

Joint Targeted Area Inspection: Reading

Multi-Agency Improvement Plan

Area for priority action:

Improvement Objectives - SUMMARY

SUMMARY OF CHANGE REQUIRED

The JTAI identified the following areas of improvement, this plans list 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.

Characteristics of good:

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 - Action

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

Key - Impact

Green	Positive impact
Amber	Moderate impact, or mechanisms to measure impact are in place but data is not yet available.
Red	No or limited impact, or no mechanisms in place to measure impact.

10th September 2025							
Ref	Objectives and actions	Complete by	Owners	Progress RAG	Impact RAG	Evidence	Comments
Improvement Objective 1: <i>VOICE AND EXPERIENCE OF INDIVIDUAL CHILDREN</i>							
1.1	MULTI-AGENCY: ABE Interviewing with police is in place – to upskill social workers and police officers when undertaking Sect 47 enquiries.	31.05.2025	Police and CSC	Green	Amber	Training has been scheduled; awaiting confirmation on delivery dates.	Impact will be assessed from the next ABE cycle. Proposed approach includes QA of ABE interviews and dip sampling, commencing from September. Progress RAG changed to Green as training is still underway.
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.	30.09.2025	BWSCP DSP	Green	Red	Multi-agency domestic abuse audit to be held Sept 2025 to include voice of the child.	Current guidance and training across partner agencies regarding voice of the child as evidence for this action. Completion date changed on 16/7 from June to Sept to reflect m/a audit date. No impact measurement has taken place yet, hence red RAG rating.
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 DSP	Green	Red	Multi-agency domestic abuse audit to be held Sept 2025 to include voice of the child.	This action is aligned to BWSCP Priority 3 action plan. No impact measurement has taken place yet, hence red RAG rating. NB: Linked to MARAC objective 8.1.
Improvement Objective 2: <i>STRATEGY MEETINGS</i>							
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.	31.07.2025	BFFC Service Manager for IROs & CP Chairs with Partners	Blue	Amber	Progress - process confirmed and shared; multi-agency training workshops held June 2025.	Safety planning audit held July 2025 (dip sample - BFFC led). Sept 2025 multi-agency domestic abuse audit to include safety planning. Limited impact measurement to date - currently showing improved practice but needs to be demonstrated over time, hence amber RAG rating
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.	30.06.2025	BFFC Service Manager for IROs & CP Chairs with Partners	Blue	Amber	Workshops held during June - well attended and positive feedback from partners attending. Strategy discussion tracker discussed at both operational and strategic JTAI groups.	To be part of highlight reporting, and risk log as required. Sept 2025 audit to be part of impact measure. Limited impact measurement to date - currently showing improved practice but needs to be demonstrated over time, hence amber RAG rating
2.3	MULTI-AGENCY: Peer Review in BFFC Children's Single Point of Access (CSPoA) being undertaken by Kent to assess effectiveness of CSPoA – this will be informed by all JTAI findings, including a focus on strategy meetings.	31.10.2025	Partnership and Kent CC	Green	Amber	40 working days have been secured from Kent to peer review with a focus on quality assurance for front door services, strategy meetings, and assessment service changes, with a recommendation for some support for the Tff part of the service. The subsequent JTAI inspection and creation of the Assessment service means the peer review is scheduled for completion for October 2025.	The peer review has been extended to October 2025. Impact updated 27/08 to reflect review plan is in place and on track
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 April/May and to feedback to the monitoring group mid May 2025.	15.05.2025	BFFC CSPoA Service Manager	Blue	Amber	Attendees reviewed as part of strat discussion processes, no concerns about lack of invitations noted. June 2025 dip sample audit of strategy discussions confirmed partner attendance, information sharing and contribution is good. Underway limited evidence of impact to date.	Need further audit / QA to ensure practice is embedded and of consistently good quality. Will be part of Sept 2025 audit. Limited impact measurement to date - currently showing improved practice but needs to be demonstrated over time, hence amber RAG rating.
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.	30.05.2025	BFFC CSPoA Service Manager	Blue	Amber	Process clarified and shared, working well.	Need further audit / QA to ensure practice is embedded and of consistently good quality. Will be part of Sept 2025 audit. Limited impact measurement to date - currently showing improved practice but needs to be demonstrated over time, hence amber RAG rating.
Improvement Objective 3: <i>INFORMATION SHARING</i>							
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	BFFC QA Lead	Blue	Amber	Workshops held in June 2025 covered practice expectations including information sharing, strategy discussions, safety planning and professional meetings. Health colleagues tracking DASH forms as part of their QA.	Will be part of Sept 2025 audit. Limited impact measurement to date - currently showing improved practice but needs to be demonstrated over time, hence amber RAG rating.
3.2	MULTI-AGENCY: Audit the quality, consistency and timeliness of information-sharing between the partner agencies involved in safeguarding children and domestic abuse.	30.07.2025	BWSCP	Green	Amber	Dip sample audit held in June 2025.	Will be part of Sept 2025 audit, on track to be completed
Improvement Objective 4: <i>THRESHOLD OF NEED</i>							

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4.1	Multi-agency: Action is taken to consider how well thresholds of need are understood in the context of disputes and escalations across the partnership to meet children’s needs and minimise risks.	30.05.2025	BFFC CSPoA Service Manager	Blue	Green	Escalation policies are being mapped across the partnership to ensure consistency and alignment. The BWSCP Escalation Policy has been re-circulated to partners for reference. An escalation tracker has been introduced within BFFC to mitigate the risk of drift or delay. While current positive insights are anecdotal, formal evidence will be available from September.	Formal review of escalation tracker will be included in the September 2025 audit. There is robust oversight of the escalation policy and tracker, with improved compliance with policy, effective early action taken when concern is escalated, and a focus on outcomes for children in response to escalation being used.
Improvement Objective 5: CUMULATIVE IMPACT							
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 BFFC CSPoA Service Manager	Blue	Red	Already in place as a process with TVP.	Audit and assurance of this action neds to be confirmed - will be a standalone multi-agency audit, probably led by Probation by TBC
5.2	MULTI-AGENCY: Patterns of risk or concern regarding domestic abuse are identified at the earliest opportunity; used to understand the cumulative impact for children, survivors and perpetrators; and develop plans for children and families	30.09.2025	BFFC CSPoA Service Manager	Green	Red	Practice expectations regarding recognising cumulative harm in place.	Included in September DA audit, evidence of impact expected by October 2025 and will be collected in further audits
Improvement Objective 6: USE OF DATA							
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.	30.09.2025	BFFC CSPoA Service Manager	Amber	Red	BWSCP has been strengthening its governance arrangements, including developing a new Quality and Impact Partnership (QIP) to replace the current Independent Scrutiny and Impact Group (ISIG). BWSCP Reading QIP is focusing on agreeing the dataset for scrutiny by the group, drawing on all relevant data sources from partners in the local area. It is expected that this will be agreed late September, with a review meeting scheduled for 18 September. It will be further informed by the Reading strategic needs assessment that has been commissioned by Reading Domestic Abuse Strategic Group, due to be delivered early 2026.	Domestic abuse strategic needs analysis planned for Reading. Domestic abuse needs assessment has not yet been completed yet, so no impact measurement has happened, hence red RAG rating. Link to BWSCP DA Priority 3 actions regarding data and profile of children, victims, survivors and perpetrators. Further QIP meeting 18 Sept 2025 to degree impact measure with partners.
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.	30.09.2025	BWSCP DSP	Amber	Red	Range of data currently reported to different operational and strategic groups, BWSCP leading on developing a targeted information dataset. We expect the action to move to green after the meeting on the 18th September (see 6.1).	Domestic abuse strategic needs analysis planned for Reading. Link to BWSCP DA Priority 3 actions regarding data and profile of children, victims, survivors and perpetrators. Need to consider timescale for this action completion to align with DA Strategic Board Strategic Needs Assessment. Consolidation of performance information and data relating to domestic abuse has not yet been completed, so no impact measurement has taken place, hence red RAG rating.
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	31.10.2025	BWSCP DSP	Green	Amber	Strategy Discussion dip sample audit completed in June 2025 did not identify any concerns about information sharing practices.	Policy & Procedures BWSCP subgroup and Pan-Berks ISA protocol. Scheduled to be signed off by all local areas by Oct 2025. As sign off has not yet occurred, impact is amber.
Improvement Objective 7: COMMISSIONED SERVICES							
7.1	MULTI-AGENCY: The partnership to receive assurance that the criteria and barriers to accessing specialist services, such as Freedom programme and DA work with both parents, are well understood by professionals and the broader community, and mitigating actions have been taken to address any barriers to access.	30.09.2025	BWSCP DSP	Amber	Red	An independent review of the DA Strategic Partnership Board has concluded and will report back to the CSP in Sept 2025. This will include recommendations on the commissioning of specialist DA services. The DA Children’s multi-agency task and finish group has been reconvened with a new ToR and is leading on a needs assessment, mapping and gap analysis of domestic abuse provision, as well as the delivery of BWSCP Priority actions on safeguardign children from DA.	Link to BWSCP DA Priority 3 actions regarding commissioned services and barriers to access. Joint commissioning arrangements are still being explored, and mapping of provision will then inform gap analysis and next steps, will be unable to measure impact until this has taken place, hence red RAG rating.
Improvement Objective 8: OVERSIGHT AND EFFECTIVENESS OF MARAC ARRANGEMENTS							

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8.1	MULTI-AGENCY: The partnership seeks assurance that within MARAC meetings children’s voices are clearly reflected in the actions set, so that children are seen, heard & safe, and that these actions are leading to better outcomes for the children.	30.09.2025	C Supt Felicity Parker	Green	Amber	There is a MARAC steering group for Berks West chaired by Karen Evans, Wokingham LA and been in place for 1 year. IT meets every quarter. The group has been asked for assurance of VofC is reflected in the actions and discussions. This should feed into this JTAI governance, the BWSCP and Reading CSP governance (the governance for DA is complex) . The MARAC chair, DI Jackson is confident that actions are set in a through way in relation to VofC and they are chased and completed in a timely way. This needs assurance.	MARAC lead to review CSC attendance at MARAC Reading so that representatives consistently have the relevant information about named children and families to add value to the meeting
8.2	MULTI-AGENCY: The partnership seeks assurance that there is sufficient, effective, multi agency governance of the MARAC; driving performance and outcomes for children in Reading.	30.09.2026	C Supt Felicity Parker	Green	Amber	MARAC steering group provides scrutiny. Reporting of this steering group will be agreed in line with learning from the DA Strategic Partnership review.	Engagement with the findings of the Review of the DA Strategic Partnership Board will support the partnership to agree a governance structure for the MARAC
Improvement Objective 9: CHALLENGE AND ESCALATION							
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 DSP	Blue	Amber	The BWSCP Escalation Policy has been re-shared across all partners. A single escalation tracker is now in place in BFfC, with regular reporting to monitor progress and mitigate delays. A meeting was held by the JTAI Operational Group on 16/07/2025 to ensure and confirm that operational practice consistently supports strategic discussions within required timescales. LI to further explore opportunities to enhance the escalation tracker as a collaborative partnership tool.	Mapping of escalation policies has been completed and confirms alignment of practice and expectations across the partnership. The RAG rating for progress was updated to blue on 16 July to reflect that actions have been taken to track, scrutinise, and report on escalations. This will remain an area of ongoing monitoring to assess impact. While formal impact measurement has not yet taken place—hence the amber RAG rating—early indicators show improvement. Escalations are occurring, leadership oversight has strengthened, and there is greater visibility and responsiveness. Case studies are emerging that demonstrate positive impact, including improved response times.
Improvement Objective 10: STRATEGIC GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS							
10.1	MULTI-AGENCY: Strengthen the role and oversight that the performance and Quality Improvement Sub Group and the Berkshire West Executive have to ensure both forums hold all partners to account and provide appropriate scrutiny and direction in order to secure the improvement required.	30.09.2025	BWSCP DSP	Green	Amber	Each local authority will have a Quality & Impact Partnerships (QIPs) and there will also be a chairs’ meeting. Attendance at chairs’ meeting (by LL or others depending on capacity) will help gather oversight and feedback into the work. The DA Children's multi-agency task and finish group will report into both the DA Partnership Board and the QIP.	Link to BWSCP DA Priority 3 actions regarding governance and Scrutiny. New BWSCP Quality Impact Partnerships being developed to replace BWSCP Independent Scrutiny and Impact groups. First QIP took place in Sept, so impact is amber.
10.2	MULTI-AGENCY: Strengthen formal communication and reporting arrangement across the strategic partnership - Domestic Abuse Board, Safeguarding Children Partnership, Community Safety Partnership etc	30.09.2025	BWSCP DSP	Green	Amber	The DA Children's multi-agency task and finish group will report into both the DA Partnership Board (which reports into the CSP) and the QIP (which reports into the BWSCP DSP's), strengthening and aligning reporting arrangements.	This is a new arrangement and unable to measure impact until meeting and reporting cycles are embdded.