



UNDERSTANDING MULTI-AGENCY SAFEGUARDING ARRANGEMENTS (MASAS)

LET'S
STRENGTHEN
THE NORTH
WEST,
TOGETHER.



*In partnership with
Participation People*



INTRODUCTION

Safeguarding children and young people is everyone's responsibility. No single practitioner, service or organisation can keep children safe on their own. Effective safeguarding depends on strong collaboration, shared accountability and a clear understanding of how agencies work together to identify risk, protect children and promote welfare.

Working Together 2026 outlines that a statutory safeguarding partner in relation to a local authority area in England is defined as:

- (a) Local Authority**
- (b) Integrated Care Board**
- (c) Police**

Every local authority, ICB and constabulary in England must be covered by a multi-agency safeguarding arrangement or MASA. These statutory partners have a joint and equal duty to make arrangements to ensure they work together as a team to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in a local area. They must also include and develop the role of wider local organisations and agencies in the process.

Education settings play a vital role within these arrangements. Schools, colleges and early years providers are often the professionals who know children best and see them most consistently, placing education at the heart of early identification, information sharing and ongoing safeguarding support. Strengthening the voice, influence and integration of education within MASA is essential to ensuring that risks are recognised quickly and that safeguarding responses reflect children's lived experiences.



This booklet explains how Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements operate in practice. It outlines roles and responsibilities, the importance of effective information sharing, and how professionals work together across organisational boundaries. By understanding and applying these arrangements, agencies can work collectively to improve outcomes and keep children and young people safe.



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[Multi Agency Working in Safeguarding](#)

KEY ROLES WITHIN MULTI-AGENCY SAFEGUARDING ARRANGEMENTS (MASA)

Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements (MASA) are underpinned by shared responsibility, collective leadership and effective coordination between partners. Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026 sets clear expectations for how safeguarding partners and relevant agencies work together to protect children and promote their welfare. While the local infrastructure, governance models and business units supporting MASA will vary, the following roles are typically required to ensure arrangements are effective, accountable and focused on improving outcomes for children and young people.

LEAD SAFEGUARDING PARTNERS

Lead Safeguarding Partners are the statutory leaders within the local safeguarding partnership. These are Chief Executives of Local Authorities and Integrated Care Boards, and Chief Officers of the Local Police Force. They hold overall responsibility and accountability for the effectiveness of multi-agency safeguarding arrangements and for setting the strategic direction of MASA. Lead partners ensure that safeguarding duties are fulfilled collectively, that resources are aligned to local need, and that arrangements are transparent, inclusive and evidence-led.

DELEGATED SAFEGUARDING PARTNERS

Delegated Safeguarding Partners act on behalf of the Lead Safeguarding Partners and must have sufficient seniority, authority and capacity to make decisions, commit resources and provide operational leadership. They are responsible for ensuring that MASA priorities are implemented within and across organisations, and that safeguarding practice reflects statutory guidance and local expectations. DSPs report to the LSP within their agency and should meet regularly to discuss safeguarding matters.

INDEPENDENT SCRUTINEER

The Independent Scrutineer provides objective oversight and constructive challenge to the safeguarding partnership. They are usually individuals with experience of safeguarding matters and assurance at a senior level. This role is critical in strengthening accountability, supporting transparency and evaluating how effectively MASA arrangements are improving outcomes for children and families. The Independent Scrutineer reports on the effectiveness of local safeguarding arrangements and supports learning and system improvement.

PARTNERSHIP CHAIR

Some partnerships appoint a Chair or strategic lead to coordinate MASA activity. This role supports balanced multi-agency engagement, facilitates collaboration and challenge, and ensures that strategic discussions remain focused on children's lived experiences and outcomes. The precise title and remit may vary locally.

BUSINESS MANAGER

MASA is commonly supported by a dedicated business unit or partnership team, although local structures, job titles and functions will differ. The business unit is managed by the Business Manager. This team provides coordination and operational support, including governance administration, policy development, communication, data management and support to learning, improvement and scrutiny activity.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

These roles support a strong learning culture across the partnership. They coordinate multi-agency audits, reviews and learning activity, including practice learning from reviews, and ensure that identified learning leads to meaningful improvement across agencies.

DATA, PERFORMANCE AND QUALITY ASSURANCE ROLES

High-quality, shared information is essential to effective MASA. These roles support the collection, analysis and use of multi-agency data to understand safeguarding pressures, identify disproportionality, monitor effectiveness and evidence impact. Their work informs strategic decision-making and continuous improvement.

PRACTITIONERS AND FRONTLINE PROFESSIONALS

Practitioners across all agencies are central to MASA. Through early identification, information sharing, professional curiosity and collaborative working, they ensure that safeguarding arrangements translate into effective support and protection for children and families. Their daily practice is fundamental to achieving positive outcomes.



CORE MASA FUNCTIONS (WORKING TOGETHER 2026)

1. STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP AND ACCOUNTABILITY

- Establish clear governance, leadership and lines of accountability across safeguarding partners
- Ensure joint responsibility for safeguarding outcomes
- Be subject to inspection and independent scrutiny

2. CO-ORDINATING MULTI-AGENCY SAFEGUARDING PRACTICE

- Work together across agencies to safeguard and promote welfare of children
- Ensure effective joint working at all levels (strategic → frontline)
- Include all relevant agencies (education, VCSE, etc.) in arrangements

3. INFORMATION SHARING AND DATA ANALYSIS

- Set expectations for timely and effective information sharing
- Use data to identify risk, harm, disproportionality and racism
- Analyse intelligence to improve safeguarding responses

4. IDENTIFYING NEED, RISK AND RESPONDING TO HARM

- Ensure systems identify:
 - children at risk of abuse, neglect, exploitation
 - emerging patterns of harm
- Coordinate multi-agency responses and decision-making

5. PLANNING AND DELIVERING INTEGRATED SUPPORT

- Enable joined-up services (including the new Family Help model)
- Ensure children and families receive co-ordinated, multi-disciplinary support

6. LEARNING, IMPROVEMENT AND SAFEGUARDING REVIEWS

- Commission and oversee local child safeguarding practice reviews
- Promote a learning culture to improve system practice
- Embed learning from serious incidents across agencies

7. INDEPENDENT SCRUTINY AND ASSURANCE

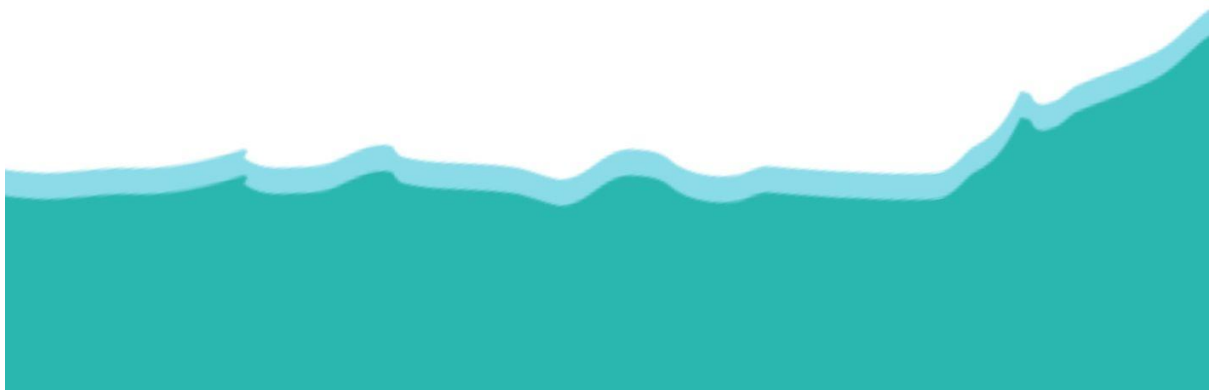
- Put in place independent scrutiny arrangements
- Provide challenge to ensure:
 - effectiveness of safeguarding practice
 - partners are held to account

8. MONITORING IMPACT AND PUBLISHING REPORTS

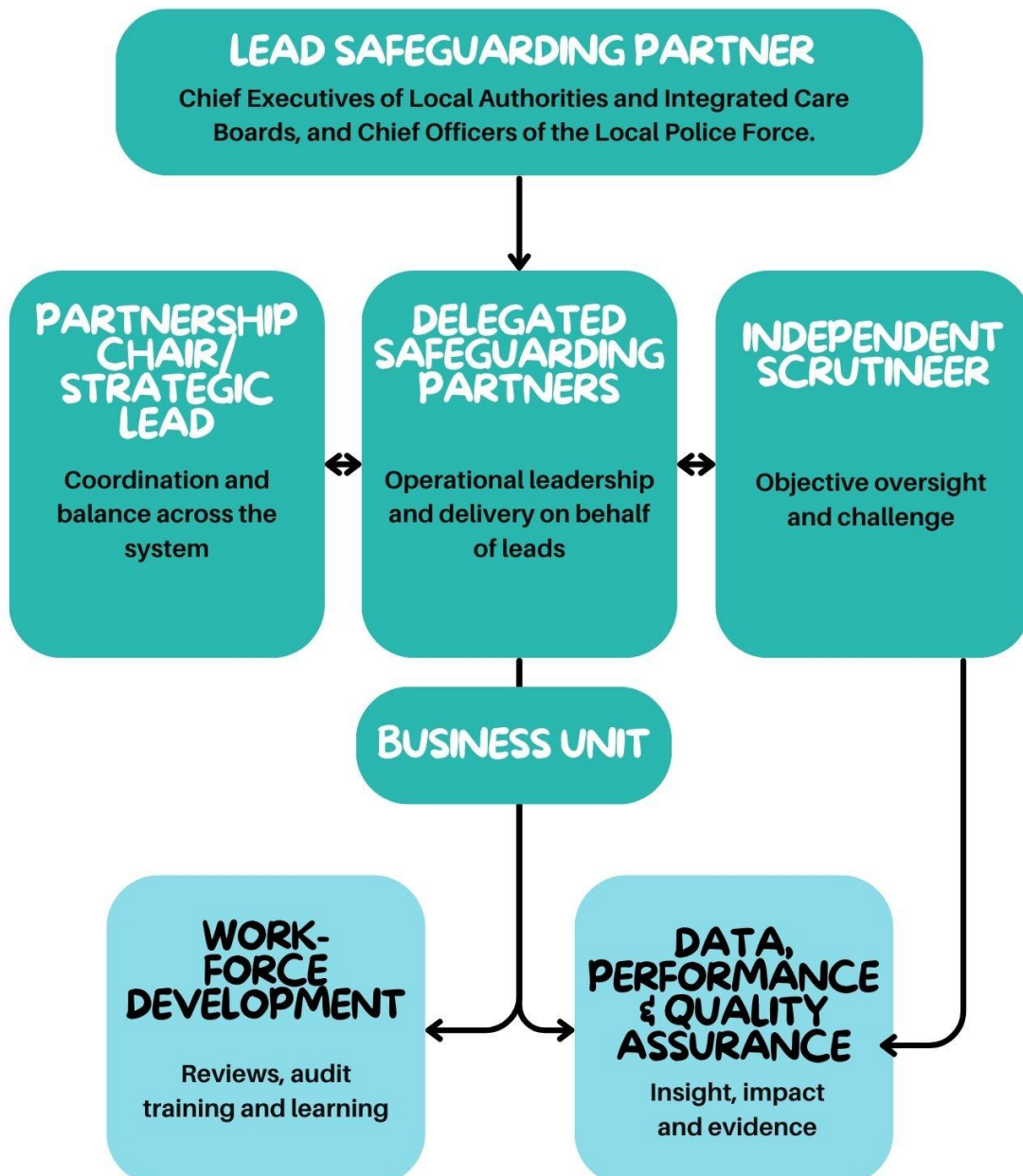
- Produce annual reports
- Demonstrate evidence of impact on children and families (not just activity)

9. ENGAGEMENT WITH RELEVANT AGENCIES AND COMMUNITIES

- Involve:
 - schools, early years, health, police
 - voluntary/charity sector and wider partners
- Ensure a whole-system safeguarding approach



MULTI-AGENCY SAFEGUARDING ARRANGEMENTS (MASA)



HELPFUL RESOURCES

Links to local safeguarding
partnerships

[Purposeful Safeguarding - Changes
to Working Together 2026](#)

[Multi-Agency Safeguarding
Arrangements](#)

[Multi Agency Safeguarding
Arrangements \(MASA\) - Child
Friendly Warwickshire](#)

