



Department
for Education

Safeguarding Children Partnerships Yearly Reports Analysis 2023-2024

Summary report, March 2025

**Authors: Evie Cogley, Marzieh Azarbadegan,
Dr Jessica Ozan, Professor Michelle McManus**



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Social Research

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Executive Summary

Introduction

The Department for Education (DfE) commissioned this high-level research in December 2024 to understand, through analysis of the 2023-24 yearly reports, how safeguarding partnerships have developed their approaches in the past year. Yearly reports must be published in accordance with the requirements set out in the Children Act 2004¹ and Working Together to Safeguard Children ([WT2023](#)). Safeguarding partners must jointly report on the activities they have undertaken over a 12-month period. The reporting should be transparent and easily accessible to families and professionals. The focus of the reports should be on the safeguarding partnerships' multi-agency approach to demonstrate impact. The yearly reports are a main tool of accountability for partnerships and are a key source of data and evidence for the DfE, Department for Health and Social Care and Home Office, as the three main government departments with responsibility for safeguarding. By sharing the findings, we hope to provide insights to improve the yearly reporting process and share practice with safeguarding partnerships so they can enhance the effectiveness of multi-agency safeguarding arrangements

Rationale for research

The DfE published [WT2023](#) in December 2023. Chapter 2 of WT2023 sets out a range of new expectations for partnership structures and practice for local safeguarding partnerships. In January 2024 the DfE provided grant funding to support this transition. To understand progress and impact of these new requirements, DfE commissioned this work to explore:

- **Progress towards implementing new WT2023 arrangements**, so that DfE along with relevant government departments can understand how to shape future support
- **Progress, impact and prioritisation** in terms of funding, implementation of national reforms and any issues or concerns encountered within the yearly cycle
- **Evidence & learning** including the implementation of learning identified in rapid reviews, LCSPRs, national reviews, how partnerships have embedded

¹ [Children Act 2004](#)

challenge and learning from independent scrutiny, and to build a picture of the main themes that partnerships have focussed on

This research did not assess how transparent and accessible yearly reports were to families and professionals. It is proposed that DfE, along with relevant government departments consider this through their policy development going forward.

Central government wanted to understand how partnerships have planned for, and what progress they have made towards, full implementation of the new expectations. By commissioning and disseminating this analysis it is hoped that it will provide a learning and reflection opportunity for partnerships. This is intended to build on the support that was offered through the 'yearly report' workshops conducted by the national safeguarding facilitators in August 2024.

Methodology and Background

There are currently 140 safeguarding partnerships, however, at the point of commissioning this project there were 139. 128 (92%) reports were available for analysis. Two of these reports were not able to be analysed due to the format that they were published in was not accessible for AI-supported analysis. This resulted in a final sample of 126 safeguarding partnership reports that were analysed.

The research aimed to conduct a comprehensive thematic analysis of 126 yearly reports with AI support, to identify key themes, trends, and areas for improvement. The analysis focused on progress towards new WT2023 requirements, priorities for partnerships, and the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements. A three-stage methodology assisted by the Ipsos Facto AI² model was used:

1. Identifying key themes for analysis through a collaborative workshop with DfE
2. In-depth analysis of the themes across 126 yearly reports
3. Quality assurance of AI outputs by researchers

Limitations of the AI analysis included inconsistency in capturing information from images, determining impact scores, and analysing non-PDF yearly report formats.

² A model developed by Ipsos that draws on various Large Language Models.

Therefore, quality checks performed by the research team were substantial and thorough to ensure the findings were robust.

High Level Assessment

At the time that this analysis was commissioned 139 safeguarding partnerships were established, 128 yearly reports were available for analysis and 126 were able to be analysed for this project.

To assess overall compliance, quality and effectiveness of the yearly reports, an assessment criterion was developed (see Table 1 below). This was to allow DfE to get an overall sense of strengths and weakness in yearly reports. When looking at quality scores based on a 4-criteria assessment framework out of 4, 9% scored 0, 0% scored 1, 52% scored 2, 3% scored 3, and 36% scored 4. Just over half (52%) of the partnerships scored 2, which suggests overall progress towards demonstrating the key information set out in WT2023. Substantial progress was made by 36% of the partnerships, who demonstrated and evidenced the impact of their activities. A small proportion (10%) who have submitted their report showed limited progress (0 or 1). Central government may want to focus on providing safeguarding partnerships support with evidence of impact in future reporting.

Table 1: Compliance with WT2023 requirements

Score	Score definition	Number of reports with score	Percentage of reports with score
0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No criteria met 	11	9%
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mirrors the language in WT2023 	1	0%
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mirrors language in WT2023 Provides basic information on processes 	65	52%
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mirrors language in WT2023 Provides basic information on processes Provides information about impact and evidence of impact 	4	3%
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mirrors language in WT2023 Provides basic information on processes Provides information about impact and evidence of impact Provides information on future planning 	45	36%

In terms of the updated requirements set out in WT2023 (see table 2 below), the analysis found that 31 partnerships reported that they had removed their independent chairs, 118 reported ways that they had embedded independent scrutiny, 107 outlined steps to ensure adequate education sector representation and 93 detailed delegations to safeguarding partners'. We are aware that some safeguarding partnerships only detail these arrangements in their published arrangements, which may impact the figure provided.

Table 2: Compliance with WT2023 requirements

Criteria	Met	Unmet	Not Mentioned
Partnership chair	31	9	86
Independent scrutiny	118	0	8
Representation of education	107	0	19
Delegated safeguarding partner	93	29	4

Progress Towards Implementing WT2023 Arrangements

Evidence suggests that safeguarding partnerships have initiated various processes to adapt leadership roles, governance structures, education partner engagement, and scrutiny arrangements to align with WT2023. This includes transitioning to partnership chairs, establishing lead and delegated safeguarding partner roles, reviewing subgroups, adding education representatives to leadership, and strengthening independent scrutineer models.

Reporting showed the statutory safeguarding partners' contributions span strategic leadership, operational collaboration, and resource allocation. Most partnerships (85%) recognise education as a key partner, engaging them through subgroups, designated safeguarding lead (DSL) forums, and representation on leadership boards. However, the analysis identified that more standardised, detailed reporting on partners' governance and education sector representation is needed.

Evidencing Progress, Impact, and Prioritisation

While most yearly reports provide a financial breakdown, few explicitly discuss changes in funding or assess the impact and value for money. The analysis shows that a key focus in 2023-24 has been the implementation of WT2023. Partnerships have reviewed arrangements, looked to strengthen the role of education and embed scrutiny. There is evidence of a shift in practice towards early help and prevention, and that policies and

training have been updated to reflect this. There are good examples of this progress in the areas who are [DfE "pathfinders"](#).³

Examples of Evidence and Learning

Evidence highlights that learning from serious incidents through various reviews is fundamental to safeguarding partnerships' work. Recurring themes in reporting include:

- professional curiosity
- understanding children's experiences
- multi-agency collaboration
- neglect
- exploitation
- domestic abuse
- parental factors
- vulnerable cohorts

Learning is disseminated through briefings, training and updated guidance, but evidencing impact on frontline practice remains challenging. It is unclear if this is due to lack of evidence of impact being gathered on practice, or whether impact has not been recorded in sufficient detail within the yearly reports.

Key decisions and actions taken by partnerships include:

- the implementation of review recommendations
- strategic planning
- governance changes
- resource allocation
- audits
- stakeholder engagement

³ Families First Partnership Pathfinders is a programme investing to design and test radical reforms in a number of local areas across policies such as family help, child protection, family networks, and safeguarding partners. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/families-first-for-children-ffc-pathfinder-programme/families-first-for-children-ffc-pathfinder-programme-and-family-networks-pilot-fnp>

However, not all yearly reports explicitly state the outcomes of these actions, making it difficult to assess progress and impact.

Strategic priorities that are consistently highlighted are neglect, exploitation, domestic abuse, and child mental health. Progress is reported in strategy development, specialist interventions, and workforce upskilling. There are ongoing challenges highlighted in respect of appropriate resources in responding to these issues as they are often complex matters spanning various forms of vulnerability.

The majority of yearly reports analysed emphasise the crucial role of independent scrutiny in ensuring robust leadership and effective multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. Many partnerships have appointed independent scrutineers, and, despite it not being a requirement in WT2023, a minority (6%) mention that they have retained independent chairs⁴ who provide oversight, challenge, and assurance regarding the functioning of these arrangements.

Outputs

This report includes several outputs for partnerships' future use:

1. Examples of quality reporting: Chapter 8 outlines clear recommendations for good quality reporting, including summaries and examples from several reports that scored full marks based on our quality assurance processes and are compliant with all the WT2023 requirements.
2. Proposed report template: Appendix 1 outlines a proposed report template, including main sections that should be included in future reports, details on what each section should outline, general notes on quality reporting, and suggestions for accessibility.

Recommendations

To enhance future reporting, it is recommended that partnerships continue to prioritise clear and comprehensive reporting on governance, leadership and collaboration. It is also important that they provide more robust analysis on how practice improvements from reviews strengthen frontline safeguarding, using case studies and practitioner/family

⁴ The reference to an independent chair was removed in Working Together 2018. WT 2023 sets out that the partnership chair should facilitate effective multi-agency working by the statutory safeguarding partners and relevant agencies and as such should challenge where this is ineffective. However, the functions of the partnership chair are separate and distinct from the functions of independent scrutiny.

feedback. Finally, it would be useful for partnerships to provide more detailed information on their financial contributions as well as assessing the value of the financial contribution in a standardised format.

Introduction

The DfE commissioned this research as an initial step in the ongoing commitment in central government to support safeguarding partnerships and to gain an understanding of how partnerships have adapted to the new requirements outlined in the Working Together to Safeguard Children (WT2023) statutory guidance, published in December 2023. The updated guidance introduced new expectations for partnership structures and practices.

Safeguarding partners must jointly report on the activities they have undertaken over a 12-month period. Yearly reports must be published in accordance with the requirements set out in the Children Act 2004⁵ and WT2023. The reports should be transparent and easily accessible to families and professionals. The focus of these reports must set out:

- what partnerships have done as a result of the arrangements, including on child safeguarding practice reviews
- how effective these arrangements have been in practice

By analysing the 2023-24 yearly reports, the DfE, along with relevant government departments aims to understand the extent to which partnerships have planned for and progressed towards the full implementation of the new expectations. The insights gained from this analysis will serve as a foundation for policy development and will inform any future updates to guidance, with the aim of enhancing the effectiveness and impact of multi-agency safeguarding arrangements.

In addition to detailing the similarities, differences, and positive steps taken by partnerships towards the implementation of the new WT2023 arrangements, this report will identify examples of good practice and case studies that can be used to promote best practice across safeguarding partnerships. Furthermore, a proposed report template is attached in Appendix 1 for consideration in future yearly reports.

⁵ [Children Act 2004](#)

Key Terms

Table 3: Key terms

Term	Explanation
Safeguarding partners' (SPs)	Local authorities, integrated care boards, and the police, who have a shared and equal duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in their local areas.
Lead safeguarding partners (LSPs)	The LSPs are the heads of the three statutory safeguarding partners. These are the Chief Executives of Local Authorities, Chief Executives of the ICBs, and Chief Officers of police forces.
Delegated safeguarding partners (DSPs)	Each LSP appoints a DSP from their agency who should be sufficiently senior to be able to speak with authority, take decisions on behalf of the LSP and hold their sectors to account. One of the DSPs is appointed as the partnership chair, facilitating discussions and acting as a point of contact.
MASA	Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements refers to the way in which safeguarding partners and relevant agencies work together to safeguard children in their area
Working Together 2023 (WT2023)	Updated statutory guidance, published in December 2023 that introduced new expectations for partnership structures and practices.
Integrated Care Board (ICB)	NHS organisations in England responsible for planning and managing healthcare services for their local populations.
Ipsos Facto	A secure Generative AI model developed by Ipsos that draws on various Large Language Models (LLMs).

Methodology and Background

Background and Objectives

This research includes a thematic analysis of 126⁶ safeguarding yearly reports with support from artificial intelligence (AI) to identify key themes, trends, and areas for improvement in safeguarding partnerships. The analysis within this report will focus on progress towards implementation of the new WT2023 requirements, and the progress, impact and priorities, and the evidence and learning reported on by partnerships. The objectives are to provide continued learning, reflection, and improvement into the effectiveness of safeguarding partnerships.

Methodology

The approach includes three key stages assisted by AI. These included

- (1) identifying key themes for analysis,
- (2) analysis of key themes, and
- (3) quality assuring the outputs of AI

The generative AI that supported the research was Ipsos Facto⁷. Additional details about the approach can be found in Appendix 2. Ipsos Facto processed 126 yearly reports to identify recurring patterns and trends, guided by a data capture template agreed in a collaborative workshop with the DfE. The data capture template incorporated themes for both high-level assessment (e.g. number of yearly reports returned) and in-depth analysis (e.g. progress towards new WT2023 requirements, priorities). An assessment framework with criteria such as adherence, quality and consistency, was developed to guide the analysis.

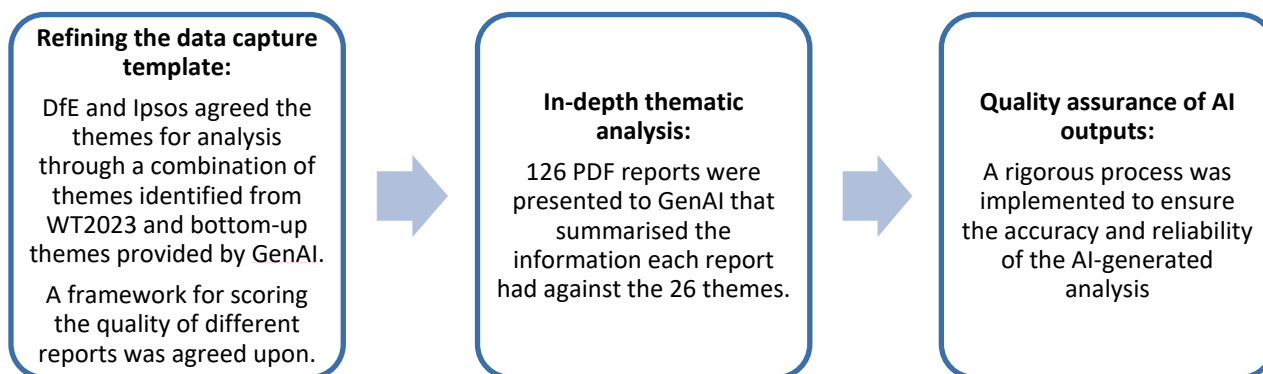
The analysis was iterative and conducted across several stages, starting with an initial processing of all yearly reports through Ipsos Facto, followed by a three-hour analysis workshop to discuss initial findings with the DfE. The yearly reports were then processed

⁶ There are currently 140 Safeguarding Partnerships however at time of submission there were 139. 128 were available for analysis. 126 were usable for AI.

⁷ This is a secure model developed by Ipsos, that draws on various Large Language Models (LLMs). For the purposes of this research, we used CLAUDE OPUS, a model capable of understanding complex information, providing detailed explanation and reasoning, and has a large file size limit.

through Ipsos Facto again using new prompts, if needed, and a final analysis was conducted (see Appendix 2 for example of prompts). To quality assure the accuracy of the AI analysis, the research team implemented a quality assurance process, checking a sample of reports with help from a subject matter expert. The different stages of this research are outlined in figure 1. below.

Figure 1: Research process



Stage 1: Refining the data capture template and assessment framework

In the first stage of the research, DfE shared all the available yearly reports with Ipsos. This included 128 yearly reports. Ipsos went on to analyse 126 of these reports, as two were not available in PDF format and only accessible on a website, which is not easily analysed using Ipsos Facto.

DfE and Ipsos then agreed on the themes that should be explored for analysis. The themes for the data capture incorporated themes identified for both high level assessment and in-depth analysis that outlined progress towards WT2023. Ipsos Facto reviewed all yearly reports and identified recurring themes, some of which were not specifically mentioned in WT2023 but were found across different yearly reports. The combination of top-down and bottom-up approaches to the data capture template provided 26 final themes (see Appendix 2). The first 14 themes are those taken from WT2023⁸, themes 15-26 were those identified by Ipsos Facto as recurring themes picked up across different yearly reports.

⁸ (paragraphs 106-108) where the key requirements are highlighted and sets out how reporting should be 'transparent and easily accessible to families and professionals' with focus on 'multi-agency priorities, learning, impact, evidence and improvement' (p.40).

During this stage, Ipsos and DfE also agreed on an assessment framework for scoring the quality of each yearly report. The assessment framework consisted of four key elements that are outlined below. Additional details about the scoring system can be found in Appendix 2:

1. The report mirrors the language within WT2023 statutory guidance.
2. The report provides information on the processes used in the partnership as well as the impact of the partnership's responses.
3. The report provides details on the impact of the safeguarding partnerships alongside the evidence of impact.
4. The report provides information on future planning and implications of the safeguarding partnership.

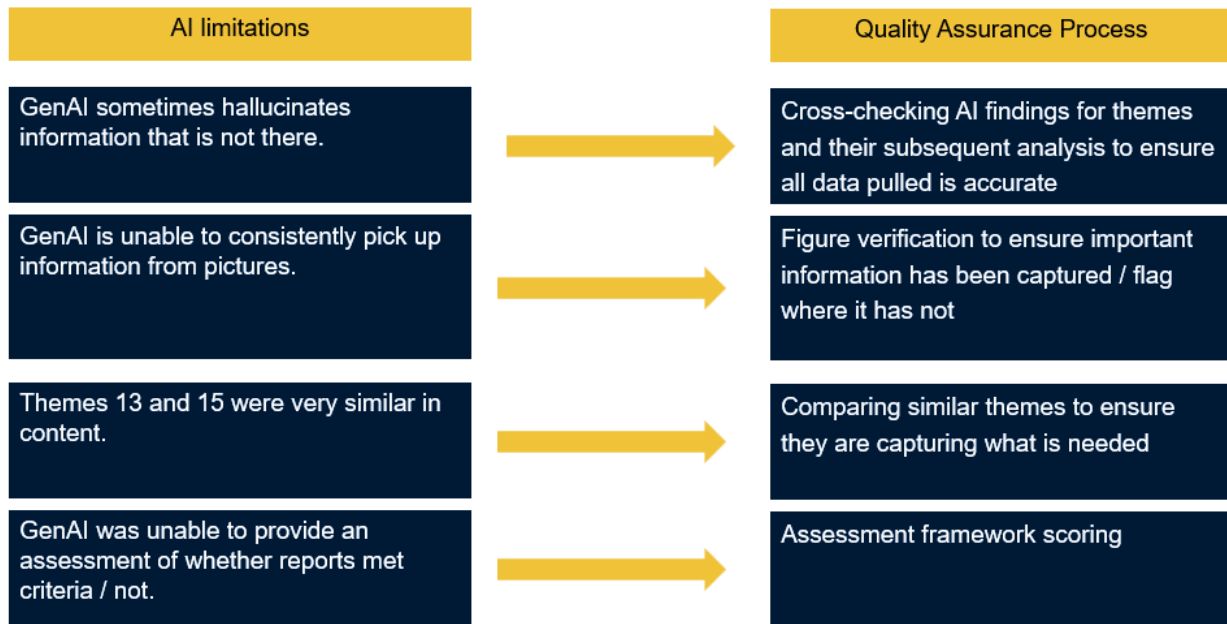
Stage 2: In-depth thematic analysis

After agreeing on the data capture template and themes, all 126 yearly reports were presented to Ipsos Facto. GenAI summarised the information each report had against the 26 themes.

Stage 3: Quality assurance of AI outputs

Ipsos Facto supported in speeding up the process of reviewing over 100 reports, providing detailed summaries against key themes, however, it still required the research team to check the outputs. To ensure the accuracy and reliability of the AI-generated analysis, a rigorous quality assurance process was implemented, this is set out in figure 2. below. This involved checking a minimum of 10% of the reports, against separate criteria by the research team with additional support from a subject matter expert. Additional details about the quality assurance process can be found in Appendix 2.

Figure 2: Outline of AI limitations and Quality Assurance Processes



Limitations

Analysing the reports with support from Ipsos Facto enabled a rapid analysis of large volumes of text but it does have some limitations. These are discussed in more detail in Appendix 2. The research team needed substantial time for quality checking the findings and AI struggles with capturing information from images, understanding impact, and handling non-PDF formats. As of January 2025, AI cannot consistently capture image information, affecting report assessments. Ipsos Facto's ability to determine impact is limited, and it lacks consistency in making yes/no assessments. The research team's quality assurance processes highlighted these issues, and the scores allocated to each report were adjusted accordingly. In terms of research limitations not specific to AI, this project has not assessed the accessibility of the reports. WT2023 states that all reports should be transparent and accessible to families and professionals. This was not explored as part of this research.

Progress Towards Implementing Working Together 2023 Arrangements

This chapter provides a deep dive into how safeguarding partnerships are meeting the WT2023 requirements. The chapter is divided into three main sections:

- Section 5.1 examines the implementation of changes from WT2023, including adaptations to leadership roles, governance structures, engagement with education partners, and scrutiny arrangements.
- Section 5.2 focuses on the contribution of each safeguarding partner, discussing their shared responsibility, the introduction of new roles, and the transition from an independent chair to a partnership chair.
- Section 5.3 explores the representation of the education sector within multi-agency safeguarding arrangements, outlining the mechanisms employed to ensure adequate representation and input from education colleagues at both operational and strategic levels.

Implementing changes from Working Together 2023 statutory guidance

The analysis suggests that since WT2023 was published, partnerships have focused on implementing and embedding the changes with support from DfE and other government departments. WT2023 introduced new expectations for local safeguarding partnership structures and practices. Of the four criteria partnerships have reported that, 94% of local areas have independent scrutiny in place, 85% have taken steps to ensure that the role of education is strengthened, 74% have named delegated safeguarding partners', and 25% have reported that they have implemented a partnership chair.

In response, partnerships indicated in their reports that they have initiated various processes to adapt their leadership roles, governance structures, engage with education partners, and scrutiny arrangements. Thirty-one (25%) partnerships reported that they have transitioned from an independent chair to a rotating partnership chair among the three statutory partners, with some stating they would be removing them by the end of 2024. Two (2%) reported they would be removing the independent chair without any specific date mentioned, and seven (6%) have explicitly reported keeping independent

chairs as part of their structures⁹. Whilst 86 (68%) partnerships have not reported anything specific about partnerships chairs, it does not necessarily mean they have not made any changes.

There is also evidence that the roles of lead safeguarding partners (LSPs) and delegated safeguarding partners (DSPs) have been established in some partnerships. Whilst four partnerships have not reported on this at all, 93 (74%) partnerships have detailed the delegations assigned to safeguarding partners, and 29 (23%) have reported on general governance structures, but not detailed the delegations assigned. Governance structures have been reviewed and updated, with examples including increased frequency of safeguarding partner meetings, reformed subgroups, and new partnership agreements.

WT2023 emphasises strengthening the role and engagement of childcare settings, schools and education providers, prompting most partnerships to add education representatives to executive leadership groups, establish education subgroups, and seek strategic education representation. 107 (85%) reports have outlined the steps they have taken to meet this criterion, and 19 (15%) have not mentioned this at all.

As part of the requirements, partnerships should have ensured that they have effective arrangements for independent scrutiny. Whilst 118 (94%) partnerships have reported that they have these arrangements in place, 8 (6%) have not mentioned it at all. Many of the partnerships reported that the approach taken to independent scrutiny is also evolving from an independent chair to an independent scrutineer model within their partnerships, with scrutiny and quality assurance processes being reviewed accordingly. To facilitate these changes, partnerships have held briefings, workshops, and development sessions, formed task groups, developed implementation plans, engaged with National Safeguarding facilitators or advisers, and in some cases, served as "Pathfinder" areas.

While reports generally did not mention specific challenges encountered, the time and effort required to consult stakeholders, adapt structures and processes, and develop new policies and procedures to achieve alignment with WT2023 by the December 2024 deadline has been identified as a key challenge. Nevertheless, the reports indicate that the majority of safeguarding partnerships are actively engaged in understanding and

⁹ WT2023 no longer refers to the need to appoint an independent chair. WT2023 sets out that the partnership chair should facilitate effective multi-agency working by the statutory safeguarding partners and relevant agencies and as such should challenge where this is ineffective. However, the functions of the partnership chair are separate and distinct from the functions of independent scrutiny.

implementing the necessary changes to strengthen their multi-agency child safeguarding arrangements in accordance with the revised statutory guidance. Appendix 1 highlights recommendations for partnerships to effectively report on future statutory guidance.

Table 6: Compliance of WT2023 requirements (n=126)

Criteria	Met	Unmet	Not Mentioned
Partnership chair	31	9	86
Independent scrutiny	118	0	8
Representation of education	107	0	19
Delegated safeguarding partner	93	29	4

Contribution of each safeguarding partner

Across the yearly reports, the three statutory safeguarding partners are consistently recognised as having a shared and equal responsibility for setting priorities and strategic direction for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children within their local communities. The contributions of these partners to the functioning and structure of the multi-agency safeguarding arrangements are multifaceted, encompassing strategic leadership, operational collaboration, and resource allocation. The reports emphasise the active involvement of senior representatives from each partner agency in executive leadership groups or boards, where they work together to set the strategic direction and priorities for the partnerships. Furthermore, many reports highlight the safeguarding partners' active participation in chairing or leading various subgroups and workstreams, demonstrating their operational commitment to driving the safeguarding agenda forward.

Several yearly reports discuss the introduction of lead safeguarding partner (LSP) and delegated safeguarding partner (DSP) roles in response to WT2023. However, the reports vary in the level of detail provided regarding the delegation of roles, with some offering a more comprehensive description of the specific responsibilities and accountabilities assigned to the LSPs and DSPs within their governance structures.

While the yearly reports provide valuable insights into the contributions and roles of statutory safeguarding partners, there are some limitations to consider. The level of detail

and consistency in reporting varies across the sample, with some reports offering more comprehensive information than others. These limitations underscore the need for more standardised and detailed reporting to facilitate a more comprehensive understanding of the contributions and governance structures of safeguarding partnerships.

Representation of education and childcare sectors

Overall, the reports demonstrate a commitment to engaging education and childcare sectors at both operational and strategic levels, recognising the vital role that schools, colleges, and early years providers play in identifying and responding to safeguarding concerns.

Reports indicated that at the operational level, many partnerships have established education-specific subgroups, such as education reference groups, education safeguarding advisory committees, or safeguarding in education groups. These forums provide a platform for education representatives, including designated safeguarding leads (DSLs), headteachers, and school governors, to actively participate in partnership workstreams, contribute to multi-agency practice, and shape the safeguarding agenda. Partnerships also engage with the education sector through regular DSL forums, network meetings, and conferences, which facilitate information sharing, training, and gathering feedback from education colleagues.

Analysis highlighted that at the strategic level, education representatives, such as directors of education, headteachers, or senior leaders from schools and colleges, are increasingly being included in the membership of executive leadership groups or boards. Partnerships outlined that this ensures that the education sector has a voice in setting the direction and priorities of the partnership. Some partnerships have taken steps to informally recognise education as having a role akin to a 'fourth partner'¹⁰ alongside the statutory safeguarding partners, reflecting their commitment to strengthening education's strategic role. Reports also mention plans to further enhance education sector representation at the strategic level, such as inviting education representatives to sit on the partnership's executive group or establishing dedicated education subgroups reporting to the executive. In some cases, education representatives are directly involved

¹⁰ This analysis did not consider how the term 'fourth partner' worked in practice and recognise that the role of the three existing safeguarding partners is set out in the Children Act 2004.

in the development and implementation of partnership strategies, business plans, and priorities, demonstrating their strategic influence.

Overall, the yearly reports indicate a growing recognition of the importance of engaging the education sector in multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. Partnerships are taking proactive steps to ensure adequate representation and input from education colleagues at both operational and strategic levels. However, the level of detail provided on education sector representation varies across the reports, with some partnerships offering more comprehensive evidence of their approaches than others. This highlights the need for continued focus on this area to ensure consistent and meaningful engagement of the education sector in safeguarding partnerships.

Evidencing progress, impact and prioritisation

This chapter provides an overview of the information provided by partnerships about their financial contributions. The chapter goes on to examine changes partnerships have made as a result of national reforms other than WT2023.

Financial breakdown and value for money

The yearly reports provide varying levels of detail regarding the financial contributions made by statutory safeguarding partners' and other relevant agencies. Out of 126 reports, 119 of the reports offer a breakdown of funding from the key statutory safeguarding partners (local authorities, integrated care boards (ICBs) and police), with some also mentioning contributions from probation services, fire and rescue services, and education providers. However, the depth of information provided on specific amounts contributed by each partner varies significantly, with some reports presenting exact figures while others only indicate the proportion of funding from each source. Notably, in many cases, the local authority emerges as the largest contributor to the safeguarding partnership budget. Due to the inconsistency and non-standardised reporting of financial contributions, the analysis was unable to draw out an accurate overall picture. A suggested approach to providing more standardised detail in future reporting has been provided at Appendix 1.

While the reports generally include a financial breakdown, most do not explicitly discuss changes to funding arrangements or levels of contribution compared to previous years. A small number of reports mention specific changes, such as increased contributions from certain partners, the impact of grant funding, or challenges faced due to reduced budgets. A handful of partnerships also highlight the need to review and agree on more equitable funding arrangements among partners, particularly in light of the new requirements set out in WT2023.

A significant limitation identified across the reports is the lack of clear assessment of the impact and value for money of the funding contributed to safeguarding partnerships. While a small number of reports mention that the current level of funding is sufficient to deliver the partnership's core activities and priorities, this is rarely supported by evidence or examples of the specific impact achieved. A few reports acknowledge the need for

further work to ensure appropriate and sustainable funding for the partnership, particularly in the context of increasing demand and complexity of safeguarding needs.

Overall, while most yearly reports provide some level of financial breakdown, there is significant variation in the depth and clarity of information presented. The lack of consistent reporting on changes to funding and the limited assessment of the impact and value for money of partnership funding make it difficult to draw firm conclusions about the overall financial breakdowns and value for money of the safeguarding arrangements. Appendix 1 sets out a recommended approach to do this more effectively in future reporting.

Implementation of national reforms

As previously discussed, many reports discuss the partnership's response to the WT2023 statutory guidance published in December 2023. Key areas of focus in implementing the reforms include:

- Reviewing and revising multi-agency safeguarding arrangements and governance structures
- Strengthening the role and representation of education and voluntary sector partners in the safeguarding system
- Enhancing scrutiny and accountability arrangements
- Shifting focus to early help, prevention, and support for families
- Updating policies, procedures, thresholds, practice standards and training to reflect the new guidance

Some partnerships have taken proactive steps, such as:

- Conducting benchmarking exercises
- Holding workshops and briefings for strategic leaders
- Establishing dedicated implementation groups
- Developing comprehensive action plans
- Engaging with national facilitators/advisers to support the change process.

Those areas who are Families First for Children pathfinder areas noted that they were testing substantial reforms across family help, child protection, multi-agency safeguarding arrangements and making greater use of family networks, with system enablers such as strengthened information-sharing arrangements woven throughout.

Other national developments mentioned include implementing recommendations from the independent review of children's social care and the national child safeguarding practice review panel reviews including the safeguarding children with disabilities in residential settings review. Some reports note the partnership's engagement with government consultations on related policy reforms. Others note specific Acts and reforms to which they respond including:

- Domestic Abuse Act 2021¹¹: Some partnerships discuss implementing the recommendations and duties arising from this legislation, such as providing support to victims and their children
- Changes to Keeping Children Safe in Education guidance¹²: A couple of reports note aligning their work with the changes in KCSIE 2024
- Serious Violence Duty in the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022¹³: One partnership mentions working collaboratively across their region on a strategic response to this new duty on local agencies
- Introduction of Virtual Hearings: A report discusses the implications of virtual hearings introduced during the pandemic for engaging parents and young people
- National Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel reports¹⁴: Several partnerships refer to considering the findings and recommendations from the Panel's national reviews on specific issues/cases
- Care Quality Commission Assurance Framework and inspections¹⁵: Some reports mention preparing for the new CQC assurance visits and inspection framework for Integrated Care Systems
- Changes to multi-agency public protection arrangements (MAPPA)¹⁶: One partnership notes the changes to MAPPA arrangements and impacts on safeguarding practice

While most reports outline plans and actions underway, limited information is provided on issues or challenges encountered so far in implementing the reforms locally. For those reports that mentioned challenges, some express concerns about the tight timescales, and the need to engage all relevant partners.

Overall, the evidence suggests safeguarding partnerships are actively working to understand and implement the required changes from WT2023 and wider national

¹¹ [Domestic Abuse Act 2021](#)

¹² [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)

¹³ [Serious Violence Duty in the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022](#)

¹⁴ [National Child Safeguarding Practice Review Report 2023-2024](#)

¹⁵ [CQC Assurance Framework](#)

¹⁶ [Changes to multi-agency public protection arrangements \(MAPPA\)](#)

reforms, with a major focus on completing the transition by the December 2024 deadline. However, this process is still in relatively early stages for many based on the 2023-24 reporting period covered.

Examples of evidence and learning

This chapter provides a summary of the key decisions, actions, and improvements made by safeguarding partnerships in response to local and national child safeguarding reviews. It covers learning derived from serious incidents, highlighting common themes and the importance of various types of reviews in driving practice changes. This chapter also explores the key decisions and actions taken by safeguarding partners. Additionally, it examines the strategic priorities identified by partnerships, including neglect, child exploitation, domestic abuse, and child mental health, and the progress made, and challenges faced in addressing these issues. Finally, the chapter discusses the role of independent scrutiny in ensuring strong leadership and effectiveness.

Key decisions and actions taken

Out of 126, 100 of the yearly reports highlight a wide range of key decisions and actions taken by safeguarding partners throughout the yearly cycle, demonstrating their commitment to improving multi-agency arrangements and safeguarding practices. One of the most frequently reported actions is the implementation of recommendations from local and national child safeguarding practice reviews. Safeguarding partners' respond to review findings by:

- Updating policies, procedures, and guidance documents
- Developing new tools and pathways
- Delivering targeted training
- Establishing task and finish groups to address specific issues.

A minority of reports also mention the perceived¹⁷ positive impact of implementing these recommendations, such as improved multi-agency working, enhanced safeguarding practices, and better outcomes for children and families.

Evidence suggests strategic planning and priority setting are additional critical areas of decision-making for safeguarding partners. Many reports highlight key decisions made regarding strategic priorities, business plans, and areas of focus for the coming year, with common priorities including neglect, child exploitation, domestic abuse, and safeguarding children with disabilities. Safeguarding partners' have outlined how they often develop

¹⁷ Noted as perceived due to lack of additional evidence provided.

and launch new strategies, action plans, and initiatives aligned with these priorities to drive progress and improvement.

In response to the revised WT2023 statutory guidance, several reports record key decisions related to changes in partnership governance and structure. Resource allocation and commissioning decisions are also mentioned in some reports, including funding for specific initiatives, training programmes, or job roles to support the work of the partnership.

Safeguarding partners mentioned in their reports that they regularly undertake multi-agency audits, case file reviews, and scrutiny activities as part of their yearly cycle to assess the effectiveness of their arrangements and identify areas for improvement. Key decisions and actions mentioned in the reports related to these activities include

- Agreeing on audit themes
- Commissioning independent scrutiny
- Implementing learning and recommendations from audit findings

Engagement and communication with stakeholders, including children and families, practitioners, and the wider public, are also a focus for many partnerships, with decisions and actions taken to launch new websites or social media campaigns, host events or conferences, and develop new communication strategies or protocols.

Overall, whilst the reports demonstrate that safeguarding partners are actively making decisions and taking actions to improve their multi-agency arrangements, there are some challenges and limitations to consider. The level of detail and comprehensiveness in recording these decisions and actions varies significantly across the reports. Not all reports explicitly state the impact or outcomes of these actions, making it difficult to assess their effectiveness, in some cases. The format and structure of the reports also vary, with some using dedicated sections to record key decisions and actions, while others mention them throughout the document in relation to different themes or priorities.

Learning from serious incidents

Reports outline how learning from serious incidents is a fundamental aspect of safeguarding partnerships' work. The analysis highlights how safeguarding partnerships engage in various types of reviews as a core activity to learn from serious incidents,

including rapid reviews, local child safeguarding practice reviews (LCSPRs), learning from experience reviews, serious incident reviews, and non-statutory learning reviews. Many reports highlight the work of specific subgroups or panels, such as case review groups or child safeguarding practice review subgroups, that oversee and coordinate these review processes. Additionally, some partnerships participate in reviews conducted by neighbouring local authorities or contribute to national reviews.

Partnerships also learn from Safeguarding Adult Reviews (SARs) and Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHRs) that may have relevance to child safeguarding. Common learning themes identified across the reports include:

- The importance of professional curiosity
- Understanding the child's lived experience
- Improving multi-agency communication and collaboration
- Recognising and responding to neglect, child sexual abuse, and domestic abuse
- Supporting parental mental health and substance misuse
- Enhancing assessment and intervention with fathers and male carers
- Addressing the specific vulnerabilities of infants, care leavers, and children with disabilities
- Strengthening safeguarding supervision and critical thinking skills for practitioners

Partnerships emphasise the importance of disseminating learning from reviews and ensuring that recommendations translate into practice improvements. Various methods are used to share learning, such as:

- Briefings
- Learning events
- Conferences
- Training
- Incorporation into policies and procedures

Some reports provide examples of specific actions taken in response to review findings, such as developing new tools, guidance, or multi-agency processes. However, evidencing the impact of learning on frontline practice remains an acknowledged challenge for many partnerships. The level of detail provided on the learning derived from

serious incidents varies considerably across the reports, with some offering in-depth analysis of specific cases and others providing more high-level overviews.

Overall, safeguarding partnerships demonstrate a strong commitment to learning from serious incidents, dedicating significant efforts to conducting reviews, identifying areas for improvement, and driving practice changes. However, there is scope for greater consistency and depth in reporting on this learning and its impact, as well as a need for more explicit discussion on evaluating the effectiveness of implementing learning from reviews and its impact on improving outcomes for children and families.

Focus on strategic priorities

The analysis of the yearly reports highlights a range of common priorities that partnerships have identified, demonstrating a commitment to addressing key safeguarding issues and improving outcomes for children and young people.

Neglect consistently emerges as a strategic priority across many partnerships, with reports outlining progress in developing neglect strategies, implementing assessment tools like the Graded Care Profile 2 (GCP2)¹⁸, delivering training, and raising awareness.

Child exploitation and contextual safeguarding feature prominently as another priority, with partnerships focusing on understanding and responding to the risks children face outside the home, such as criminal exploitation, sexual exploitation, and serious youth violence. Progress is evident in the development of exploitation strategies, the work of multi-agency child exploitation (MACE) panels, and the delivery of contextual safeguarding interventions.

Furthermore, domestic abuse is another recurring priority, with partnerships recognising the significant impact it has on children's lives. Reports highlight progress in implementing initiatives like the Safe and Together model, providing specialist support to survivors and their families, and improving the identification and assessment of domestic abuse. Please see a good example from a safeguarding partnership below

- [Hammersmith and Fulham](#): This report provides details on the progress and challenges in each priority area, such as the work of the Gangs, Violence &

¹⁸ Graded Care Profile 2 (GCP2) helps professionals measure the quality of care provided by a parent or carer in meeting their child's needs. [Graded Care Profile 2 \(GCP2\) | NSPCC Learning](#)

Exploitation Unit (pages 13-14), the implementation of the Safe and Together model to tackle domestic abuse (page 18), and the collaboration with MIND to support children's mental health (pages 20-21).

Child mental health and emotional well-being also emerge as key priorities, particularly in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic and its impact on children's lives. Partnerships report progress in developing integrated care pathways, commissioning specialist services, and delivering training to improve practitioners' understanding of mental health issues. Achievements included developing mental health pathways, collaborating with CAMHS and voluntary sector partners, and delivering training. However, progress was uneven, with some partnerships reporting mental health as an area requiring improvements.

Other common priorities mentioned include work to address child sexual abuse, safeguarding children with disabilities, early help and prevention, and workforce development. Progress and challenges in these areas vary across partnerships, with some reporting significant achievements and others identifying them as areas requiring further focus and improvement. These achievements include:

- Developing strategies and resources to improve identification and response to child sexual abuse
- Strengthening early help arrangements, including for children with disabilities
- Promoting trauma-informed, systematic and restorative practice approaches

Overall, the reports demonstrate that safeguarding partnerships are actively working to address a range of strategic priorities, informed by local needs assessments, case reviews, and national policy developments. While progress is evident in many areas, partnerships also state that they face ongoing challenges in terms of resources, capacity, and the complexity of the issues they are seeking to address. The reports highlight the importance of regularly reviewing and adapting priorities to ensure that partnerships are responsive to emerging needs and risks and are effectively safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children and young people in their local areas.

Independent scrutiny

The yearly reports highlight the critical role of independent scrutiny in ensuring strong leadership and the effectiveness of multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. Many

partnerships have appointed independent scrutineers who provide oversight, challenge, and assurance regarding the functioning of these arrangements. These scrutineers engage in a wide range of activities, such as attending partnership meetings, observing subgroups, reviewing policies and procedures, scrutinising data and quality assurance processes, conducting deep dive investigations into specific areas of practice, and providing recommendations for improvement. Some reports also mention the involvement of young scrutineers or co-production exercises to gain the views of children and families as part of the independent scrutiny process, adding a valuable perspective to the assessment of safeguarding arrangements. Please see a good example from a safeguarding partnership below

- [Greenwich yearly report](#): The report contains comments from a Young Independent Scrutineer, reviewing the impact and learning from independent scrutiny arrangements (Pages 6-10).

Several reports demonstrate how independent scrutiny has contributed to strengthening leadership and ensuring that safeguarding partners are effective in achieving their desired impact. Reports set out that independent scrutineers provide critical challenge and support to safeguarding partners', helping them to maintain oversight, identify areas for development, and drive continuous improvement. In some cases, independent scrutineers have played a key role in supporting partnerships to review and update their arrangements in light of new statutory guidance, such as WT2023. Reports also mention how independent scrutineers have helped to ensure that safeguarding partners are held accountable for fulfilling their statutory duties, maintaining quality assurance mechanisms, and implementing learning from local and national reviews.

The impact and learning from independent scrutiny arrangements are evident in the way that partnerships have responded to findings and recommendations from scrutiny activities. Several reports provide examples of how independent scrutineers have identified areas for improvement, such as the need for greater clarity in governance arrangements, stronger engagement with children and families, or more robust data analysis and performance monitoring. Partnerships have taken action to address these issues, demonstrating a commitment to learning and continuous improvement based on the insights gained through independent scrutiny. Some reports also highlight the value of independent scrutineers in facilitating shared learning and encouraging a culture of openness, challenge, and reflection among safeguarding partners.

While many reports provide positive examples of the impact and learning from independent scrutiny arrangements, there are some limitations and challenges to consider. The level of detail and analysis varies considerably across the documents, with not all reports including a comprehensive review of how independent scrutiny has ensured strong leadership and the achievement of desired outcomes. This inconsistency makes it difficult to assess the effectiveness of these arrangements in some cases.

Examples of quality reporting

This chapter will provide recommendations for good quality reporting. It will include summaries and examples from several reports that scored full marks based on our quality assurance processes. The reports outlined below are set out how they are compliant with all the WT2023 requirements.

Reporting on processes

Governance and structures: Most reports consistently outline the partnerships' governance structure, including leadership roles, subgroups, and their responsibilities. This is important for accountability and clarity in decision-making. Examples include details on the functioning of key forums like partnership boards and executives, as well as the roles of independent scrutineers.

Some good examples of the reporting on processes on partnership structure is seen in the following reports:

- [Durham yearly report](#): This report outlines the structure and functioning of the partnership, including the roles and responsibilities of various groups and subgroups (pages 6-7). It also discusses the partnership's strategic priorities, key activities, and decision-making processes (pages 8-19).
- [East Sussex yearly report](#): This report outlines the partnership structure and government arrangements (pages 7-10). Specifically, in section 4.2 it provides an overview of the partnership structure, including a diagram of the various groups and subgroups. In section 4.3 it discusses the review of partnership arrangements and proposed new partnership structure components.

Multi-agency collaboration: All the reports that scored a 4 emphasise multi-agency working, detailing how partners collaborate and share information to safeguard children. This includes descriptions of joint working arrangements, information sharing protocols, and collaborative initiatives across agencies like social care, police, education, and health.

Good examples of reporting on multi-agency collaboration as a process are seen in the following reports:

- [Sheffield yearly report](#): The report outlines the various subgroups and workstreams that make up the Partnership (pages 10-15). It also discusses the Partnership's approach to multi-agency audits, case reviews, and scrutiny and challenge (pages 14-15, 21, 26-32).
- [Isle of Wight yearly report](#): The report outlines the partnership's working arrangements, detailing the processes for multi-agency collaboration, scrutiny, and learning. It also demonstrates the impact of the partnership's work through case studies, partner agency contributions, and evidence of how learning from audits and reviews has been embedded to improve safeguarding practice and outcomes for children and families (pages 8-27).

Quality assurance processes: Reports often discuss quality assurance mechanisms like multi-agency audits, case reviews (including rapid reviews and local child safeguarding practice reviews), and learning from serious incidents. This highlights the focus on continuous improvement and learning from practice.

Good examples of partners' highlighting their quality assurance processes are seen in the following reports:

- [Worcestershire yearly report](#): The report details the activities and achievements of various subgroups, such as the Quality Assurance Practice and Procedures Group section (pages 30-42). This provides an extensive overview of the audit work and other quality assurance activities undertaken by this group to assure the quality of multi-agency child protection work. This also includes details on various multi-agency case audits completed.
- [Medway yearly report](#): This report describes the partnership's scrutiny and assurance processes, including independent scrutiny arrangements, Section 11 audits, and multi-agency audits (Pages 8-11, 19-20).
- [Barnsley yearly report](#): This report highlights similar quality assurance processes like multi-agency audits, as well as incorporating learning from serious incidents through local child safeguarding practice reviews (pages 42-43)

Training and development: Reports frequently mention multi-agency training programmes and workforce development, indicating a commitment to equipping practitioners with necessary skills and knowledge. Some reports detail the impact of training on practitioner confidence and practice.

A good example of a safeguarding partner highlighting their training and development processes can be seen below:

- [Greenwich yearly report](#): This report provides an overview of the GSCP's multi-agency training programme to improve skills and knowledge of practitioners. It also includes data on the number of training attendees by sector (page 42). It also highlights practitioners' confidence in understanding and confidence to identify abuse, work collaboratively with other agencies, and utilise best practices (page 44).

Impact and evidence of impact

Clear articulation of impact and robust evidence: Reports effectively articulate the impact of the partnership's work, going beyond simply stating intended outcomes to providing concrete evidence of the difference made for children and families. For example, some reports include dedicated 'Impact' or 'What difference has it made?' sections for each priority area, outlining specific achievements and improvements. Strong reports also provide a range of evidence to support these claims of impact, including quantitative data (e.g. reductions in referrals, increased service uptake, improved outcomes for children in care), qualitative feedback from children, families, and practitioners, case studies illustrating successful interventions, and findings from audits and reviews.

Some good examples of yearly reports showcasing impact and evidence of impact can be seen below:

- [Salford yearly report](#): Throughout the report, each section includes a 'What difference has it made?' part that highlights the impact of the partnership's work. Evidence cited includes audit findings showing improvements in practice (e.g. increased use of assessment tools, improved multi-agency attendance at meetings), practitioner survey results demonstrating increased knowledge and confidence, and some case examples and data illustrating positive outcomes for children.
- [Durham yearly report](#): This report provides information on the impact of the safeguarding partnership alongside evidence for this impact. The report includes specific sections titled 'What difference has this made?' for several of the

partnership's key initiatives and priority areas, such as the Child and Adolescent to Parent Violence and Abuse (CAPVA) program (pages 10-11), the Neglect Group's work (page 15), and the Child Exploitation Group's efforts (pages 18-19). These sections outline the concrete outcomes and improvements resulting from the partnership's work, supported by data, feedback from children and families, and case study examples.

- [Worcestershire yearly report](#): Throughout the report, there are dedicated sections titled "Evidence of Impact" for various subgroups and initiatives, such as the work of the GET SAFE Partnership Group (page 29), the Quality Assurance Practice and Procedures Group (pages 39-40), and the Education Head Teacher Safeguarding Steering Group (pages 48-49). These sections highlight specific outcomes and improvements in safeguarding practices and child protection resulting from the partnership's activities, backed by data and examples.
- [South Gloucestershire yearly report](#): The report includes an 'Impact Summary' section (pages 11-12) which highlights specific examples of how the partnership's work has led to changes in practice and improved outcomes. This includes changes in recording practices after training, implementing learning from case reviews, and evidence of collaborative working leading to better support for children at risk.
- [Barnsley yearly report](#): The report includes sections throughout like 'Are we making progress on protecting children?' which presents data across various services (e.g. Children's Social Care, Early Help, Youth Justice) to demonstrate trends and outcomes. The 'Children and Young People's Voices' section (pages 34-37) offers qualitative evidence of impact through case studies, feedback from youth groups, and examples of how youth engagement has influenced service provision.

Linking activities and initiatives to outcomes: Good practice involves clearly linking specific partnership activities and initiatives to tangible outcomes, highlighting 'how has it made a difference?'. For example, demonstrating how multi-agency training has improved practitioner confidence and led to better identification of safeguarding concerns, or how learning from case reviews has resulted in changes to practice and improved service provision. Reports often highlight the impact of specific initiatives, such as the development of neglect strategies and toolkits, the implementation of early help

programmes, and the establishment of multi-agency teams to address child exploitation. Providing details on these initiatives and their positive outcomes strengthens the evidence of impact amongst safeguarding partnerships.

Please see examples of yearly reports showcasing good impact and evidence of impact:

- [South Gloucestershire yearly report](#): The report includes an "Impact Summary" section (pages 11-12) which highlights specific examples of how the partnership's work has led to changes in practice and improved outcomes. This includes changes in recording practices after training, implementing learning from case reviews, and evidence of collaborative working leading to better support for children at risk. The report also provides data and case studies as evidence of impact in certain areas. For example, it shares findings from multi-agency audits (page 10) and provides statistics and feedback to illustrate the effectiveness of Early Help services (page 10).
- [Isle of Wight yearly report](#): The report dedicates a section titled 'Our Impact' (pages 29-48) to showcase how the work of the partnership has influenced safeguarding practice and outcomes for children and families. This includes partner agency contributions, case studies, examples of how the partnership has responded to matters and resolved them, as well as the impact of their multi agency safeguarding arrangements.

Future planning

Dedicated forward-looking sections: Reports include clearly labelled sections like 'Next Steps' or 'Future Focus' that specifically outline the partnership's planned actions, priorities, and focus areas for the coming year. This makes it easy for readers to understand the direction and commitments of the partnership. Also, high quality reports acknowledge how challenges and learning from the previous year will shape future efforts. They highlight planned developments in areas like quality assurance, training, data analysis, and impact measurement to strengthen the partnership's effectiveness and evidence base.

Please see below for some good examples of future planning:

- [Durham yearly report](#): This report includes subsections titled 'Next Steps' or 'What next?' within several sections of the report. These subsections outline the partnership's plans for further development, improvement, and implementation of lessons learned in the coming year. Additionally, the report mentions the partnership's ongoing work to update and develop practice in line with changes in WT2023 guidance and legislation, demonstrating its commitment to future planning based on national reforms and local priorities (page 32).
- [Bury yearly report](#): The report includes a section titled 'Strategic Plan for the Year Ahead' (page 31) which outlines the partnership's priorities for 2024-2025, including a focus on safeguarding babies, embedding the neglect strategy, protecting children and young people from sexual abuse, and implementing changes from the WT2023 statutory guidance. This demonstrates the partnership's commitment to ongoing improvement and adaptation based on identified needs and national reforms.

Proactive planning for emerging issues: While primarily focused on the next year, some reports also touch on rapidly evolving issues like online safety, mental health, and transitional safeguarding that will require ongoing adaptation of safeguarding approaches. This demonstrates a proactive, long-term planning mindset.

Please see below a good example of a report showing proactive future planning:

- [Sunderland yearly report](#): The report outlines planning to implement the new WT2023 statutory guidance in 2024-25, which will involve revising their multi-agency safeguarding arrangements and launching a new 5-year business plan (pages 12-13). It also mentions forthcoming priorities and areas of focus for the partnership, such as: strengthening engagement with education partners (page 13), developing a strategic plan for the Strategic Exploitation Group (page 8), continuing to embed learning from case reviews (page 12) and enhancing transitional safeguarding work with the Adult Safeguarding Board (page 3).

Overall, good practice involves having a clear, forward-looking perspective in the report, identifying priorities and plans based on learning and demonstrating a commitment to proactive adaptation and improvement. The key is striking a balance between comprehensively reporting on the previous year's activity and providing a sense of direction for the period ahead.

Conclusions and recommendations

The analysis of the 2023-24 safeguarding partnership annual reports provides valuable insights into the progress made by partnerships in implementing the new requirements outlined in the WT2023 statutory guidance. The majority of partnerships demonstrate active engagement in reviewing and updating their structures, processes, and priorities to align with WT2023. The reports generally provide good information on their governance arrangements, leadership roles, subgroups, and joint working practices. The strengthening of the role of education and childcare settings in multi-agency safeguarding arrangements is also a promising development, with some evidence of good working across strategic and operational levels.

Learning from serious incidents is highlighted as a fundamental aspect of safeguarding partnerships' work, with reports describing a range of review activities and providing examples of practice improvements made as a result. Nevertheless, evidencing the impact of this learning on frontline practice and outcomes for children remains an acknowledged challenge for many partnerships. The reports identify key strategic priorities across partnerships, including neglect, child exploitation, domestic abuse, and child mental health. Partnerships demonstrate progress in developing strategies, tools, and interventions to address these issues, but also recognise the ongoing challenges in terms of capacity, resources, and complexity. Good practice examples illustrate partnerships clearly articulating their impact by linking activities to tangible outcomes and providing robust supporting evidence. High quality reports also tend to be more forward-looking, with dedicated sections outlining future plans and priorities.

Despite these positive aspects, there are limitations in the consistency and depth of analysis provided across the reports as a whole. The lack of detail on issues such as changes to funding arrangements, evidence of impact, and evaluation of scrutiny raises challenges in comprehensively assessing partnerships' effectiveness and progress.

Based on the conclusions drawn from the analysis of the yearly reports, several recommendations can be made to improve the quality, consistency, and effectiveness of future reporting. These include:

- Partnerships should continue to prioritise clear and comprehensive reporting on their governance structures, leadership, subgroups, and collaboration arrangements to ensure transparency and accountability. The inclusion of

structure charts and diagrams can be particularly helpful in this regard. However, partnerships should avoid using images, if images must be used, the information should also be comprehensively explained in writing, including ALT text, to ensure accessibility.

1. More detailed and standardised reporting on financial contributions from each partner and assessment of the impact and value for money of this funding should be encouraged and ideally presented as tables. This will allow for better comparisons and identification of any resource challenges faced by partnerships. Financial information should be presented in actual tables (as opposed to images) to improve accessibility
2. Partnerships should aim to provide more robust analysis on how practice improvements are made as a result of reviews, audits and inspections and how this has strengthened frontline safeguarding. The use of case studies and feedback from practitioners and families can help illustrate this impact. The inclusion of 'impact' and 'next steps' subsections for each priority area could be adopted more widely to enhance the clarity and usefulness of reports.
3. Partnerships are encouraged to produce reports in accessible, searchable formats to enable accessibility for professionals, children and families. Providing a clear email address to request alternative accessible formats is also important. Ongoing training and support to partnerships on effective report writing, demonstrating evidence and impact, and evaluating scrutiny arrangements may help drive improvements in the quality and consistency of yearly reports in future.

By implementing these recommendations, safeguarding partnerships can enhance the quality, consistency, and impact of their yearly reports, ultimately contributing to the continuous improvement of multi-agency child safeguarding arrangements and outcomes for children and families.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Proposed Yearly Report Template

Section 1: Outlining requirements set out in statutory guidance

To anchor what needs to be reported, safeguarding partnerships should start by outlining expectations set out in statutory guidance. Provide a brief overview of what your partnership has done to adhere to the guidance. This will help safeguarding partnerships to remain focused on the key requirements for reporting purposes.

Section 2: Area profile

It would be useful for safeguarding partners to provide crucial information about their local context, such as, number of children in their area, demographics of the area, recent inspections (examples include National Child Protection Inspections for police forces, Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services and joint targeted area inspections JTAs), single or multi-agency collaborations, amongst other contextual factors. This would help situate the different priorities or themes of focus more effectively.

Section 3: Progress against statutory guidance

Safeguarding partnerships may consider using the following subheadings that reflect their progress against requirements set out in statutory guidance. Underneath each of these sub-headings, outline:

- a) the activities achieved,
- b) the impact of the activities,
- c) evidence of the impact,
- d) and any future plans.

Further guidance has been provided regarding how to highlight impact. The key subheadings are:

1. Implementation of any changes set out in statutory guidance: An overview of processes that partnerships have taken towards updating their multi-agency safeguarding arrangements to align with any new requirements, including changes in leadership and governance during the reporting period.

2. Contribution of each safeguarding partner: The contributions of each safeguarding partner to the functioning and structure of the multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. This needs to outline:
 - a. Approaches to partnership governance structures. If diagrams are being used to present this information, ensure that either it is not in picture format, or that pictures are explained in detail within the text.
 - b. Approaches to undertaking the partnership chair function.
3. Aggregated scrutiny: Aggregated methods of scrutiny, such as reviews, scrutineer activities, and multi-agency audits.
 - Impact on outcomes for children and families: Evidence of the impact of the work of safeguarding partners and relevant agencies, including training, on outcomes for children and families.
 - Feedback from children and families: Ways in which safeguarding partners have sought and utilised feedback from children and families to inform their work and influence service provision.
4. Analysis of areas with limited progress: An analysis of areas where there has been little or no evidence of progress on agreed priorities set out in previous year's reporting.
5. Learning from serious incidents: An analysis of learning derived from serious incidents. This could include conducting rapid reviews, local child safeguarding practice reviews, and other case reviews including and learning from national reviews, to learn from serious incidents as a core activity.
6. Key decisions and actions taken: A record of key decisions and actions taken by the safeguarding partners in the yearly cycle, including the implementation of recommendations from local and national child safeguarding practice reviews, and their impact.
 - Financial breakdown and value for money: A breakdown of costs in delivering the arrangements, including financial contributions of individual partners any changes to funding, and an assessment of the impact and value for money of this funding.
 - a. A breakdown of funding from each safeguarding partner should be provided, including exact figures for the contributions from each partner.

- b. Changes to the funding arrangements should be outlined explicitly in comparison to previous years.
- c. An assessment of the impact and value for money of the funding received by safeguarding partnerships should be provided.
- d. Financial information should not be presented in screenshotted tables. A simple table format could be used instead (please see Table 9)

Table 9: Template for reporting financial contributions

Contributor	Value of contribution
<i>Partner 1 contribution (ICB)</i>	£XX,XXX
<i>Partner 2 contribution (Police)</i>	
<i>Partner 3 contribution (Local Authority)</i>	
....	
<i>Total contribution / Income</i>	

- 7. Representation of education sector: Evidence of how safeguarding partners are ensuring the adequate representation and input from the education sector at both operational and strategic levels of the arrangements.
 - a. Operational level: Any education-specific sub-groups that have been established, or any means partnerships use to engage with the education sector.
 - b. Strategic level: Any instances of including education representatives with executive leadership or boards.
- 8. Use of data and information sharing: An overview of how data is being used to encourage learning within the arrangements and evidence of how information sharing has improved practice and outcomes.
- 9. Independent scrutiny: A review of the impact and learning from independent scrutiny arrangements to ensure strong leadership and that the arrangements achieve the desired impact.

10. Updates to published arrangements: Any updates to the published safeguarding arrangements with proposed timescales for implementation.
 11. Implementation of national reforms: Evidence of national reforms being implemented, key decisions and actions taken by safeguarding partners in response to reforms, and any issues or concerns encountered during the yearly cycle. Information on national developments in addition to any future changes to statutory guidance and what has been done to address those should be outlined.
- Review of use of restraint in secure establishments: For areas with secure establishments, a review of the use of restraint within the establishment, with findings reported to the youth justice Board, youth custody service, and His Majesty's inspectorate of prisons.

Section 4: Additional information

Our analysis identified additional key themes that safeguarding partnerships addressed in their yearly reports. Where appropriate, these should be included:

1. Focus on strategic priorities: Common priorities partnerships have identified to focus joint efforts on including neglect, child exploitation/contextual safeguarding, domestic abuse, and child mental health. Progress and challenges against any priority area should be reported.
- Strengthening multi-agency collaboration: Outline the importance of effective partnership and any challenges working across statutory safeguarding partners and relevant agencies. Examples could include joint initiatives, information sharing, co-located teams, etc.
2. Workforce development through multi-agency training, workforce capacity and hearing the voice of the workforce:
 - a. Any information relevant to recruitment, resource, retention and high turnover of the children's safeguarding workforce and any challenges occurring because of this.
 - b. Any points regarding comprehensive training offers to build safeguarding knowledge and skills across the multi-agency workforce is a key function, including seeking frontline staff input to inform the work of the partnership.

3. Transitional safeguarding: Supporting young people transitioning from children to adult services.
4. Thresholds: Understanding and application of thresholds for providing support across the partnership
5. Specific cohorts: Focused attention on vulnerable cohorts like under 1s, children with disabilities, children in care.
6. Early help: support being provided to children and families before problems escalate. Examples could include efforts to strengthen their early help offer, such as developing Family Hubs, enhancing multi-agency working at the front door, and increasing uptake of early help assessments.
7. Mental health: How partnerships are working to provide a coordinated multi-agency response and early support for mental health, amid high demand for services. Specific concerns picked up through this analysis include self-harm, suicide, and mental health of vulnerable cohorts like children in care.
8. Engaging parents/caregivers: Any mention of improving engagement with and assessment of parents/caregivers.

Section 5: Future planning

Clearly labelled sections like 'Next Steps' or 'Future Focus' that specifically outline the partnership's planned actions, priorities, and focus areas for the coming year should be included. This makes it easy for readers to understand the direction and commitments of the partnership. Strong reports acknowledge how challenges and learning from the previous year will shape future efforts. They highlight planned developments in areas like quality assurance, training, data analysis, and impact measurement to strengthen the partnership's effectiveness and evidence base.

It would also be useful to outline proactive planning for emerging issues such as online safety, mental health, and transitional safeguarding that will require ongoing adaptation of safeguarding approaches. This demonstrates a proactive, long-term planning mindset.

Section 6: Conclusion

At the end of the report, a conclusion section should be included, bringing all of the key points across the report together; reflecting on what has been achieved with regards to

the requirements set out in statutory guidance, what the impact of this has been overall, and what plans are going forward.

Key elements to consider across reporting

In all reporting, the following elements should be considered:

Governance and structure

Outline the partnership's governance structure, including leadership roles, subgroups, and their responsibilities. This is important for accountability and clarity in decision-making. Emphasise multi-agency working, detailing how partners collaborate and share information to safeguard children. Include descriptions of joint working arrangements, information sharing protocols, and collaborative initiatives across agencies like social care, police, education, and health.

Impact and evidence of impact

Effectively articulate the impact of the partnership's work, going beyond simply stating intended outcomes to providing concrete evidence of the difference made for children and families. For example, include a dedicated section called 'Impact' or 'What difference has it made?' for each priority area, outlining specific achievements and improvements. Aim to provide a range of evidence to support these claims of impact, including quantitative data (e.g. reductions in referrals, increased service uptake, improved outcomes for children in care), qualitative feedback from children, families, and practitioners, case studies illustrating successful interventions, and findings from audits and reviews. If you do not have robust evidence for the year of reporting, provide this for the previous year.

Clearly link specific partnership activities and initiatives to tangible outcomes. For example, demonstrate how multi-agency training has improved practitioner confidence and led to better identification of safeguarding concerns, or how learning from case reviews has resulted in changes to practice and improved service provision. Highlight the impact of specific initiatives, such as the development of neglect strategies and toolkits, the implementation of early help programs, and the establishment of multi-agency teams to address child exploitation. Providing details on these initiatives and their positive outcomes (e.g. case studies) strengthens the evidence of impact amongst safeguarding partnerships.

Notes on format

It would be useful to note the formatting guidelines are followed to ensure that the reports are more easily accessible:

1. Abide by general accessibility guidelines to ensure that the report is readable for the general public, families, and practitioners.
2. Provide a PDF format of the report.
3. Avoid putting key information in images (e.g. do not screenshot charts and tables). Provide the key information within the document itself. If you would like to present data in images, ensure that the full explanation appears in the text.
4. Avoid the use of screenshotted tables to provide financial information. Please use a simple table format (as outlined in Table 8).

Appendix 2: Methodology Additional Details

The approach taken to address the objectives of this research had three key stages assisted by AI. These included (1) identifying key themes for analysis, (2) analysis of key themes, and (3) quality assuring the outputs of AI. In each of the stages, the research team refined appropriate and detailed prompts to ensure high quality outputs from Ipsos Facto. Prompting AI always included providing background context on the objectives of the project, assigning the character of a social researcher to AI, and then assigning a specific task. In addition, all prompts asked Ipsos Facto to provide the exact location (e.g. page number) from which it was pulling data, to ensure researchers could go back and quality check the responses. An example of prompts is included below.

Example AI Prompt

The example below demonstrates how the research team prompted AI to interrogate the reports.

Imagine you are a social researcher with lots of experience. We are doing a project for DfE around safeguarding partnerships. The background information is as follows: The Children and Social Work Act 2017 placed a shared and equal duty on local authorities, integrated care boards, and the police to come together as statutory safeguarding partners (SPs) to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in their local areas. As part of the scrutiny and accountability system, SPs are required in legislation and statutory guidance to publish a yearly report.

The DfE published updated statutory guidance, WT2023 in December 2023. In WT2023 the department set out a range of new expectations for partnership structures and practice for local safeguarding partnerships. Yearly reports are a key source of data and evidence for the department, and they are intended to provide a learning and reflection opportunity for partnerships.

Compliance with yearly report publication is particularly important this year. Analysis of the 2023-24 yearly reports will enable us to understand how partnerships have planned for, and what progress they have made towards, full implementation of the new expectations. We also want to gain insights into how effective partnerships are, how they are funded and areas that require focus for improvement. It is likely that we will identify key themes which could inform policy development across the spectrum of children's

social care and multi-agency working. Findings will also be fed into the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel to enable it to review and escalate any issues to a national level

We expect that the analysis of the yearly reports will have multiple purposes, it will provide:

- evidence to assess if safeguarding partners are compliant with WT2023 (are they compliant with the requirement to publish and are they meeting the new structural and practice requirements)
- an understanding of the priorities, learning, impact and improvement of safeguarding partnerships, identifying key or recurring themes
- evidence to inform future policy development and inform potential future reforms (e.g. areas that may require further development including learning and support offers, accountability and equitability of partnerships)
- evidence on what partnerships have done because of child safeguarding practice reviews they have undertaken.
- evidence to inform future approaches to the yearly reporting process
- evidence that can be shared with the sector through to support development and signal to the sector the importance that DfE places on the information shared in yearly reports

I would like you to highlight the key themes that are emerging from the report I have attached. Using the background information as context, please read through the attached report and ask me any questions that would help you analyse the themes better.

[if it does ask you questions, discuss with team and then after responding to questions, prompt] Please highlight the key themes and tell me where you are pulling this information from.

[if it does not ask you questions and just provides the themes, prompt as follows] Please tell me where you are pulling the themes from.

Refining the data capture template and assessment framework

The approach taken to address the objectives of this research had three key stages assisted by AI. These included (1) identifying key themes for analysis, (2) analysis of key themes, and (3) quality assuring the outputs of AI. In each of the stages, the research team refined appropriate and detailed prompts to ensure high quality outputs from Ipsos Facto. Prompting AI always included providing background context on the objectives of the project, assigning the character of a social researcher to AI, and then assigning a specific task. In addition, all prompts asked Ipsos Facto to provide the exact location (e.g. page number) from which it was pulling data, to ensure researchers could go back and quality check the responses. An example of prompts is included below.

DfE and Ipsos agreed on themes for analysis, incorporating both high-level and in-depth assessments to track progress towards WT2023. Ipsos Facto reviewed yearly reports and identified 26 final themes, combining top-down and bottom-up approaches. The first 14 themes were from WT2023, while themes 15-26 were recurring themes identified by Ipsos Facto across different reports.

Key themes and explanations for analysis for the yearly reports

Theme	Explanation
1. Contribution of each safeguarding partner	<p>The contributions of each safeguarding partner to the functioning and structure of the multi-agency safeguarding arrangements.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) This needs to consider if and how reports have outlined their approaches to the delegation of the safeguarding role from the 3 lead partners' (LSP, ICBs, Police) within partnership governance structures.b) The removal of the independent chair and evidence of planning towards, or implementation of, the partnership chair role.
2. Themes from aggregated scrutiny	<p>Themes emerging from aggregated methods of scrutiny, such as reviews, scrutineer activities, and multi-agency audits.</p>

Theme	Explanation
3. Impact on outcomes for children and families	Evidence of the impact of the work of safeguarding partners and relevant agencies, including training, on outcomes for children and families.
4. Analysis of areas with limited progress	An analysis of areas where there has been little or no evidence of progress on agreed priorities.
5. Learning from serious incidents	An analysis of learning derived from serious incidents. This could include conducting rapid reviews, local child safeguarding practice reviews, and other case reviews including and learning from national reviews, to learn from serious incidents as a core activity.
6. Key decisions and actions taken	A record of key decisions and actions taken by the safeguarding partners in the yearly cycle, including the implementation of recommendations from local and national child safeguarding practice reviews, and their impact.
7. Feedback from children and families	Ways in which safeguarding partners have sought and utilised feedback from children and families to inform their work and influence service provision.
8. Financial breakdown and value for money	A breakdown of costs in delivering the arrangements, including financial contributions of individual partners, any changes to funding, and an assessment of the impact and value for money of this funding.
9. Representation of education sector	Evidence of how safeguarding partners are ensuring the adequate representation and input from the education sector at both operational and strategic levels of the arrangements.
10. Use of data and information sharing	An overview of how data is being used to encourage learning within the arrangements and evidence of how information sharing has improved practice and outcomes.
11. Independent scrutiny	A review of the impact and learning from independent scrutiny arrangements to ensure strong leadership and that the arrangements achieve the desired impact.
12. Updates to published arrangements	Any updates to the published safeguarding arrangements with proposed timescales for implementation.

Theme	Explanation
13. Implementation of national reforms	Evidence of national reforms being implemented, key decisions and actions taken by safeguarding partners in response to reforms, and any issues or concerns encountered during the yearly cycle.
14. Review of use of restraint in secure establishments	For areas with secure establishments, a review of the use of restraint within the establishment, with findings reported to the Youth Justice Board, Youth Custody Service, and His Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons.
15. Implementing changes from WT2023 statutory guidance	Processes partnerships have taken to update their multi-agency safeguarding arrangements to align with the new requirements by the December 2024 deadline. This includes changes to leadership roles, governance structures, engaging education partners, and scrutiny arrangements.
16. Focus on strategic priorities	Common priorities partnerships have identified to focus joint efforts on including neglect, child exploitation/contextual safeguarding, domestic abuse, and child mental health. Progress and challenges against each priority area should be reported.
17. Strengthening multi-agency collaboration	Where reports outline the importance of effective partnership working across statutory safeguarding partners and relevant agencies. Examples could include joint initiatives, information sharing, co-located teams, etc. Some challenges around full engagement of all are noted.
18. Workforce development through multi-agency training, workforce capacity and hearing the voice of the workforce	Any mentions of recruitment, resource, retention and high turnover of the children's safeguarding workforce and any challenges occurring because of this. Mentions of comprehensive training offer to build safeguarding knowledge and skills across the multi-agency workforce is a key function. Mentions of seeking frontline staff input to inform the work of the partnership.
19. Changes in leadership and governance	Any changes in partnerships' leadership, structures or governance arrangements during the reporting period.
20. Transitional safeguarding	Supporting young people transitioning from children to adults' services

Theme	Explanation
21. Thresholds	Understanding and application of thresholds for providing support across the partnership
22. Specific cohorts	Focused attention on vulnerable cohorts like under 1s, children with disabilities, children in care
23. Early help	Mentions of providing early support to children and families before problems escalate. Examples could include efforts to strengthen their early help offer, such as developing Family Hubs, enhancing multi-agency working at the front door, and increasing uptake of early help assessments.
24. Mental health	Mentions of how partnerships are working on how to provide a coordinated multi-agency response and early support for mental health, amid high demand for services. Specific concerns include self-harm, suicide, and mental health of vulnerable cohorts like children in care
25. Covid-19	Any focus on pandemic recovery, and ongoing impacts felt. Examples could include mental health strains, increased child protection concerns, continued backlogs/high demand on services, and changes made during Covid, like virtual training delivery, that have had some benefits that partnerships want to retain.
26. Engaging Mothers and Fathers	Any mention of improving engagement with, and assessment of, mothers/female caregivers. Any mention of improving engagement with and assessment of fathers/male caregivers.

Ipsos and DfE agreed on an assessment framework for scoring yearly reports, based on four key elements:

1. The report mirrors the language within WT2023 statutory guidance.
2. The report provides information on the processes used in the partnership as well as the impact of the partnership's responses.
3. The report provides details on the impact of the safeguarding partnerships alongside the evidence of impact.
4. The report provides information on future planning and implications of the safeguarding partnership.

The scoring system was as such:

- Categories 1,2,3: If the report met the criteria, it scored one, and if not, it scored zero. This allowed the range of 0-3 from this section.
- Category 4: If the report met criteria 1,2,3 (as in scored one on all of these), category 4 would also be scored. If the report met criteria 4, they scored one, and if not, they scored zero.

This meant that if a partnership had recorded categories 1 and 2 but not provided evidence for impact (category 3) but had outlined future planning, they would score two out of four, as they needed to have included all three categories before being awarded for the presence of category 4. A score of zero indicates that none of the criteria are met.

Assessment scores

Criteria	Scoring System
The report mirrors the language of WT2023 guidance.	Meets criteria? Yes = 1 No = 0
The report provides basic information on the processes used in the partnership as well as the impact of the partnership.	Meets criteria? Yes = 1 No = 0
The report provides the impact of the safeguarding partnerships alongside the evidence for impact.	Meets criteria? Yes = 1 No = 0
The report provides information on future planning and implications.	If report meets criteria 1,2,3 (If all of them score Yes) then... Meets criteria? Yes =1 No = 0

Quality assurance of AI outputs

Ipsos Facto supported in speeding up the process of reviewing over 100 reports, providing excellent and detailed summaries against key themes, however, it still required the research team to check the outputs. To ensure the accuracy and reliability of the AI-generated analysis, a rigorous quality assurance process was implemented. This involved checking a minimum of 10% of the reports, against separate criteria by the research team with additional support from a subject matter expert:

- a) Cross-checking AI findings for themes and their subsequent analysis:
Researchers verified the findings by cross-checking the generated summaries with the original reports, paying particular attention to the source of specific data points to ensure that AI findings were not hallucinated.
- b) Figure verification: Recognising the limitations of AI in consistently capturing information from images and tables, a quality check was conducted on randomly selected reports. Researchers manually verified the figures presented in the images against the data extracted by Ipsos Facto.
- c) Comparing themes: It was highlighted that themes 13 and 15 were very similar, so this was checked to ensure the data was captured appropriately.
- d) Assessment framework scoring: Ipsos Facto was prompted to provide a score out of 4 for each report, based on 4 separate criteria. The researchers cross checked the scores that were given to the reports overall, and when it was deemed appropriate, judgement calls were made to amend the scores.

Limitations

While AI provides substantial benefits in efficiently analysing large volumes of text and identifying themes and trends, it is important to acknowledge its limitations. The specific limitations of AI related to this project are that substantial time is required from researchers to perform quality checking. AI also has an inability to capture information from images consistently, in understanding impact, and evidence of impact, enough to score it within assessment scoring, and difficulties interrogating reports in formats other than PDF. difficulty

As of January 2025, AI does not consistently capture information from images. This means that where partnerships outlined their structures or financial contributions within

images and did not include alternative text (ALT text), this was not captured by Ipsos Facto. Similarly, some reports were scored down in the assessments as they had linked follow up information in images that AI could not capture. This was subsequently reviewed by the researchers and the scores were amended.

Ipsos Facto's ability to determine impact, and evidence of impact is limited, particularly when some safeguarding partnerships have only recently implemented certain practices. Additionally, although Ipsos Facto reviewed the reports very well based on the assessment criteria outlined, it was not fit to make an assessment of whether or not the reports met those criteria. In other words, whilst it could provide the rationale, it lacked consistency when making a yes/no assessment. Ipsos' quality assurance processes highlighted these discrepancies. The scores were therefore given by the researchers, based on the rationale outlined by Ipsos Facto.

Finally, as previously mentioned, Ipsos Facto is currently unable to review reports that were not in PDF format or were not easily convertible to this format. This meant that two of the yearly reports that were available for analysis were not analysed as part of this research.

In terms of research limitations not specific to AI, this project has not assessed the accessibility of the reports. WT2023 states that all reports should be transparent and accessible to families and professionals. This was not explored as part of this research.



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