



Department
for Education

ISAG February Meeting Update

ISAG held its **fourth virtual meeting on 24 February 2026**, chaired by **Adrian Loades** (National Safeguarding Partner Multi-Agency Facilitator). The group will initially meet monthly for 12 months to drive forward its strategic priorities.

Agenda discussed:

- **Update- ISAG Website Publication:** Members were updated that the ISAG information had now been approved for publication on GOV.UK, including a group overview and contact details.
- **Update- Research Project (Interviews):** A progress update showed that 13 interviews had been completed across a mix of scrutineers, business managers, and DSPs. Engagement had been strong, with interviews consistently lasting an hour. Early themes were beginning to emerge, and the group highlighted the importance of capturing evidence of impact, linking findings to existing frameworks, and considering factors such as contract length and the role of scrutineers in inspection processes.
- **Update- Initial Outline for Research Report:** The group reviewed a proposed structure for the research report, covering the executive summary, methodology, findings, examples of practice, and recommendations. Members advised that some sections could be streamlined, suggested stronger alignment with existing tools, and emphasised the need to clearly articulate both immediate and longer-term impacts of independent scrutiny.
- **The Role of Independent Scrutiny within Yearly Reports:** A DfE representative shared early policy thinking on improving MASA yearly reports. Members stressed the need for reports to be concise and focused on priorities, learning, and impact, and encouraged alignment with the revised Six Steps to Scrutiny guidance as well as clearer integration of independent scrutiny statements.
- **Call-out for Topics “Spotlight On”:** Members were invited to propose topics for future spotlight sessions. Suggestions included elective home education scrutiny, thematic work on children’s mental health and neurodiversity, regional scrutiny examples across different processes, and exploration of independent scrutiny within reform programmes. The group noted the importance of complementing national thematic priorities.

We welcome input from across the sector. Please contact:
MASA.partners@education.gov.uk to share your insights or ask questions.

Next Meeting: Tuesday, 31st March 2026 at 11:30 AM BST