



ISAG July Meeting Update

The Independent Scrutiny Advisory Group (ISAG) held its **ninth virtual meeting on 28 July 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 publication plans for the independent scrutiny research report and associated resources. The discussion focused on how learning from the research can be shared effectively across safeguarding partnerships. Members explored opportunities to develop practical tools and supporting materials that could help partnerships reflect on and strengthen their approaches to independent scrutiny.
- **ISAG continuation and member engagement:** Members were informed of strong support for the continuation of the advisory group into a second cycle. Discussion highlighted the value of the group as a national forum for sharing learning, discussing emerging issues and contributing to the development of independent scrutiny policy and practice. Plans for future activity and member participation were also considered.
- **Engagement with inspectorates on independent scrutiny:** The group received an update on recent discussions with inspectorates regarding the role of independent scrutiny within safeguarding arrangements. Members discussed opportunities to strengthen understanding of scrutiny activity within inspection frameworks while maintaining clear distinctions between scrutiny, assurance and inspection functions. The importance of proportionate approaches and constructive relationships between scrutiny and inspection was emphasised throughout the discussion.
- **Working Together consultation:** Members considered emerging themes from the ongoing consultation and reflected on proposals intended to strengthen safeguarding partnership arrangements. Discussion highlighted the importance of effective scrutiny, access to data and information, partnership accountability and the availability of resources to support improvement activity. Members agreed to revisit consultation outcomes once analysis of responses has been completed. The group also discussed strengthening links between local scrutiny activity and national learning from inspections, reviews and other sector intelligence.

- **Discussion on the Child Protection Authority (CPA):** Members received an overview of plans for the proposed Child Protection Authority and its intended role within the wider safeguarding landscape. The discussion explored how the Authority could support improvement, accountability and the sharing of effective practice while complementing existing safeguarding structures. Members reflected on issues including escalation, system leadership, regional consistency, partnership effectiveness and the relationship between the Authority and independent scrutiny functions. The group welcomed continued engagement on the development of the Authority and its future role in supporting safeguarding partnerships.

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 25th of August, 2026 at 11:30 AM BST (subject to member availability during summer)

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