



Department
for Education

ISAG June Meeting Update

The Independent Scrutiny Advisory Group (ISAG) held its **eighth virtual meeting on 30 June 2026**, chaired by Adrian Loades (National Safeguarding Partner Multi-Agency Facilitator). The group continues to meet monthly to support the development and strengthening of independent scrutiny across multi-agency safeguarding arrangements.

Agenda discussed:

- **Update on the Independent Scrutiny Research Project:** Members received an update on the independent scrutiny research programme. Publication has moved to late September 2026 to allow for final clearance and publication processes. The group discussed the importance of ensuring the report demonstrates how effective scrutiny contributes to improved outcomes for children and families, alongside improvements in partnership arrangements and governance. Members emphasised the value of practical examples that show the impact of scrutiny on safeguarding practice and outcomes.
- **Update on ISAG continuation and member feedback:** Members were informed that a proposal has been submitted and approved to extend the ISAG for a further 12 months. Feedback received from members has been overwhelmingly positive, with strong support for the group continuing to provide a national forum for discussion, learning and influence on independent scrutiny developments.
- **Discussion on the Working Together Consultation:** The group considered the recently launched consultation and how this impacts on independent scrutiny arrangements. Discussion focused on proposals intended to strengthen consistency and accountability while retaining local flexibility. Members reflected on themes including greater focus on impact and outcomes, strengthening the role of children's lived experience within scrutiny activity, and proposals to streamline reporting requirements through a single annual return. The group agreed to review the consultation in detail and share reflections at a future meeting.
- **The role of independent scrutiny during periods of change:** Members explored the challenges and opportunities presented by local government reorganisation, health reforms and wider system change. Discussion highlighted the importance of maintaining effective safeguarding oversight during periods of transformation and ensuring scrutiny remains focused on risks, outcomes and the experiences of children and families. Members reflected on the need for flexibility within local arrangements while also recognising the benefits of clearer national expectations.

The group also discussed strengthening links between local scrutiny activity and national learning from inspections, reviews and other sector intelligence.

- **Strengthening relationships between scrutiny and inspection:** Members were advised of planned engagement with inspectorates, including Ofsted, HM Inspectorate of Probation, the Care Quality Commission and HMICFRS, to explore expectations of the independent scrutiny function within inspection frameworks and inspections. The discussion recognised the potential benefits of improved information-sharing and greater consistency in approaches to safeguarding assurance and improvement.

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

Next Meeting: Tuesday the 28th of July, 2026 at 11:30 AM BST

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