

## Preparing for Norfolk's Joint Area Review 2008

Welcome to our briefing about Norfolk's Joint Area Review (JAR) of services for children and young people – one of three major inspections taking place this summer looking at different aspects of children's services and of Norfolk County Council.

The other two inspections happening at the same time as the JAR are the Corporate Assessment (CA) of Norfolk County Council by a team led by the Audit Commission and an inspection of the Youth Offending Team, led by HM Inspectorate of Probation.

All three inspections are linked and there is a Joint Inspector for JAR and CA who will liaise between the two teams.

This briefing will help you prepare for the JAR by giving you information about:

- The inspection process, including key dates
- Details of the inspectors visiting us
- The focus of Norfolk's JAR
- What to expect and how best to prepare for it

The inspectors will judge us on what they see and hear, on what we tell them, and on our performance data and what is written down.

During analysis week, 11-13 June, the inspectors will:

- Analyse our position statement
- Review key documents
- Analyse ten case files

This will help them to determine the focus of the inspection fortnight, 30 June – 11 July.

In preparing for the inspection, you will find it helpful to make yourself familiar with:

- our [JAR position statement](#)
- our [Review of outcomes, activities and progress](#)
- the [Children and Young People's Plan](#) to pinpoint how your work contributes to it
- performance data for your part of the service
- [Ofsted APA grade descriptors](#) to see how inspectors judge services

These key documents can be found on the Every Norfolk Child Matters website JAR pages at [www.everynorfolkchildmatters.org](http://www.everynorfolkchildmatters.org). Alternatively e-mail the JAR team for a hard copy [jarteam@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:jarteam@norfolk.gov.uk).



**Lisa Christensen, Director of Children's Services**

## 1. What is a JAR?

The JAR involves a team of 11 inspectors, led by Ofsted and looks at all publicly funded services for children and young people and how well we work together to improve outcomes for the county's youngsters. It has a particular focus on vulnerable children, as well as two additional areas for investigation, teenage pregnancy and 14-19 provision.

Put simply, the inspection team is looking to assess the impact of our work on outcomes for children and young people in Norfolk.

These are areas for investigation in Norfolk's JAR:

- Safeguarding
- Looked after children
- Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities
- Teenage pregnancy
- 14-19s provision
- Service management and capacity to improve

## 2. Who are the inspectors?

Each inspector will focus on a particular area of investigation and the inspectors will work collectively to share information and evidence. All the inspectors have been CRB cleared.

Our Lead Inspector is **Marianick Ellender-Gelé** from Ofsted. She will lead the team and focus on understanding our approach to equality and diversity.

Our Deputy Inspector is **Geoff Corre** from Ofsted. He will be looking at services for looked after children.

The Joint Inspector who will contribute to both the JAR and the Corporate Assessment is **Ellis Layward** from the Audit Commission. He will concentrate on service management.

The rest of the team are:

- **Glenys Johnston**, Independent Inspector, leading on safeguarding
- **Barbara Spittle**, Ofsted, leading on services for children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and supported by
- **Norman Riches**, Ofsted
- **Nick Gadfield**, Ofsted and **Ian Handscombe**, Ofsted, will look at services for 14-19 year olds
- **Steve Blackburn**, HMI Probation, will provide input from the Youth Offending Team inspection
- **Jan Fooks-Bale**, Healthcare Commission, will focus on teenage pregnancy
- **Tony Gallagher**, Ofsted, will spend two days in West Norfolk looking at all areas for investigation to ensure good coverage of the county.

### 3. What has happened so far?

#### Voluntary and community sector survey

An early input into the JAR was an Ofsted survey of a range of over 20 voluntary and community sector agencies providing services to children and young people. These agencies have responded directly to Ofsted with their views.

#### Self-assessment

A key starting point for the inspection is our [JAR position statement](#) and [Review of outcomes, activities and progress](#) presenting a picture to the inspection team of our assessment of our strengths and areas for development. We submitted this self-assessment on 30 May.

#### Document request

In preparation for the inspection, Ofsted requested copies of key documents such as strategies, plans, policies and procedures. A list of the documents that inspectors have received is on the JAR pages of the [Every Norfolk Child Matters](#) website.

#### Case files

The inspectors will look at case files of ten children and young people that they have selected from a list of 100 that we gave them. They will examine files from all agencies relating to these cases. The inspectors are looking for evidence of good practice, good recording, good outcomes for the children and young people and good inter-agency working.

### 4. What will happen next and when?

#### On site activity

The inspections will involve County Council and partner organisation staff, county councillors as well as focus groups of children, young people and parents. The JAR and CA will be closely coordinated and are likely to involve some of the same people.

For one week in June and two weeks in July a team of inspectors will be 'on site' at County Hall with a base in the Archive Centre (see key dates below). They will also visit various places throughout the county whilst carrying out their investigations.

You may be asked to take part in an interview or focus group run by the inspection team during their time on site in the two weeks beginning 30 June. **Please bear in mind** - the inspectors have asked us to remain flexible about the arrangements during the inspection fortnight and that some arrangements may need to be changed, or new ones made, at relatively short notice.

Key dates	Activity	What will happen?
11-13 June	JAR analysis week	<p><b>Wed 11 –Thur 12 June</b> – the JAR inspectors study ten case files and review the documents we have given them. The CA Inspectors and the JAR lead inspector will visit Great Yarmouth to see examples of the work we are doing to address the challenges and improve the quality of life in Norfolk. Inspectors form critical judgements of our activities.</p> <p><b>Fri 13 June PM</b> – The Lead and Deputy Inspectors will give initial feedback to the Director of Children’s Services, Lead County Council Member for Children’s Services and key colleagues.</p> <p><b>All week</b> - inspectors will be reviewing the information already supplied - and requesting more</p>
30 June – 11 July	Inspection fortnight	<p><b>30 June</b> - Inspectors will be on-site for two weeks</p> <p><b>All fortnight</b> – Inspectors will be meeting staff and our partners, County Councillors, children and young people, and their parents/carers in interviews and focus groups. Inspectors may also ask to observe meetings that are taking place</p> <p><b>All fortnight</b> - inspectors will be continuing to review information and requesting more.</p> <p><b>Fri 11 July</b> – Lead and Deputy Lead Inspector will give feedback on their findings to the Director of Children’s Services, Lead County Council Member for Children’s Services and key colleagues.</p>
Sept	Report writing	The JAR report is drafted and sent to us for comments.
18 Nov	Final report	The JAR report will be published

## 5. What to expect and how to prepare

### a) If you take part in an interview or focus group

Much of the information below may seem obvious but it is intended to be a useful reminder of general ‘hints and tips’ when you are preparing for an interview or focus group. Make some time to:

- **Read** -the [JAR position statement](#) and [Review of outcomes, activities and progress](#) - as well as parts of the Children and Young People’s Plan about your part of the service – and any other relevant documents. Most of the key JAR documents can be found on the Every Norfolk Child Matters website JAR pages at [www.everynorfolkchildmatters.org](http://www.everynorfolkchildmatters.org). This includes a PowerPoint presentation that summarises the key messages in our JAR Position Statement.

- **Be clear** - about **what** you want to say, **why** you want to say it and the **evidence** you have to support it
- **Know** – your performance data and the relative **strengths** and **weaknesses** of your service area – eg compared to other authorities
- **Remind** - yourself of how you consult with service users, staff and other stakeholders – especially black and minority ethnic groups and harder to reach groups at risk of disadvantage - in planning and evaluating services
- **Think** – about actual examples you can give that will show the **impact and outcome for users** of your service. The Inspection Team are very interested in the ‘so what?’ question. Whilst activities and actions are important, what is more telling is their impact on children, young people and their families.
- **Identify** – complex or difficult areas where you have worked, perhaps with partners, **to improve the situation** and think of **how you’ve made a difference**
- **Know** – the areas and issues that need to improve and be able to talk about what plans are in place to make those improvements
- **Consider** – how priorities are set, how competing demands are balanced - and how you are offering **value for money**

### And, last but not least...

- **Remember** – that this is a valuable opportunity to **demonstrate the achievements** and **share your success stories**

### b) General information

- The JAR Team will let you know the basics - **where** and **when** and **who** you are meeting. To contact the JAR Team e-mail [jarteam@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:jarteam@norfolk.gov.uk)
- **Don’t assume the inspectors will know.** However much reading and preparation they will have done, they cannot possibly know everything you know about what we are doing in Norfolk - so be ready to draw key evidence to their attention
- If you **don’t know** the answer to a question **say so** – and that you will find out and get back to the inspectors via Frances Kemp (see below) with the information.
- **Please note** that any follow up information **must** be routed through Frances Kemp in the JAR Team so there is no confusion about the pool of information the Inspection Team has. Frances can be contacted on [frances.kemp@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:frances.kemp@norfolk.gov.uk) 01603 222234.
- Be **open and honest** - it is fine if what you are discussing is ‘work in progress’. Highlight strengths whilst being clear about what you are doing to remedy areas identified as in need of improvement.
- Be prepared to **challenge assumptions** if you consider that to be the case and ensure that you can provide evidence to back this up for the inspectors.