

## **Joint Targeted Area Inspection of the multi-agency response to Children's Mental Health in Plymouth**

Between 18 November 2019 and 22 November 2019, Ofsted, the Care Quality Commission (CQC), HMICFRS and HMI Probation (HMI Prob) carried out a joint inspection of the multi-agency response to 'front door' services, evaluating all forms of abuse, neglect and exploitation, as well as an evaluation of the responses to children's mental health in Plymouth.

The findings, in the form of a letter was published on 8<sup>th</sup> January 2020. There are no recommendations but 17 areas for improvement.

The full report can be viewed here

<https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmicfrs/wp-content/uploads/Plymouth-JTAI-inspection-report-.pdf>

### **Police and Crime Commissioner's response**

I welcome the 'Joint targeted area inspection of the multi-agency response to children's mental health in Plymouth' report published in January 2020. This is a joint report by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS), the Care Quality Commission and Ofsted. I will refer to all of these organisations as 'the joint inspectorate'.

Following consultation with the Chief Constable of Devon and Cornwall Police I am pleased to provide the following response to this report.

I thank the joint inspectorate for taking a complex area of work and producing a fair, balanced, and easily digestible action focused report. It is important that the public can view and understand this type of work and this report is, in my view, particularly accessible.

This report explores the response to children's mental health in Plymouth and I am delighted that the joint inspectorate found 24 key strengths associated with this area of work. I am also pleased that those strengths span an extensive partnership landscape as this demonstrates the core concept that safeguarding children truly is everyone's responsibility.

I am particularly pleased that the work of Devon and Cornwall Police has been recognised favourably within the report, particularly in relation to the Force's: mental



health delivery board; liaison and diversion service within custody; street triage capability; trauma-informed ambassador training; and reflective learning panels. I have asked the Chief Constable to pass on my thanks to all of the officers and staff who have worked hard on these areas of business. Recognising and praising good practice is I believe important, particularly within services that are directly dealing with children and other vulnerable people.

The report however also recognises that there are 17 areas for improvement, 3 of which relate directly to Devon and Cornwall Police. The areas for improvement for the Force refer to 'front door referral pathways, reviewing of VISTs and gaps in the mental health street triage service. I will work directly with the Chief Constable to understand these issues in more detail and ensure that appropriate action is taken in response. For governance and accountability purposes I will check the status of any resulting actions at my Joint Leadership Board.

Through my commissioning, criminal justice and partnerships team I have also extended the support of my office to Plymouth's Director of Children's Services and the Youth Offending Team. The purpose being to explore if and how my organisation may be able to provide any new support to the partnership board to assist in its response to the other areas of improvement suggested by the joint inspectorate.

I thank the joint inspectorate for this report and its insight which is useful to me in my role as police and crime commissioner.

I believe that every child has the right to live a life that is free from all forms of abuse, neglect and exploitation and that no child should have to live in fear. As a leader doing everything in my power to maintain, nurture and in some cases heal the mental health of children is something that I am not only passionate about, but feel duty bound to do. For this reason, I will ensure that my office adds this report to the evidence base for the next police and crime plan for Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly.

**Alison Hernandez**  
**Police and Crime Commissioner**  
**Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly**