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Police & Crime Commissioner  
for Thames Valley

## **Thames Valley Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) Response to HMI Report: “Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI) of Services for Children in Reading”**

<https://hmicfrs.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/publications/joint-child-protection-inspection-of-victims-of-domestic-abuse-in-reading/>

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### **Introduction**

The recent Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI) into services for children in Reading has highlighted serious weaknesses in the multi-agency response to domestic abuse. While there are examples of good practice, too many children face delays in receiving the support they need, and the voice of the child is not consistently heard.

Thames Valley Police (TVP) plays a vital role in safeguarding and has been recognised for its constructive engagement, use of protective measures, and commitment to child-centred policing. The force’s leadership within the partnership and its investment in innovation, such as automation to improve safeguarding processes, are positive steps.

This report outlines my response to the inspection’s findings, focusing on how TVP is addressing the challenges and where further progress is needed to ensure children are seen, heard, and protected.

### **PCC Response:**

#### **Key Points from the Force Response**

TVP has responded constructively to the inspection, and I am assured by the following:

- **Leadership in Partnership:** TVP continues to play a leading role in the Reading safeguarding partnership, particularly around intra- and extra-familial harm. The force’s involvement in reviewing 200 recent referrals and improving escalation processes shows a clear commitment to joint problem-solving.
- **Protective Measures in Practice:** The use of DVPNs, MAPPA, MATAAC, and the DRIVE programme demonstrates a robust approach to protecting victims and children. The rollout of Robotic Process Automation (RPA) to improve DVDS timeliness is a smart, forward-looking move that’s already reducing pressure on staff and improving outcomes.
- **Voice of the Child:** It’s positive to see improvements in how officers recognise and respond to children’s experiences. This is a direct result of internal campaigns and scrutiny, and I expect this momentum to continue.

## Areas for Continued Focus

- **Information Sharing:** The inspection highlights the need for more detailed and timely information at the point of referral. TVP's next phase of RPA development - focused on MASH workflows and statutory reporting - must deliver tangible improvements here.
- **Sustained Investment:** The force has faced barriers in securing funding and strategic backing for automation. I will continue to support efforts to unlock the investment needed to modernise safeguarding processes and reduce risk.
- **Child Centred Policing Policy:** I also welcome the development of the force's new Child Centred Policing Policy, led by a Detective Chief Superintendent. This work is timely and directly supports the inspection's recommendation to embed the voice of the child more consistently across policing. The policy's operational, tactical, and strategic framework - anchored in the principle that every child should be seen, heard, and safe - has the potential to drive meaningful cultural and procedural change. I will continue to monitor its implementation and impact through my oversight role.

## Conclusion

This inspection highlights both areas of strength and opportunities for improvement. Thames Valley Police has responded with clarity and purpose, and I will continue to oversee how these improvements are delivered and embedded. Ensuring that progress is sustained, and that the needs and voices of children remain central to our safeguarding approach, will remain a key priority in my ongoing scrutiny.

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