



ISAG April Meeting Update

The Independent Scrutiny Advisory Group (ISAG) held its **sixth virtual meeting on 28 April 2026**, chaired by Adrian Loades (National Safeguarding Partner Multi-Agency Facilitator). ISAG continues to meet monthly to support the development and strengthening of independent scrutiny across multi-agency safeguarding arrangements.

Agenda discussed:

- **Update on the Independent Scrutiny Research Project:** Members received an update on the ongoing research exploring how independent scrutiny is operating across safeguarding partnerships. Emerging findings highlighted consistent expectations around the core elements required for effective scrutiny, including clarity of role, access to data and partners, sufficient time and support, and clear governance. The group discussed how impact from scrutiny is most effectively demonstrated over time, through follow-up on recommendations, learning, and changes in practice, rather than through single performance measures.
- **Consideration of how research findings will be shared:** The group discussed approaches to disseminating research findings in ways that are accessible and useful to different audiences. Options included webinars, targeted engagement with regional and professional networks, and the development of shorter, role-specific summaries for safeguarding leaders, scrutineers, and wider partners. Members emphasised the importance of consistent national messaging that can also support local adaptation.
- **‘Spotlight On’ session: Child mental health, wellbeing and neurodiversity:** Members heard a thematic case study focused on independent scrutiny of child mental health and neurodiversity. Discussion explored how partnerships identify scrutiny priorities, commission thematic work, and use mixed methods such as data review, case studies, and stakeholder engagement. The session highlighted the value of integrated approaches, clear governance, and ensuring children’s voices inform scrutiny activity. Members also reflected on how learning from scrutiny can be embedded during periods of wider system change.
- **The role of independent scrutiny during organisational change:** The group considered the challenges and risks to effective scrutiny during periods of significant organisational or system change. Discussion emphasised the assurance role of independent scrutiny in helping partnerships maintain focus on safeguarding priorities while navigating reform and restructuring.

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

Next Meeting: Tuesday, 26 May 2026 at 11:30 AM BST

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