficiently understand the experience of children who are victims of domestic abuse and the prevalence of the issue in their area.						
REF	Action	Complete by	Owners	Theme	Plan	Progress RAG	Impact RAG	
6.1	MULTI-AGENCY: Domestic Abuse needs assessment of the safeguarding partnership to be informed by relevant data from health, police and Local Authority in order to plan for the needs of the local population.	30.06.2025	BFRIC	Information Sharing	Operational	Amber		
6.2	MULTI-AGENCY: Consolidation of performance information and data related to Domestic Abuse to fully understand the needs of the local population and impact upon safeguarding children.	30.06.2025	BWSCP	Information Sharing	Strategic	Amber		
6.3	MULTI-AGENCY: Review information sharing protocols and information sharing templates to ensure all agencies disclose relevant and appropriate information at the right time to enable effective safeguarding of children and young people whilst maintaining compliance with data protection requirements	30.05.2025	BWSCP	Information Sharing	Operational	Amber		
Improvement Objective 7: COMMISSIONED SERVICES		High risk: Urgent activity required		Characteristics of good:				
Accountable lead: TVP		There is effective commissioning of support services for children and their families based on a clear understanding of local need.						
REF	Action	Complete by	Owners	Theme	Plan	Progress RAG	Impact RAG	
7.1	MULTI-AGENCY: Overcome criteria and barriers to accessing specialist services such as Freedom programme and DA work with both parents	30.06.2025	BWSCP	Service Delivery and Design	Operational	Amber		
Improvement Objective 8: MARAC ARRANGEMENTS		Moderate risk: Activity is necessary		Characteristics of good:				
Accountable lead: TVP		There is good oversight and effectiveness of multi-agency risk assessment conferences (MARAC).						
REF	Action	Complete by	Owners	Theme	Plan	Progress RAG	Impact RAG	
8.1	MULTI-AGENCY: Refresh and update partnership knowledge of MARAC function and role and their potential impact for practitioners across different agencies.	30.06.25	TVP	Learning and Training	Operational	Green		
Improvement Objective 9: CHALLENGE AND ESCALATION		Moderate risk: Activity is necessary		Characteristics of good:				
Accountable lead: BFRIC		Professionals challenge and escalate concerns about children that are not receiving an adequate response.						
REF	Action	Complete by	Owners	Theme	Plan	Progress RAG	Impact RAG	
9.1	MULTI-AGENCY: The partnership takes action to evidence how professionals effectively challenge and escalate concerns about children that are not receiving an adequate response, and how this impacts on the lives of children.	30.06.25	BWSCP	Service Delivery and Design	Strategic	Amber		
Improvement Objective 10: STRATEGIC GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS		High risk: Urgent activity required		Characteristics of good:				
Accountable lead: BFRIC		There is effective strategic governance arrangements to ensure priorities are set and aligned with the other strategic partnerships, with a focus on those children subject to domestic abuse.						
REF	Action	Complete by	Owners	Theme	Plan	Progress RAG	Impact RAG	
10.1	MULTI-AGENCY: Strengthen the role and oversight that the performance and Quality Improvement Sub Group and the BW Executive have to ensure both forums hold all partners to account and provide appropriate scrutiny and direction in order to secure the improvement required.	30.06.25	BWSCP	Strategic Partnership (MASA)	Strategic	Green		
10.2	MULTI-AGENCY: Strengthen formal communication and reporting arrangement across the strategic partnership - Domestic Abuse Board, Safeguarding Children Partnership, Community Safety Partnership etc	30.06.25	BWSCP	Strategic Partnership (MASA)	Strategic	Green		

Appendix 3 JTAI Improvement Plan Governance Structure



KEY:

- Children's Services
- Partnership Boards
- Reading Borough Council
- Department for Education
- Quality Assurance and Improvement Committee / Children's Services Improvement Board

*Following the transition of Children's Services into the Council this will change to the Children's Services Improvement Board

Appendix 4 Domestic Abuse Strategic Governance Structure

