

Consultation on establishing a Child Protection Authority

Analysis of responses

7th July 2026

Authors: York Consulting

Contents

Contents	2
Executive Summary	5
About the respondents	5
Child Protection Authority Overview	5
System leadership and national oversight	6
System learning and support	7
Driving system improvement in the child protection system	8
Effectiveness, structure and engagements with other bodies	8
Introduction	9
Methodology	10
Phase 1: Data checking and preparation	10
Phase 2: Analysis of responses	10
Phase 3: Reporting	11
List of figures	12
Chapter 1: About the respondents	14
Respondent characteristics	14
Stakeholder type	14
Location	15
Emailed responses	16
Campaign responses	17
Chapter 2: Child Protection Authority Overview	18
Q1. Do you agree with the scope of the CPA?	18
Q2. How else might the Panel develop its role to help explore potential CPA functions in the interim period while the CPA is being consulted on and created?	21
Q3. The cross-government violence against women and girls (VAWG) strategy is due to be published shortly. The strategy will set out how we will halve VAWG in a decade – as well as the further measures we will take to support the victims and tackle the perpetrators. What more could we do to make sure that the design of the CPA will contribute to the work to tackle VAWG?	23
Chapter 3: System leadership & national oversight	26
Q4. Do you agree with the proposals set out for how the CPA will have national oversight of the child protection system?	26

Q5. How should the CPA advise government on systemic risks and emerging themes in child protection?	28
Q6. Do you agree with the proposals set out for how the CPA will horizon scan?	30
Q7. Do you agree that a national body should monitor diverse information sources to identify emerging threats to child protection?	32
Q8. Do you agree with the proposals set out for how the CPA will build data and analytical expertise?	34
Q9. Are the data sources set out above the right ones for the CPA to identify risks and systemic issues?	36
Q10. How can the CPA ensure its data and intelligence work complements local efforts and avoids duplication with existing systems and responsibilities?	38
Q11. What types of national reports, dashboards, or analytical products would be most useful to practitioners and policymakers?	40
Q12. Do you agree with the proposals set out for how the CPA will identify and address evidence gaps?	42
Chapter 4: System learning and support	46
Q13. Do you agree with the proposals set out for how the CPA will promote and embed good practice?	46
Q14. How can the CPA work collaboratively with your organisation to promote learning, innovation and continuous improvement in child protection?	48
Q15. Do you agree with the proposals set out for how the CPA will support research and evidence?	50
Q16. How should the CPA prioritise research topics, particularly in collaboration with existing What Works Centre and research bodies?	51
Q17. How can the CPA ensure that commissioned research is accessible, relevant, and used effectively by practitioners?	54
Q18. How can we ensure that the CPA has the evidence-base embedded in the child protection system?	55
Q19. What risks or challenges do you foresee in establishing a national body to synthesise and advise on child protection learning?	57
Q20. What content, features, or formats would make a national learning platform most useful for improving child protection practice in your local context?	60
Q21. Do you agree with the proposals set out on how the CPA can support workforce and training?	62
Q22. Do you support the CPA working with regulators and professional bodies, and national government, to promote consistent training standards across safeguarding partners?	65

Chapter 5: Driving system improvement in the Child Protection System	67
Q23. Do you agree with the proposals set out for the CPA to support multi-agency learning and improvements?	67
Q24. Do you believe your sector would benefit from additional support from the CPA when implementing recommendations and improvements?	69
Q25. What do you think are the most persistent barriers to implementing recommendations from local and national reviews effectively?	71
Q26. How do you think the CPA could best monitor the implementation of recommendations from reviews?	73
Q27. Do you agree with the proposals set out for how the CPA will address persistent failings (powers to compel information sharing, powers to convene partners, powers to advise inspectorates on activity)?	74
Q28. In what circumstances should the CPA escalate its concerns to inspectorates?	77
Q29. How can the CPA ensure that its approach is both proportionate and effective?	79
Q30. Where significant failings are identified, including persistent lack of action against recommendations, what additional actions or powers should the CPA be able to take to hold organisations to account?	81
Chapter 6: Effectiveness; structure and engagements with other bodies	84
Q31. Do you believe these are the correct criteria by which to determine what type of public body the CPA should take?	84
Q32. What types of professional expertise and backgrounds should be represented within the CPA to ensure it can respond effectively to child protection challenges? Are there any specific roles or disciplines you believe are essential?	86
Q33. How can the CPA engage children, young people, and victims/survivors?	89
Conclusion	91
Analysis of emailed responses	92
Remit, authority and powers of the CPA	92
Relationship with existing bodies	92
Independence and governance	93
Engagement with stakeholders and those with lived experience	93
Workforce development and systemic issues	93
Data, evidence and learning	94

Executive Summary

The establishment of a Child Protection Authority (CPA) was one of the key recommendations of the final report of the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA). Through establishing a CPA, the DfE aims to address three persistent issues within the child protection system:

- fragmentation, with a lack of strong leadership and coordination at a national level
- a lack of consistent sharing and embedding of good practice.
- learning not being consistently translated into improvements.

The consultation on establishing a CPA was open from 11 December 2025 to 5 March 2026. It sought views on the proposed scope, functions and powers of the CPA.

The analysis of responses to the consultation was completed by York Consulting LLP between March and April 2026. Qualitative responses were coded in MAX QDA software, using a framework that identified core themes and issues for each question. This report summarises the key findings across all quantitative and qualitative consultations questions.

About the respondents

In total, 379 responses were received to the consultation. This comprised:

- 299 responses submitted through the online Citizen Space platform.
- 16 emailed responses that followed the consultation questionnaire.
- 17 emailed responses that did not follow the consultation questionnaire.
- 47 campaign responses (that did not follow the consultation questionnaire) expressing support for establishing a CPA.

Child Protection Authority Overview

Respondents generally agreed with the proposed scope of the CPA (63% or 191). However, there were calls for a broader remit encompassing all significant harms, structural determinants of harm and systemic issues within the child protection sector. Some concerns were raised about the potential for organisational duplication, with respondents emphasising the need for clear differentiation between the CPA's functions and those of other bodies.

Varied suggestions were made for how the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel might develop its role in the interim period whilst the CPA is being consulted on and created. Some said the Panel's role should evolve from retrospective reviews to more proactive, preventative and system-focused functions, to align with the future CPA. Others

identified ways in which the Panel could explore approaches to enhance learning, knowledge dissemination and analytical capabilities.

Regarding ensuring the design of the CPA contributes to tackling violence against women and girls, there were calls for the CPA to prioritise learning and education about VAWG and to take an evidence-informed, multi-agency, preventative approach.

System leadership and national oversight

Most respondents agreed with the proposals that the CPA will have national oversight of the child protection system (71% or 211). Respondents emphasised that oversight must actively facilitate cross-agency collaboration and stressed that any national body must have clear authority to enforce change.

Regarding how the CPA should advise government on system risks and emerging themes, respondents suggested that the CPA should provide credible, impactful advice grounded in robust, evidence-led approaches. Respondents also wanted an approach combining quantitative data and qualitative insight (particularly from those with lived experience) that is translated into clear, actionable recommendations.

Three-quarters of respondents (74% or 217) agreed with the proposals on horizon scanning. Respondents suggested specific data types that the CPA should draw on, including intelligence from frontline practitioners and those with lived experience. There were concerns about the risk of duplication and fragmented datasets, with calls for horizon scanning to cover online harms and systemic issues with the child protection sector.

Almost all respondents (91% or 269) agreed that a national body should monitor diverse information sources for emerging threats. However, some felt the proposals relied too heavily on traditional data and advocated for a wider evidence base including complaints, Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) related trends, workforce indicators, and criminal justice data. The need for clear scope, safeguards, and transparency in data collection was also highlighted by some.

Over three-quarters (77% or 219) agreed with the proposals for the CPA to build data and analytical expertise. Respondents emphasised strong data quality, integration, and analytical capability and stressed the need for data standardization, clear definitions, ethical and trauma-informed data use, and safeguards for security and AI.

While 63% (172) thought the proposed data sources were correct for identifying risks, some called for expanding beyond statutory datasets to include qualitative intelligence like complaints, survivor testimony, whistleblowing, and information from voluntary sectors.

On how the CPA can ensure its data and intelligence work complements local efforts and avoids duplication, respondents emphasised the need for effective collaboration and communication between the CPA and local authorities. There were also suggestions that

the CPA should leverage existing data systems and develop unified national data standards.

In terms of the most useful types of national reports, dashboards or analytical products, respondents wanted resources that draw on cross-agency data to give system-wide insight, whilst also enabling local and regional comparisons. Respondents also stressed the need for user-friendly, action-oriented, practical tools and guidance.

Most respondents (75% or 207) agreed with the proposals for identifying and addressing evidence gaps, stressing the importance of diverse stakeholder perspectives, especially those with lived experience. They also emphasised the need for research coordination and prioritisation, whilst also ensuring that identifying evidence gaps leads to meaningful action.

System learning and support

Almost three-quarters of respondents (71% or 196) agreed with the proposals for how the CPA will promote and embed good practice. There were varied suggestions for effectively implementing good practice and developing the workforce, with some respondents also urging consideration of barriers to good practice implementation.

Respondents agreed with the CPA's proposed role in supporting research and evidence (80% or 222), though there were concerns that excessive focus on data collection might detract from practical improvements, with respondents stressing the need for research to have tangible impact and include the experiences of marginalized groups.

The importance of collaboration with sector experts in prioritising research topics was highlighted, with calls for research to focus on urgent issues, areas where there are significant gaps, and high-harm areas (such as neglect, exploitation, and VAWG). Respondents also stressed the importance of making commissioned research accessible, relevant, and useful for practitioners through co-design and continuous engagement.

To embed the evidence base, a comprehensive approach incorporating agency data, lived experience, practitioner insight, and existing research was called for, with emphasis on translating findings into national practice and workforce development. Risks foreseen in establishing a national body to synthesise and advise on child protection learning included lack of synergy, duplication, being too centralized or disconnected from local realities, and lacking power to enforce recommendations.

For a national learning platform, practical, ready-to-use, interactive, and accessible tools were suggested, with features that enable content filtering. There were also calls for co-production of the platform with practitioners.

A large majority (76% or 210) agreed with proposals for CPA support for workforce and training, with suggestions for co-production, alignment with existing learning, and national training standards.

Almost all (89% or 248) supported the CPA working with regulators and government to promote consistent training standards, emphasising the need for broad stakeholder representation, including frontline practitioners and those with lived experience.

Driving system improvement in the child protection system

Almost all respondents (82% or 226) agreed with the proposed approach for the CPA to support multi-agency learning. Generally, respondents wanted to see multi-agency expertise embedded within the CPA's design, rather than as a separate advisory function.

Almost all respondents (90% or 237) believed their sector would benefit from additional CPA support in implementing recommendations, stressing the importance of collaboration, co-ordination, and co-design with local authorities and specialists. Resource constraints, lack of a joined-up approach, and impractical recommendations were identified as the most persistent barriers to implementation. Regarding monitoring the implementation of recommendations, suggestions included a national tracking system, feedback from local partners and frontline practitioners, independent audits and a focus on meaningful outcome indicators rather than just compliance actions.

Almost three-quarters (74% or 199) agreed with the proposals for the CPA to address persistent failings. Respondents felt the CPA should have enforcement powers where there are failures to learn or act on recommendations, unaddressed improvements and/or clear evidence of harm or systemic risks. Suggested actions included mandating time-bound actions, compelling information-sharing, monitoring progress, escalation to inspectorates and holding leaders accountable.

Effectiveness, structure and engagements with other bodies

Most respondents (80% or 202) agreed with the criteria for determining the CPA's public body type. There were calls for frontline practitioners (social workers, health professionals, police etc.), third-sector representatives, and individuals with lived experience, alongside those with research, analytics, and inspection backgrounds, to be represented within the CPA. Respondents suggested that effective engagement with children, young people, and victims/survivors would need to be trauma-informed and accessible, with co-production embedded structurally within the CPA to foster long-term relationships.

Introduction

On 11 December 2025 the Department for Education (DfE) launched the consultation on establishing a Child Protection Authority (CPA), which sought views on the proposed scope, functions and powers of the CPA. The closing date for responses was 5 March 2026.

The establishment of a Child Protection Authority (CPA) was one of the key recommendations of the final report of the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA), with the DfE committing to consult on the issue before the end of 2025. Through establishing a CPA, the DfE aims to address three persistent issues within the child protection system:

- fragmentation, with a lack of strong leadership and coordination at a national level
- a lack of consistent sharing and embedding of good practice.
- learning not being consistently translated into improvements.

The proposed CPA will therefore seek to generate clarity and consistency within the child protection system, whilst also facilitating ongoing improvement through effective, evidence-based support.

This consultation sought views on how the CPA will:

- provide leadership and oversight.
- provide system learning and support.
- drive system improvement.
- be structured and engage with other organisations.

Stakeholders invited to contribute included frontline practitioners, safeguarding partnerships, voluntary and community sector organisations, inspectorates and regulatory bodies, improvement training and support organisations, and families with lived experience of the child protection system.

The consultation involved an online survey comprising 36 questions, including 3 questions gathering information about the respondents, 15 closed questions with an accompanying free text box and 18 standalone open questions.

In total, 379 consultation responses were received. Some responses were received via email and did not follow the consultation questionnaire.

This report presents an analysis of all responses received via the online and emailed routes.

Methodology

The methodological approach for analysis of the consultation data involved 3 phases, detailed below.

Phase 1: Data checking and preparation

DfE staff undertook a process of reviewing and checking the dataset of online responses prior to the secure transfer of data to York Consulting. This process was solely focused on removing personal identifiable information, as aligned with the privacy statement in the consultation and involvement of a third-party analyst (York Consulting). Whilst undertaking further analysis, York Consulting continued checks for any personal information and/or safeguarding disclosures – reporting any discovered to DfE for further action as necessary.

Other dataset management tasks included:

- flagging identical and/or similar responses, to review whether these constituted campaign responses (47 evident)
- reviewing emailed responses against the online responses to identify any duplicates, whereby an individual or organisation responds via email and the online system
- uploading the full dataset to MAX QDA qualitative analysis software.

Phase 2: Analysis of responses

Coding of qualitative data (open questions)

An initial coding framework was developed through manual coding of 25% of responses per question. Codes were developed through a combination of inductive, manual review of responses and suggestions from the Artificial Intelligence (AI) assist function in MAX QDA.

The coding framework identified and defined core themes and issues for each question. Following DfE feedback on the coding framework, the remaining responses were manually coded using the updated and refined coding framework.

Analysis of closed questions

Closed questions were analysed using Excel to produce descriptive statistics showing the balance of views for each question. For each question, those who did not answer were excluded from the analysis. Percentage bases (the number who responded to each question) are reported in the chart source information.

Emailed responses

A total of 80 emailed responses to the consultation were received. Of these, 16 followed the consultation questionnaire, so were included in the analysis detailed in the main body of the report. There were 17 emailed responses that did not follow the consultation questionnaire, which are summarised in Annex A: Emailed responses. The remaining 47 emailed submissions were identical campaign responses comprising a short paragraph expressing support for the establishment of a CPA. Further detail on these campaign responses is outlined in Chapter 1: About the respondents.

Phase 3: Reporting

The remainder of this report details the analysis of the consultation responses, including a chapter on respondent characteristics, analysis of all quantitative and qualitative questions and an annex summarising emailed responses.

Results for closed questions are presented as a chart with an accompanying narrative of results.

Findings from the analysis of qualitative responses are reported using summaries of the themes identified for each open question. Analysts' understanding of the responses gained through manual coding, combined with AI generated overviews of the text segments coded to each theme, informed the drafting of these summaries.

For each question, the number of respondents with comments coded to each theme is in brackets. Themes with the highest number of respondents have been reported first, with the others in descending order.

Within the theme summaries, the proportion of respondents raising each point is quantified in the following way:

- almost all – over three-quarters (of the comments coded under the theme)
- most – one-half to three-quarters
- some – one-quarter to one-half
- a few – less than one-quarter.

A few comments within each question said they did not feel able to comment or that the proposals did not provide sufficient detail for them to comment. All questions had a similar, small proportion of these comments with no notable exceptions. As such, these have not been included in the summaries to avoid repetition.

List of figures

Figure 1: Respondents categorised by region, shown against the population of English regions by percentage	16
Figure 2: Q1. Do you agree with the scope of the CPA?	18
Figure 3: Q4. Do you agree with the proposals set out for how the CPA will have national oversight of the child protection system?	26
Figure 4: Q6. Do you agree with the proposals set out for how the CPA will horizon scan?	30
Figure 5: Q7. Do you agree that a national body should monitor diverse information sources to identify emerging threats to child protection?	32
Figure 6: Q8. Do you agree with the proposals set out for how the CPA will build data and analytical expertise?	34
Figure 7: Q9. Are the data sources set out above the right ones for the CPA to identify risks and systemic issues?	36
Figure 8 Q12. Do you agree with the proposals set out for how the CPA will identify and address evidence gaps?	43
Figure 9 Q13. Do you agree with the proposals set out for how the CPA will promote and embed good practice?	46
Figure 10 Q15. Do you agree with the proposals set out for how the CPA will support research and evidence?	50
Figure 11 Q21. Do you agree with the proposals set out on how the CPA can support workforce and training?	62
Figure 12 Q22. Do you support the CPA working with regulators and professional bodies, and national government, to promote consistent training standards across safeguarding partners?	65
Figure 13 Q23. Do you agree with the proposals set out for the CPA to support multi-agency learning and improvements?	67
Figure 14 Q24. Do you believe your sector would benefit from additional support from the CPA when implementing recommendations and improvements?	69
Figure 15 Q27. Do you agree with the proposals set out for how the CPA will address persistent failings (powers to compel information sharing, powers to convene partners, powers to advise inspectorates on activity)?	75

Figure 16 Q31. Do you believe these are the correct criteria by which to determine what type of public body the CPA should take?

Chapter 1: About the respondents

In total, 379 responses were received to the consultation. This comprised:

- 299 responses submitted through the online Citizen Space platform
- 16 emailed responses that followed the consultation questionnaire
- 17 emailed responses that did not follow the consultation questionnaire
- 47 campaign responses (that did not follow the consultation questionnaire) expressing support for establishing a CPA.

Emailed responses that did not follow the consultation questionnaire did not answer the respondent characteristic questions and therefore are not included in the respondent analysis below.

Respondent characteristics

Respondents were asked whether they were responding on behalf of an individual or organisation and what local authority area they were based in.

Stakeholder type

Across the responses that followed the consultation questionnaire, 54% (169) were responding as an individual, whilst 44% (140) were responding on behalf of an organisation¹.

Whilst the consultation did not include a question on stakeholder type, respondents were categorised by DfE based on information provided in their consultation response. Below shows the breakdown of respondents by stakeholder type, with the largest respondent groups being those from third sector organisations (22% or 70), education (17% or 55) and local authorities (16% or 49).

¹ Base = 309 (all those who answered the question)

Table 1: Stakeholder categorisation

Stakeholder type	Number	Percentage
Third sector	70	22%
Education	55	17%
Local authority	49	16%
Health	29	9%
Parent or carer	15	5%
Out-of-school-settings	7	2%
Lived experience	6	2%
Police and criminal justice	5	2%
Government body	4	1%
Other	75	24%
Total	315	100%

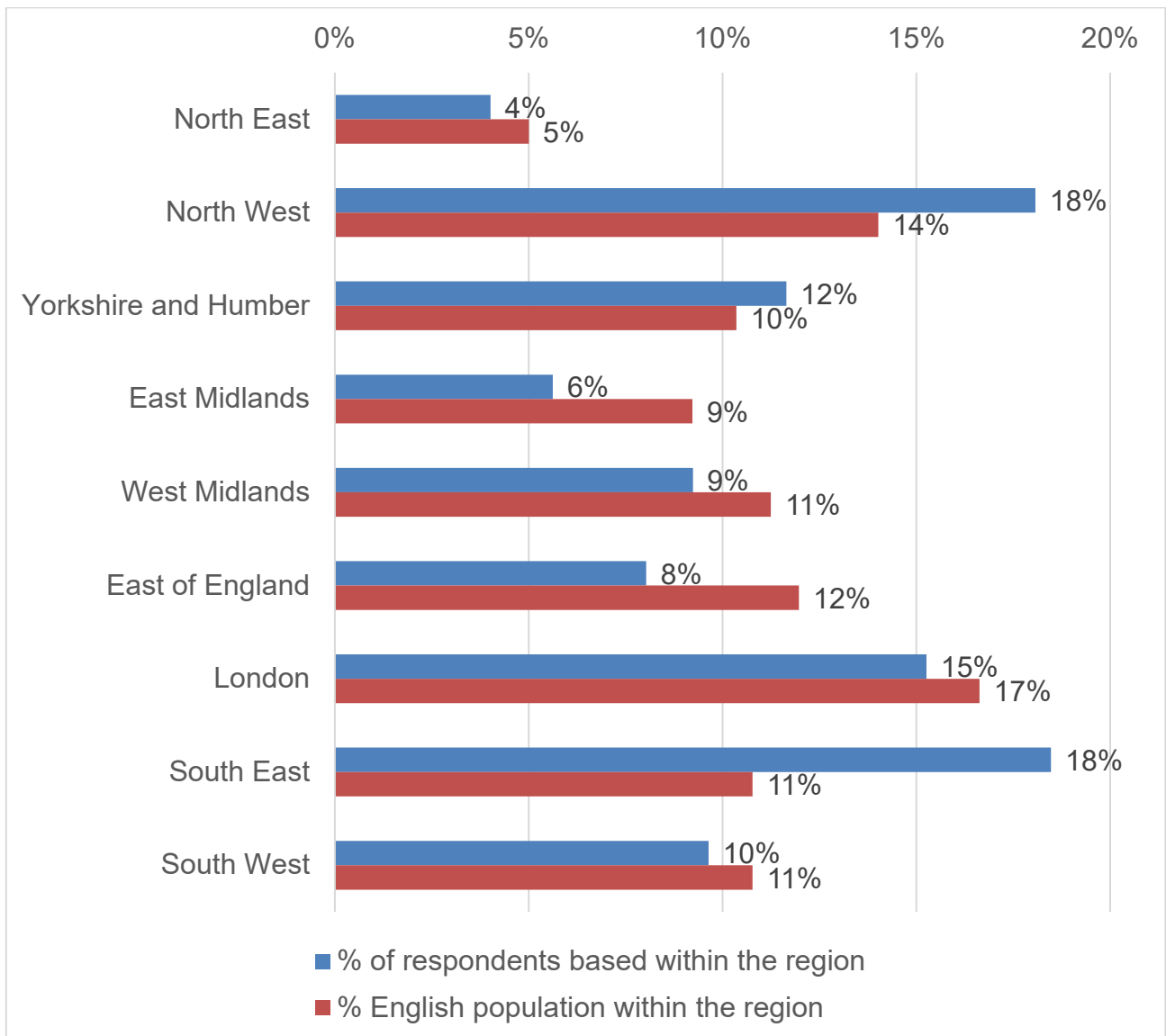
Source: DfE categorisation of CPA consultation responses, March 2026. Base = 315. The 'Other' category includes 65 respondents where there was insufficient information to determine stakeholder type, and 10 other respondents who did not fit into any of the above categories, such as academics and unions.

Location

Around one-sixth of online respondents (17% or 53) identified themselves as national stakeholders not linked to a particular region or local authority area. One respondent was based in Wales and one outside the UK.

Amongst the respondents based within a region, there was an over representation of respondents from the South East and North West and a slight under representation of those from the East of England and East Midlands (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Respondents categorised by region, shown against the population of English regions by percentage



Source: CPA consultation responses, March 2026. UK Census 2021². Base = 249 (all online respondents who indicated they were based in a local authority).

Emailed responses

Of the 33 non-campaign responses received via email (both those that followed the consultation questionnaire and those which did not), respondents tended to be sector organisations such as charities, public bodies, campaign organisations or local authorities.

² [Office for National Statistics \(2022\) Population and household estimates, England and Wales: Census 2021](#)

Campaign responses

The remaining 47 emailed responses were campaign responses that contained the following paragraph expressing support for the establishment of a CPA.

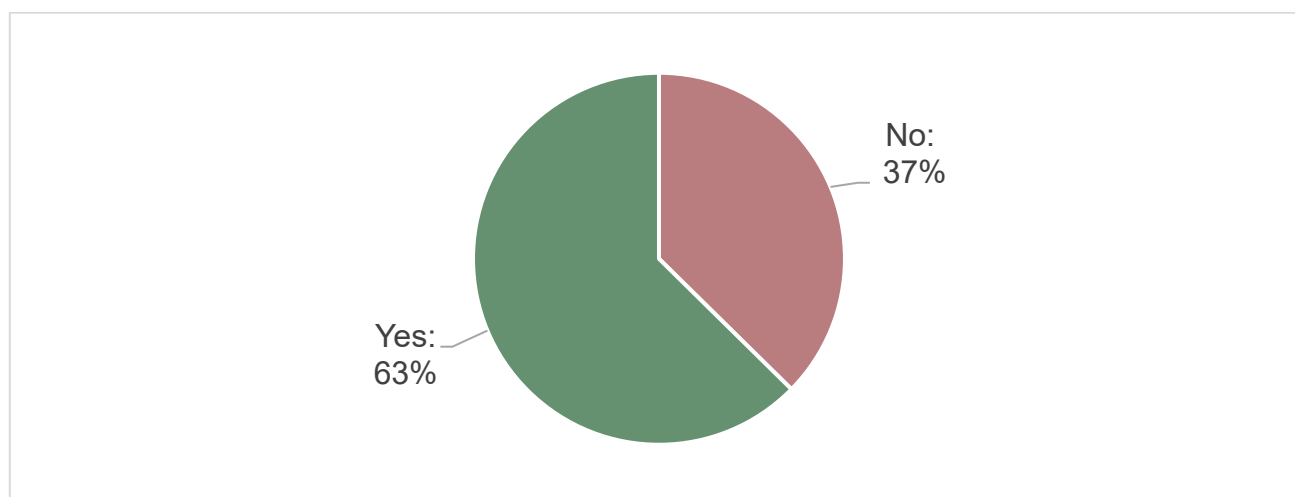
“I support the creation of the Child Protection Authority as per recommendation 2 of the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse published in Oct 2022. This is a welcome and urgently needed development for child protection reform and will help to address the unacceptable numbers of children who experience child sexual abuse in the UK (500,000 every year). I want to see this bill progress and pass during the current Parliamentary Session, so a CPA can be established and further developed once in place and oversee the implementation of the remaining IICSA recommendations.” - *Emailed campaign response*

Chapter 2: Child Protection Authority Overview

Q1. Do you agree with the scope of the CPA?

As shown in Figure 2, just under two-thirds of respondents (63% or 191) agreed with the proposed scope of the CPA, whilst just under one-third disagreed (37% or 114).

Figure 2: Q1. Do you agree with the scope of the CPA?



Source: CPA consultation responses March 2026. Base = 305.

Qualitative responses to question 1

There were 183 qualitative responses to this question. Most respondents commented on the CPA's scope in terms of the types of harm and groups which should be covered, including calls for a broader remit encompassing all significant harms, structural determinants of harm and systemic issues within the child protection sector. Some concerns were raised about the potential for organisational duplication, with respondents emphasising the need for clear differentiation between the CPA's functions and those of other bodies. Some respondents also suggested that, for the CPA to be effective, it will need strong enforcement powers and mechanisms for ensuring recommendations are implemented.

Scope regarding types of harm, groups and issues covered (114 respondents)

Most of these respondents stressed that while prioritizing severe or cumulative harm is understandable, all significant harms must be investigated, learned from, and prevented, without overlooking other serious forms of abuse. Respondents also emphasised the need for explicit and consistent definitions of abuse categories and harm.

Some respondents felt the scope of the CPA should be expanded in specific ways, including suggestions that it:

- should proactively address systemic issues, such as poverty, housing and inequality, and encompass a broader remit that includes preventative work, early help and children in need
- will need to address systemic issues in child protection, such as underfunding, staff shortages, high caseloads, and poor retention, to be effective
- should encompass extracurricular, voluntary, sport, faith, arts, and other out-of-school-settings, with respondents highlighting what they saw as significant safeguarding risks in these areas.

A few respondents made suggestions for specific contexts and groups they thought should be under the remit of the CPA. These included:

- children in institutional and residential settings, such as boarding schools, children's homes, and residential special schools
- children who are victims of domestic abuse, both within the family and in their own intimate relationships
- young adults up to 25 years of age, particularly those with additional needs and/or experience of care
- all care-experienced children, not just those currently in care, due to their continued vulnerability
- extra-familial harm, contextual safeguarding, online harm, and exploitation
- specific vulnerable groups, such as trans and gender-diverse children, children with insecure immigration status, refugee and migrant children, and children who are neurodivergent or have disabilities.

Relationships with other bodies and safeguarding partners (36 respondents)

Most of these respondents expressed concerns about potential organisational duplication, stressing that the CPA should not replicate the functions of organisations such as Ofsted or the Care Quality Commission (CQC). As such, there were calls for clear differentiations between the CPA's functions and those of existing regulatory and oversight bodies, to prevent confusion and inefficiency.

Some respondents commented on how they felt the CPA should work with existing bodies, including local safeguarding partners. This included suggestions that the CPA should focus on national oversight, learning, and improvement, rather than intervening directly in local operational responsibilities or individual cases. There were also calls for a truly multi-agency approach, ensuring the CPA can make recommendations across all relevant government departments and agencies, including health, education, and youth justice.

Accountability and enforcement powers (35 respondents)

Respondents emphasised the need for the CPA to have sufficient power and statutory footing, going beyond guidance and oversight. Most suggested the CPA should have the ability to issue mandatory directions and sanction non-compliance with standards and recommendations. Some also stressed the importance of the CPA's independence in effectively holding government and other bodies accountable, with some suggestions for the CPA to have an inspectorate role, particularly for organisations not currently subject to statutory inspections, such as out-of-school settings.

Implementing recommendations and sharing learning (35 respondents)

There were calls for robust mechanisms for tracking and enforcing recommendations, including the CPA having the powers to escalate action where recommendations are ignored. Some respondents made suggestions for how the CPA could translate learning into system wide improvements, including developing national standards in areas such as cross-agency working, documentation, and professional supervision.

Expert and lived experience input (21 respondents)

These comments emphasised the need for the CPA to incorporate expert and lived experience, particularly from survivors, care leavers, and adoptive parents, to ensure its effectiveness and legitimacy.

Geographical scope (19 respondents)

There were concerns and suggestions regarding the geographical reach of the CPA, specifically whether it should apply only to England or extend to other UK nations, as well as comments about cross-border coordination.

Operation and effectiveness (18 respondents)

Respondents made comments and suggestions about the CPA's operational effectiveness, including those questioning whether it would meaningfully improve outcomes for children.

Specific proposals the CPA should implement (13 respondents)

These respondents made varied suggestions for proposals, including the development of national standards and practice frameworks, that they would like the CPA to implement once it is established.

General opposition to establishment of a CPA (9 respondents)

The respondents were opposed to the establishment of the CPA, mainly viewing it as unnecessary and having the potential to add increased pressure to an already overly burdened child protection system.

Other comments (5 respondents)

These respondents shared general frustrations related to wider systemic issues or provided comments that did not fit under any of the above themes.

Q2. How else might the Panel develop its role to help explore potential CPA functions in the interim period while the CPA is being consulted on and created?

There were 267 responses to this question, with varied suggestions made for how the Panel might develop its role in the interim period. Some said the Panel's role should evolve from retrospective reviews to more proactive, preventative and system-focused functions, to align with the future CPA. Others identified ways in which the Panel could explore approaches to enhance learning, knowledge dissemination and analytical capabilities. A few respondents made other suggestions, including that the Panel could play a role in gathering feedback from stakeholders to inform the proposed changes, support the development of guidance, frameworks and standards, or pilot and test proposed CPA functions.

Qualitative responses to question 2

Panel focus and considerations (91 respondents)

Respondents said the Panel should evolve its role from retrospective reviews to more proactive, preventative and system-focused functions, aligning with the future CPA.

Respondents felt the Panel should consider and support developments to:

- improve information sharing and multi-agency collaboration across services (social care, health, education, the police etc.) to develop a holistic view and prevent delays in support
- address the existing fragmented safeguarding system through aligning policies, strengthening collaboration and fostering a multi-agency approach
- build on practitioner expertise, understand on-the-ground decision making, and engage diverse stakeholders (including those with lived experience) to inform the CPA's design and functions
- map and resource existing systems and staffing models, to address concerns about caseloads and overall capacity.

Strengthen learning and knowledge dissemination (77 respondents)

Respondents identified ways in which the Panel could explore approaches to enhance learning, knowledge dissemination and analytical capabilities. These included:

- reference to a central evidence hub and improved sharing of tools and approaches across organisations to support continuous improvement and best practice
- improving analytical capacity to focus on patterns, gaps and system risks, building an evidence-base for the CPA
- integrating lived experience into learning processes to ensure standards and interventions are designed with emotional well-being and perspectives of children and care-experienced adults in mind
- more effective processes for learning from serious incidents, ensuring learning translates into actionable improvements across the system.

Engage key stakeholder groups (57 respondents)

Respondents said the Panel could play a role in gathering diverse perspectives to inform proposed changes. This included from frontline practitioners, children, families with lived experience and various stakeholders across government departments and regional bodies. Structured feedback mechanisms were suggested such as practitioner reference groups, lived-experience panels and thematic consultations. Some respondents also said there was a need for cross-departmental collaboration and learning from existing regional work to avoid duplication and ensure an integrated approach.

Consistent and inclusive approach (57 respondents)

Respondents called for consistency and alignment across agencies and local authorities in safeguarding practice. Recognition and integration of education as a statutory safeguarding partner was identified as important. Also, engaging a broader range of partners and services, including the voluntary sector, faith organisations and those working in out-of-school-settings, to ensure a comprehensive and inclusive approach.

Guidance, standards and workforce development (46 respondents)

Respondents said the Panel could support the development of guidance, frameworks and standards to support consistency and quality across different regions and agencies. Specific suggestions included workforce development and guidance for frontline practitioners to enhance skills (such as trauma-informed practice, multi-agency collaboration, understanding gender diversity, and anti-oppressive decision making).

Define CPA role (42 respondents)

Respondents said that the interim period should be used to build a CPA which is more than advisory, and has the necessary powers to enforce recommendations, prevent future harm, and ensure measurable improvements in practices. Respondents suggested that functions for the CPA should include robust accountability and enforceable powers, analytical capacity and embedding lived experience and trauma-informed practices within the safeguarding system.

Safeguarding delivery/support issues (36 respondents)

These respondents highlighted specific concerns within existing child safeguarding systems regarding systemic failures and inadequate support, with recommendations for more holistic approaches, improved communication and better training accountability for professionals. Specific areas of concern related to misapplication of safeguarding processes for disabled children, lack of support of younger victims of sexual abuse, inadequacies of the family court system, and the need to address the impact of domestic abuse on children and families.

Test and pilot CPA functions (23 respondents)

Respondents said that the Panel could pilot and test proposed CPA functions during the interim period, identifying risk and supporting effective implementation in relation to, for example, building a child-centred national safeguarding system, multi-agency audits, data-sharing models and quality reviews.

Concerns about the CPA (17 respondents)

Some respondents questioned the need for the CPA and called for strengthening existing bodies or reallocating funding. Some respondents expressed concerns about the funding and scope of the CPA, and its interaction with existing frameworks. Others called for greater clarity, transparency and a more integrated approach with current initiatives.

Timescales (15 respondents)

These respondents were concerned that the proposed timeline for establishing the CPA was too slow, with the risk of losing momentum or abandoning reform if legislation is not taken forward this year.

Q3. The cross-government violence against women and girls (VAWG) strategy is due to be published shortly. The strategy will set out how we will halve VAWG in a decade – as well as the further measures we will take to support the victims and tackle the perpetrators. What more could we do to make sure that the design of the CPA will contribute to the work to tackle VAWG?

There were 272 responses to this question. Some respondents called for learning and education about VAWG to be a priority for the CPA, including educating young people about healthy relationships, misogyny and aggressive behaviour. Some stressed the importance of using a range of evidence and data to inform a more preventative approach to tackling VAWG, and there were calls for integrated, multi-agency working with strengthened information sharing. Some respondents also stressed the importance of

recognising VAWG as a serious and interconnected child protection issue which can affect all children, not just women and girls.

Qualitative responses to question 3

Provide learning and training focused on preventing VAWG (81 respondents)

Respondents emphasised that learning and education about VAWG must be a priority for the CPA, including educating young people about healthy relationships, misogyny and aggressive behaviour. Alongside this, there were calls for increased education and training for professionals working in child protection, particularly on identifying signs of VAWG, the direct and indirect impacts on children, and how to respond.

Focus on a more preventative, evidence-based approach (67 respondents)

Respondents stressed the importance of using evidence and data to inform policy, strategy and decision making. This included using data and evidence to identify the early warning signs, relationships between types of abuse or violence and patterns of abuse, with the aim of using such data to prevent harm through the recognition of patterns and past indicators.

Mandate and/or strengthen multi-agency working (67 respondents)

Respondents highlighted the need for integrated and cross-agency working, including strengthening information sharing, with some respondents providing examples of poor information sharing between organisations related to VAWG. Respondents discussed how social services, schools and the justice system must work together to protect children and young people. Some also emphasised the need for adult and child systems to work together, to ensure the impact of VAWG is fully considered and accounted for.

Importance of recognising VAWG as a child protection issue (63 respondents)

These respondents stressed the importance of recognising VAWG as a serious concern and the long-term impacts it has on individuals. Respondents also called for the CPA to recognise the interconnected nature of different child protection issues, including VAWG. Some respondents highlighted that VAWG can affect all children, not just girls and women, and as such there is a need to recognise children as victims in their own right when they witness VAWG in the home.

Ensure learning is drawn from data, patterns, complaints and lived experience (59 respondents)

These respondents suggested that the CPA should integrate learning from a range of sources to address VAWG, including data on repeated patterns and failures, complaints data, and the lived experience perspective of victims and survivors. Most respondents also highlighted the need for improved data collection, recording standards, and analysis regarding VAWG, including around coercive control and the gender of victims.

Align with existing VAWG governance and oversight (46 respondents)

Respondents suggested that the CPA should align with existing VAWG governance and oversight structures to avoid duplication and strengthen the national response. Recommendations included embedding VAWG expertise within the CPA, collaboration with various partners and having consistent definitions.

Improve resources to combat VAWG (29 respondents)

Respondents highlighted the need for increased funding and support for the sector, to tackle workforce barriers (e.g., high workloads), so that VAWG can be addressed effectively. Comments called for systemic change in funding mechanisms, such as funding for specialist frontline positions and victim support, improved training, and support for practitioners to prevent burnout.

Ensure trauma informed practice (21 respondents)

Respondents emphasised that trauma-informed approaches should be embedded in all aspects of the CPA, including trauma-informed practice in collating lived experience perspectives, trauma-informed training for practitioners, and safeguards to prevent re-traumatisation.

Improve VAWG reporting processes (21 respondents)

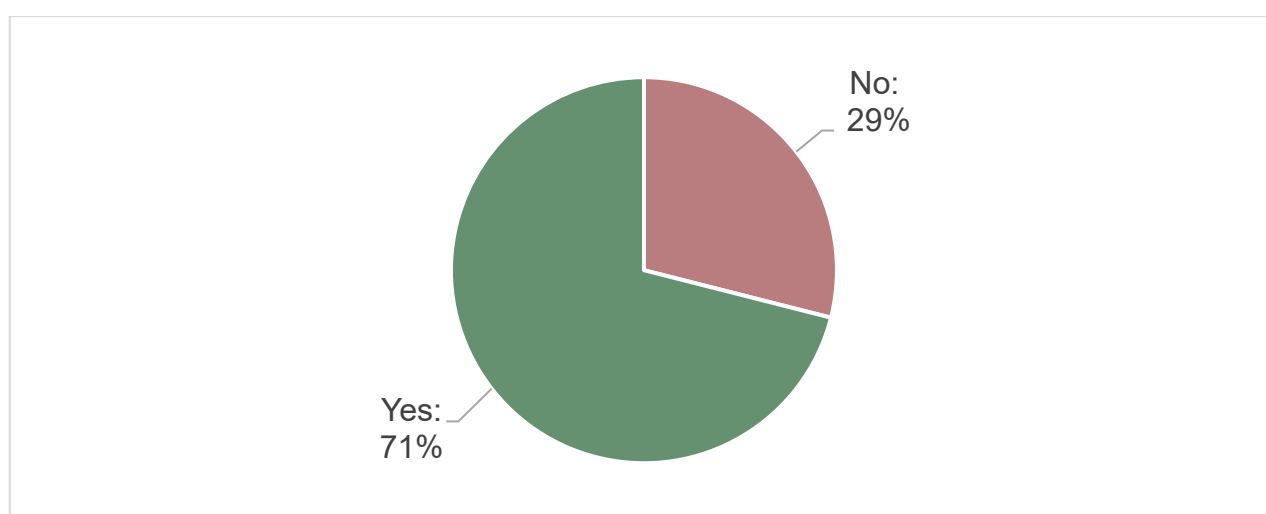
Respondents called for the CPA to improve reporting processes for VAWG, with recommendations including systems for information sharing, clear escalation routes, anonymous and trauma-informed reporting strategies, and addressing barriers to reporting.

Chapter 3: System leadership & national oversight

Q4. Do you agree with the proposals set out for how the CPA will have national oversight of the child protection system?

Most respondents (71% or 211) agreed with the proposals that the CPA will have national oversight of the child protection system (Figure 3), whilst just under one-third (29% or 86) disagreed.

Figure 3: Q4. Do you agree with the proposals set out for how the CPA will have national oversight of the child protection system?



Source: CPA consultation responses March 2026. Base = 297.

Qualitative responses to question 4

There were 153 qualitative responses to this question, with views expressed about the requirements for effective government or national oversight. Many respondents emphasised that oversight must actively facilitate cross-agency collaboration, particularly across social care, police, health and other partners, to support joined-up working in complex and cross-boundary cases. A similar number stressed that any national body must have clear authority to enforce change, arguing that oversight would lack credibility if it were limited to monitoring, learning or reporting without the power to challenge poor practice, require action or ensure compliance across the system. Alongside this, some respondents felt the proposed model was not yet fit for purpose, raising concerns about a lack of clarity and practical detail, the risk of duplicating existing structures, and whether the proposals adequately addressed known system challenges.

Government / national oversight must facilitate cross agency collaboration (51 responses)

Respondents emphasised that national oversight must actively facilitate stronger cross-agency collaboration to be effective. While there was general support for the CPA's role, many highlighted the need for clearer mechanisms to coordinate across agencies, including social care, police, health, and other partners, particularly in managing complex and cross-boundary cases.

Any national oversight must have the authority to enforce (50 responses)

Respondents emphasised that for national oversight to be meaningful, the CPA must have clear authority to enforce change rather than simply review or advise. Some respondents felt the proposals were currently too focused on monitoring, learning, and reporting, without sufficient powers to drive improvement or hold agencies to account. There were also calls for the CPA to have defined enforcement mechanisms, including the ability to challenge poor practice, require action, and ensure compliance across the system.

Proposed national oversight is not 'fit for purpose' (37 responses)

Respondents expressed concerns that the proposed model of national oversight is not yet fit for purpose, citing a lack of clarity, coherence, and practical detail on how it would operate. While some supported the intent, many felt the proposals were too vague, risked duplicating existing structures, and did not sufficiently address challenges.

Further clarity is needed before a judgement is made (28 responses)

These respondents felt that further clarity is needed before they can make a firm judgement on the proposals for national oversight. While there was openness to the concept, many highlighted uncertainties around the CPA's remit, powers, governance arrangements, and how it would interact with existing structures and reforms.

Local arrangements should / need to be strengthened (27 responses)

Respondents suggested that, while CPA national oversight is valuable, it will only be effective if accompanied by significant strengthening of local accountability, capacity, and system performance, with clear integration between national and local levels.

National oversight must go beyond local authority services (15 responses)

Respondents stressed that national oversight must extend beyond local authority children's services to be effective. Key points included the need for strong national leadership to address cross-border risks, greater clarity on governance and how the CPA will align with existing structures, and sufficient resourcing to manage increased demand and workforce pressures.

Resistance to future government oversight (6 responses)

These respondents were resistant to future government oversight, viewing it as adding an extra level of unnecessary complexity. In some cases, there was distrust of the government due to past negative experiences.

Q5. How should the CPA advise government on systemic risks and emerging themes in child protection?

There were 269 responses to this question. Most suggested that the CPA should provide credible, impactful advice grounded in robust, evidence-led approaches. This included suggestions for combining quantitative data and qualitative insight, including from those with lived experience, to identify systemic risks, emerging trends and urgent issues, and translating these into clear, actionable recommendations. Respondents emphasised the importance of regular, transparent outputs (such as annual reports, thematic briefings and rapid alerts) alongside independence and accountability to ensure government action. Some stressed a need for the CPA to focus on underlying systemic challenges and long-term trends, including poverty, service pressures, workforce capacity and inequalities, rather than individual incidents. There was also clear support for drawing on multidisciplinary expertise, sector knowledge and frontline insight, with an emphasis on incorporating survivor perspectives to ensure advice reflects real-world impacts.

Qualitative responses to question 5

Using data and evidence led approaches (110 respondents)

Respondents emphasised that the CPA should advise the government through a structured, evidence-based approach, integrating quantitative data, qualitative insights, and lived experiences. There were suggestions that this advice should be proactive, identify systemic risks and emerging themes early, and translate these into clear, actionable recommendations. Respondents highlighted the importance of regular reporting, including annual reports, thematic briefings, and rapid alerts for urgent issues.

Some respondents stressed the need for the CPA to be independent, transparent, and accountable, with the ability to hold government departments responsible for implementing recommendations. A few respondents specifically mentioned the need for cross-departmental collaboration, horizon scanning, and the integration of frontline practitioner and survivor intelligence as an early warning system.

Advice should focus on systemic issues/trends (85 respondents)

Respondents highlighted that the CPA's advice should focus on identifying and addressing underlying systemic issues and long-term trends shaping child protection, rather than isolated incidents. This includes highlighting structural drivers such as poverty, service

pressures, workforce capacity, and inequalities, as well as recognising patterns across regions and agencies to inform national policy.

Draw on expert advice and specialist knowledge (82 respondents)

Respondents suggested that the CPA should draw on a wide range of expert advice and specialist knowledge to inform its guidance to government, including input from practitioners, academics, and sector specialists. There was a focus on incorporating multidisciplinary perspectives and ensuring that advice is grounded in both professional expertise and current research. Respondents also highlighted the importance of engaging those with frontline experience to provide nuanced, credible insights, helping ensure that recommendations are well-informed, contextually relevant, and practically applicable.

Draw on and advise government using survivor insight / experience (52 respondents)

Respondents suggested that the CPA should draw on survivor insight and lived experience to inform its advice to government, ensuring that policies and approaches are grounded in the realities of those directly affected by child protection systems.

Establish an early warning system to notify government of emerging trends / patterns (50 respondents)

Respondents highlighted that the CPA should establish an early warning system to proactively identify and alert government to emerging risks and trends in child protection. This includes drawing on real-time data, frontline intelligence, and cross-agency information to detect patterns and anticipate issues before they escalate.

Via regular briefings and consultations (35 respondents)

Respondents felt that the CPA should provide advice to government through regular briefings and ongoing consultations to ensure a consistent flow of information on emerging issues in child protection. They emphasised the value of maintaining open, two-way dialogue with government and stakeholders, allowing insights from practice and evidence to be shared in a timely fashion.

Other suggestions for advice approaches (29 respondents)

Respondents provided varied other suggestions for how to approach advice to the government, including working in collaboration across local, national and cross-agency actors and improving information sharing systems. They felt that the CPA should focus on the practical application, clarity and timeliness of advice, whilst also remaining independent and autonomous.

Other comments (31 respondents)

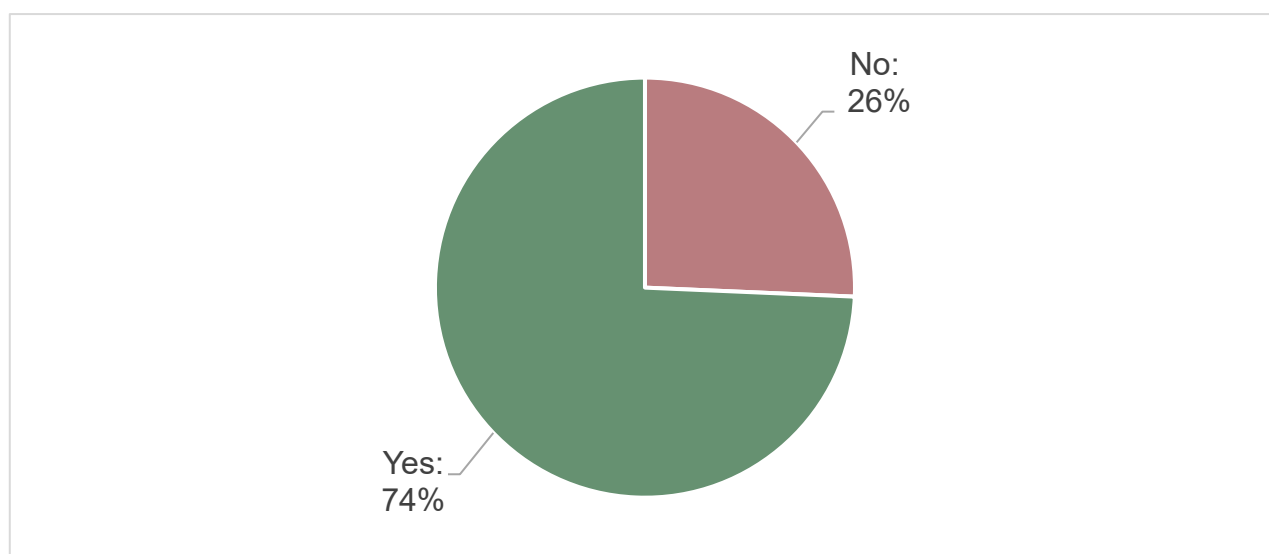
Respondents made varied comments that did not fit within the themes outlined above. Some were uncertain about how much information is needed for effective oversight and

the CPA's role. Concerns were also raised about selective government uptake of advice, slow departmental responses, and errors in the consultation document.

Q6. Do you agree with the proposals set out for how the CPA will horizon scan?

As shown in Figure 4, just under three-quarters of respondents (74% or 217) agreed with the proposals on horizon scanning, whilst just over one-quarter disagreed (26% or 75).

Figure 4. Q6. Do you agree with the proposals set out for how the CPA will horizon scan?



Source: CPA consultation responses March 2026. Base = 292.

Qualitative responses to question 6

There were 128 responses to this question. Respondents suggested specific types of data that should be utilised for horizon scanning, including intelligence from frontline practitioners and those with lived experience. Some respondents shared varied concerns about the proposed approach, including the risk of duplication and the potential use of fragmented or inconsistent datasets. Some wanted horizon scanning to include specific issues, including online harms and systemic problems affecting the child protection system.

Data and evidence sources (44 respondents)

Respondents commented on specific types of data, information and intelligence that should be utilised for horizon scanning. Most respondents stressed that intelligence gathering should involve those with lived experience and frontline practitioners, including those in education, health, social care, and the voluntary sector, to capture emerging risks. Respondents also highlighted the importance of integrating qualitative data and insights, not just quantitative metrics, to understand contextual factors and early warning signs.

Some respondents called for systematic analysis of existing data, such as complaints, safeguarding referrals, and youth justice cases, to identify patterns and systemic issues.

Concerns and limitations - current and proposed approach (37 respondents)

Respondents shared concerns regarding the horizon scanning proposals, including the risk of duplication, fragmented and/or inconsistent datasets, potential overreliance on AI and possible administrative burden. Some suggested the proposals do not adequately address the scale, speed, and complexity of emerging risks, particularly in online and cross-border environments.

Groups, harms and areas covered (34 respondents)

Some of these respondents emphasised the need for horizon scanning to include continuous intelligence gathering across digital platforms, social media, and international contexts, particularly concerning online harms and digitally facilitated exploitation. Others suggested that the definition of "emerging risk" should be broadened to include systemic issues such as workforce pressures, inadequate supervision, institutional defensiveness, and regulatory failures.

A few respondents suggested other areas they felt should be covered, including identifying risks faced by marginalised children, potential risks within out-of-school-settings, and national issues that impact local delivery, such as unregulated provision.

Collaboration and integration (21 respondents)

Respondents suggested that horizon scanning needs to be a collaborative effort, involving various agencies, sectors, and international bodies. Comments also mentioned the need to connect national and local data and ensure consistency with existing systems.

Information action, intervention and policy making (16 respondents)

Respondents stressed that the intelligence identified via horizon scanning must be translated into concrete actions, interventions and policy adjustments.

Transparency and accountability (12 respondents)

Respondents called for transparent reporting, clear definitions, and accountability for addressing identified risks within any horizon scanning activities.

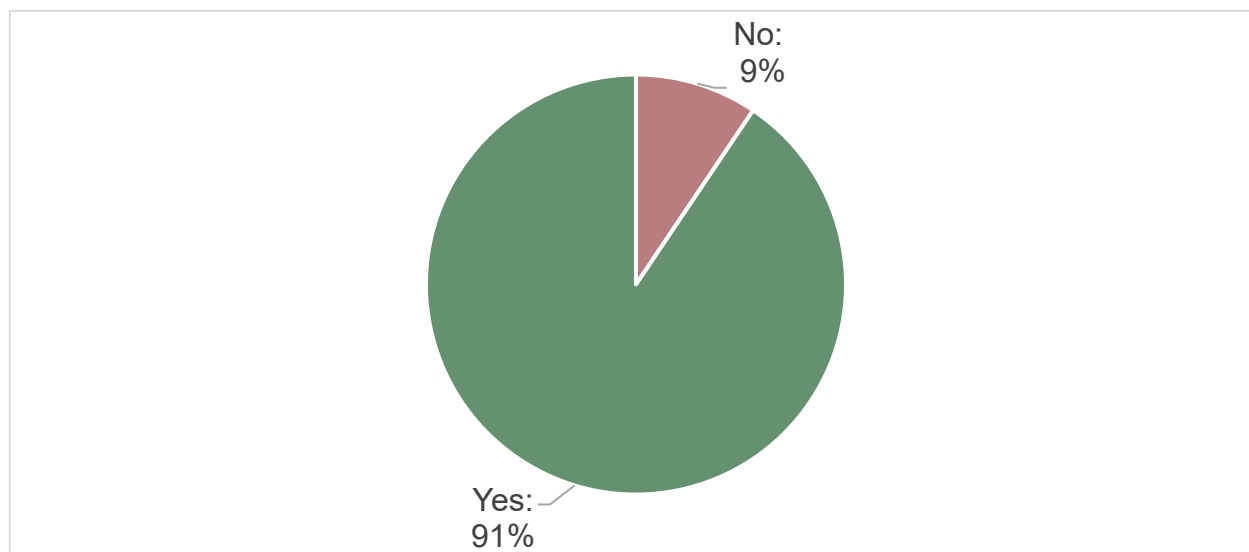
Other comments (11 respondents)

A few respondents expressed that they were unsure how to respond, the question scope was outside their expertise, or they thought the proposals provided insufficient detail to respond. Other expressed general agreement with the proposed horizon scanning approach.

Q7. Do you agree that a national body should monitor diverse information sources to identify emerging threats to child protection?

As shown in Figure 5, almost all respondents (91% or 217) agreed with the proposals that the national body monitoring diverse information sources to identify emerging threats to child protection, whilst 9% (28) disagreed.

Figure 5. Q7. Do you agree that a national body should monitor diverse information sources to identify emerging threats to child protection?



Source: CPA consultation responses March 2026. Base = 297.

Qualitative responses to question 7

There were 99 responses to this question with mixed views on the CPA's approach to monitoring information. Some respondents felt the proposals relied too heavily on traditional data sources, arguing this would restrict the CPA's ability to identify emerging risks. As such, there were calls for a wider evidence base, including insights from complaints, special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) related trends, workforce indicators, criminal justice data, and the voluntary and community sector. Others emphasised the need for clear scope, safeguards and transparency around data collection and monitoring to minimise bias, ensure quality, and avoid duplication with existing organisations. Alongside these concerns, some respondents expressed general support for monitoring diverse information sources, highlighting the value of national oversight in improving consistency and early risk identification.

Beyond traditional data sources (31 respondents)

Respondents highlighted that monitoring diverse information sources is important for identifying emerging threats to children, but suggested that the current proposals were insufficient. They argued that the focus remains on traditional datasets, which may

overlook systemic issues within safeguarding agencies themselves. Suggestions for expanding data sources included complaints data, SEND tribunal trends, and patterns of safeguarding referrals linked to SEND or disability. Additionally, there were suggestions to incorporate insights from the voluntary and community sectors, particularly those supporting marginalised children, as well as data on workforce indicators, multi-agency intelligence, and criminal justice data.

Scope, clarity and bias in monitoring (27 respondents)

These comments suggested that the CPA should carefully consider which sources will be used and how data will be collected and monitored, to ensure any possible bias is minimised (e.g., survivorship or availability bias). Respondents highlighted that there must be rigorous safeguards on data quality, with clear structures on reporting.

General support for monitoring diverse information sources (25 respondents)

These respondents provided general statements in support of the proposals to monitor diverse information sources. Comments also highlighted benefits of national oversight, such as ensuring consistency in monitoring.

Action and intervention beyond monitoring (17 respondents)

Respondents suggested that monitoring alone would be insufficient and the national body must also have capacity to intervene when risks are identified, with calls for clarity about how the CPA would act in such situations.

Consideration of systemic issues (12 respondents)

Respondents suggested that the national body should consider the systemic issues facing the sector, such as inconsistent reporting across local authority regions, certain data collection placing further strain on the system, wider issues which are linked to child abuse.

Qualitative data and lived experience (11 respondents)

Respondents called for the inclusion of qualitative accounts from practitioners and multi-agency partners working in child protection, as well as those with lived experience.

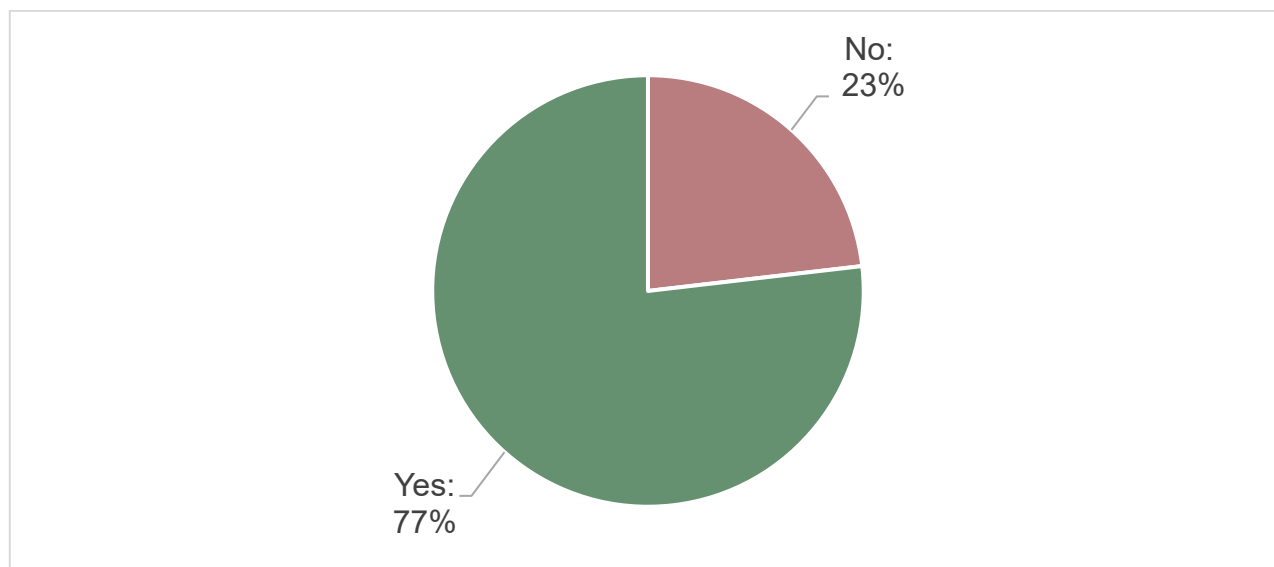
Other comments (8 respondents)

Some respondents suggested monitoring should be carried out by existing government departments. Other comments included concerns about government control and other remarks which were not relevant to the question.

Q8. Do you agree with the proposals set out for how the CPA will build data and analytical expertise?

Figure 6 shows that over three-quarters of respondents (77% or 219) agreed with the proposals regarding how the CPA will build data and analytical expertise, whilst 23% (66) disagreed.

Figure 6. Q8. Do you agree with the proposals set out for how the CPA will build data and analytical expertise?



Source: CPA consultation responses March 2026. Base = 285.

Qualitative responses to question 8

There were 133 responses to this question. Respondents emphasised the need for strong data quality, integration and analytical capability to support effective national oversight. They highlighted the importance of data standardisation, clear definitions and ethical, trauma-informed use of data, alongside safeguards around security and the use of AI or predictive tools. Others stressed the value of data sharing and multi-agency integration, while raising concerns about compatibility between existing systems. Some respondents also offered suggestions for building data and analytical expertise, including the use of complaints data, regional comparisons, analysis of case recording quality, and improved use of SEND and disability data to strengthen insight and decision-making.

Data standardisation and quality (44 respondents)

Respondents highlighted the importance of standardising data and ensuring quality. Suggestions included having clear definitions and clarity on how data will be merged, ensuring compliance with ethical standards, use of trauma-informed approaches for data

collection (e.g. surveys)³, and considerations of data security. Additionally, a few respondents shared concerns that use of AI and predictive tools might miss key messages, provide an over-simplistic view or contain pre-existing biases (e.g. in relation to ethnic minority groups) based on the data it has been trained on.

Data sharing and integration (35 respondents)

Respondents outlined their support for sharing of information and looking at child protection from a multiagency lens. Comments also shared concerns about lack of compatibility between different systems, suggesting that the national body should consider this.

Suggestions for building data and analytical expertise (27 respondents)

This included various suggestions for how the national body can build data and analytical expertise, including suggestions for specific types of data to be collected and ways in which this could be done. For example, complaints data, data comparisons between regions and specific settings, analysis of case recording quality and SEND data.

Actionable insight, effective intervention, practical improvements (24 respondents)

Respondents suggested that the CPA's role should not only include monitoring and building intelligence but also responding to findings effectively. Comments highlighted that insights should be translated into genuine change in the child protection sector.

Specific data needs or gaps in child protection (22 respondents)

Respondents highlighted various issues with collecting data and the lack of data on some areas. Respondents suggested that the scope should be widened to capture insights from all parts of the child protection system, especially underreported and 'invisible' data. They also outlined that this should not create further administrative burden and practical data tools should be offered to practitioners.

Inclusivity and engagement to shape data strategy (14 respondents)

Respondents highlighted the importance of collating feedback from various stakeholders to build data and analytical expertise, including professionals, frontline practitioners, third-sector workers and lived experience groups.

National oversight and strategic purpose of the data (14 respondents)

Respondents provided general statements in support of national oversight and agreement that the proposals address the correct areas of weakness.

³ For example data tools designed to be safe, respectful and empowering and recognise and respond to the impact of trauma without causing further harm.

Accountability and data transparency (13 respondents)

Comments highlighted that there should be full transparency from the CPA on how data is collected, analysed, and the implications of the findings.

Other comments (9 respondents)

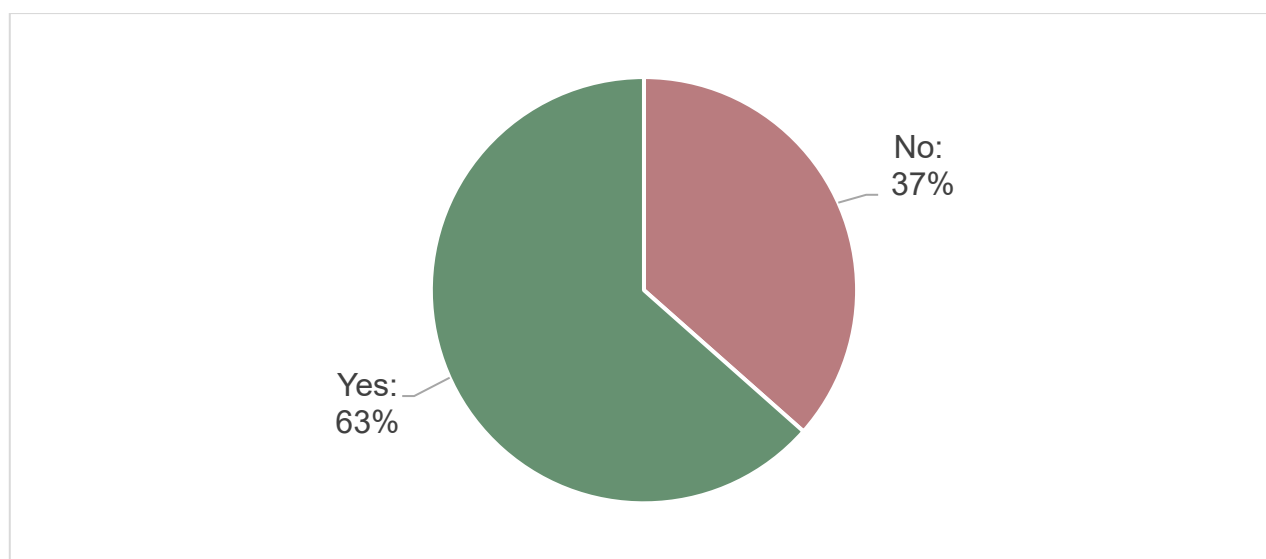
Other comments included:

- statements that this should be carried out by an existing department
- references to wider issues, such as the system including too many ‘tick box’ exercises
- other remarks which were not relevant to the question.

Q9. Are the data sources set out above the right ones for the CPA to identify risks and systemic issues?

Figure 7 illustrates that just under two-thirds of respondents (63% or 172) thought the proposed data sources were the correct ones, for the CPA to identify risks and systemic issues, whilst 37% (99) disagreed.

Figure 7. Q9. Are the data sources set out above the right ones for the CPA to identify risks and systemic issues?



Source: CPA consultation responses March 2026. Base=315.

Qualitative responses to question 9

There were 156 responses to this question, with respondents emphasising the need to expand and improve the use of data to strengthen national oversight. Many called for broader data sources, moving beyond statutory datasets to include qualitative intelligence such as complaints, survivor testimony, whistleblowing, workforce capacity, multi-agency

coordination, and contextual factors like poverty, as well as greater use of information from voluntary, community and faith sectors. Others stressed the importance of better data integration and standardisation across agencies, raising concerns about poor data quality, over-reliance on service contact data, and the ethical, legal and practical limitations of AI. Some respondents also highlighted systemic challenges affecting visibility, noting that fragmented systems, inconsistent reporting and wider structural failures can result in key risks being overlooked and should be actively considered when monitoring information.

Expanded data sources – specific types (75 respondents)

Respondents emphasised the importance of broadening the range of data sources considered, moving beyond a reliance on traditional statutory service data such as health and education. Most highlighted the need to incorporate qualitative intelligence, including complaints, survivor testimony, and whistleblower information, to help identify systemic issues. Respondents pointed to the value of data on workforce capacity, multi-agency coordination, and wider contextual factors such as poverty and deprivation. Some specifically called for greater inclusion of data from the voluntary, charity, and faith sectors, as well as more detailed online safety data that captures multiple platforms and emerging risks.

Data integration and standardisation (43 respondents)

Respondents stressed the need for better integration and standardisation of data across agencies to build a clearer picture of risk and prevent children being missed. Concerns were highlighted about poor data quality and over-reliance on service contact data, alongside unease about the use of AI due to privacy, surveillance, and effectiveness limitations. Some emphasised the importance of flexible, regularly reviewed data approaches, disaggregated data to identify disproportionate harm, and clear legal and privacy frameworks, with a few noting the CPA should focus on better use of existing data to reduce duplication and identify gaps.

Systemic challenges impacting visibility (29 respondents)

Respondents highlighted the impact that systemic failures, fragmented information and disparities in reporting have on data visibility. Comments urged the national body to consider this when monitoring information sources, as key information may be missed.

Qualitative data and lived experience (28 respondents)

Respondents suggested that qualitative accounts need to be included, such as survivor testimonies, experiences of third-sector workers and volunteers, frontline practitioner feedback, and various lived experience groups.

Proposed data sources are inadequate (27 respondents)

Respondents suggested that the proposed data sources are inadequate as they capture only traditional safeguarding concerns, and do not cover all harms or persistent failures in everyday practice.

Other comments (5 respondents)

Some respondents discussed wider issues, such as handling of complaints and accountability, scepticism about the value of the CPA, and other remarks unrelated to the question.

Q10. How can the CPA ensure its data and intelligence work complements local efforts and avoids duplication with existing systems and responsibilities?

There were 242 responses to this question. Respondents stressed the need for effective collaboration and communication between the CPA and local authorities and other agencies, with varied suggestions made for how this could be facilitated. Some respondents suggested that the CPA should leverage existing data systems to avoid duplication, with some wanting the CPA's role to primarily focus on synthesising information at a national level. There were also calls from some for the CPA to develop unified national data standards, definitions, and protocols.

Qualitative responses to question 10

Collaboration and communication (85 respondents)

These comments stressed the need for effective collaboration and communication between the CPA and local authorities and other agencies. Respondents suggested co-designing data frameworks, reporting templates, and intelligence processes with local partners to ensure relevance, avoid duplication, and minimize administrative burden. Most highlighted the importance of two-way communication, where local areas contribute intelligence and receive guidance, national insights, and feedback from the CPA. Some respondents recommended establishing regional liaison officers or points of contact to facilitate information sharing and build trust. Others felt the CPA should focus on national-level analysis of trends and emerging risks, to complement rather than replicate local functions.

Leveraging existing data and systems (52 respondents)

Respondents suggested that the CPA should leverage existing national and local data systems and intelligence to avoid duplication and reduce the potential data collection burden on frontline professionals and other staff and agencies. This included suggestions that the CPA should conduct a mapping exercise to understand existing local and national data systems to understand what is collected, by whom and for what purpose.

CPA's role: National synthesis and oversight (47 respondents)

These respondents felt the CPA's role should be to synthesise information at a national level, rather than collecting data at a local level, to provide actionable insights for local authorities and other safeguarding stakeholders.

Standardisation and system integration (46 respondents)

There were calls for the CPA to establish unified national data standards, definitions, and protocols to ensure consistent information collection and recording across all agencies, thereby avoiding duplication and strengthening local safeguarding efforts.

Data collection, analysis and interpretation considerations (39 respondents)

These respondents made varied suggestions for types of analysis that the CPA should do or data sources it should review. Comments also highlighted areas to consider when interpreting data, such as making sure local nuance and context is accounted for, and raised concerns about the potential burden of any new data collection or collation requirements the CPA may introduce.

Single source/centralised data sources (20 respondents)

Respondents suggested establishing a single, centralised data system to collate information across safeguarding partners, with the aim of reducing duplication, improving data sharing, and ensuring no child is missed across different authorities and agencies.

Clarity and transparency about roles and responsibilities (20 respondents)

There were calls for the CPA to clearly define its role and boundaries, including specifying what the CPA will monitor nationally, expectations for local authorities (including any data collection or reporting requirements), and escalation procedures. Some respondents commented that transparency around the CPA's data analysis, expertise, and how conclusions and recommendations are developed will be crucial.

Questioning duplication as the primary concern (9 respondents)

Respondents questioned the notion that avoiding duplication should be a main priority for the CPA. They suggested that other issues, such as institutional failure or lack of action, are more critical, and that duplication might even be acceptable if it leads to better outcomes.

Other comments (17 respondents)

Comments not covered by the above themes included respondents expressing general concerns about the current child protection system and those stating they do not have sufficient information to provide an answer.

Q11. What types of national reports, dashboards, or analytical products would be most useful to practitioners and policymakers?

There were 241 responses to this question. Some respondents suggested that the most useful resources would pull from local and national cross-agency data and information, with the ability to garner whole-system insight but also drill down to regional or local levels to enable comparisons. Some respondents felt that the focus should be on developing easy-to-digest action-oriented practical tools, including guidance, advice and training on how to tackle issues and generate impact. Some respondents favoured the development of up-to-date national-level thematic dashboards and other analytical tools that can be filtered via location and other demographic data.

Qualitative responses to question 11

Cross-agency: local and national (107 respondents)

Respondents suggested that resources created should integrate data from local and national cross-agency sources, including health, education, policing, social care, and other relevant sectors to child protection. It was felt that resources should showcase national data to support a holistic view of risk and system effectiveness, whilst also having the ability to drill down to a regional or local level to allow for comparisons between different areas.

Guidance and resources (77 respondents)

Respondents highlighted that the focus should be on developing easy-to-digest action-oriented practical products to aid implementation of insight and learning for practitioners, managers, and policymakers. Most respondents said that this would include the development of guidance, advice and training for practitioners on how to tackle issues and generate impact. It was suggested that resources should feature emerging risks, effective practices and actionable recommendations, with a particular focus on short, user-friendly formats, e.g. action-oriented dashboards, case studies, and practice guidance. Some respondents felt that resources for policymakers should inform decision-making, with suggested products including executive summaries, infographics, and policy briefs.

Dashboards & analytical products (68 respondents)

Respondents were favoured the development of up-to-date, interactive national-level thematic dashboards and other analytical tools that can be filtered via location or demographic characteristics to gain insight on contextual data, with the ability to drill down into information for better understanding and interpretation.

Emerging safeguarding risks (49 respondents)

These comments suggested that national reporting and analytical products should focus on emerging safeguarding risks, including risk dashboards, early-warning indicators and thematic reports on a range of topics (e.g., systemic pressures, exploitation, and online harm).

Priority harms and issues (45 respondents)

Respondents suggested that any analytical tools created by the CPA should prioritise certain types of harm and systemic issues, comparing regional and national trends. This included emerging risks, systemic workforce pressures, specific types of harm like domestic abuse, sexual exploitation, neglect, and online harm.

Reports (42 respondents)

Respondents favoured the development of national-level thematic reports which identify emerging risks, systemic weaknesses and trends over time. Themes mentioned include SEND, Section 47, legal and tribunal insights, complaints and obstruction.

Data sharing (38 respondents)

Respondents suggested that resources created should encourage and facilitate data sharing between agencies, to ensure transparency.

Resources produced should be consulted on with experts (33 respondents)

These comments stressed that resources should be informed by the expertise of those working across relevant sectors, especially frontline practitioners.

Systemic challenges and successes (31 respondents)

Respondents emphasised that resources created must consider and highlight institutional and systemic failings, as well as provide examples of good practice.

Intersectional issues (29 respondents)

These respondents suggested that resources should include features which allow for filtering based on demographic characteristics, helping to identify disproportionate harm and inequalities. They also suggested that thematic reports should feature issues around intersectionality, including SEND, ethnicity, and gender.

Progress tracking (27 respondents)

Respondents suggested that the CPA could create trackers for monitoring timelines of services, implementation of recommendations, recurring issues and actual outcomes and impacts.

Resources produced should account for existing frameworks and tools (27 respondents)

Comments from these respondents emphasised the importance of using existing data and tools to inform those created by the CPA, to prevent duplication across the system and develop practical, user-friendly tools.

Serious incident notifications, rapid reviews and local child safeguarding practice reviews (17 respondents)

Respondents suggested resources created should feature data from serious incident notifications, rapid reviews and local child safeguarding practice reviews (LCSPR).

Accessibility (15 respondents)

Respondents suggested that resources should be accessible to all, including disability adjustments (e.g., British Sign Language), easy read and avoiding jargon.

Definitions and thresholds (14 respondents)

Respondents suggested that resources should have clear definitions around terminology and thresholds, highlighting that there is variability in these across the UK.

Lived experience (13 respondents)

Respondents proposed that resources created should feature insights from those with lived experience of harm.

Patterns of abuse (12 respondents)

Respondents felt that resources created should highlight consistent or long-established patterns in abuse (e.g. specific times of year like school holidays or national events).

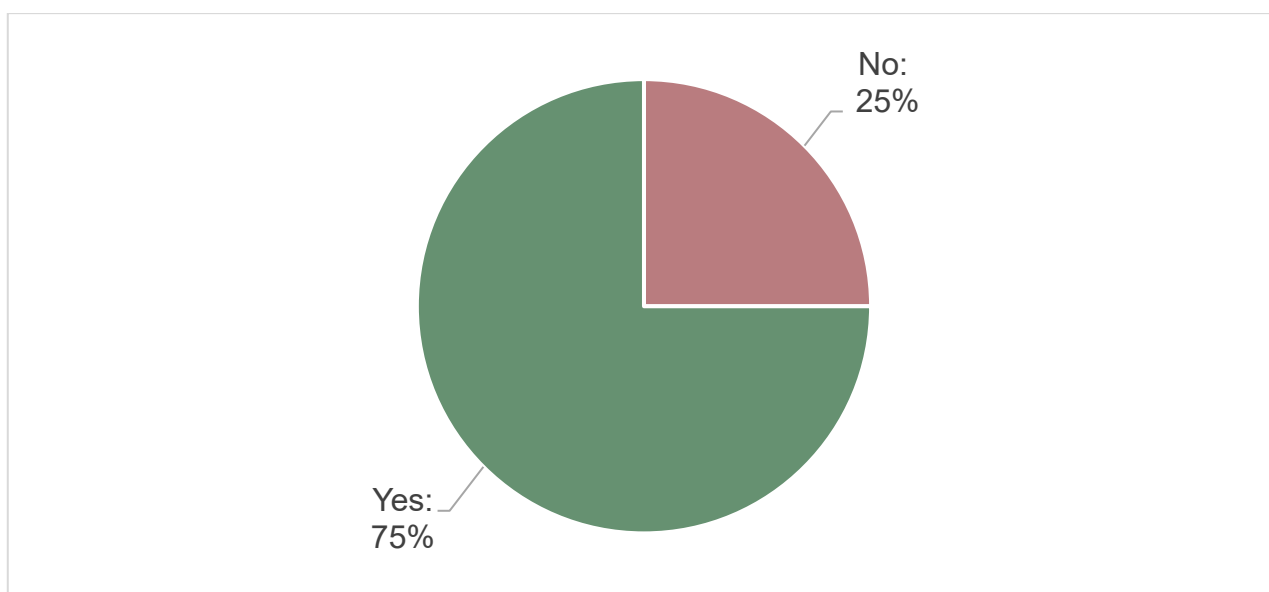
Other comments (22 respondents)

Comments from these respondents included frustrations with the existing system and comments that not relate to the question.

Q12. Do you agree with the proposals set out for how the CPA will identify and address evidence gaps?

As shown in Figure 8, three-quarters of respondents (75% or 207) agreed with the proposed approach for how the CPA will identify and address evidence gaps, whilst one-quarter disagreed (25% or 69).

Figure 8 Q12. Do you agree with the proposals set out for how the CPA will identify and address evidence gaps?



Source: CPA consultation responses March 2026. Base = 276.

Qualitative responses to question 12

There were 134 responses to this question. Respondents stressed the importance of incorporating the perspectives of diverse stakeholders, especially those with lived experience. Some respondents emphasised the need for research coordination and prioritisation, whilst others stressed that identifying evidence gaps is only useful if it leads to meaningful action. There were suggestions of specific areas where respondents felt evidence was weak or missing, as well as concerns that calls to commission further research could let organisations avoid accountability.

Incorporating diverse perspectives and lived experience (51 respondents)

Respondents emphasised that identifying evidence gaps must be guided by diverse perspectives, especially from those with lived experience. Respondents felt that lived experience should be treated as a primary evidence source, with these perspectives embedded throughout the research process. Many highlighted the need for systematic collection of lived experience data, alongside insights from frontline practitioners and specialist voluntary and community organisations, to capture emerging risks early.

Need for coordinated research function (35 respondents)

Respondents suggested the CPA should lead on identifying and addressing evidence gaps by establishing a national research and insight function that coordinates work, prioritises needs, sets data standards, and shares findings transparently.

Translating evidence into action and improvement (33 respondents)

These respondents stressed that identifying evidence gaps is only useful if it leads to real action and measurable improvement. Respondents commented that the CPA must turn findings into practical guidance, training, and rapid implementation of recommendations, while addressing barriers that prevent frontline practitioners from using evidence.

Collaboration with external bodies (32 respondents)

Respondents suggested that the CPA should work closely with a wide range of external partners, including international bodies, academics, specialist charities, and community organisations, to build a robust, current evidence base.

Specific evidence gaps (30 respondents)

These respondents felt that the current CPA proposals overlook deeper systemic issues, particularly how safeguarding processes themselves can generate harm, escalate risk, or rely on weak evidence. Respondents highlighted evidence gaps around safeguarding escalation after complaints, misuse of safeguarding processes in SEND, disability and emotionally based school avoidance (EBSA) contexts, inconsistent domestic abuse responses, and the misapplication of fabricated or induced illness, alongside a lack of robust lived-experience data.

Limitations of current data/approach to addressing evidence gaps (30 respondents)

There were suggestions that a failure to act on data and evidence that already exists is the primary issue, rather than evidence gaps. These respondents felt that the current proposals could let institutions avoid accountability by commissioning more research instead of addressing known failings.

Need for dynamic and responsive framework (23 respondents)

Respondents suggested that the proposals are too static and urge the CPA to adopt a dynamic, agile approach that continually reviews emerging risks. Respondents called for regular horizon-scanning, strong data analytics, and close work with specialist voluntary organisations to track new digital harms, exploitation patterns, and evolving professional practice.

Methodology and technical issues (16 respondents)

These respondents emphasised the need for research to be ethical (including protecting children's privacy), transparent, and use diverse methods - including longitudinal and implementation studies. Some respondents emphasised that frontline experts, rather than just analysts, should shape priorities.

Other comments (26 respondents)

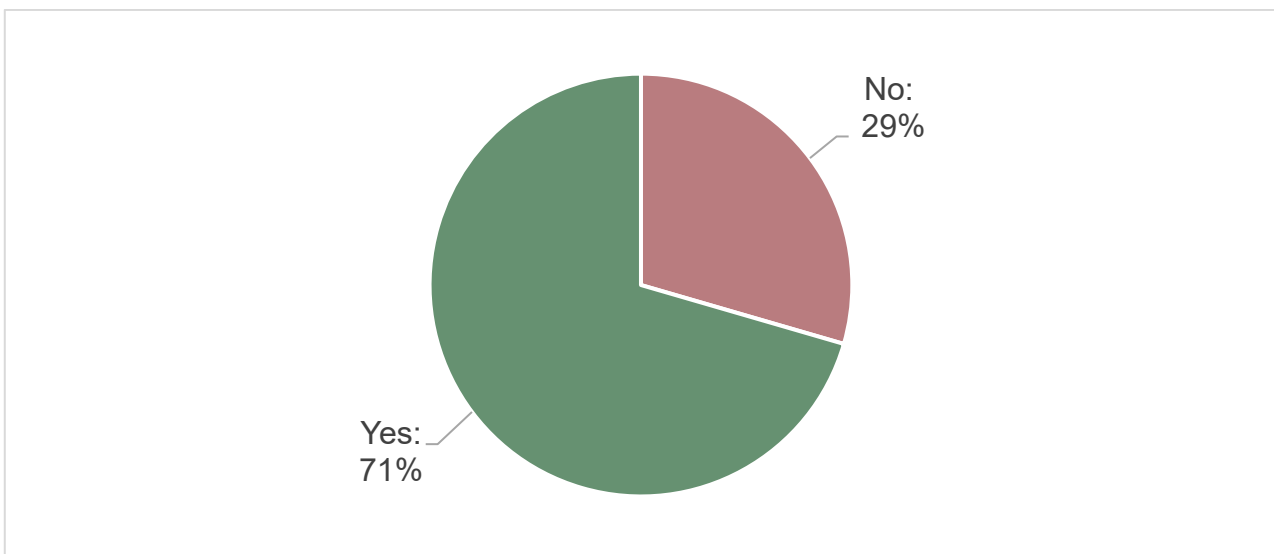
Some respondents expressed that they were unsure how to respond or thought the proposals provided insufficient detail to respond. A few suggested that effective evidence gap-finding requires proper resourcing and agency commitment.

Chapter 4: System learning and support

Q13. Do you agree with the proposals set out for how the CPA will promote and embed good practice?

As shown in Figure 9, most respondents (71% or 196) agreed with the proposals set out for how the CPA will promote and embed good practice, whilst 29% (82) disagreed.

Figure 9 Q13. Do you agree with the proposals set out for how the CPA will promote and embed good practice?



Source: CPA consultation responses March 2026. Base = 278.

Qualitative responses to question 13

There were 140 responses to this question. Themes mainly covered suggestions for effectively embedding good practice and developing the workforce, with some respondents also urging consideration of barriers to implementation.

Suggestions for successful embedding and implementation (59 respondents)

Most respondents suggested that embedding good practice is an iterative process which requires time for reflection, discussion, supervision and training of the workforce. Respondents suggested that this should be informed by research and analytical evidence, frontline experience, engagement with third-sector organisations and lived experience groups. Most respondents also mentioned that the creation of a national learning platform or other accessible ways for dissemination of resources, which do not overload the workforce, must be considered. Some suggested the CPA should provide practical tools and realistic 'what good looks like' guidance for complex safeguarding scenarios. Other comments made by a few respondents included comments:

- suggesting that the CPA should link learning to appropriate funding decisions and workforce support
- stressing the importance of engaging with leaders and senior managers
- expressing concerns that good practice recommendations may become prescriptive, leading to blame culture and added pressure
- suggesting that the CPA could consult with communication experts to ensure effective ways of embedding learning, such as short, impactful videos.

Defining good practice (48 respondents)

Most respondents highlighted the need for clear, evidence-based definitions of good practice, with concerns that the current proposals are too narrow or lack clarity. Most respondents stressed that definitions of good practice should be co-produced with those working in the child protection space and with lived experience, including children and care-experienced adults. Some suggested that the definition of good practice should evolve overtime, informed by emerging evidence, risks, anti-discrimination principles, and trauma-informed practice. Some also mentioned that learning should be drawn from both successes and systemic failures.

Training and professional development (27 respondents)

Respondents emphasised the need for accessible and consistent training for the workforce. Most suggested that staff must be supported with dedicated time for training, advocating for a national approach with specialised training for different roles. Some respondents shared concerns regarding online-only training, urging for in-person training, informal learning opportunities, and training which translates to measurable improvements in outcomes. A few respondents suggested mandatory training, especially on child sexual abuse and exploitation.

CPA roles and responsibilities as an authority (26 respondents)

Respondents emphasised that the CPA needs strong statutory powers and clear roles and expectations in promoting good practice. Most mentioned accountability and enforcement mechanisms, to ensure guidance and training is embedded effectively and not ignored. Some also suggested that the CPA must ensure guidance is clear and produce practical tools to aid implementation. A few respondents highlighted that the CPA should be transparent, by publishing findings and patterns of resistance to good practice.

Barriers to good practice (24 respondents)

Respondents highlighted systemic barriers faced by the frontline sector, which they felt must be understood when promoting good practice. The barriers mentioned by most respondents included high workloads, overwhelming documentation, institutional failures, opposition to change, and inconsistencies in responses to abuse reports.

Other comments

There were varied comments made by a few respondents that did not fit under any of the above themes. These included:

- comments regarding wider issues that doubted the feasibility of the proposed body, with some suggested that funding should be focused on frontline resources
- respondents expressing their support for proposals, without providing further information or suggestions.

Q14. How can the CPA work collaboratively with your organisation to promote learning, innovation and continuous improvement in child protection?

There were 275 responses to this question. Themes covered examples of information and resources which can be produced and the inclusion of co-creation and ongoing engagement with stakeholders. Respondents also highlighted how the CPA can support training, trauma-informed approaches and incorporate clear governance and reporting structures.

Qualitative responses to question 14

Information and resources (115 respondents)

Most respondents called for regular updates and reports, with accessible formats like newsletters and online platforms. Most also suggested the need for collaborative work to disseminate information, such as training workshops, webinars and peer learning networks, with some respondents suggesting national learning should be contextualised to local operational structures. Some suggestions also included collaboration on research, dashboards, benchmarking and analytical tools for national and local improvement. Other comments made by a few respondents included:

- specific area suggestions for thematic reviews, like emerging digital harms and new forms of coercive behaviour
- comments stressing the importance of involvement of education settings and non-professionals in information sharing
- suggestions to utilise and build on existing platforms and networks
- comments emphasising trust building and transparency in collaboration.

Co-production (106 respondents)

Respondents mostly emphasised co-production as a key method for collaboration, particularly in developing guidance, learning materials, and practice frameworks. Stakeholders referenced included frontline practitioners, social workers, educational

professionals, foster carers, and lived experience groups, to ensuring insights are grounded in real-world experience. Other comments made by a few respondents included suggestions that:

- co-designing could include pilot programmes, new practice models, digital tools, child-centred recording tools
- training could be designed through co-production to address specific workforce and community needs
- collaboration should be focused on preventing system-generated harm and ensuring trauma-informed or disability-informed safeguarding practices.

Feedback and ongoing dialogues – bridging the gap between policy and practice (81 respondents)

Most respondents emphasised the need for collaboration with tangible outcomes, which they felt could be achieved through continued engagement and feedback mechanisms, both with different sector organisations and with service users. Respondents felt the CPA should demonstrate how learning has informed national strategy, what actions were taken, and barriers encountered. Some suggested that ongoing collaboration should involve forums and direct visits.

Support in innovation & training (57 respondents)

Respondents suggested the CPA must help support and develop training and education. Most mentioned there is a need for consistent, high quality, accessible training, which translates national guidance into practical content. Some respondents mentioned specific training areas, like safeguarding, trauma-informed care, and specific-types of abuse. Innovation pilots, safe spaces for experimentation and sharing of learning across the system, were also mentioned by some respondents. A few respondents mentioned that innovation and training should be based on learnings from persistent failures.

Trauma-informed approaches (17 respondents)

Most respondents highlighted the importance of trauma-informed approaches and child-centred practice in child protection and collaboration with lived experience groups. Respondents advocated for tools and training to address issues like misdiagnosis, system-generated trauma and emotional impact of case records, especially through collaboration with lived experience groups. A few respondents suggested specific approaches like applying the STREAM (Strengths-based, Trauma-informed, Rights-based, Emotionally Containing, Anti-oppressive, Memory-aware) framework.

Clear governance and reporting structures (13 respondents)

Most of these suggestions included standards which should be set for organisations, especially around taking accountability and reporting data. Some comments also

suggested auditing, to help organisations understand what they need to prioritise to improve.

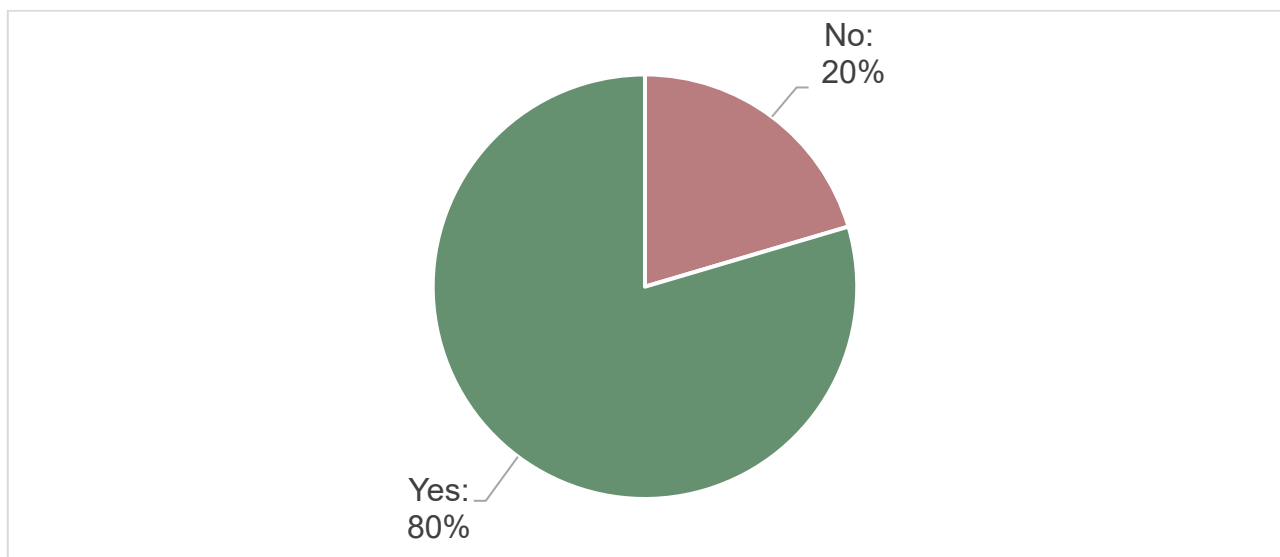
Other comments (15 respondents)

There were varied comments made by a few respondents that did not fit under any of the above themes. These included general comments referencing persistent failings within the sector and comments which were sceptical about the value of the CPA.

Q15. Do you agree with the proposals set out for how the CPA will support research and evidence?

Figure 10 shows that over three-quarters of respondents (80% or 222) agreed with the proposals set out for how the CPA will support research and evidence, whilst one-fifth disagreed (20% or 57).

Figure 10 Q15. Do you agree with the proposals set out for how the CPA will support research and evidence?



Source: CPA consultation responses March 2026. Base = 315.

Qualitative responses to question 15

There were 103 responses to this question. Views on the CPA's proposed approach to data and evidence were mixed. Some respondents worried that too much focus on data collection and analysis could detract from translating evidence into practical improvements in child protection, stressing that research must lead to tangible impact. Others highlighted the need for inclusive, representative data that captures the experiences of marginalised groups, frontline practitioners and those with lived experience to ensure an accurate, system-wide picture.

Concerns that the CPA will become too focussed on data gathering (46 responses)

Respondents expressed concern that the CPA may prioritise collecting and analysing data at the expense of meaningful, practical action. While respondents generally acknowledged the importance of research and evidence, they emphasised that this must translate into real-world improvements in child protection practice.

Data gathering must be inclusive (29 responses)

Respondents highlighted that any data collection approach must be inclusive, representative, and reflective of diverse experiences across the system. This includes ensuring that marginalised groups, frontline practitioners, and those with lived experience are properly captured.

Agreed – no concerns (17 responses)

Respondents expressed clear support for the proposals, viewing them as a positive and necessary step toward strengthening the evidence base in child protection.

Concerns about how data gathering will be funded (5 responses)

Respondents questioned whether sufficient funding and infrastructure will be available to support such a large-scale undertaking. There were also concerns about existing pressures on local systems and whether additional data requirements would be feasible without dedicated investment.

Other comments (16 responses)

Responses in this category raised various other points, including scepticism about the need for a new body given existing organisations and calls to strengthen current systems instead.

Q16. How should the CPA prioritise research topics, particularly in collaboration with existing What Works Centre and research bodies?

There were 238 responses to this question. Respondents suggested that the CPA should prioritise research topics through collaboration with sector experts, particularly What Works Centres, to prevent duplication, leverage expertise, and support alignment of priorities. Some respondents also felt that the most urgent issues or significant gaps should be prioritised, with a focus on high harm areas, such as neglect, exploitation, and VAWG. Others suggested that existing data, intelligence and previous research findings should be used to prioritise research topics.

Qualitative responses to question 16

Consulting sector experts (101 respondents)

Most respondents felt that research topic prioritisation should be consulted on in collaboration with various existing sectors, actors or experts (particularly 'What Works Centres') that have been identified as examples of good practice or have been historically involved in children's safeguarding. They felt that this would prevent duplication, leverage expertise, support effective multi-agency working and align research with national priorities. Most respondents highlighted the importance of engaging frontline practitioners for this purpose.

Urgent issues and significant gaps (73 respondents)

Respondents suggested that research priorities should be driven by the most urgent and significant gaps and challenges in child protection. Most suggested focusing on high harm areas, such as neglect, exploitation (including online and sexual exploitation), domestic abuse, and violence against women and girls (VAWG). Some respondents advocated for research that aimed to establish age-based safeguarding thresholds, examined international inconsistencies, and incorporated developmental neuroscience. A few specifically mentioned the importance of tackling research that touches on innovation, such as predictive analytics and digital safety tools.

Prioritisation via existing information and data (59 respondents)

Respondents emphasised that research topic prioritisation needs to be informed by existing data, intelligence and previous research findings. This included drawing on national datasets, complaints data, case reviews, frontline staff feedback, to identify key gaps and challenges in the sector.

What works and good practice (57 respondents)

Respondents highlighted the importance of considering good practice, moving away from solely focusing on failures. Additionally, comments suggested that research must be practical and lead to actionable recommendations, which can be achieved by identifying successful models for implementation and effectively disseminating findings to stakeholders.

Persistent barriers and failure of action (41 respondents)

These respondents felt that research should focus on persistent failures and barriers within the child protection space, to understand why these occur and why recommendations cannot be effectively implemented, to help prevent this in the future.

Emerging risks (41 respondents)

Respondents suggested that emerging risks should be identified and prioritised for research, using methods like horizon scanning, to ensure timely responses to such threats.

Consulting those with lived experience (36 respondents)

Respondents felt that research topics prioritisation should be decided in collaboration with lived experience groups.

Weakest evidence bases (35 respondents)

Respondents suggested that the CPA should focus their research on areas where evidence is currently weak, inconsistent or lacking, as well as focusing on issues which are generally poorly recorded and not well understood.

Other tips for how to approach research (33 respondents)

Respondents provided a range of ideas, emphasising the importance of a transparent, iterative and collaborative approach to research prioritisation. These included regular updates, reviews and utilisation of different methodologies.

National issues (30 respondents)

Comments suggested that research prioritisation should be informed by national issues, drawing on data from national datasets, case reviews, and national concerns.

Local and regional issues (21 respondents)

Respondents highlighted the importance of considering local and regional issues in research prioritisation, supporting the understanding of variations between areas and helping to address local needs via research.

Consulting children and parents (19 respondents)

Respondents suggested that research topic prioritisation should be decided in collaboration with children and parents.

Focus on high risks (19 respondents)

Respondents suggested that research topics should focus on the most-at-risk and highly vulnerable groups.

Other comments (13 respondents)

Some comments expressed general frustrations with the child protection space. Other comments did not relate to the question and did not fit under the themes identified.

Q17. How can the CPA ensure that commissioned research is accessible, relevant, and used effectively by practitioners?

There were 240 responses to this question. Respondents emphasised the need for accessible resource formats, utilising a broad range of dissemination strategies and integrating research findings into training, professional development and existing systems. Some also suggested research co-design with practitioners and those with lived experience, to ensure relevance.

Qualitative responses to question 17

Accessible material (98 respondents)

Respondents suggested research should be disseminated in accessible formats, such as short summaries and visual aids, avoiding academic jargon and lengthy reports. Most mentioned that a central, open-access online platform could make it easier to find and filter relevant information. Some respondents also suggested that producing multiple formats, tailored to different needs, could be used to ensure wider reach when disseminating findings. A few also mentioned making information free at point of use and considering disability needs is vital when creating resources.

Broad range of resources and dissemination strategies (84 respondents)

Respondents suggested resource formats and dissemination channels, including:

- central websites, hubs, and portals
- clear and practical outputs, like infographics, dashboards, videos, 'research in practice' summaries, and real-world case studies relevant to specific sectors or situations
- diverse communication channels, such as gov.uk publications, social media, webinars, newsletters, and conferences
- marketing campaigns to increase outreach
- training events and opportunities for development

Effective implementation strategies (82 respondents)

Respondents under this theme emphasised the need for research findings to be integrated into training, professional development and existing systems, for all relevant agencies, including health, police, education and local authorities. Most highlighted that the CPA should provide practical implementation support, with practice-ready tools that will not cause further burden to practitioners. Some suggestions for training tools included digital platforms and online modules for interactive learning. A few respondents mentioned that:

- the CPA should prioritise implementing existing recommendations over producing new academic studies, as the system is saturated with unimplemented findings

- research should be linked to system improvement activities and tested in local contexts.

Co-designing research (71 respondents)

Most respondents highlighted the importance of involving frontline staff, voluntary sector representatives, children, families, victims, survivors and other relevant groups, in research question design to ensure relevance. Some suggested that co-production should extend to shaping research outputs, testing usability, and challenging conclusions to reflect lived reality.

Relevant and credible evidence (35 respondents)

Most respondents suggested that research must be based on real experiences, real-time data at local, national and international levels, as well as reflect a timely response to emerging risks and real-world challenges. Additionally, some suggested that to ensure relevance, research must be trauma-informed, anti-oppressive, avoid deficit-based language, and reflect diverse experiences. Some also highlighted that there must be transparency in research, with the CPA reporting on all aspects of commissioned research, including aims, limitations, ethical safeguards and findings.

Active engagement and improvement (33 respondents)

Most respondents highlighted that there should be opportunities for ongoing engagement and feedback, with examples including webinars, Q&As, and feedback loops. A few respondents mentioned that clear mechanisms should be put in place to evaluate whether research is influencing practice and outcomes, creating feedback loops and supporting continuous improvement.

Other comments (16 respondents)

There were varied comments made by a few respondents that did not fit under any of the above themes. These included

- comments which expressed that they were unsure how to respond to the question, the question scope was outside their expertise or thought the proposals provided insufficient detail to respond
- comments which referenced wider systemic issues, such as lack of funding for child protection services.

Q18. How can we ensure that the CPA has the evidence-base embedded in the child protection system?

There were 224 responses to this question. Most respondents emphasised that the evidence base should be comprehensive, incorporating agency data, lived experience, practitioner insight and existing research, with emphasis on translating findings into

national practice. Additionally, workforce development, guidance and training were seen as important to support consistent application of evidence with integration within existing systems emphasised, alongside effective stakeholder engagement. National consistency and transparency were viewed as key to clarifying evidence-based practice. Some respondents also highlighted the importance of accessible practical tools, robust monitoring and continuous learning, and ensuring evidence is actively translated into everyday frontline practice.

Qualitative responses to question 18

Comments on evidence base inclusion (69 respondents)

Most respondents suggested the evidence-base itself should be comprehensive and include agency-reported data, lived experience perspectives from children, families and survivors, frontline practitioners and specialist organisations, and independent data from safeguarding processes or anonymous referrals. Respondents commented that the evidence base should build on existing research rather than commission new research and focus on translating recommendations into consistent national practice. Some suggestions of new research exploration areas and literature reviews were suggested.

Workforce development, guidance and training (62 respondents)

These respondents commented that workforce development, training and clear guidance are important for effectively integrating evidence into child protection practices. Respondents also suggested support for practitioners to understand, interpret and apply research findings through mandatory training, supervision models and national standards. There were suggestions to draw on expertise from practitioners, safeguarding professionals and specialist organisations to ground guidance in practical realities. There were also suggestions to avoid unnecessary duplication of training.

Evidence integration within systems (55 respondents)

Respondents suggested that the use of evidence should go beyond just dissemination or guidance and should be aligned and integrated within existing statutory guidance, national standards, commissioning frameworks, frontline practice, inspections, quality assurance and compliance mechanisms. Some suggested enforcing application of evidence through mandatory compliance, legislation and accountability mechanisms.

Stakeholder engagement (49 respondents)

Respondents commented that embedding the evidence-base within the child protection system requires consistent communication, collaboration and shared understanding across key sectors including social care, health, education and law enforcement. These respondents suggested that key stakeholders should be engaged (frontline practitioners, children, families, statutory and non-statutory organisations) to support practices which are co-produced, relevant and effectively embedded across the entire system.

Need for national consistency and transparency (48 respondents)

Some respondents commented that the CPA should establish national standards and ensure consistent practices for embedding and applying evidence across the system (rather than initiating new research programmes). These respondents also said the CPA should provide clarity by defining what evidence-based practice entails and support transparency through publication of instances where evidence is ignored.

Develop accessible and practical evidence tools (43 respondents)

Some respondents commented that evidence should be translated into accessible, practical tools and outputs for practitioners, such as guidance, dashboards and digital apps. These respondents also suggested the establishment of a single, national core dataset to drive learning, track progress and identify areas where practice is falling short.

Monitoring and continuous learning (33 respondents)

Respondents stressed that continuous learning, feedback loops and robust monitoring will be important in ensuring insights from research and practice lead to measurable and improved outcomes for children and not just compliance. These respondents also suggested the CPA should provide oversight, governance and scrutiny, demonstrate how practice has been enhanced through evidence-based approaches, evaluate outcomes over time and actively monitor the implementation and impact of recommendations on children's safety and well-being.

Translating evidence into practice/implementation (27 respondents)

Respondents suggested that evidence should become a "living part of practice" and everyday decision-making, rather than being a static product. These respondents highlighted that this requires actively translating research and recommendations into practical guidance, tools and consistent implementation that shapes frontline work, accountability and system improvement.

Other comments (33 respondents)

Some respondents criticised the current state of evidence-based practice and research, warning of over-reliance on data from local authorities, and use of jargon in the consultation. Some respondents suggested funding and wider consultation was needed.

Q19. What risks or challenges do you foresee in establishing a national body to synthesise and advise on child protection learning?

There were 258 responses to this question. Respondents anticipated that the new body and other sector agencies may not work well together to develop advice relevant for all, and there may be some duplication of the work of existing organisations. Some

respondents felt that the CPA's approach would be too centralised, generic, or disconnected from the realities of local areas and frontline practice, not reflecting local needs or reducing local autonomy. Some respondents were worried that the CPA may lack the necessary power, influence, or mechanisms to enforce its recommendations and achieve real change. They feared that a purely advisory body would be ineffective and unable to achieve impact, whilst adding a layer of bureaucracy.

Qualitative responses to question 19

Relevance and synergy across all sectors (115 respondents)

These respondents felt that establishing a national body to synthesise and advise on child protection learning could be challenging due to the fragmentation and complexity of the sector's landscape, emphasising the need for the CPA's role to be clearly defined. Most highlighted the need to establish clear boundaries, strong partnerships, and a shared national framework to avoid overlapping responsibilities and ensure the CPA's work is complementary to existing efforts. Some respondents also pointed out the challenge of achieving consistent implementation and information sharing across diverse agencies like police, health, education, and social care, that have different interpretations of guidance.

Disconnection from local context and practice (97 respondents)

Most of these respondents expressed concerns that the CPA would be too disconnected from local realities and frontline practice. They felt this would risk the creation of guidance that is abstract, impractical, or fails to account for the diverse contexts of different local areas. Some respondents suggested that local innovation would be stifled, professional judgment reduced, and a "one-size-fits-all" approach could be adopted which would fail to address variations even within local contexts, such as urban versus rural challenges. A few respondents were worried that the CPA might not adequately integrate with existing local systems, potentially duplicating efforts or a loss of local autonomy and relationships.

Lack of authority, bureaucracy and impact (75 respondents)

Respondents expressed concern that the CPA may lack sufficient authority and enforcement mechanisms necessary to drive action forward, which could mean failure to challenge regulators and oversight bodies leading to recommendations being ignored and the persistence of systemic problems. Most respondents felt there was a risk that the CPA could become a "commentary body", unable to generate impact on practice or improve outcomes. Some respondents also pointed to the danger of learning creating another layer of bureaucracy for organisations (more syntheses, thematic reviews, research) and potentially being prioritised over or delaying required actions to address situations where children remain at risk. Respondents felt this could result in increased reporting burdens, administrative discussions, and slow decision-making, with little impact for children and families.

Funding and resources (51 respondents)

Respondents suggested there may be challenges related to the financial aspects of the new body, including the need for sufficient funding to implement changes, the risk of funding being redirected, and wider financial constraints faced by the system.

Engagement and resistance (47 respondents)

Challenges mentioned by these respondents were related to engaging organisations and staff at ground level, including potential resistance, disengagement, and feelings of being 'done to'.

Unclear role and mission (46 respondents)

Respondents mentioned risks associated with overlapping roles with existing bodies, and a lack of clarity around roles, responsibilities, and aims of the CPA. They highlighted the need for clear boundaries, statutory remits and accountability mechanisms.

Ensuring expertise (43 respondents)

Respondents suggested there is a need for incorporating frontline expertise and lived experience insights within the CPA, sharing concerns that omission of this could lead to inaccurate analyses, missed risks and impractical recommendations.

Quality of advice (32 respondents)

Respondents mentioned risks associated with the nature and utility of the learning generated or disseminated by the new body. Comments included fears of 'group thinking', re-branding old ideas, focusing on the wrong issues, inaccessibility or producing impractical recommendations.

Data handling, management and analysis (28 respondents)

Respondents suggested challenges associated with organisational willingness to share data, existing data gaps, and navigating poor quality or inconsistent data. They also suggested that the willingness for practitioners to engage with data and/or inability to synthesise and interpret data accurately could be an issue.

Trust and credibility (27 respondents)

Comments from these respondents suggested that there is a risk that the new body will struggle to establish and maintain the trust and credibility necessary to be effective.

Overcoming existing barriers (26 respondents)

These respondents expressed concern that the new body may not overcome existing systemic and cultural barriers. Some barriers mentioned included organisational risk aversion or prioritisation of profits, overburdened services, or public awareness around safeguarding issues.

Over-burdening organisations (25 respondents)

Respondents shared concerns about the risk that the decisions made by the new body will over-burden organisations already struggling with capacity.

Political and external factors (16 respondents)

Respondents highlighted challenges arising from the broader political landscape, government changes, and other external influences that could impact the body's stability or effectiveness.

Inability to keep up with emerging threats (11 respondents)

Respondents mentioned risks associated with the organisation being too large and top level to be able to keep up with, identify and successfully manage emerging safeguarding threats.

Becoming insular or an echo-chamber (6 respondents)

Respondents expressed concern that the national body will be focusing on the wrong priorities or reinforce current ways of thinking, narrowing the scope for research and evidence.

Other comments (10 respondents)

Comments from these respondents related to general frustrations with existing systemic issues, and other comments which did not answer the question and did not fit under the themes.

Q20. What content, features, or formats would make a national learning platform most useful for improving child protection practice in your local context?

There were 224 responses to this question. Most respondents stressed the need for practical, ready-to-use tools and guidance that are interactive and accessible. A few respondents suggested platform features which would allow practitioners to filter and tailor content to their needs. A few also suggested co-producing the platform with practitioners.

Qualitative responses to question 20

Practise-ready and effective tools (122 respondents)

Most respondents suggested practical, ready-to-use tools and guidance, including checklists, templates, referral pathways, decision aids, flow charts and case studies to illustrate examples of poor or good practice in real-world scenarios. Some suggested content should address specific, often misunderstood, areas like system-generated harm, anonymous referrals, unconscious bias, and structural inequalities. A few respondents

mentioned the importance of tailoring content to different local contexts and the needs of various professionals, including foster carers and children's home staff.

Accessibility (87 respondents)

Most respondents provided suggestions for accessible tools which could be included on the platform. This included tools which are easy to understand and user-friendly, such as videos, infographics, bite-sized modules, and summaries which avoid jargon. Additionally, many suggested accessible, multimedia formats with consideration of disabilities, such as individuals with visual, auditory or language impairments, or who are neurodivergent. Other suggestions mentioned by a few respondents were a free platform, digital and print versions of content, training from the platform integrated into local contexts and sectors, use of inclusive language, and that the CPA could explore social media strategies to maximise engagement.

Relevance (59 respondents)

Most respondents suggested features which would allow for tailored content, making the platform relevant to individual needs and contexts. Most also suggested flexible features, which allow users to filter and sort information in line with their needs. Suggestions for information which could be filtered based on relevance, mentioned by some of the respondents included:

- demographic information, such as role, sector, age group, or level of experience
- local, regional and national data comparisons
- regularly updated, real-time local data
- emerging trends and risks in particular sectors, such as exploitation patterns, abuse types, and online harms
- searchable libraries for new research findings, case law, and guidance
- practical tools and resources.

A few respondents commented that there should be alignment with existing platforms or content, from other organisations, to reduce duplication.

Co-production (52 respondents)

Most respondents suggested that the CPA could co-produce the platform and its features with practitioners working in the child protection space, ensuring features and content matches the needs of different sectors and areas, to improve practice. Respondents also suggested co-production should involve lived experience groups. Some suggested that the content should be informed by anonymised case-studies, cases of real-life failures and examples of good practice, collated through feedback from stakeholders. A few respondents specifically mentioned the importance of including foster carers, care-experienced individuals, and voluntary sector representatives. A few also mentioned co-production could involve evaluating the effectiveness of materials in practice.

Interactive features (47 respondents)

Most respondents provided suggestions for interactive features within the platform which provide opportunities for feedback, clarifications and information sharing between users. Some respondents mentioned webinars, discussion areas and forums, and Q&A sections, which could provide opportunities for interaction with the CPA, multi-agency sharing, and peer-learning. Additionally, some mentioned the inclusion of ongoing feedback, to share concerns, emerging patterns in child protection, research needs, or suggest improvements to the platform. A few respondents mentioned that AI chatbots or tools could be utilised.

Transparency (14 respondents)

Respondents mostly mentioned that information within the platform should be transparent by not only celebrating good practice but including examples of systemic failures.

Whistleblowing and oversight (12 respondents)

Respondents mostly emphasised the need for a complaint system within the platform. Some respondents suggested there should be monitoring and oversight of the platform and its content.

Other comments

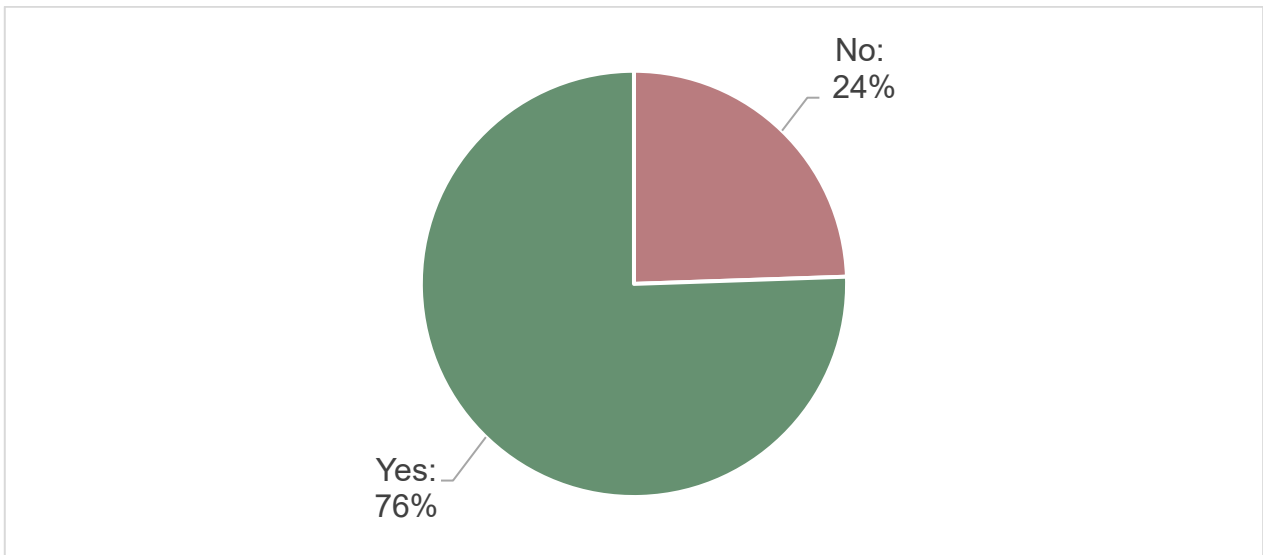
There were varied comments made by a few respondents that did not fit under any of the above themes. These included:

- comments which refer to wider systemic issues rather than the national digital platform, such as staffing shortages.
- comments which express they do not have an opinion, do not have enough expertise or are unsure how to answer the question due to lack of detail in the consultation.

Q21. Do you agree with the proposals set out on how the CPA can support workforce and training?

Figure 11 shows that just over three-quarters of respondents (76% or 248) agreed with the proposals set out on how the CPA can support the workforce and training, whilst just under one-quarter disagreed (24% or 68).

Figure 11 Q21. Do you agree with the proposals set out on how the CPA can support workforce and training?



Source: CPA consultation responses March 2026. Base = 278.

Qualitative responses to question 21

There were 125 responses to this question. Respondents emphasised the need for consistent, evidence-based, and multi-agency training aligned with modern safeguarding risks. There were also calls for standardized training across all safeguarding partners to ensure consistent practice aligned with national expectations and evidence. Some respondents urged consideration of systemic barriers which may limit the effective implementation of training.

Content suggestions to enhance the proposals on training (53 respondents)

Respondents emphasised the need for consistent, evidence-based, and multi-agency training aligned with modern safeguarding risks. Many respondents provided suggestions for workforce development, with most highlighting the importance of trauma-informed practice, going beyond technical knowledge, and effectively covering the complexities of child protection. Some also called for training which addresses system-generated harm, the impact of institutional behaviours, and emerging risks like online grooming or cross-border exploitation. Other training suggestions highlighted by a few respondents included:

- handling anonymous referrals safely
- importance of professional boundaries
- embedding lived experience
- specialist training for managers and leadership roles
- inclusion training, including poverty, inequality and disability awareness
- inclusion of non-statutory partners in proposals including education.

National standards and enforcement (33 respondents)

Respondents called for mandatory, standardized training across all safeguarding partners to ensure consistent practice aligned with national expectations and evidence. Most respondents highlighted that the CPA should hold powers to enforce national training standards, with minimum requirements for completion. Some respondents highlighted the importance of linking training to supervision, accountability, and decision audits.

Understanding systemic barriers (26 respondents)

Respondents urged consideration of systemic barriers which could limit the effective implementation of training. Most respondents felt the CPA must investment resources to support the workforce and tackle barriers. Barriers mentioned by some of the respondents included inadequate resourcing, unmanageable workloads, lack of support for frontline staff, lack of time for training, and leadership failures.

Co-production (17 respondents)

Respondents suggested that the CPA should engage with practitioners and lived experience groups to develop resources for training, with some highlighting how this will help cover relevant issues, challenges, and needs of different sectors.

Alignment with existing resources (17 respondents)

Respondents suggested that the CPA should consider how well-aligned training will be with existing frameworks, with some suggesting that the authority could draw on existing resources to develop core training modules.

Continuous improvement of training (12 respondents)

Respondents suggested that training should be regularly evaluated and updated, in line with new intelligence and emerging risks, as well as some suggesting that feedback from practitioners and analysis of performance metrics should be used to evaluate the effectiveness of training.

Delivery and accessibility (11 respondents)

These respondents emphasised that the CPA should consider how training will be delivered to ensure it is accessible. There were suggestions for learning approaches such as digital tools, micro-learning modules, and AI-driven aids to facilitate learning in busy environments, and the inclusion of practical toolkits to embed learning. Some suggested in-person training should be offered to avoid an overwhelming amount of online material.

Other comments (11 respondents)

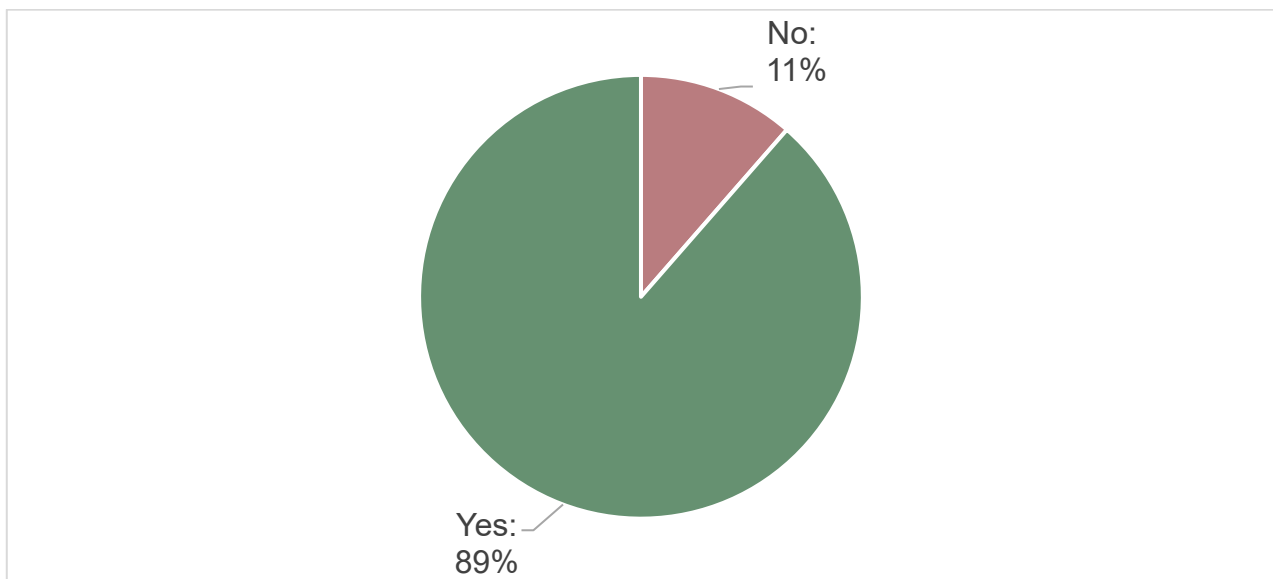
There were varied comments made by a few respondents that did not fit under any of the above themes. These included:

- comments expressing that they were unsure how to respond to the question, the question scope was outside of their expertise, or the consultation provided insufficient detail to respond
- comments which simply stated ‘agree’
- comments which oppose the establishment of the CPA, viewing it as unnecessary.

Q22. Do you support the CPA working with regulators and professional bodies, and national government, to promote consistent training standards across safeguarding partners?

Figure 12 shows that almost all respondents (89% or 248) supported the CPA’s proposal to work with regulators, professional bodies and national government, to promote consistent training standards across safeguarding partners. Just over one-tenth did not support this (11% or 32).

Figure 12 Q22. Do you support the CPA working with regulators and professional bodies, and national government, to promote consistent training standards across safeguarding partners?



Source: CPA consultation responses March 2026. Base = 280.

Qualitative responses to question 22

There were 108 responses to this question. Generally, respondents emphasised the need for broad stakeholder representation, particularly the inclusion of frontline practitioners and those with lived experience, alongside engagement with organisations and other sectors lacking formal professional bodies. This was closely followed by detailed suggestions on training content and scope, including digital safeguarding risks, complex decision-making and extending training beyond statutory roles.

Representation from various stakeholders, including frontline staff and lived experiences (49 respondents)

Most respondents suggested there should be engagement with other stakeholders, which were not mentioned in the proposals. For example, consultation with families and survivors for lived experience perspectives and collaboration with various organisations, such as the NHS, National Youth Agency, College of Policing and Youth Justice Board. Some respondents suggested sector stakeholders which do not have professional bodies to represent them such as youth work, faith and sport.

Training content and scope suggestions (48 respondents)

Respondents made various suggestions for the content and scope of training. Content suggestions included digital safeguarding such as grooming models, livestream risks, gaming platforms and algorithmic exposure. Other examples included decision-making in complex cases, understanding key topics, STREAM principles and training which extends to volunteers.

General support for proposals: collaboration to promote consistent training standards (22 respondents)

Respondents expressed support for different aspects of the proposals to promote consistent training, providing reasons why this is needed.

Call for accountability and systemic change (13 respondents)

Respondents suggested that consistent training is not enough and there should be action to enforce training and tackle barriers which limit training from being implemented effectively.

Other comments (8 respondents)

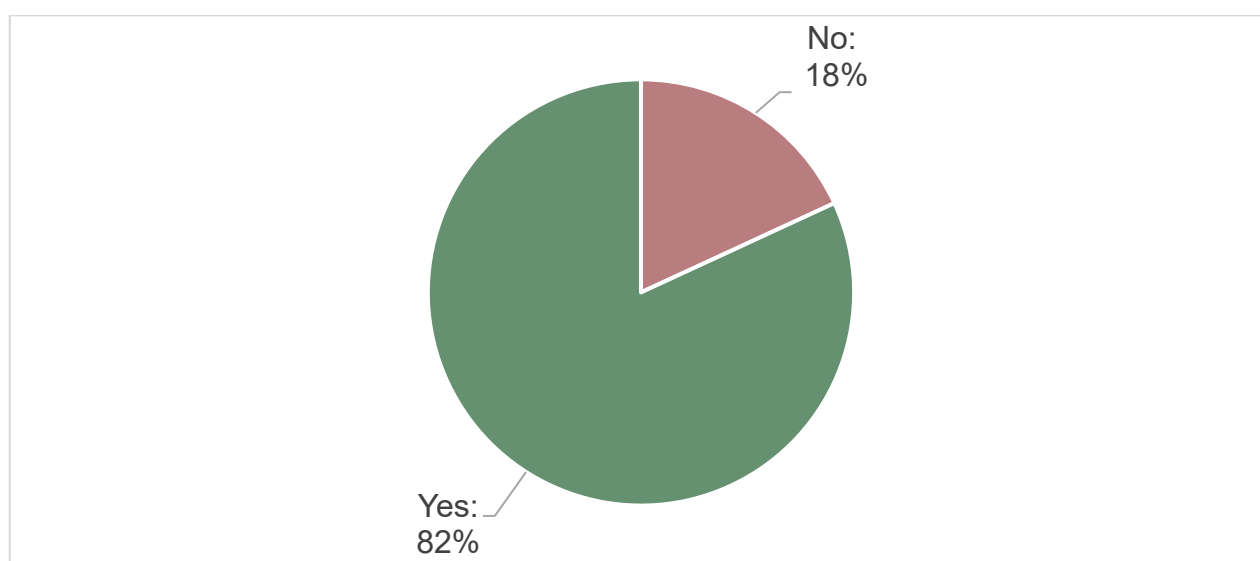
Respondents expressed that they were unsure how to respond, the question scope was outside their expertise or thought the proposals provided insufficient detail to respond. Other comments included those which do not seem to respond to the question or those which doubted the feasibility of the proposals.

Chapter 5: Driving system improvement in the Child Protection System

Q23. Do you agree with the proposals set out for the CPA to support multi-agency learning and improvements?

Just over four-fifths of respondents (82% or 226) agreed with CPA's proposed approach for supporting multi-agency learning and improvements (Figure 13), whilst just under one-fifth disagreed (18% or 50).

Figure 13 Q23. Do you agree with the proposals set out for the CPA to support multi-agency learning and improvements?



Source: CPA consultation responses March 2026. Base = 276.

Qualitative responses to question 23

There were 107 responses to this question. Generally, respondents wanted to see multi-agency expertise embedded within the CPA's design, rather than as a separate advisory function. A few respondents stressed that wider systemic issues should be considered when supporting multi-agency learning or suggested tools and training which could be offered to partners.

Agencies, sectors and groups (32 respondents)

These respondents tended to emphasise that multi-agency and multi-sector expertise (including lived experience groups, third sector and community-focused organisations, and frontline practitioners in social care, health, police, and education) should be embedded within the CPA's design, rather than treated as an external advisory function. Some respondents also suggested that approaches to multi-agency learning and improvement

should involve co-production with relevant stakeholders from the outset, to ensure they are meaningful and effective.

General support for the proposed approach (23 respondents)

Respondents provided general statements of support for the proposed approach, along with reasons why this is important.

Concerns about the existing system or the proposal (20 respondents)

These comments stressed that wider systemic issues and pressures must also be considered in multi-agency learning and suggested that the proposals may not have the right capacity to address these.

Tools, training, and data sharing (18 respondents)

Respondents provided examples of tools and training which could be offered to partners to facilitate multi-agency learning and improvement. Comments also highlighted the need for data sharing and effective dissemination of information.

CPA authority and accountability (17 respondents)

These respondents stressed the need for learning to translate into actions and real change, suggesting that the CPA should hold the authority to intervene where persistent failure occurs.

Implementation of learning (12 respondents)

Respondents suggested ways to effectively turn learning into practice, including the consideration of barriers faced by certain agencies which may stall improvements.

National consistency and local relevance (10 respondents)

These comments stressed that, whilst consistent national improvement is needed, any national policy must consider local and regional differences in order to effectively translate into local improvement.

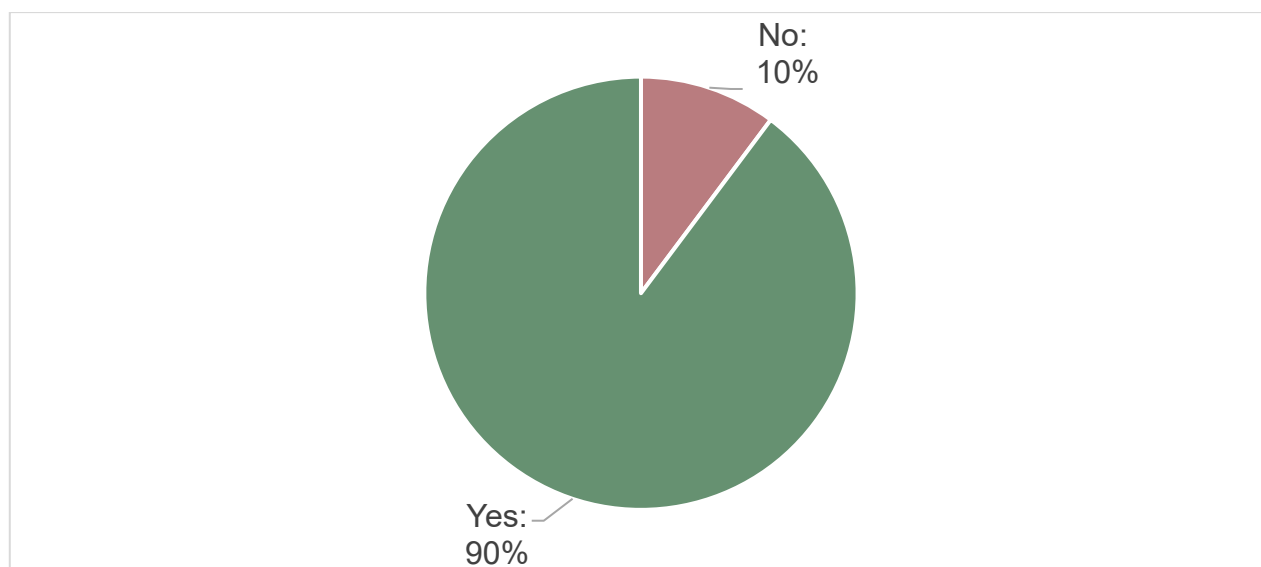
Other comments (8 respondents)

These respondents commented either that they were unsure how to respond, the question scope was outside their expertise or they thought the proposals provided insufficient detail to respond.

Q24. Do you believe your sector would benefit from additional support from the CPA when implementing recommendations and improvements?

Figure 14 shows that almost all respondents (90% or 237) believed the sector would benefit from additional support from the CPA when implementing recommendations and improvements. One-tenth (10% or 27) believed that the sector would not benefit from additional support.

Figure 14 Q24. Do you believe your sector would benefit from additional support from the CPA when implementing recommendations and improvements?



Source: CPA consultation responses March 2026. Base=264.

Qualitative responses to question 24

There were 99 responses to this question. Most respondents highlighted the importance of collaboration, co-ordination and co-design between organisations, local authorities, other key services and specialists in the child protection sector to develop recommendations and improvements. Specialists, practitioners and those with lived experience were deemed as best placed to support in advisory roles for this and their involvement should be regular, structured and funded. Some respondents expressed concern that without funding or additional resources it will be difficult to adopt or implement any changes.

Focus on collaboration and co-design (45 respondents)

Respondents felt that efforts should focus on collaboration and coordination between organisations (e.g. voluntary sector, health, education, policing, social care organisations), local authorities, other key services and specialists. There were suggestions that specialists, practitioners and those with lived experience should be recruited in an advisory or co-design role as their expertise makes them best placed to support decisions around

the development of recommendations and improvements. Some respondents also suggested that engagement with experts should be regular, structured and funded.

Generally positive (37 respondents)

Respondents expressed that they were generally in favour of additional support from the CPA when implementing recommendations and improvements.

Resources (25 respondents)

Respondents suggested that in order for the sector to successfully implement recommendations and make improvements, the organisations involved in child protection must be provided with better resources, including increased funding, to tackle systemic barriers.

Guidance and tools (21 respondents)

These respondents called for the CPA to produce and disseminate the guidance and tools necessary to support implementation, including frameworks, step-by-step guidance, toolkits, checklists, and model templates.

Practicality & recognition of limitations (21 respondents)

Respondents highlighted the importance of developing clear and practical recommendations and improvements, with consideration to what can be realistically and credibly achieved according to respective contexts.

Support only effective if other factors addressed (19 respondents)

Respondents felt that additional support would only be effective if other factors are addressed first. Examples included stronger oversight over progress tracking, quality assurance, supporting organisations to feed into prevention and early identification strategies.

Proportionality, scale and relevance (17 respondents)

Respondents suggested that support and guidance should be proportionate, practical and must target local and sector needs. They felt that the approach should be scaled and tailored based on such needs, and it could also build on existing systems to ensure relevance.

Avoiding the creation of additional burden (12 respondents)

These respondents stressed the approach should avoid the creation of additional burdens or barriers to a system already under pressure.

Other comments (22 respondents)

Some respondents expressed that the question did not apply to them, or they did not know the answer. Some comments do not relate to the question or do not fit under the themes. A few respondents were concerned that the CPA can effectively carry out responsibilities regarding implementation. A few respondents expressed that they believe the adequate processes are already in place.

Q25. What do you think are the most persistent barriers to implementing recommendations from local and national reviews effectively?

There were 263 responses to this question. Most respondents expressed concern about resource constraints, suggesting that without adequate resourcing implementing recommendations would be difficult. Some respondents also felt that a persistent barrier to recommendation implementation was the lack of a joined-up approach between the actors working in the sector, with inconsistent safeguarding approaches and different interpretations of risk. Some respondents said that it was difficult to prioritise and follow-through with any recommendations or suggested improvements, as they were often too impractical or vague to implement.

Qualitative responses to question 25

Lack of resources (147 responses)

Respondents highlighted concerns about insufficient funding, staffing, and capacity to effectively implement recommendations. They felt that without adequate resourcing, the CPA's ambitions may not be achievable in practice. Most respondents emphasised that the sector is faced with high workforce turnover, capacity pressures, and heavy workloads, which limits time for reflection, training, and implementing improvements. Some respondents pointed to financial constraints, poor pay, and rising costs as contributors of staffing shortages and overall service degradation.

Lack of a joined-up approach (122 responses)

Respondents felt that work in the sector is fragmented and operates in silos, with inconsistent practices, information-sharing and poor communication across actors. Most respondents highlighted discrepancies between national, local and cross-agency approaches, with inconsistent safeguarding thresholds and varying interpretations of risk. Respondents expressed concern that without strong coordination and alignment between agencies, the CPA's efforts could duplicate existing work or fail to create meaningful system-wide improvement.

Unclear follow up (85 responses)

Respondents felt that recommendations or improvements made were often too vague and/or not practical enough to be taken forward, with actors unsure where to go to for seeking out advice to carry out the next steps for implementation. They emphasised that the sectors were bombarded with proposed changes and there was a lack of clarity around what to prioritise to take forward.

Unclear responsibilities/ Lack of accountability or enforcement (72 responses)

Respondents said that with no single body responsible to drive change forward, there were no consequences in the case of failure. They highlighted that responsibilities were fragmented and it was unclear who should take ownership of actions or if failure to act can be enforced.

Education / training / awareness (70 responses)

Respondents shared the need for improved knowledge, skills, and understanding across the workforce to support effective use of research and evidence. This included training on data collection, analysis, and application in practice. There was also a call for greater awareness of the CPA's role and purpose to ensure engagement and buy-in from stakeholders.

Priorities (58 responses)

Respondents highlighted competing demands and pressures within the system and questioned whether research and evidence activities will be prioritised amid other urgent responsibilities. They were concerned that without clear prioritisation and alignment with frontline needs, these efforts may be deprioritised.

Cultural barriers (51 responses)

Respondents noted that resistance to change, lack of trust, or limited openness to learning could undermine the CPA's aims. Some respondents had concerns that entrenched attitudes, behaviours and ways of working may hinder genuine change.

Other barriers (36 responses)

This category captured responses that mentioned a range of additional challenges not covered elsewhere, such as practical implementation issues, technological limitations, or concerns about data quality.

Other comments (18 responses)

Responses in this category included miscellaneous comments that did not clearly align with the main themes.

Q26. How do you think the CPA could best monitor the implementation of recommendations from reviews?

There were 221 responses to this question, with varied suggestions made for how the implementation of recommendations could be monitored. Some respondents suggested a national system to track implementation, whilst others stressed the importance of seeking feedback from local and regional partners, frontline practitioners, and those with lived experience. Other comments included the view that monitoring should focus on meaningful outcome indicators, rather than just compliance actions, and suggestions for independent audits and inspections to monitor implementation.

Qualitative responses to question 26

Structured tracking and reporting system (72 respondents)

Respondents highlighted the need for a structured national system to track the implementation of recommendations from various reviews, including regional and serious incidents. They suggested the system should include public dashboards, regular updates, and publishing annual reports, to ensure transparency.

Stakeholder involvement and feedback (60 respondents)

Respondents stressed the importance of feedback from local and regional partners, frontline practitioners, and those with lived experience, both in the development of recommendations and monitoring their implementation. They also highlighted the need for qualitative evidence, such as case notes, assessments, supervision records, and observations, in addition to quantitative data, to understand how recommendations are implemented and the impact on practice and culture. Some respondents also suggested creating safe and anonymous channels for stakeholders to share feedback.

Focus on outcomes and impact tracking (57 respondents)

These respondents emphasised that monitoring recommendations should focus on actual outcomes and impact, using meaningful system improvement indicators with measurable indicators of change, rather than simply monitoring compliance. Some respondents also stressed the importance of understanding workforce conditions and providing support, alongside monitoring.

Independent or external verification and audit (52 respondents)

Respondents suggested that independent or external audits and inspections should be carried out to ensure recommendations are implemented effectively, including via spot checks, case file reviews, periodic audits. Some suggested that existing bodies, like Ofsted, could conduct such checks.

Accountability and enforcement (39 respondents)

Respondents suggested that the CPA should have accountability and enforcement mechanisms as there need to be clear consequences for non-compliance. Some suggestions included mandatory timelines for implementation, escalation routes, challenging senior leadership, and intervention when necessary.

Broad range of data (30 respondents)

There were suggestions for varied data sources that could be used to monitor the implementation of recommendations, including comments highlighting the importance of combining quantitative and qualitative data. Suggested sources included data on child protection referrals and the numbers of children within the child protection system, Report Harmful Content data, inspection findings, local self-assessments, LCSPRs and multi-agency partnership reviews, alongside qualitative feedback from practitioners, those with lived experience, partner agencies, and voluntary and community sector organisations,

Thematic tracking approach to monitoring (25 respondents)

These respondents suggested that monitoring should include holistic understanding focused on systemic issues, recurring patterns, and barriers to implementation. Respondents felt that this risk-based approach would allow for assessing real-world impact of recommendations and addressing systemic issues.

Alignment with existing systems and processes (10 respondents)

These comments suggested that monitoring processes should align with existing approaches, to avoid duplication of resources or competing demands.

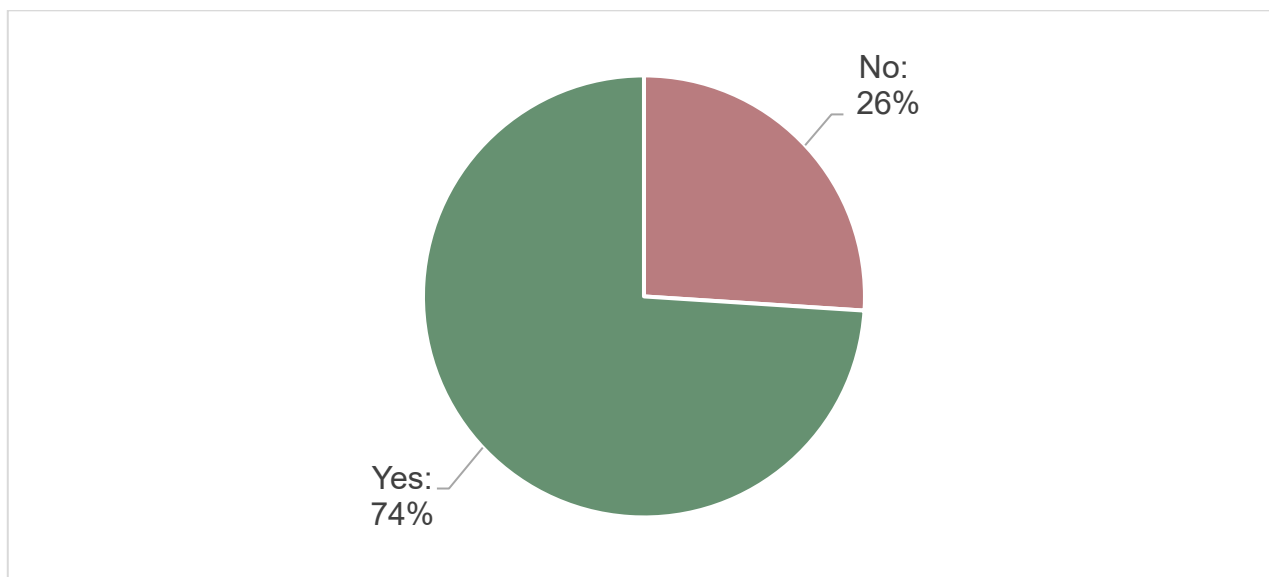
Other comments (16 respondents)

These respondents made comments which did not fit with the above themes, including those stating that the proposals contained insufficient information for them to comment, the question was outside of their expertise or the proposed approach to monitoring was insufficient.

Q27. Do you agree with the proposals set out for how the CPA will address persistent failings (powers to compel information sharing, powers to convene partners, powers to advise inspectorates on activity)?

Figure 15 shows that just under three-quarters of respondents (74% or 199) agreed with the proposals set out for how the CPA will address persistent failings. Just over one-quarter of respondents (26% or 70) disagreed with how the CPA will address persistent failings.

Figure 15 Q27. Do you agree with the proposals set out for how the CPA will address persistent failings (powers to compel information sharing, powers to convene partners, powers to advise inspectorates on activity)?



Source: CPA consultation responses March 2026. Base = 269.

Qualitative responses to question 27

There were 126 responses to this question. Some respondents suggested that the CPA should have enforcement and intervention powers to be effective in addressing safeguarding failures, including issuing binding directions, mandating action, compelling information-sharing, enforcing compliance, and setting minimum safeguarding standards. A few respondents emphasised the need for clear guidance and adequate support to address persistent failings and felt that the proposal should have more information to help clarify this area further. A few were concerned about bureaucracy and overreach resulting from how the proposal set out the way the CPA will address persistent failings. They called for greater clarity on how the new body will complement the work of existing actors without creating burden or duplication.

Needs to include enforcement and intervention powers (62)

Respondents felt the CPA's proposed powers are necessary but not enough to tackle persistent safeguarding failures. They argued the CPA needs clear statutory authority to issue binding directions, mandate action, compel information-sharing, enforce compliance, and set minimum safeguarding standards. Respondents felt that without such stronger "hard powers," the CPA risks becoming only an advisory body unable to ensure meaningful change or hold failing organisations to account.

Support and guidance also required (29)

Respondents commented that there is a need for clear guidance and adequate support, concerns were raised that the proposal does not sufficiently explain how powers will be balanced with support, learning, and capacity-building.

Risk of bureaucracy and overreach (21)

Respondents expressed concern that the proposed powers could lead to increased bureaucracy and a disproportionate or misdirected use of authority. They called for greater clarity on how these powers will interact with existing statutory roles and regulators, and how they will avoid duplication.

Needs to recognise system pressures / workload (13)

Respondents felt that persistent safeguarding failures were widely linked to systemic issues such as under-resourcing, excessive caseloads, and workforce instability, rather than a lack of willingness to improve. They expressed concern that additional oversight could intensify pressure on an already strained system, and suggested giving that any statutory powers to enforce minimum standards must be paired with an understanding of system pressures.

Concerns about creating a culture of blame (11)

Respondents felt there was a risk of creating a culture of blame, with repeated calls for a strengths-based approach focused on learning from mistakes rather than assigning fault.

Doesn't address underlying failures (9)

Respondents were concerned that recommendations are routinely ignored, creating a culture of impunity where underlying safeguarding failures go unaddressed.

Other disagreements (9)

Respondents expressed other disagreements with how the CPA will address persistent failings, which included that:

- the proposals do not go far enough or are imprecise regarding the powers of the CPA
- the CPA would be unsuitable for this role, as it would lack the authority and credibility needed its involvement in regulation would undermine trust in its learning function
- they generally disagreed with the proposals, deeming the CPA unnecessary and suggesting that existing governance and inspection mechanisms should address these issues.

Other comments (8)

Other comments included suggestions to establish strong information sharing systems and promote shared leadership, while clearly distinguishing the CPA from inspectorates to avoid confusion and maintain engagement.

Q28. In what circumstances should the CPA escalate its concerns to inspectorates?

There were 217 responses to this question. Respondents make varied suggestions for when they felt that the CPA should escalate concerns, including in situations where there is failure to learn from previous incidents, learning is not taken forward, improvements or actions to take forward are not acted upon, and recommendations are not responded to. Some respondents suggested that escalation should occur when there is clear evidence of harm to children and/or young people, whether that is from breaches of national standards or from whistleblowers. A few respondents deemed escalation necessary when there is clear evidence of systemic risks or repeated failures in safeguarding children.

Qualitative responses to question 28

Where an organisation or agency is failing to improve (79)

Respondents commented that escalation should occur when there is persistent failure to act on learning, recommendations or improvement plans, especially after supportive or partnership approaches have been exhausted. This includes lack of progress, repeated concerns about the same setting, or evidence of defensiveness or obstruction. Most respondents included examples of situations where there is evidence of a lack of progress, repeated concerns about the same setting, or defensiveness or obstruction. Some respondents felt that escalation should be used as a last resort, after other options have been exhausted, and should be oriented towards the protection of children rather than a punishment.

Evidence of harm or risk to children / young people (77)

Respondents commented that escalation is necessary when there is evidence of harm or risk of harm to children and young people. Most respondents felt that escalation should be taken forward when clear safeguarding breaches of national standards happen or there is evidence of serious or emerging harm. Some respondents called for escalation when concerns are raised by families, advocates, or professionals about culture, misconduct, or trauma, especially those usually systematically dismissed.

Clear evidence of systemic risk or repeated failures (35)

Respondents commented that escalation should be deemed necessary when there is clear evidence of systemic risks or repeated failures in safeguarding children. This

included persistent non-implementation of recommendations, recurrent safeguarding incidents, and patterns of similar failures within or across organisations.

Non-compliance with regulation or best practice (32)

Respondents felt that the CPA should escalate when there is persistent non-compliance with regulations, statutory guidance, or best practice standards, especially important when local agencies fail to act sufficiently or address identified concerns. This included repeated failures to implement recommendations and a lack of engagement or follow-through on critical issues.

Where there are safeguarding risks (20)

Respondents identified that safeguarding risks span multiple agencies and datasets, requiring the CPA to integrate quantitative data, qualitative insights, lived experience, and multi-agency patterns. They felt that escalation is necessary when there are safeguarding risks.

Suggestions for an escalation approach (12)

Respondents advocated for a well-communicated, simple and clear escalation process with defined timelines and required responses is needed. Other suggestions included a traffic-light escalation system, stronger use of whistleblowing and governing bodies, and a cultural shift in social care to openly acknowledge problems. Respondents also emphasised that the CPA's role should be proportionate and supportive, avoiding duplication of inspectorate functions, with regular annual meetings with inspectorates proposed as a better approach.

Recurring incidents or complaints (10)

Respondents suggested that escalation to inspectorates is needed when there are repeated incidents, complaints, or failures to protect children, including persistent inaction on known risks or agencies passing responsibility. It should occur when review recommendations are not implemented, the same organisations recur across incidents, or there is evidence of defensiveness such as withholding information or minimising concerns.

Lack of multi-agency working/communication/information sharing (7)

Respondents identified that recurring failures in multi-agency collaboration, such as poor information-sharing, inconsistent thresholds, and weak coordination create avoidable risks. They felt the CPA should escalate when agencies repeatedly disagree on risk, work in silos, or refuse to engage in learning.

Other comments (21)

Most of these comments expressed concerns about inspectorate reliability and accountability, alongside reports of cover-ups and systemic failure. Respondents

highlighted fear and lack of protection for whistleblowers, differing views on whether escalation should be early, automatic, case dependent or avoided altogether, and noted confusion about roles and calls for greater CPA authority.

Q29. How can the CPA ensure that its approach is both proportionate and effective?

There were 193 responses to this question. Some respondents advocated for the use of existing evidence to drive the development of CPA activities, while also considering the constraints that services are faced with. They thought this process should be learning oriented, iterative and subject to independent review. Some respondents provided suggestions on the operational focus of the CPA, including expert engagement, fostering a unified approach, prioritising children's safety and welfare and challenging existing systems. Some respondents advocated for a model which prioritises collaboration, working closely with local partners and stakeholders, frontline practitioners to develop actionable, practical and sustainable improvements in safeguarding practice.

Qualitative responses to question 29

Evidence-based approach (70 respondents)

Respondents felt that use of evidence should inform and target the activities of the CPA, with actions determined based on an understanding of context, systemic factors and frontline realities and challenge the systems and resource issues that get in the way of improvement work. It was suggested that the body should distinguish between poor practice and systemic failure and recognise that services are overwhelmed and under-resourced. Some respondents also felt that the CPA should regularly monitor, audit, review and evaluate its own outcomes and impact, and be subject to independent review and audit.

Operational focus of CPA (58 respondents)

Suggestions from respondents made about the operational focus of the CPA to ensure proportionality and effectiveness included:

- listening to and engaging experts, partners, and those with lived experience, and championing social work expertise and values
- fostering a unified national system with clear standards and alignment across all agencies
- prioritising children's safety and welfare, early intervention and family-centred approaches
- challenging existing systems, ensuring sufficient funding to address systemic issues rather than assigning blame, and promoting good practice standards.

Supportive and engaging model (49 respondents)

Respondents advocated that the CPA approach should prioritise collaborative engagement, dialogue and learning. They felt it should work closely with local partners and stakeholders, listening to frontline insights and providing clear, actionable and practical feedback to ensure sustainable improvements in safeguarding practices.

Transparent and accountable (39 respondents)

Respondents emphasised the importance of the CPA operating with transparency, accountability and efficiency in all its processes, from decision-making to reporting and communication. They felt it should demonstrate independence from political pressure and avoid unnecessary bureaucracy and duplication of efforts.

Escalation model (38 respondents)

Respondents felt that the CPA should operate a tiered or graduated response to intervene when risks in child safeguarding are identified, which begins with support and only escalates to stronger measures when issues are persistent, severe or unaddressed.

Clear and consistent frameworks (37 respondents)

Respondents said that the CPA should establish clear, transparent and consistent frameworks, criteria and thresholds for its operation. These should facilitate distinguishing between situations requiring support, learning, escalation or scrutiny. The respondents also mentioned the inclusion of defined success measures and time-bound actions.

Risk-based and outcomes-focused approach (27 respondents)

Respondents suggested that the CPA should adopt a risk-based approach that prioritises children's safety over institutional outcomes. For example, they should use vulnerability and harm indices to focus on evidence of risk to children where harm is most likely or learning has demonstrably failed. Respondents emphasised that the focus should be on addressing safeguarding and protective action with success measured through improvements in children's experience and outcomes, rather than just process compliance or volume of activity.

Improvement focused approach (24 respondents)

Respondents said that the CPA should focus on improvement and trust-building rather than compliance and punitive measures. This included understanding local contexts, considering partners' capacities, offering practical support and offering challenge to achieve sustained and embedded change.

Diversity of experience needed in the CPA workforce (12 respondents)

Respondents highlighted the importance for the CPA to have a diverse, experienced and knowledgeable workforce, including individuals from various backgrounds and with current

experience in child protection work and specialist expertise. This will support robust discussions, understanding complex issues and ensuring credible, trusted leadership.

Other comments (33 respondents)

Some respondents were not sure how to answer this question, while some referred to comments made previously. Some respondents were sceptical regarding the potential for positive change and improvement as a result of the CPA. A few respondents said that the CPA should have robust enforcement powers and be able to compel compliance and remove organisations from operation.

Q30. Where significant failings are identified, including persistent lack of action against recommendations, what additional actions or powers should the CPA be able to take to hold organisations to account?

There were 217 responses to this question. Some respondents suggested that the CPA should have the power to mandate improvements in safeguarding practices, including setting out time-bound plans for implementation, monitoring progress and escalate if concerns persist. Some respondents felt that those responsible for failings, leaders and key individuals, should be held accountable for organisations that showcase persistent and significant failings. A few respondents advocated for the CPA to have the power to subject organisations with persistent and significant failings to independent inspections or reviews.

Qualitative responses to question 30

More enforceable mechanisms (61 respondents)

Respondents suggested the CPA should have mechanisms in place to mandate improvements in safeguarding practices. This included time-bound improvement plans with measurable outcomes, public reporting and monitoring to ensure compliance and sustained change, formal improvement notices, demonstrating impact and learning, and the ability to escalate concerns and/or mandate external support where failings persist.

Leadership accountability (57 respondents)

These respondents advocated for holding leadership and key individuals accountable for persistent failures in safeguarding. Measures to achieve this referenced included licensing regimes, referral to regulators, fines, mandatory training/retraining and professional development, or removing from positions.

Inspections and reviews (53 respondents)

Respondents said that inspections and formal review processes should support the CPA to address systematic failings and persistent safeguarding concerns. Robust accountability

frameworks should be in place and the CPA should have the authority to mandate independent audits, targeted inspections, and multi-agency reviews, escalating concerns to existing regulatory bodies as required.

Escalation mechanisms (48 respondents)

These respondents thought that the CPA should refer to an external body or government entity to intervene or enforce change where serious or persistent failings in safeguarding occur. Regulators, inspectorates, government departments and ministerial/parliamentary levels were mentioned.

Statutory powers (44 respondents)

Respondents said that the CPA should have robust statutory powers that go beyond advisory functions, to enable it to address safeguarding failures, ensure accountability and compel change within organisations. Suggested powers included the ability to intervene directly, mandate improvements, impose sanctions, and trigger special measures.

Enforcement powers (34 respondents)

Respondents said that the CPA should be able to revoke licences or professional registration, remove leaders and suspend operations where failings and persistent lack of action are identified.

Legal action (34 respondents)

These respondents said that legal action should be taken against individuals and organisations for significant failings or non-compliance. Measures suggested included fines, prosecution, and withdrawal of funding.

Public reporting (27 respondents)

Respondents advocated for the use of public reporting and transparency as mechanisms to compel action, restore public confidence and highlight systematic failures.

Local level enforcement (25 respondents)

Respondents said that the CPA should have the authority to intervene, direct and track improvement within local authorities and safeguarding partnerships.

Resource for improvement (19 respondents)

These respondents said the CPA should be able to mandate or recommend additional resources, funding and expert support for organisations to support improvement.

Other advice (18 respondents)

Other advice included the need for clear criteria, independent scrutiny, and evidence-based approaches, and powers to protect or empower whistleblowers.

Negative views (15 respondents)

These respondents were negative about the idea of granting additional powers, and that existing mechanisms should be used. They identified the potential for duplication or undermining current efforts.

Other comments (27 respondents)

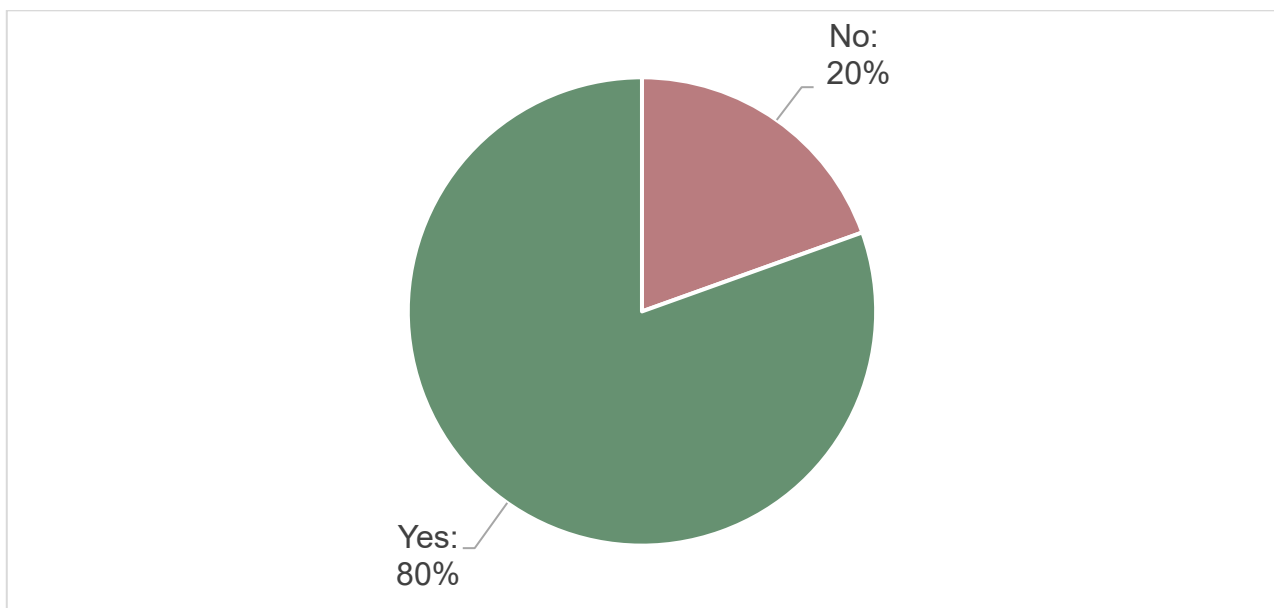
Some respondents were concerned about injustices and failures within legal and social care systems, citing negligence and lack of communication as issues. A few respondents agreed there should be additional actions but did not specify which.

Chapter 6: Effectiveness; structure and engagements with other bodies

Q31. Do you believe these are the correct criteria by which to determine what type of public body the CPA should take?

As shown in Figure 16, most respondents (80% or 202) believed the criteria set out, regarding what type of public body the CPA should take, were correct. One-fifth (20% or 49) did not believe the proposed criteria were correct.

Figure 16 Q31. Do you believe these are the correct criteria by which to determine what type of public body the CPA should take?



Source: CPA consultation responses March 2026. Base = 251.

Qualitative responses to question 31

There were 91 responses to this question. Some respondents expressed their preference for certain aspects of the proposal, and others provided suggestions for criteria which the CPA should follow, including opinions on proximity to government, level of authority and how it should be driven by expertise.

Independence, authority and influence (50 respondents)

Respondents suggested that the CPA should be independent from government bodies, allowing it to challenge systemic issues without political affiliation or conflicts of interest. Most respondents also highlighted this must be well balanced with CPA having statutory authority and enforcement powers, allowing it to influence policy decisions and escalate concerns. Other respondents commented that:

- the current criteria do not adequately address the required level of statutory power or independence
- the national body must be able to influence national standards, advise inspectorates, challenge policy decisions and funding decisions, to address systemic barriers.
- without a certain level of authority and independence, the CPA risks becoming another layer in the child protection system

Credible and accountable (26 respondents)

Respondents highlighted the importance of the CPA appearing credible in its operational activities and offering recommendations. This included respondents who suggested credibility can be achieved with clarity about the structure of the CPA and it being guided by appropriate evidence. Respondents also advocated for transparency through regular reporting, naming persistent failures, giving visibility to non-compliance and institutional defensiveness, as well as avoiding influence from conflicts of interest. Some respondents suggested:

- the need for accountability mechanisms, such as the CPA having accountability to Parliament
- that the CPA must be grounded in real practice to appear knowledgeable and trustworthy to the child protection workforce
- that clarity was needed around Local Safeguarding Children Partnerships (LSCP) accountability, and the need for clear reporting.

Preference for specific type of public body (18 respondents)

Respondents expressed their preference for the CPA to be a non-departmental public body (NDPB), with comments highlighting this could provide the right balance of statutory authority and independence from the government, to influence policy decisions and challenge systemic issues. A few provided general statements expressing their preference for an executive agency, without expanding with further detail.

Expertise-driven (16 respondents)

Most respondents expressed that the CPA should be guided by expertise knowledge, both by including experts within the structure of the CPA and by consulting frontline practitioners and others working in the child protection space. Some respondents also suggested the need to engage with lived experience groups to guide the CPA.

Other comments (12 respondents)

There were varied comments made by a few respondents that did not fit under any of the above themes. These included:

- suggestion that establishing a public body would not address emerging risks and wider issues, such as pressures arising in frontline settings
- general support for the proposed criteria, without providing additional information or suggestions
- respondents who were unsure how to respond, felt the question scope was outside of their expertise or thought the proposals provided insufficient detail to respond.

Q32. What types of professional expertise and backgrounds should be represented within the CPA to ensure it can respond effectively to child protection challenges? Are there any specific roles or disciplines you believe are essential?

There were 257 responses to this question. Suggested included various frontline practitioners and professionals working in the child protection space, such as social workers, health professionals, third-sector representatives, and individuals working in policing and the justice system. Respondents also highlighted the importance of including lived experience perspectives. Other themes related to professional backgrounds included research, analytics and inspections.

Qualitative responses to question 32

Frontline child protection expertise and practitioners (159 respondents)

Respondents emphasised the critical need for frontline practitioners from various sectors to be represented, highlighting their direct experience and understanding of practical challenges. Most suggested:

- social workers, given their extensive experience with real-world child protection issues.
- education professionals, such as teachers, Designated Safeguarding Leads, and educational psychologists, who could contribute with their experience in early identification.
- various health professionals, with psychiatrists, mental health practitioners, health visitors, doctors, nurses and midwives mentioned.

Some respondents also advocated for specialists with understanding different types of abuse, including VAWG, domestic abuse, sexual violence, as well as online harms and exploitation, especially given their trauma-informed knowledge. Some called for specialists in equality, diversity and inclusion, including knowledge of neurodiversity and LGBTQ+ perspectives

A few respondents suggested:

- professionals from care systems, like foster parents and those with experience in residential care
- the inclusion of representatives from local authorities and housing.

Justice and legal expertise (88 respondents)

Respondents suggested the need for police and policing expertise, including those with understanding of child exploitation, safeguarding, and criminal justice. They highlighted the critical role of solicitors and legal experts, encompassing child protection, family law, human rights, statutory duties, and accountability. Youth justice experts were also mentioned by most respondents, including those focused on preventing criminalization and understanding high-risk children. Some respondents mentioned probation and prison service workers, and a few suggested forensic medicine practitioners.

Third sector and community representation (71 respondents)

Respondents emphasised the need for third sector and community representatives, including charities specialising in child protection matters. The inclusion of diverse community representatives was also mentioned by most respondents, such as the faith sector and marginalised groups. Some respondents specifically suggested expertise in safeguarding children with disabilities and neurodevelopmental conditions.

Lived experience (69 respondents)

Respondents emphasised the need for incorporating lived experience within the CPA, both through engagement to influence policy decisions and inclusion within CPA's operational activities. In addition, most respondents highlighted that engagement with lived experience groups must not be tokenistic, ensuring that the input is used to inform decisions.

Specific groups mentioned by most of the respondents included victims and survivors, children and young people, care-experienced adults, parents and anyone who has lived experience of system failures. Some suggested that the groups must represent diverse backgrounds from different communities, especially those who have navigated complex safeguarding contexts. Some respondents highlighted that lived experience provides an insight into emotional impact of decisions, harmful or supportive practices, what builds or hinders trust, and exposes systemic failures. Other comments made by a few respondents included:

- lived experience experts should be recruited within the CPA, and the CPA's advisory board should be made up of a significant proportion of individuals with lived experience
- there should be a focus on trauma-informed engagement and recruitment approaches when involving lived experience groups, with special safeguards in place against dismissal or retaliation for sharing experiences.

Analytics, research and policy (59 respondents)

Respondents under this theme highlighted the need for expertise in data analysis, research and evaluation. Most mentioned specific expertise, such as digital safety and online harms, research specialists in child protection and safeguarding, epidemiologists. Some respondents suggested:

- data governance, ethical governance, and information management specialists, for auditing and addressing inaccurate records
- individuals with understanding of international child protection frameworks and cross-border risks.

A few respondents mentioned experts in trauma-informed research, policy design and implementation, both on a national and local level, public health and prevention specialists. A few also highlighted the importance of research and policy specialists possessing understanding of diversity and inclusion.

Multidisciplinary teams (37 respondents)

These respondents urged for the CPA to include diverse, multidisciplinary teams who understand the complexities of child protection. Most suggested combining professionals from a range of backgrounds, including frontline professionals, legal professionals, analysts, researchers, and lived experience groups. Most highlighted that such diverse teams must be embedded within CPA's core staffing and leadership structures, rather than solely relying on advisory groups or consultations. Some respondents suggested that the teams must represent various geographical and demographic areas.

Other comments (29 respondents)

There were varied comments made by a few respondents that did not fit under any of the above themes. These included:

- comments related to qualifications which CPA employees should hold, such as in safeguarding or trauma-informed practice
- suggestions that the CPA should represent additional expertise from inspection and accountability specialists, like independent inspectorates and whistleblowing specialists
- comments which referenced wider systemic issues and were sceptical about the value of the CPA
- comments expressing that they were unsure how to respond to the question, the question scope was outside their expertise or thought that the proposals provided insufficient detail to respond.

Q33. How can the CPA engage children, young people, and victims/survivors?

There were 260 responses to this question. Themes covered suggestions for effective engagement strategies which are trauma-informed, accessible, safe and respect participants' contributions. Themes also highlight the importance of co-production embedded structurally within the CPA and ongoing engagement, to foster long-term relationships.

Qualitative responses to question 33

Effective engagement strategies (154 respondents)

Respondents made suggestions for routes to reach lived experience groups, types of strategies to gather feedback, and practical considerations of such engagement strategies.

Most suggested using varied engagement methods to be effective, including anonymous surveys, digital tools, creative methods, one-to-one sessions, and groups conversations. Most respondents suggested establishing advisory panels or councils composed of individuals with lived experience, including children, young people, adult survivors, and parents or carers, ensuring diverse representation. Some suggested the use of national surveys and outreach to broaden perspectives.

To facilitate engagement, most highlighted the value of engaging via trusted community partnerships - such as charities and schools - to utilise their existing networks, particularly when reaching hard-to-reach groups.

Other suggestions made by a few respondents included:

- learning from existing engagement models and recommendations, such as IICSA or the Children's Commissioner
- establishing a direct escalation or complaints mechanisms for children and families to expose systemic failures.

Trauma-informed and safe engagement (96 respondents)

Respondents highlighted the necessity of engagement methods being trauma-informed, safe and supportive. Most suggested participation should be voluntary, confidential, with clear boundaries and with the option to opt out. Most also suggested engagement should be facilitated by trained professionals, to ensure participants feel respected, heard and protected from re-traumatisation. Some respondents suggested that engagement may need to be personalised to needs, like child-focused approaches, age-appropriate or accessible formats, one-to-one conversations, anonymous feedback. Some respondents also highlighted the need for appropriate support for participants, like counselling, trauma care, support groups and independent advocacy.

Other comments made by a few respondents suggested:

- engagement must be inclusive and reflect diversity, with efforts to hear from marginalised groups, disabled children and neurodivergent individuals
- incentives and compensations should be offered for participation.

Ongoing engagement (75 respondents)

Respondents emphasised that engagement should be ongoing, not tokenistic. Most highlighted that feedback loops or regular-engagement forums should be incorporated, often referencing a 'you said, we did' approach, to demonstrate how input influenced decisions, build trust and maintain engagement. Some respondents suggested that incentives, support and recognition should be offered, to foster long-term relationships.

Co-creation embedded within CPA operations (61 respondents)

Most respondents suggested that meaningful engagement would be embedded within the CPA, through genuine co-production. These include involving children, young people, and survivors in all stages of the CPA's work, from priority setting and governance to policy development, guidance, training, and evaluation. Some respondents mentioned the creation of advisory panels or reference groups, which are ongoing and have genuine influence on decision-making. A few comments highlighted that engagement through co-production should offer opportunities for participants to develop skills and benefit from their involvement.

Friendly and accessible resources (22 respondents)

Most respondents emphasised the importance of child-friendly engagement creative, play or visual methods and eye-catching information. Most also highlighted that engagement must be accessible, including easy to understand summaries, various languages, and neurodivergent or disability-friendly formats. Some also suggested there should be clear explanations of rights and pathways for reporting concerns.

Other comments (15 respondents)

There were varied comments made by a few respondents that did not fit under any of the above themes. These included:

- general comments which refer to wider systemic issues and were sceptical about the value of the CPA in addressing these
- comments which express doubts about how the CPA will incorporate experiences of those who cannot participate
- general comments against the proposed approach, expressing that engagement with children, young people and survivors or victims will not be useful.

Conclusion

Overall, there was a consensus amongst respondents about the need for a CPA to drive consistency and improvement of the child protection system at a national level.

The proposals were generally well received, with most respondents (around two-thirds or more) agreeing to the suggestions outlined.

Certain themes were evident across responses to the consultation questions. These included respondents:

- calling for clarity around the CPA's scope, linked to concerns about duplication of organisational functions, data collection and research.
- wanting the CPA to have clear authority to enforce change, whilst also stressing the importance of ensuring research and evidence translate into tangible improvements
- urging consideration of structural determinants of harm, such as poverty and inequality, and systemic issues within child protection, such as underfunding, high caseloads and staff shortages
- emphasising the need for lived experience perspectives and insight from frontline practitioners to inform all aspects of the CPA
- highlighting the importance of cross-agency working, including the need for an approach to national oversight that respects local context and involves meaningful and constructive collaboration with local authorities.

Analysis of emailed responses

Overall, there was a consensus amongst email respondents about the need for a Child Protection Authority (CPA). Respondents recognised the potential of the CPA to provide national leadership, identify emerging risks, drive improvements in policy and practice, and address systemic issues. The need for a single body to synthesize learning from serious incidents, reviews, and inquiries, and to promote cross-organizational learning, was also highlighted by some.

However, this support was often accompanied by concerns and suggestions for the CPA's effective implementation. Respondents emphasised that its success hinges on clear definitions of its powers, robust independence, meaningful engagement with diverse stakeholders (especially those with lived experience), a focus on systemic issues like poverty and workforce capacity, and a complementary rather than duplicative relationship with existing regulatory and support structures.

Remit, authority and powers of the CPA

Some email respondents stressed that the CPA must have sufficient power to direct and enable practice improvement, intervene, and hold safeguarding partners and organizations to account. Others called for clarity around the CPA's remit, authority and powers, with concerns about duplication and blurred accountability, particularly with existing regulatory bodies.

Respondents also commented on the scope of groups and issues covered by the CPA, including suggestions for the explicit inclusion of:

- children in institutional settings
- those on Deprivation of Liberty orders
- homeless 16–17-year-olds
- unaccompanied asylum-seeking children
- children with disabilities
- adoption law, due to what the respondent saw as unique safeguarding gaps in this area
- domestic abuse, including the involvement of independent domestic abuse specialists.

Relationship with existing bodies

Some respondents stressed that the CPA must complement, not duplicate, the work of existing inspectorates and regulatory bodies, ensuring its role strengthens rather than

fragments the system. Some also called for specific attention to be given to the CPA's relationship with certain organisations, including Ofsted, the Charity Commission, Cafcass, Social Work England, and the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC)

Independence and governance

Some respondents called for the CPA to provide leadership across government departments, with calls for joint ownership beyond just the Department for Education and involving stakeholders like the Ministry of Justice and the Home Office. A few respondents stressed that the CPA's independence from government departments will be crucial for its credibility and ability to deliver objective national learning and challenge.

Engagement with stakeholders and those with lived experience

Most emailed responses emphasized the critical importance of involving children, young people, and families with lived experience in shaping the CPA's work, policy development, and implementation plan.

A few email respondents made specific suggestions for stakeholders to involve, including:

- independent advocates
- academics and What Works Centres
- inspectorates
- domestic abuse and VAWG specialists.

Workforce development and systemic issues

Some email respondents stressed the need for adequate funding, both for the CPA and for local services.

A few respondents made other suggestions related to workforce development and systemic issues, including that the CPA should:

- play a role in strengthening workforce development, shaping training standards, and promoting consistency in practice.
- address current challenges within the sector, including workforce shortages and under-resourcing, rather than assuming improved oversight alone will resolve systemic failings
- include within its scope the impact of poverty and inequality as structural drivers of child protection intervention.

Data, evidence and learning

There were comments, made by a couple of respondents each, regarding data, evidence and learning. These included comments stressing that high-quality, well-linked data is essential for identifying risk earlier and improving outcomes, with suggestions that the CPA should draw on diverse data sources, including those from private law proceedings and significant incidents. There were also concerns about inconsistent data collection, with a few respondents suggesting the need for a more strategic approach to collecting, analysing, and sharing child protection data. Concerns were also raised about the use of AI and predictive tools in CPA operations raises ethical and safety concerns, with warnings about potential stigmatization and bias against marginalized groups.

There was support for the proposed role of the CPA in identifying and addressing evidence gaps, commissioning research, and strengthening the evidence base for practice and policy.

A few respondents called for the CPA to establish direct links with voluntary sector organisations to provide insight and data and offering their involvement in this.

© Crown copyright 2026

This publication is licensed under the terms of the Open Government Licence v3.0, except where otherwise stated. To view this licence, visit nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3.

Where we have identified any third-party copyright information, you will need to obtain permission from the copyright holders concerned.

About this publication:

enquiries www.gov.uk/contact-dfe

download www.gov.uk/government/publications