



**Matthew Barber**

Police & Crime Commissioner  
for Thames Valley

## **Thames Valley Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) Response of the joint targeted area inspection (JTAI) of the multi-agency response to child sexual abuse in the family environment in Oxfordshire.**

[Oxfordshire Joint Targeted Area Inspection Report Feb26 0](#)

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PCC Response: June 2026

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### **1. Introduction**

I welcome the publication of the Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI) of Oxfordshire's response to child sexual abuse in the family environment.

This inspection provides an important assessment of how effectively safeguarding partners - including Thames Valley Police (TVP), local authorities, and health services - work together to identify, protect and support vulnerable children.

Independent scrutiny of this nature is essential in highlighting both effective practice and where further improvement is required.

### **2. Summary of Inspection Findings**

The inspection identifies a number of strengths across the partnership, particularly where risks to children are known or have been disclosed.

Inspectors found that:

- Children generally receive a **swift and effective multi-agency safeguarding response**
- Police investigations are **timely, well-coordinated and child-focused**, with strong evidence of **high-quality investigative practice**
- Specialist training supports the **consistency and effectiveness of policing responses**
- Police make **effective use of safeguarding powers, including bail conditions**, to protect children
- There is **effective joint working** between police and children's social care
- Children are able to access **appropriate therapeutic support**

The report also highlights areas requiring improvement, including:

- Earlier identification of risk, particularly where abuse is not disclosed
- Strengthening information sharing between safeguarding partners
- Improving offender assessment and management, including through MAPPA
- Ensuring the voice of the child is consistently reflected in decision-making
- Improving the quality of referrals and early risk assessments

These findings underline the importance of developing a more **proactive and preventative approach** to safeguarding.



### 3. PCC Response

I have reviewed the findings alongside a response from Thames Valley Police.

I am reassured by the inspection's findings in relation to the **quality and consistency of police investigations and safeguarding activity**, particularly where risks to children are clearly identified. The Force's response reflects this position, highlighting that **investigations are timely, child-focused and supported by strong safeguarding measures**.

However, I note the consistent message - from both inspectors and the Force - that improvement is required in **identifying and responding to risk at an earlier stage**, particularly in complex cases where abuse may be less visible or not disclosed.

In particular, I expect to see stronger and more consistent:

- Early risk recognition
- Information sharing across agencies
- Joint approaches to managing offenders and safeguarding risk
- Consideration of the child's voice in decision-making

These are longstanding challenges in safeguarding, but they are critical to ensuring that **children who do not disclose abuse are still identified and protected effectively**.

I note the Force's commitment to working with partners to develop and share a **next step action plan with the inspectorate**, and I expect this to support the delivery of sustained improvement.

### 4. Ongoing Oversight and Next Steps

I will continue to hold the Chief Constable to account for the Force's response to the inspection and the delivery of improvements.

This will include:

- Monitoring progress against the **multi-agency action plan** developed in response to the inspection
- Scrutiny through **regular performance and accountability meetings**
- Ensuring alignment with my priority to **protect vulnerable people**
- Seeking assurance that **partnership working is strengthened**, particularly in relation to early identification and information sharing



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I will expect to see clear evidence of sustained improvement in the areas identified by inspectors.

## **5. Conclusion**

The inspection highlights that there is a **strong policing and partnership response in place where risks to children are clearly identified**, and that this is supporting positive outcomes in many cases.

However, it also makes clear that **more needs to be done to identify and address risk at an earlier stage**, particularly where abuse is less visible.

I will continue to maintain close oversight of the response to this report to ensure that these improvements are delivered and that safeguarding arrangements across Oxfordshire continue to strengthen.

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