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Jacqui Old CBE, Executive Director of Education and Children's Services, Lancashire County Council

Sarah O'Brien, Chief Nursing Officer, NHS Lancashire and South Cumbria Integrated Care Board

Chris Rowley, Chief Constable, Lancashire Police

Andrew Snowden, Police and Crime Commissioner, Lancashire

Georgine Lee, Youth Offending Service Manager, Lancashire County Council

Dear Lancashire Local Safeguarding Partnership

Joint targeted area inspection of Lancashire

This letter summarises the findings of the joint targeted area inspection (JTAI) of the multi-agency response to serious youth violence in Lancashire.

This inspection took place from 5 to 9 February 2024. It was 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).

Context

The findings in the report evaluate the effectiveness of the multi-agency response to children aged 10 and over who are at risk of or affected by serious youth violence and/or criminal exploitation. Even where the report does not specifically refer to this group of children, all findings relate to this scope.

The inspectorates recognise the complexities for agencies in intervening to address serious youth violence when risk and harm occur outside of the family home. As a consequence, risk assessment and decision-making have a number of complexities and challenges. A multi-agency inspection of this area of practice is more likely to highlight some of the significant challenges to partnerships in improving practice. We anticipate that each of the joint targeted area inspections (JTAs) of this area of practice that are being carried out will identify learning for all agencies and will contribute to the debate about what good practice looks like in relation to the multi-agency response to serious youth violence. In a significant proportion of cases seen by inspectors, children had also experienced other forms of abuse, which reflects the complexity of the needs and risks for children.



Headline findings

Leaders from across the local area partnership of agencies have a shared commitment to addressing the causes and impact of serious youth violence and the criminal exploitation of children. Underpinned by a helpful single strategy, leaders across the partnership have developed a unified public health and trauma-informed approach to addressing serious youth violence and criminal exploitation. There is clear understanding of the causes of serious youth violence and the work to tackle it is extremely well supported by the Lancashire Violence Reduction Network (LVRN). There is a high degree of visibility and connectivity between leaders who are determined in their aspiration to prevent serious youth violence and to deliver trauma-informed and child-centred services that improve children's lives.

Despite this strong strategic intent, there are areas of practice across the partnership that need to improve to strengthen the response for all children affected by serious youth violence. Partner agencies do not always recognise the severity of risk to children. This means that children do not always receive a child protection response that reflects their needs or levels of risk. Professionals do not always see children as children first or use appropriate language to describe their behaviours and actions. The increased vulnerability of children with special educational needs and who are neurodiverse has not been sufficiently responded to by partner agencies. For some children at the highest level of risk of serious youth violence and criminal exploitation, progress in reducing risks and increasing safety is often slower.

There is a strong focus on prevention and early intervention in response to tackling serious youth violence by the partnership. Across Lancashire, work with children in schools and other settings about serious youth violence is increasing in priority. Partner agencies, supported by the Community Safety Partnership Board (CSPB), Local Community Safety Partnerships (LCSPs) and the LVRN, come together to provide a multitude of targeted and community-led youth initiatives to educate and divert young people away from the risks of youth violence, criminal exploitation and knife crime. Partner agencies are in the process of comprehensively reviewing and evaluating the impact of most of their interventions with children to better understand what initiatives and services are having the most impact in reducing risks. While many of these initiatives are making an encouraging difference, not all are closely aligned to their LCSPs and to the LVRN so as to enable their impact to be sufficiently measured and evaluated.

Leaders recognise that there is still more they can do to understand the scale and prevalence of serious youth violence. Led by the CSPB and LVRN, partner agencies are working together to expand the range of data and intelligence they use within their strategic needs assessments in order to help identify the number of children with emerging indicators of risks and vulnerabilities to serious youth violence. The partnership plans to use this to further strengthen processes, and services, at both a strategic and operational level, for children at risk of serious youth violence.



Statutory partners continue to invest in and strengthen the multi-agency support and services provided to the most vulnerable children affected by serious youth violence and criminal exploitation. There have been significant changes and developments across the partnership over the last six months. New multi-agency safeguarding arrangements have been launched, as well as a new adolescent service that brings the multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH), the Youth Justice Service, children's statutory assessment teams and new specialist multidisciplinary Empower teams together into one service. The new Empower teams include social workers, family workers, police and specialist health staff. Working closely with the Youth Justice Service and education partners, there is a strong commitment and focus on trauma-informed prevention, support and intervention.

Children and families benefit from a wide range of trauma-informed universal and early help services which are delivered by partner agencies, community services, schools, youth services, multi-agency family hubs, and through intensive family work by children's services. These are making a positive difference in addressing the underlying causes of serious youth violence and are helping to reduce vulnerabilities and to improve many children's lives.

The support and interventions provided, particularly by the Empower teams, are having an increasingly positive impact in reducing risks and successfully diverting children away from serious youth violence and criminal exploitation. The Youth Justice Service's prevention and diversion team is also having a positive impact in diverting children away from the criminal justice system.

What needs to improve?

- How consistently staff in partner agencies understand and apply the thresholds for holding child protection strategy meetings and conducting child protection enquiries. This includes increasing awareness of formal escalation processes
- The quality and impact of practice across partner agencies for children at the highest level of risk.
- How quickly the partnership is acting to shape and target services in the light of the increase in numbers of children from British Asian backgrounds at risk from serious youth violence and criminal exploitation.
- How well the increased vulnerability to criminal exploitation, serious youth violence and potential unnecessary criminalisation of children with special educational needs and who are neurodiverse is recognised and acted on, including the timely access to specialist diagnostic health assessments.



- The quality and effectiveness of record-keeping, information-sharing in the MASH and other multi-agency meetings, and quality assurance systems across the partnership.
- How consistently staff from all agencies recognise children at risk from serious youth violence and criminal exploitation as children first and use appropriate child-centred language to describe their risks, needs and behaviours.
- The depth of professional curiosity and the frequency of appropriate professional challenge, and in particular, how well these behaviours support assessment and planning.
- The inclusion of key practitioners from across the partnership at meetings for individual children and groups of children.
- The access to, and provision of, education for children at risk of serious youth violence, in particular those who are excluded from schools.
- The timeliness with which education, health and care plans for children affected by serious youth violence are reviewed and updated.
- The robustness of the response and the effectiveness of the interventions when working with families who are more difficult to engage, who are resistant to services offered, and who withdraw their consent to working with practitioners.

Strengths

- The positive impact of the partnership's public health and trauma-informed response to children affected by serious youth violence.
- The scale and reach of place-based interventions, which are highly effective in educating and diverting children away from risk within the community.
- The strength and maturity of partner relationships at both a strategic and operational level.
- The range of multidisciplinary preventative and early help services, including youth services.
- The effectiveness of the health offer for children supported by the Youth Justice Service and the flexible and needs-led support provided by the emergency department navigators and community and primary health services.



- The positive impact of police-led targeted operations, disruption activity, safeguarding action and the diversion of children away from the criminal justice system.

Main findings

The response to serious youth violence is very much a shared partnership response in Lancashire. There is a consistent approach by partners and the VRN to listening to the views of children and families and understanding what makes children feel safer in their communities. Creative practice, forums, activities and conferences are used well to understand children's views on key areas of their lives, their worries, the pressures they are facing and their aspirations. Their voices are used effectively in order to help shape, in particular, education programmes, individual practice with children, community-based initiatives and health services.

Lancashire is the fourth largest county council in England. There is significant variation in levels of deprivation and need within the 12 district council areas it includes, ranging from pockets of relative affluence to some areas of serious poverty. The population of Lancashire is about 1.236 million. Almost a fifth of the population are of ethnic minority heritage and a fifth are children. Overall, a quarter of children live in income-deprived families or receive free school meals. Lancashire has more children's homes than any other local authority in England, with over 263 at the time of the inspection. The number of secondary school exclusions per 10,000 children in Lancashire rose to 30 in 2021/22, which is almost double the England rate of 16. These demographics and variations in Lancashire's population and communities are mostly understood well by partner agencies. However, leaders and managers across the partnership have not acted with sufficient speed in response to a small, but potentially significant, change in the demographics of children at risk of serious youth violence and exploitation. While the Youth Justice Service monitors for emerging indicators of disproportionality within the service, an increasing number of British Asian children are open to the Empower team. The reason for this increase has not yet been sufficiently well explored or understood by the wider partnership.

Leaders across the partnership are very clear about their roles and responsibilities in responding to serious youth violence. They attend a range of interconnected strategic boards, which helps to bring a high degree of consistency and continuity to the partnership's response. This includes the CSPB and LCSPs, LVRN, the Youth Justice Board, the Lancashire Children's Safeguarding Partnership (LCSAP), and the Multi-agency Safeguarding Partnership, which focuses on early intervention within communities and ensuring a joined-up response to safeguarding concerns. Partner agencies are equally well represented at operational boards and subgroups that deliver the priorities and objectives of the work of the strategic partnership in tackling serious youth violence.

The LCSAP is a relatively new board following the disaggregation of the pan-Lancashire children's safeguarding arrangements into place-based boards aligned to



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local authority geographical areas. There are clear governance arrangements, strategic objectives and plans in place. Subgroups focus on key safeguarding priorities that include the response provided to children affected by serious youth violence. The LCSAP is aware of the need to improve children's participation and quality assurance processes using multi-agency audits and independent scrutiny. However, it is too early to evaluate the effectiveness of the LCSAP in the partnership's response to children affected by serious youth violence.

Responsive and agile information-sharing between practitioners across the partnership is helping to create effective multi-agency responses for children. For example, the district-based 'team around the schools and services' acts as an effective information-sharing conduit about existing or new safeguarding concerns for children within schools and the community. The forum uses subgroups to develop education programmes and early intervention to help prevent and respond to contextual safeguarding risks, including serious youth violence and knife crime. The continued investment in youth services is providing a range of effective, detached and targeted youth work in places, spaces and schools and helps to educate and divert children away from risk and into positive activities. Safe spaces are provided across the county for children during the week and at weekends.

The Youth Justice Service delivers a comprehensive range of evidence-based diversionary and preventative services to educate and support children away from risks associated with serious youth violence. Children access a range of activities, including a specific knife crime programme, mentoring and first-aid training, to reduce their vulnerability to offending and becoming involved in serious youth violence. These interventions are evaluated to measure impact and are making a positive difference for many children.

Partner agencies are evaluating the success of many of the outcomes of multi-agency intervention programmes in the community and those delivered through the LVRN. There is a good understanding by strategic boards of the scope and limits of future commissioning arrangements, with forward planning in place to ensure that impactful services that help reduce risk to serious youth violence are not disrupted for children. While local organisations are tenacious in applying for funding to deliver multi-agency interventions, not all interventions are aligned to their LCSP so as to ensure that the partnership has oversight of the full range and impact of all place-based interventions.

There is generally good information-sharing between partner agencies and shared access to databases that supports safeguarding practice for children affected by serious youth violence. For example, health practitioners in the MASH and community services have access to children's social care records and health records, which strengthens information-sharing and decision-making. However, information-sharing and access to pertinent children's records within the MASH are not



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sufficiently robust. MASH practitioners do not have access to youth justice records and there is no single point of contact for the Youth Justice Service to support information-gathering about children at the earliest point in time.

Police are not always identifying hidden or complex risk within police safeguarding referrals (PSRs) in a sufficiently timely way and PSR risk assessments are not always completed. Police records do not consistently identify children at risk of exploitation. This may leave some children at risk of waiting too long for a safeguarding response and not all relevant information about risk is being shared. Positively, Operation Encompass is firmly established as the primary pathway for police to share safeguarding information directly with schools, and this is working well for schools, supporting their ability to respond appropriately to children at risk at the earliest point in time.

The response to children at risk of serious youth violence and criminal exploitation is not consistent across the partnership. Not all staff across partner agencies are aligned in their understanding of statutory thresholds for children in need of help and protection from serious youth violence and criminal exploitation. This also means that thresholds for child protection strategy meetings and child protection enquiries are not consistently applied for all children following concerns about serious offending, potential exploitation and involvement in violent incidents. For these children, while further assessment and support are progressed, and this is helping to mitigate risk, a strategy discussion and child protection enquiries could have resulted in earlier information-sharing. For some children, particularly those who have a social worker from the Empower team or children who are looked after, strategy meetings and child protection enquiries are initiated more consistently when such concerns arise. The outcomes of child protection strategy meetings and enquiries are not always recorded by police on their systems. This brings an inherent risk that children may be responded to by police without the fullest understanding of the risks and concerns being known or considered by them.

Multiple exploitation risk assessment tools are being used across the partnership to support workers in their identification of the risks to children. While this is generally a positive and is helping to identify risk, the use of a range of assessment tools is leading to a degree of inconsistency in the identification of risk. For example, not all risk assessment tools used by health partners consider the risk to children from serious youth violence and criminal exploitation.

Some health practitioners say that they feel they do not have an equal standing when it comes to raising professional challenge, including when there is disagreement regarding threshold or escalation.

Leaders recognise the importance of education as a crucial protective factor in children's lives and that exclusion from school and missing education increases the risks of children suffering harm as a result of serious youth violence and criminal



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exploitation. While this is recognised, the rate of exclusion in Lancashire secondary schools is higher than the national average and a high proportion of children affected by serious youth violence and criminal exploitation do not attend school. Too many children who are not in full-time education, and are instead receiving alternative provision, are only accessing a relatively low number of hours of education each week, which increases their vulnerability.

Work is ongoing with schools and educational settings to reduce exclusions and to increase the numbers of children returning to mainstream education from alternative provision. Trauma-informed training to schools is beginning to lead to a reduction in exclusions in those schools that have been part of a project delivered by the VRN. However, there is not a sufficiently comprehensive strategic understanding of the effectiveness of the approaches in place to support children to engage in education or of the barriers to their engagement. Leaders recognize the need to have a better strategic overview, particularly within the LCSAP, of the needs, risks and impact of interventions for children, and they have appointed a serious violence duty coordinator to work with schools and other educational settings. While positive, this is a new appointment and is therefore yet to have a significant impact.

Partner agencies do not identify or consider the particular needs or the greater vulnerability of disabled children and those with special educational needs to serious youth violence and criminal exploitation sufficiently well. This limits their understanding of how best to adapt their approaches to individual children. Children's services and key partners do not prioritise the review of education, health and care (EHC) plans for children who have them, including for some looked after children. Some EHC plans are not reviewed and updated within either statutory timescales or at a frequency that matches the changing circumstances of children. EHC plans do not always identify when a child is at risk of serious youth violence or criminal exploitation or detail the long-term targets and strategies that might be helpful for these children.

Health-based interventions for children affected by serious youth violence are making a positive difference to the health, well-being and safety of many children. Emergency department navigators are commissioned by the LVRN, and they support children affected by serious youth violence within hospital emergency departments. They provide a vital role for children. They are with children at key moments and help them to process their experiences and to think about the support available to them. Community and primary health services are aware of the risk to children from serious youth violence and criminal exploitation and reach out to them using priority appointments and by seeing children at home and in the community. In addition, these practitioners helpfully take on multiple roles for children when they are mistrustful of the professionals who normally deliver those services, and when this is appropriate, for example when other barriers present.



Children supported by Youth Justice Services benefit from being fast-tracked to practitioners from child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS), who are located within the well-resourced youth justice health team. However, there is an absence of a formal pathway to fast-track children with special educational needs, and neurodiversity, and who are at risk of serious youth violence, into core CAMHS and community paediatrics. The failure to understand the increased risks these children face and to prioritise them appropriately limits the opportunity to meet their health needs in a timely way. Health practitioners are not always confident about which neurodiversity health pathway to refer children to, and referring to the wrong pathway can lead to an additional wait. Leaders are aware of the long waits for assessments in these areas and have plans in place to reduce these.

The contribution of the North West Ambulance Service (NWAS) to the multi-agency response to serious youth violence is negatively affected by their limited capacity and by high demand. The NWAS safeguarding team is unable to support the work of the VRN or the community safety partnership due to the large geographical area they cover. This risks inequitable liaison and joint work and limits the opportunity for NWAS to add value to the partnership.

When children are detained in police custody, their needs and well-being are carefully monitored. They receive timely support from appropriate adults, health practitioners, and liaison and diversion staff. Police custody staff are trained in trauma-informed practice, and children are only taken into custody when necessary. Police leaders carefully scrutinise the detention of every child detained to make sure their needs are met. Older children who spoke with inspectors were positive about their experience of police custody and said they were dealt with fairly and promptly.

Staff from all agencies report feeling well supported in their roles and by managers. There is, generally, regular management oversight of their work and supervision is in place to support practice. Most staff, including those in frontline roles in health, police, schools, education and social care, benefit from specialist and generic safeguarding training to enable them to identify and respond to criminal exploitation. Training includes the importance of capturing the wishes and feelings of children. The Youth Justice Service recognises the impact on staff of working with children affected by serious youth violence and is currently exploring clinical supervision options for their staff. The police includes safeguarding staff from other organisations in intensive Hydra training for child protection and exploitation, and this is having a positive impact on practice. However, not all workers benefit from training that focuses specifically on serious youth violence, and some key practitioners in the MASH and police investigation teams have not yet received trauma-informed practice training or criminal exploitation training.

Key learning, shared with staff in all agencies through safeguarding training, is not currently fully embedded in all practice. The voices of children are not consistently well captured in all police and health records. Some children's records include



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language that is not child centred, and in some cases is child blaming, demonstrating a lack of understanding of the risks, or of the gravity of the risks, to children. Some children are inappropriately viewed by practitioners as making fully informed choices or being wholly responsible for their actions when in fact they are the victims of exploitation by adult perpetrators. This use of language and the misattribution to children of adult levels of understanding and choice-making does not reflect the partnership's approach to trauma-informed child-centred practice.

The majority of quality assurance activity and learning from practice is single-agency, and is led by children's services, health and youth justice acting as individual agencies. This includes regular practice audits and thematic reviews in response to emerging concerns, for example a thematic review of children in care who are involved in serious youth violence and remanded to custody. While learning is shared well across partner agencies, the single agency approach is limited and could be improved by increasing the levels of joint and multi-agency training. The LCSAP is leading on the development of multi-agency quality assurance activity across the partnership. Leaders know that this is an area that requires further strengthening to give them a fuller understanding of whether practice, in this complex area of work, is meeting the objectives of safeguarding children from harm and improving individual children's lives.

Diligent practitioners across all agencies work together to help, support and protect children affected by serious youth violence and criminal exploitation. This work is underpinned by the trauma-informed approach adopted across all agencies. Staff from across agencies communicate regularly with each other and build trusting and respectful relationships with children. The children, young people, parents and carers who spoke to inspectors talked positively about the support and the services they receive. They were able to describe a positive impact on their lives in terms of a reduced risk of reoffending, their emotional well-being and health.

Children receive a timely response from the MASH and out-of-office hours services when significant concerns about serious youth violence and criminal exploitation are identified. MASH enquiries are mostly timely, appropriate and proportionate to children's need. Schools have effective systems to identify when children are at risk of harm and make appropriate referrals to agencies.

Early help is a strength in Lancashire in addressing children's emerging vulnerability to risks of serious youth violence. Workers are child centred and use a broad range of tools and approaches to assess risks and concerns alongside children, their families and with other professionals. Their relationship-based practice, which includes direct work with the child, enables them to identify and access the right kind of support. Strength-based safety plans are created with children and families, including their brothers and sisters and the team around the family. This helps children and their families to understand risk and identify actions that will help to keep them safer. When risks to children increase, there is appropriate consideration



of risk and safeguarding action is taken. Partner agencies have plans in place aimed at further strengthening this work, including through the implementation of a Family Hubs Information Sharing Service in the summer of 2024, which is being jointly funded by the LVRN and the local authority.

Practitioners actively consider who is best placed to build a trusting relationship with children, and most are persistent in their efforts to engage them, helping them to understand the risks they face. Direct work is undertaken to help workers understand children's experiences and to address risks and concerns. Engagement with family members to achieve and sustain positive change is also a strength, and there is much purposeful involvement of parents and family members in safety planning for children, which is essential for achieving and sustaining changes.

The quality of children's services statutory assessments of children's needs is highly variable. Stronger assessments are comprehensive and analytical, and include the views of children, their families and professionals. Weaker assessments lack this strong child focus and helpful analysis, and some are over-optimistic due to a failure to fully understand the potential impact of risks. At times, a lack of sufficient professional curiosity, whether in meetings with children and families, with professionals, or in the completion of assessments, leads to professionals not fully identifying children's needs or understanding the seriousness of risk. For some children, this can limit how well plans and interventions are matched to children's individual circumstances.

Staff from across the partnership attend a range of multi-agency meetings that support practice with individual children and groups of children affected by serious youth violence. While they meet frequently to share information about individual children and groups of children, the right staff from each agency are not always invited. For example, a daily meeting held by the Empower team provides for purposeful information-sharing between police and children's services. However, the meeting does not consistently include health practitioners. The omission of key staff from a range of generally effective meetings limits the efficacy of these forums for timely information-sharing, planning, decision-making and evaluation of emerging risks and harm. In addition, limited professional challenge among agencies has meant that decisions made by the multi-agency group have at times been changed by children's social care without consultation. This means that not all staff feel listened to or have the most recent plan.

Practitioners across the Empower teams and other partner agencies are involved in effective protection, disruption and prevention activity. This includes the appropriate use of Child Abduction Warning Notices and referrals to the National Referral Mechanism for children at risk of trafficking and criminal exploitation. Police-led multi-agency operations use problem-solving plans to protect children and disrupt offenders and target exploitation hot spots. This includes visiting hotels and other commercial premises to involve staff. Wherever possible, children are appropriately



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diverted away from court and successful court appeals are preventing the criminalisation of some children.

Most children at risk of serious youth violence and exploitation receive a robust response when they go missing from care or from their homes. There is good use of trigger plans to identify interventions and bring partners together to help prevent and reduce the frequency of episodes of going missing from care. Return home interviews are completed with children to help understand push and pull factors, but not all interviews include sufficient oversight of wider risks, or an overall evaluation to help mitigate future risk.

The Philomena protocol, a scheme that encourages agencies and parents to record information which can be used in the event that children go missing, has not been formally adopted in Lancashire. A memorandum of understanding has been developed by the police for children who go missing from children's homes, but this is not routinely followed. This limits the effectiveness of actions taken to protect this vulnerable group of children when they go missing. Children in care are also waiting beyond 20 days for their initial health assessments. This means that looked after children who experience serious youth violence may have unidentified health needs when entering the care system. This information is especially relevant when identifying risks to children during episodes of going missing. When children or parents disengage from services, these services are too often withdrawn even when children's needs and risks remain unchanged. For some children, this leads to a cycle of repeat referrals to children's statutory services because risks have escalated. The barriers to continuing to work with children and families who are unable to understand the seriousness of risks, or who are resistant to professional support, are not explored robustly enough by practitioners across the partnership.



Practice study: highly effective practice

The partnership's commitment and investment in community-led initiatives is highly effective.

In response to a significant rise in antisocial behaviour and youth violence in two communities, partner agencies came together with the local community and businesses, and planned a multi-agency, but very much community-based, response. The result of this was the launch of a range of innovative interventions, including targeted youth groups, open-access sessions, detached youth work with school staff joining in at weekends, and dance and football sessions. One football club included knife crime, hate crime and substance misuse topics in their football sessions with children. These approaches have helped to significantly reduce antisocial behaviour and criminality.

The agile approach to information-sharing and understanding of risks has meant that partner agencies have been able to respond quickly to emerging concerns and risks and have prevented incidents from escalating in the community. The impact of these interventions has been carefully measured by keeping track of the frequency of antisocial behaviour and the numbers of young people engaged in the various positive activities and through community feedback.

Staff working with the children involved in the initiatives are passionate and committed to making a positive difference for children and their community. The partnership's commitment to a trauma-informed approach is very much embedded in their approach. Staff are very aware of the complex and difficult factors that can often impact on children's presenting behaviours.

Both of these initiatives are positively strengthening community feelings of safety, inclusion and cohesion.



Practice study: areas for improvement

For one child, professionals from across all agencies did not fully recognise their level of risk or the extent to which adults were criminally exploiting them. The child was involved in offending and professionals were too ready to see this as an active choice. Although professionals were aware that the child was at a developmental level considerably lower than their chronological age, this did not adequately inform their assessment and actions, and they were too ready to attribute a level of understanding to the child that was at a much more adult level than their actual understanding.

A failure to review, accurately assess and support the child's complex health and communication needs meant that the child was unnecessarily criminalised because not all professionals recognised that the child was functioning at a much younger level. At the time of the inspection, professionals were also largely unaware of the child's wider learning needs and emotional and mental health needs. Although several attempts had been made to complete a review, the child's EHC plan had not been reviewed for several years.

Pathways for specialist health assessments and how to access services when planning for children in Lancashire aged between 16 and 18 years old lack clarity. Consequently, professionals have been unclear about how best to plan for this child's transition to receiving adult services.

Services have not always kept the child safe or promoted their welfare as well as they could.



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Practice Study: highly effective practice

The VRN champions programme is making a positive difference to young people in reducing the incidents of violent offending among 10 to 25-year-olds. Champions develop interventions with young people in order to increase engagement in education, training and employment, work to address negative behaviours that increase young people's vulnerability to offending, and focus on creating opportunities and experiences to help improve young people's well-being. The programme is delivered through local football club community organisations.

Initial outcome measures show very positive indicators. Many young people report positive differences to their well-being, and many do not go on to further reoffend. A large number of young people are being supported successfully into meaningful activities, skills-based training, education and employment.



Next steps

We have determined that Lancashire County Council is the principal authority and should prepare a written statement of proposed action responding to the findings outlined in this letter. This should be a multi-agency response involving the individuals and agencies that this report is addressed to. The response should set out the actions for the partnership and, when appropriate, individual agencies. The local safeguarding partners should oversee implementation of the action plan through their local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements.

Lancashire local authority should send the written statement of action to ProtectionOfChildren@ofsted.gov.uk by 10 July 2024. This statement will inform the lines of enquiry at any future joint or single-agency activity by the inspectorates.

Yours sincerely

Yvette Stanley
National Director Regulation and Social Care, Ofsted

Dr Sean O'Kelly BSc MB ChB MSc DCH FRCA
Chief Inspector of Health Care, CQC

Michelle Skeer OBE QPM
His Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary
His Majesty's Inspector of Fire & Rescue Services

Martin Jones CBE
His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Probation