

Looking at how we keep children and young people safe in Neath Port Talbot

A Joint Inspection of Child Protection Arrangements



September 2021

Hello

Care Inspectorate Wales check and inspect services. We make sure services are doing the right things in the right ways. We can take action if they aren't.

In July 2021 we checked how services in Neath Port Talbot keep children safe.

We checked:

- how services work together to keep children and young people safe
- how they deal with Child Exploitation
- how they assess children needs
- how support is planned and delivered
- how leadership and managers work
- how they deal with abuse and neglect
- how they improve services.

i **Child Exploitation** can be **Criminal Exploitation** where children and young people are forced to do something illegal or **Sexual Exploitation** which involves sexual abuse.

Who was involved?

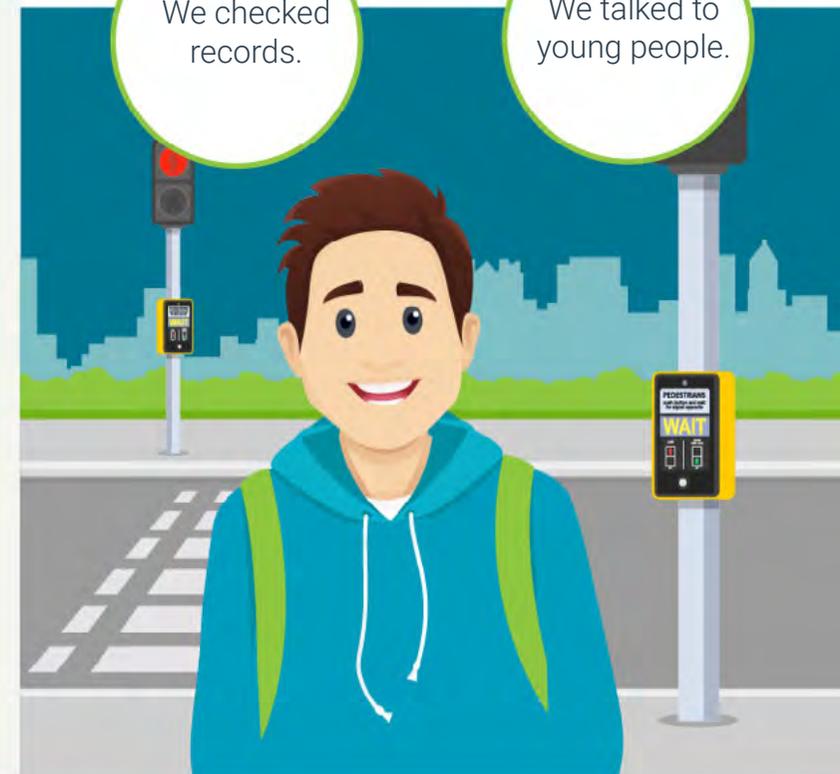
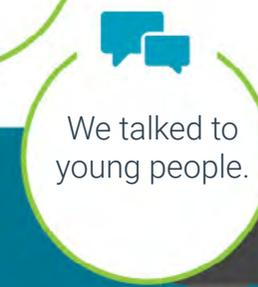
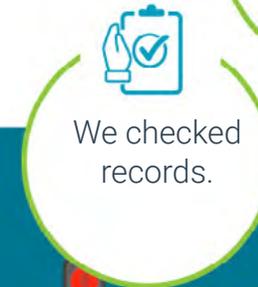
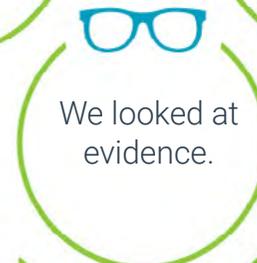
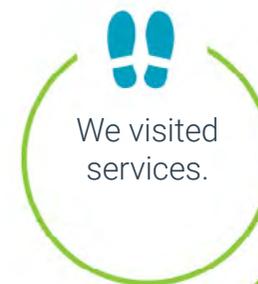
We had help from:

- Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services
- Healthcare Inspectorate Wales
- Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation
- Estyn.

We inspected:

- the Police
- Local Authority services – Children's Services, Youth Justice Service, schools and more
- Health Services
- Probation services
- other groups and organisations.

What we did



This booklet tells you about what we found.

Some of our main findings

Staff and other professionals are skilled and work together to protect children.

🕒 Safeguarding Meetings and Multi-Agency Exploitation Meetings

These meetings are an opportunity for services and the Police to share information and resources. They help them work together to support children and young people, and keep them safe.

🕒 Contextual Risk Panel

This is a group of professionals who look at all areas of a young person's life, the risks involved and what needs to happen to keep them safe from exploitation. They share information and work with the local authority, services and the police.

🕒 Understanding exploitation

Professionals across services understand the risk of Child Exploitation. Health staff use the Child Sexual Exploitation Risk Questionnaire well.

🕒 Single Point of Contact (SPOC)

There is one clear point of contact for information, advice and assistance. Professionals across services use this and referrals are made quickly. The SPOC team work well with other services and are able to make decisions.

🕒 Dealing with the pandemic

Services continued to protect children and young people through the pandemic. Support for staff and professionals was good. There was investment in training and risk management, including training for school staff.

🕒 Involving children, young people and families

The views of children, young people and families are listened to, and they are involved in decisions. For example, in the **Youth Voices Conversation Project**, 800 young people told the police what they felt about community safety. This has helped the police plan for the future and improve services.

Lots of professionals and staff are working together to protect children by:

- sharing information
- stepping in early to support children and families
- stopping children getting involved with unsafe people or crime
- giving support
- letting services and the Police know if a child is at risk
- working with schools
- building strong relationships in the community
- involving children and young people in planning and in decisions that affect their lives.



Some of the good points we found

✓ The Police

South Wales Police (SWP) are committed to keeping children safe and stopping Child Exploitation. They work well with local authority services, organisations and other partners. They:

- find new ways to spot children at risk and step in early to protect them
- check their policies and plans are up-to-date and include any new threats or risks
- use evidence and information to stop children being exploited
- patrol areas they know are a risk
- train staff so they understand the issues vulnerable children face
- train staff so they understand Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) like domestic abuse and drug use
- train staff in their call centres so they know how to support vulnerable children
- have a trained missing person team
- have a new system that highlights the risk for missing children aged 14-17 called NAIRA
- use Child Abduction Warning Notices (CAWNs) to stop certain adults being near a child
- share information with services
- have return home interviews for young people who go missing and share that information with other services
- have an Organised Crime and County Lines Team that focuses on keeping children safe from criminal gangs.

Operation Encompass

This is a daily alert system that lets schools know if a young person has witnessed or been involved in domestic abuse situation. This allows the school to plan support at the start of the day.

Making sure all services know when a child is at risk is important.



**We want all children across
Neath Port Talbot to have
happy, healthy lives, free
from neglect or abuse.**



✓ **Swansea Bay University Health Board (SBUHB)**

The Health Board has good systems in place to keep children and young people safe. They:

- have safeguarding leadership teams that support staff
- have a Corporate Safeguarding Team
- have systems for staff to check if a child or young person is at risk
- have an online safeguarding page for staff in their day-to-day work
- give staff Safeguarding Adult and Children Training
- have systems so staff can report any safeguarding issues
- have systems so Emergency Departments and Minor Injuries Units can report safeguarding concerns
- train staff on issues like Child Exploitation
- make sure staff know how to use the Child Sexual Exploitation Risk Questionnaire
- make sure staff check the Child Protection Register (CPR)
- make sure GPs and healthcare staff know their responsibility to keep children safe
- make sure people can get services in Welsh
- make sure young people can get free help from the Integrated Sexual Health Unit
- improve their work using self-assessment tools
- listen to children and young people and involve them in decisions.
- share information with other services.

✓ **Health visitors**

Health visitors in the area know the children very well. They share information with primary schools, so the school can support vulnerable children as early as possible.

✔ Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council

The local authority makes a positive difference to the well-being and safety of children and young people. They work well with other local authorities across the region. They:

- step in early to help and protect children and young people at risk
- support children who are looked after
- have systems in place so services and the Police can work together
- support staff to spot and deal with exploitation
- have strong relationships with communities and organisations
- listen to the views of children and their families
- support children and young people at home and in the community
- make information and advice easy to find through a Single Point of Contact (SPOC)
- train staff on issues like child sexual exploitation
- work well with schools and colleges
- offer children and young people advocacy services
- have an Education Safeguarding lead officer.

✔ Children's Services

Children's services work hard to keep children safe. Their managers and leaders support staff well and keep improving how services work. They:

- step in early and support children and families
- are trusted and have positive relationships with families in the area
- have trained staff that understand child protection
- know how to recognise the signs of exploitation and its risks
- have stable social work teams that know their responsibilities
- support children who are looked after well
- work with other services and organisations
- listen to the views of children and young people
- continue to improve how they work.



Being absent from school can put children at risk.



✓ Schools and education services

Schools and education services understand how important it is to spot children at risk. Schools in the area have very good Estyn inspection reports for their Care support and guidance, including safeguarding. They:

- have up-to-date plans and policies in place to protect children
- train teachers and other staff on risks like Child Exploitation
- work well with the local authority, other services and the police
- are part of the Safeguarding and Multi-Agency Exploitation Meetings
- have support and advice from the Education and Lifelong Learning Directorate
- have school-based counselling services and Emotional Literacy Support Assistants
- have strong mentoring and pastoral programmes for pupils at risk
- share information in the right ways when a child at risk moves between schools
- have systems, so teachers and staff refer children to other services
- work well with Education Welfare Officers so less children go missing from school
- have at least one teacher in each school that is responsible for safeguarding
- support children, young people and families in Welsh
- have a dedicated governor for safeguarding
- listen to children's and young people's views
- have good management and leadership.

✓ The Vulnerable Learners' Service

This service works with schools and helps learners who have English as an Additional Language. They are trained and know how to spot vulnerable learners and keep them safe from exploitation.

✔ **The Youth Service**

This service steps in early to help young people who are at risk. They were the first Youth Service in Wales to achieve the National Participation Standards for Wales. They support schools and work with young people who are hard-to-reach, who aren't in education, employment or training (NEET) and who are looked after.

✔ **The Youth Offending Service (YOS)**

This service has improved since its last inspection. They work well with other services and the Police to stop young people getting involved in crime. They understand their area, the threats and risks young people face and are committed to keeping young people safe. The Management Board has improved how they work and now connect better with staff.

✔ **Team Around the Family (TAF)**

This team steps in early to help families. They work alongside other services to help families spot risks, build their strengths and stop things from getting worse.

✔ **Early Intervention Panel**

This Panel includes people from Team Around the Family (TAF), the Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) and other services. As a team, they step in early and support families.

✔ **Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)**

CAMHS staff help to stop young people from putting themselves at risk and support their wellbeing.

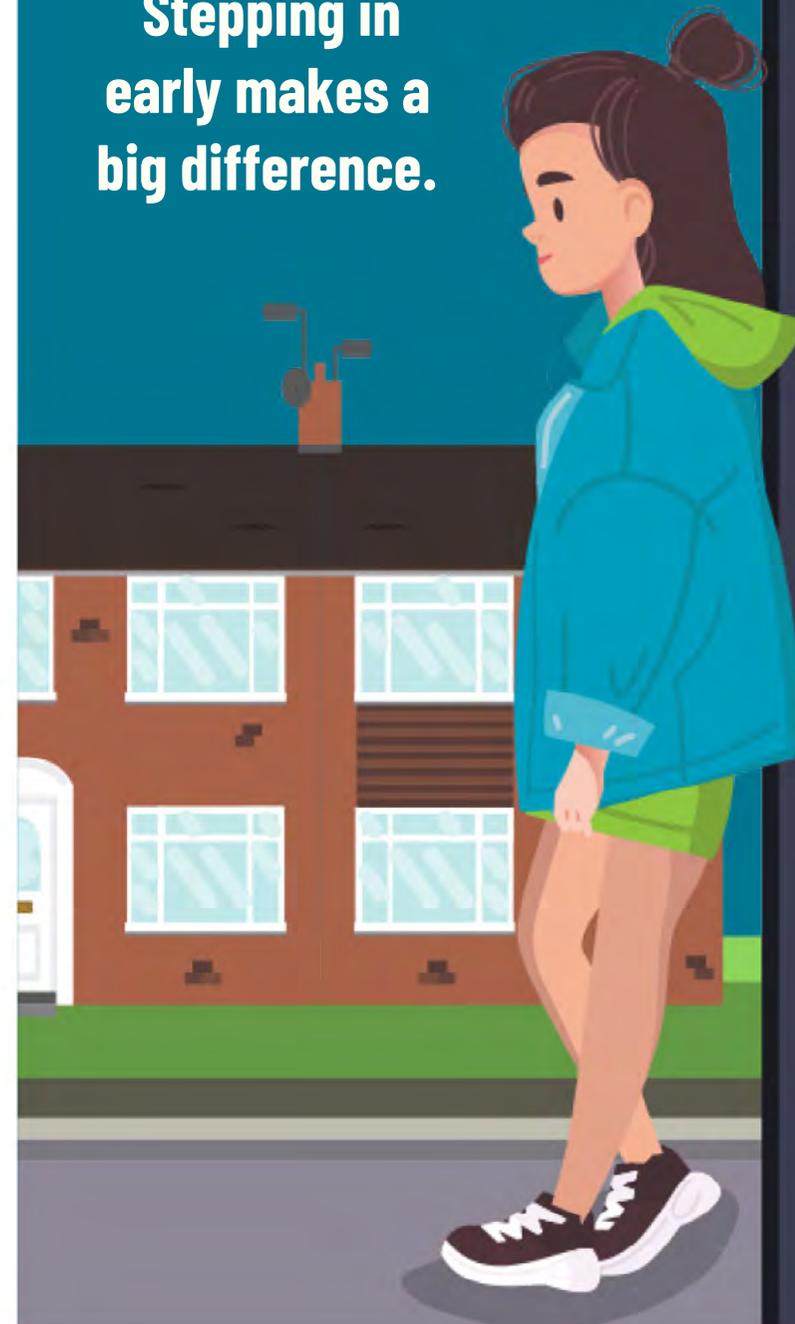
✔ **The Well-being Team**

This team supports schools, staff, children, young people and their families to stay safe and well in all areas of their lives.

✔ **Other organisations**

The St Giles Trust, Cynnydd and Barnardo's run projects to stop children from being exploited. They work well with schools, services and the Police.

**Stepping in
early makes a
big difference.**



Making it better for the future

We set out different ways the services in Neath Port Talbot can improve to keep children safe.

Some of the ways to improve include:

- making sure Safeguarding and Multi-Agency Exploitation Meetings happen regularly and involve everyone needed
- keeping better records of meetings so there's evidence about decisions and what support is in place
- training staff on how a child's life situation can put them more at risk
- developing a new risk assessment model for all services to use
- checking the quality of assessments across all services
- using the support networks that children and families already have as part of safety plans
- raising awareness about independent advocacy and the National Youth Advocacy Service
- reviewing safety plans more often
- making sure assessments are shared with families
- sharing information better
- making sure training is up to date
- making sure leadership support staff better.

**It's everyone's job
to spot dangers and
keep children and
young people safe.**



▶ Next steps

We've written a letter to all the services involved. It explains what we found and what they have to do.

They will let us know how they plan to improve their work.

We will inspect services again in the future.

Thanks for reading this.

You can read the full letter here:

careinspectorate.wales/joint-inspectorate-review-child-protection-arrangements-jicpa-neath-port-talbot-2021

