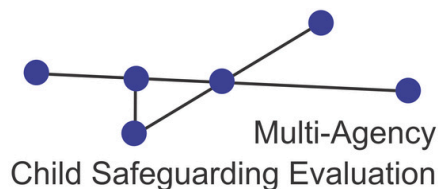


MACS



Evaluation of the Multi-Agency Child Safeguarding Arrangements

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Table of Contents

List of tables and figures	iii
Acknowledgements	iv
List of abbreviations	vi
<i>Summary</i>	<i>vii</i>
<i>Executive summary</i>	<i>viii</i>
<i>Introduction</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Overview of the project</i>	<i>2</i>
Research questions	2
Research methods	2
Limitations	3
<i>Part 1: Effectiveness and potential cost-effectiveness of multi-agency child safeguarding arrangements</i>	<i>4</i>
1.1 Effectiveness	4
1.1.1 Introduction	4
1.1.2 General findings	4
1.1.3 Leadership	5
1.1.4 Accountability	6
1.1.5 Participation	7
1.1.6 Collaboration	8
1.1.7 Culture	10
1.1.8 Effective multi-agency safeguarding arrangements: enablers and barriers ...	11
1.1.9 Covid-19	13
1.2 Resources, expenditure, cost and cost-effectiveness	13
1.2.1 Evidence from the literature	13
1.2.2 Evidence from the survey and workshops	14
1.3 Discussion	17
1.4 Conclusion	19
<i>Part 2: MACS TOC and framework</i>	<i>21</i>
2.1 MACS TOC	21
2.1.1 Introduction	21
2.1.2 What is Theory of Change?	21
2.1.3 The MACS TOC tree	21
2.1.4 Impact for children, young people and their families and communities	22
2.1.5 Outcomes of multi-agency child safeguarding partnership working	22
2.1.6 What activities do LSCPs undertake?	23
2.1.7 What resources do LSCPs need to operate effectively?	23

2.1.8	What are the shared principles underlying the work of LSCPs?	24
2.1.9	Pathways of change	24
2.1.10	Enablers and barriers to change	25
2.2:	MACS framework	26
2.3	Using the TOC and framework: Monitoring progress against outcomes.....	31
2.3.1	Introduction	31
2.3.2	How to use the MACS TOC	31
2.3.3	Monitoring progress against outcomes	33
2.3.4	Cumulative summary of work towards achieving outcomes	34
2.3.5	Feedback on the MACS TOC and framework.....	34
	<i>References</i>	35
	<i>Appendix I: Project advisory groups</i>	39
	<i>Appendix II: Survey development, administration and analysis</i>	41
	Contents of the survey	41
	Distribution.....	43
	Responses.....	44
	Data analysis	45
	<i>Appendix III: Case study selection, workshops and data analysis</i>	46
	Workshops with members of LSCPs	46
	Workshops with children and young people	50
	Workshops with parents and carers	51
	Data analysis	51
	<i>Appendix IV: Survey data on LSCP Resources and Expenditure</i>	52
	<i>Appendix V: Feedback on the MACS TOC and framework</i>	56

List of tables and figures

Figure 1: TOC tree	22
MACS framework	26
Table A1. Research Advisory Group	39
Table A2. Practice Advisory Group	39
Table A3. National Strategic Committee	40
Table A4. TOC Working Group	40
Table A5. List of survey statements on effectiveness of the work of the LSCP	42
Table A6. Survey participants' professional information	45
Table A7. Characteristics of case study LSCPs	47
Table A8. Case study participants	49
Table A9. Categories of expenditure	53
Table A10. Staff employed using LSCP budget	53
Table A11. Adequate financial, staff, training and administrative resources	54

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Glossary of terms

Children and young people

While we recognise the particular needs and vulnerabilities of babies and unborn children in relation to safeguarding, we use the term *children and young people* to cover the age range 0-25, in line with the legal definition of children as aged 0-18 and certain statutory responsibilities up to the age of 25.

Education

Unless otherwise stated, reference to education or the education sector in the report refers to providers, including schools, early years and childcare providers, and colleges. In the survey, a distinction was made between representatives of the local authority education department and representation of providers. In case study areas, one education representative was from a Multi-academy trust, the remainder from the local authority.

Local Safeguarding Children Board

This term is used to refer to the bodies charged with coordinating local child safeguarding arrangements prior to the introduction of tripartite responsibility under the Children and Social Work Act 2017.

Local Safeguarding Children Partnership

We are aware that the term *Local Safeguarding Children Partnership* is not used in [Working Together 2023](#) but have chosen to use the term in this work in preference to Multi-agency safeguarding arrangements, reflecting the research questions for the project. Multi-agency safeguarding arrangements (MASAs) are the organisational structures or terms of reference that facilitate working together (defined in [Working Together 2023](#) as ‘the way in which [these] organisations and agencies work together’). Local Safeguarding Children Partnerships are the relationship-based collaborations between agencies identified in the MASAs – they are the collective entities that undertake the arrangements. Most partnerships describe themselves as ‘[X] Safeguarding Children Partnership’, and the term is familiar and concrete to professionals involved in local arrangements. Partnership working is the essential core to bringing agencies together to safeguard children. We are concerned to ensure a focus on the people and relationships at the heart of the arrangements.

In this report, we use the term Local Safeguarding Children Partnership (LSCP) or partnership to refer to the membership as a whole and partners to refer to the lead safeguarding partners (LSPs).

List of abbreviations

Abbreviation	Meaning
AoCPP	Association of Child Protection Professionals
CAFCASS	Child and Family Court Advisory and Support Service
CCGs	Clinical Commissioning Groups
CSC	Children's social care
CSCP	Camden Safeguarding Children Partnership
CSPRP	Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel
CYP	Children and young people
DfE	Department for Education
DHSC	Department of Health and Social Care
DSP	Delegated safeguarding partner
EEDI	Equity, equality, diversity and inclusion
FRG	Family Rights Group
ICB	Integrated Care Board
IS	Independent Scrutineer
LA	Local authority
LSCB	Local Safeguarding Children Board (refers to pre-2019 arrangements)
LSCP	Local Safeguarding Children Partnership (refers to arrangements under the Children and Social Work Act 2017)
LSP	Lead safeguarding partner
MACS Evaluation	Multi-agency Child Safeguarding Evaluation
MACS TOC	Multi-agency Child Safeguarding Evaluation Theory of Change
MASH	Multi-agency safeguarding hubs
MEL	Monitoring, evaluation and learning framework
NIHR	National Institute for Health Research
Ofsted	Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills
TASP	The Association of Safeguarding Partners
TOC	Theory of change
VCSE	Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise

Summary

Following the introduction of joint and equal responsibility for local child safeguarding arrangements between partners representing the local authority, Integrated Care Board (ICB) and police (Children and Social Work Act 2017), this project was commissioned by DHSC to provide i) an initial assessment of the effectiveness of arrangements and ii) a framework to support Local Safeguarding Children Partnerships (LSCPs) to reflect on and evidence progress using a systematic, structured format. The MACS framework is a monitoring, evaluation and learning framework. It is based on a co-created theory of change developed through literature review; consultation with key stakeholders including children and young people and parents and carers; a survey of professionals involved in their LSCP (322 responses from 102 LSCPs); and workshops in eight LSCP case study areas and with parents and carers and young people. The research suggested confidence in many aspects of the multi-agency arrangements but highlighted the breadth and complexity of the work of LSCPs and the significance of local context. Some core challenges identified in relation to the work of Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LCSBs) remained, including capacity and consistency of leadership, ensuring broad representation across agencies at appropriate levels of seniority, and inclusion of education provider organisations in strategic decision-making. Key findings include:

- Less than half of survey participants considered that their LSCP has access to adequate data to inform service design/respond to safeguarding issues across agencies. Data and analytical capability to understand and respond to the needs of diverse communities and monitor EEDI concerns should be a priority.
- Less than half of survey participants reported having adequate financial resources, staffing, and administrative/data systems: funding needs to keep pace with increases or changes in local populations and better reflect levels of diversity and deprivation.
- Although nearly three-quarters of survey participants felt that decision-making was genuinely tripartite, in some places the local authority remained dominant.
- Incorporating the voice of professional safeguarding leads such as designated health professionals is essential to ensure the quality of strategic decision-making.
- Although mechanisms for child voice are often well embedded in individual services, the voice of children, young people and families is not yet consistently captured across the diversity of the population and used to inform policy and practice changes.
- Effective strategic collaboration does not easily translate to improvement at the frontline. LSCP membership needs to include representation from different levels and parts of services to ensure a strong line of sight on practice.
- Replacement of Clinical Commissioning Boards (CCGs) by Integrated Care Boards (ICBs) may cause some instability in accountability mechanisms with structures in some areas yet to fully adapt.
- Health and/or police areas covering more than one LSCP may struggle to meet increased demands on resourcing for senior personnel and achieve consistency of approach across the larger area of that partner agency.
- Ensuring that learning impacts on practice was a key focus but very difficult to achieve and demonstrate. More attention should be paid to learning from successful practice.
- Equity, equality, diversity and inclusion (EEDI) considerations were a focal concern for children and young people.

Executive summary

Following the introduction of joint and equal responsibility for local multi-agency child safeguarding arrangements between partners representing the local authority, Integrated Care Board (ICB) and police through the Children and Social Work Act 2017, this project was commissioned by DHSC to

- provide an initial assessment of the effectiveness and potential cost-effectiveness of the new arrangements and
- create a framework ('MACS framework') to support Local Safeguarding Children Partnerships (LSCPs) to reflect on and evidence progress.

The MACS framework is a monitoring, evaluation and learning framework. It is based on a co-created theory of change ('MACS TOC'), informed throughout by consultation with key stakeholders including children and young people and parents and carers. Following review of the literature, a survey (October – December 2023) captured the views of 322 professionals from 102 of the 137 LSCPs in England as to how well their local arrangements were working; how that had changed over time; the most important factors for achieving effective multi-agency safeguarding at strategic level; the availability and use of resources in LSCPs; the extent to which adaptative practices during the COVID-19 pandemic had been retained; and confidence in contingency planning in the event of future emergencies. Analysis informed further development of the TOC, which was then tested through workshops with eight LSCPs (April - August 2024, n=90). Workshops were also undertaken with children and young people (n=11) and parents and carers (n=11) to understand their experiences and how their voices can best be captured to inform the work of LSCPs.

The survey identified strong confidence in some core aspects of the multi-agency arrangements, including:

- promotion of a culture of multi-agency learning from experience without blame.
- shared understanding across agencies of the local safeguarding context.
- shared vision for how to improve outcomes for children locally.
- the responsiveness of multi-agency training to local concerns.
- LSCP influence on the local response to intra-familial and extra-familial harm.

Areas which were regarded as less successful included:

- access to adequate data to inform service design/respond to safeguarding issues.
- influence of the views and experiences of children and young people, families and communities on development of safeguarding services.
- addressing disproportionality (unequal representation of and outcomes for young people, particularly depending on ethnicity / gender / (dis)ability).

Despite the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, judgements of improvement over time were more common than those of deterioration, although 'no change' was the most common response for over half of the survey items. However, survey and workshop participants highlighted challenges in effecting change in practice and in demonstrating that impact. Many factors pertaining to effective joint working are beyond the control of LSCPs, including systemic challenges in staff recruitment and retention, and resourcing constraints across agencies. Some core challenges identified in relation to the work of Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LCSBs) remain.

Key findings and areas for development identified from the survey and case studies under each of the categories used in the MACS framework include:

Leadership

- While nearly three-quarters of survey participants felt that decision-making was genuinely tripartite, in some places the local authority remained the dominant

partner. Commitment of the most senior leaders had not been fully achieved in all areas (however, the changes required by [Working Together 2023](#) had not been fully implemented by LSCPs at the time of fieldwork).

- Incorporating the voice of professional safeguarding leads such as designated health professionals is essential to ensure the quality of strategic decision-making.
- Ensuring that education providers are adequately represented in strategic decision-making (now a component of [Working Together 2023](#)) was regarded as important but remained challenging for many LSCPs.

Accountability

- Just over two-thirds of survey participants considered that ‘organisations and agencies are challenged appropriately, holding one another to account effectively’; nearly half of participants identified improvement since their involvement in the partnership.
- Replacement of Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) by ICBs had caused some instability in mechanisms and lines of accountability in health: in places the structures had yet to fully adapt to this change.

Participation

- Although mechanisms for child voice are often well embedded in services, the voice of children and young people, parents, carers and the community is not yet consistently captured across the diversity of the population by LSCPs and used to inform development of services.
- Only nine LSCPs indicated in the survey that they had a young scrutineer group; 62 expressed interest in establishing one.
- Equity, equality, diversity and inclusion (EEDI) considerations were a focal concern for children and young people. Local areas acknowledged the limitations of available data in understanding and responding to local diversity.

Collaboration

- Effective strategic collaboration does not easily translate to improvement at the frontline. LSCP membership needs to include representation from different levels different parts of services to ensure a strong line of sight on practice, robust communication to and from the frontline and to incorporate ‘on the ground’ experience.
- Less than half of survey participants considered that their LSCP has access to adequate data to inform service design and respond to safeguarding issues across agencies. Effective data sharing within and between agencies remains a key barrier to effective multi-agency collaboration.

Culture

- Ensuring lessons learnt from reviews were communicated to practitioners and effected change was regarded as the most important measure of effectiveness of LSCPs. However, demonstrating the impact of learning on practice was very difficult.
- There was a desire for more attention to learning from the ‘bottom up’ as well as ‘top down’, especially learning from successful practice.
- Embedding learning requires workforce development strategies that are time consuming and may be deemed costly: resource pressures and staffing demands were barriers to creation, delivery and evaluation of multi-agency training.
- LSCP leaders need to model a culture of challenge and the ability to own and manage mistakes.

The following enablers and barriers to effective multi-agency safeguarding arrangements were elicited from survey responses, including open questions, and case studies:

Resourcing

- Less than half of survey participants reported having adequate financial resources, staffing, and administrative/data systems.
- Scarcity of resources, including staffing, may detract attention from multi-agency activities to single agency responsibilities and result in narrower targeting of work.
- Investment would be beneficial in a number of areas, including:
 - shared data systems, data collection and data analysts.
 - development of multi-agency data sets, including to assess impact and outcomes, inform priority setting and improve understanding of EEDI concerns
 - access to specialist staff, particularly for smaller LSCPs.
- Funding needs to keep pace with increases or changes in local populations and better reflect high levels of diversity and deprivation.

The breadth and complexity of the work of LSCPS

- LSCPs are tasked with managing enormous breadth and complexity of work in circumstances in which the activity of partnerships is an 'add on' for senior professionals in each agency. Effective operation depends on focusing on achievable and realistic priorities.

The significance of local context

- Population diversity, spread and changes, as well as the size of the area, increase the challenges of achieving a shared vision and consistency of approach.
- Health and/or police areas covering more than one LSCP experience challenges from
 - increased demands on resourcing for senior personnel and the need to delegate some functions
 - the desire for consistency of approach across the larger partner agency area.
- Significant implementation challenges are introduced where the LSCP 'footprint' covers a number of local authorities, including different accountability procedures and different population trends and needs in local authority areas, and the risk that the voice and needs of smaller authorities may be overlooked.

The importance of close working relationships

- Close working relationships at strategic level are key to creating and driving a shared vision; understanding and reconciling tensions between the differences in the priorities, functions and cultures of different agencies; collaborative working; and embedding a culture of learning and appropriate challenge. They are difficult to achieve without consistency of leadership and in staffing.

Covid-19

- Although service pressures dictate the retention of much greater use of remote working than prior to the pandemic, concerns suggest the need for greater LSCP oversight to ensure appropriate use in direct work with children and families and multi-agency meetings.

The Theory of Change was well-received by the eight case study partnerships, who endorsed the areas of focus and outcome statements. The resultant MACS framework draws on insights from case study areas and is intended to be a practical tool to support LSCPs to evidence progress and reflect on enablers and barriers to improvement. In addition to the MACS TOC and framework, outputs include a handbook and an animated film developed by the project's young researchers to promote the development of young scrutineer groups.

Introduction

The Multi-Agency Child Safeguarding Evaluation project ([MACS evaluation](#)) was a two year project (January 2023-December 2024) designed to provide evidence of what makes Local Safeguarding Children Partnerships (LSCPs) work well in coordination and oversight of multi-agency safeguarding arrangements to improve outcomes for children and families. The project aims were:

1. To provide an initial assessment of the effectiveness and potential cost-effectiveness of the multi-agency child safeguarding arrangements
2. To create a theory of change ('MACS TOC') and framework ('MACS framework') for ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the arrangements.

The project was led by academics from King's College London and the University of Bedfordshire in partnership with The Association of Safeguarding Partners (TASP) and Camden Safeguarding Children Partnership (CSCP), and in collaboration with Family Rights Group (FRG) and the Association of Child Protection Professionals (AoCPP). It was funded by the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) on behalf of the Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC) in collaboration with the Department for Education (DfE).

The current Multi-agency safeguarding arrangements (MASAs) were introduced following a review of the operation of Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs) by Sir Alan Wood (Wood, 2016). Wood concluded that the statutory duty on partner agencies to cooperate with the local authority was not enough to ensure a collective approach and that the cost of the arrangements to key agencies was unsustainable. In response, the Children and Social Work Act 2017 established joint and equal responsibility for local multi-agency child safeguarding arrangements between the three Safeguarding Partners (now the local authority, an Integrated Care Board (ICB) for an area any part of which falls within the local authority area, and the chief officer of police for an area any part of which falls within the local authority area). The safeguarding partners must make arrangements to work together and with 'relevant agencies' to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in their area, including through the identification and response to the needs of local children. The collaborative entities undertaking those arrangements are commonly called Local Safeguarding Children Partnerships (LSCPs), and we use that term to refer to them in this report. While education was not listed as a statutory partner, statutory guidance ([Working Together 2023](#)) (HM Government, 2023) emphasises the role of education providers in safeguarding arrangements. The legislation also strengthened accountability by clarifying expectations for information-sharing, independent scrutiny, funding, and reporting. Changes introduced by [Working Together 2023](#) were implemented during the life of the project. The project has potential to support implementation of the government's proposals, as set out in [Keeping Children Safe, Helping Families Thrive](#) (DfE, 2024), by strengthening oversight and development of local multi-agency safeguarding practice.

Following an overview of the project methods, this report is in two parts. Part I sets out the findings in relation to effectiveness and resourcing (aim 1). Part II explains the MACS TOC and presents the MACS framework (aim 2).

Overview of the project

Research questions

The MACS evaluation addressed the following research questions:

- how effective is strategic oversight and governance of multi-agency safeguarding arrangements by LSCPs?
- to what extent does investment in LSCPs appear to be a cost-effective use of resources?
- what arrangements are in place to ensure the work of LSCPs is informed by the views and experiences of children and young people and families?
- what has been the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on multi-agency safeguarding arrangements and how have LSCPs mitigated these?
- what outcome measures would best facilitate ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the work of LSCPs?

Research methods

A mixed methods, multifaceted approach to evaluation was adopted to develop a theory of change (TOC) about how and why LSCPs work. The project was conducted in four stages. Development of the TOC was an iterative process drawing on information and data from each stage. Ethical approval was obtained from King's College London (RESCM-23/24-35229) and the University of Bedfordshire (IASR 28/22).

Stage 1- Literature review and information gathering

We undertook:

- i. a scoping review (Arksey and O'Malley, 2005; Levac et al., 2010) of academic literature related to the effectiveness and/or cost-effectiveness of multi-agency safeguarding arrangements through LSCBs and LSCPs in England. A total of 936 abstracts were screened, with 13 papers included for final review.
- ii. A review of academic and 'grey' (other) literature on the operation of multi-agency safeguarding arrangements, including a 'mapping' exercise of 'enabling' factors for improved outcomes for children through effective multi-agency working and a summary analysis of Joint Targeted Area Inspections of LSCPs from 2020-2023 (HM Inspectorate of Probation, 2020-2023).
- iii. A review of literature on the impact of COVID-19 on multi-agency safeguarding.

We conducted consultations at key points in the project through webinars with our advisory groups (appendix I), members of TASP, AoCPP, children and young people (guided by CSCP young advisors), and parents and carers (through FRG). The work of stage 1 informed development of survey questions and an initial draft TOC, which was shared with the MACS TOC working group (appendix I, table A4) for feedback.

Stage 2- Survey

The survey sought the perceptions of all professionals engaged in the work of LSCPs on how well arrangements were working. Participants were presented with a series of statements and asked i) how true the statement was for their LSCP, ii) whether there had been improvement or deterioration, or things had stayed the same since their involvement in the partnership; and iii) how important the statement was as a measure of the effectiveness of arrangements. The survey also included questions about budget

contributions and use of resources (asked of business managers only), the use of values to underpin LSCPs' work, measures used to assess the effectiveness of the arrangements, and modifications to practice in the aftermath of the pandemic and monitoring of those. Open questions invited additional comments. 322 responses that were sufficiently complete to be analysed were submitted. Participants represented 102 of the 137 LSCPs in England (74%). Quantitative responses were analysed using descriptive statistics and qualitative responses using template analysis (King, 2012). Details of the survey methodology are provided at Appendix II. In this report, survey participants are referred to by their agency/role and region (e.g., Health: Region 1).

Stage 3- Case studies

We approached LSCPs to test and refine the TOC as a self-evaluation tool that can be adapted to local contexts. Partnerships were selected to provide coverage of different regions and diversity in a range of factors, including socio-economic background, ethnicity, rural/urban classification, multiple authority coverage, and local authority Ofsted ratings. A total of 90 participants from eight LSCPs took part, with two online workshops held in each area. In addition, three workshops were held with parents and carers (n=11) and three with young people (n=11) to explore their experiences of and views on LSCP participation. Data relating to each aspect of the TOC (e.g., resources, activities and change pathways) were analysed using template analysis (King, 2012) to support further development of the MACS TOC. Other data arising from discussions was analysed thematically (Braun and Clarke, 2022) and informed understanding of enablers of and barriers to effectiveness. Details of the case study methodology are provided at Appendix III. To preserve anonymity, case study partnerships are referred to as LSCP 1- LSCP 8.

Stage 4- Refinement of the MACS TOC and development of the MACS framework

Case study data was used to refine the TOC and develop the MACS framework, which elaborates outcomes and indicators for effective multi-agency partnership working. It is designed to support LSCPs to evaluate, monitor and learn from outcomes of multi-agency partnership working using a systematic, structured format. Feedback on the draft from sector experts and the research advisory groups informed the final framework.

Limitations

Effective multi-agency arrangements are identified as an 'enabling' factor for improved outcomes for children (Department for Education, 2023a). However, it is not possible to establish a direct link between the two, because of the myriad other factors in play and the indirect role of partnerships (see Munro and France (2012) in relation to LSCBs). There are also a number of limitations arising from the study methods. First, survey participants were not representative of LSCP membership by agency or role (see Appendix II, table A6). Differences by agency are not reported because numbers were small for some. Second, in the absence of established evaluation criteria, survey data provide evidence of partnerships' perceptions of effectiveness, rather than an objective measure. Third, because workshops were informal discussions and addressed different aspects of the work of LSCPs, the volume of comments on any given point does not necessarily indicate strength of feeling or agreement. Finally, arrangements have developed further after our data collection (April-August 2024), as LSCPs implemented [*Working Together 2023*](#) (HM Government, 2023).

Part 1: Effectiveness and potential cost-effectiveness of multi-agency child safeguarding arrangements

1.1 Effectiveness

1.1.1 Introduction

The scoping review of the academic literature revealed little direct academic evidence as to the effectiveness of LSCBs or LSCPs. This section therefore combines a summary of evidence from both academic and ‘grey’ (other) literature. It reports findings from the survey and case study workshops on how well arrangements were considered to be working in local areas. From the literature reviews and consultations in stage 1, we identified five categories regarded as central to effective multi-agency safeguarding arrangements: leadership, accountability, participation, collaboration, and culture. These informed construction of the survey as well as the theory of change (MACS TOC) and its associated framework. After a summary of general findings in relation to the effectiveness of the arrangements, more detailed findings are reported for each of these categories. Next, factors which are implicated as enablers or barriers to effective multi-agency safeguarding arrangements are considered and the enduring impact of the COVID-19 pandemic is summarised. Survey responses are rounded to the nearest percentage. ‘Completely true’ and ‘mostly true’ responses are reported as ‘true’. Similarly, ‘not at all true’ and ‘mostly not true’ are reported as ‘not true’.

1.1.2 General findings

While research identified instances of excellent and committed partnership working among boards (Baginsky and Holmes, 2015), they were found to lack adequate power to compel agencies to act (Baginsky and Holmes, 2015; Horwath, 2010; Wood, 2016). Evidencing the impact of the work on children and families has been a challenge for boards and partnerships alike (Association of Independent LSCB Chairs (AILC), 2016; Baginsky and Holmes, 2015; Briggs and Harris, 2021; Osthwaite and Briggs, 2022). The survey identified strong confidence in some core aspects of the multi-agency arrangements (more than 80% of participants answering ‘true’), including:

- promotion of a culture of multi-agency learning from experience without blame.
- shared understanding across agencies of the local safeguarding context.
- shared vision for how to improve outcomes for children locally.
- multi-agency training responds to identified local safeguarding concerns.
- influence on the local area response to intra-familial and extra-familial harm.

Areas considered to be less successful (less than 50% responding ‘true’) included:

- access to adequate data to inform service design/respond to safeguarding issues.
- influence of the views and experiences of parents, carers and families and communities on development of safeguarding services.
- addressing disproportionality (unequal representation of and outcomes for young people, particularly depending on ethnicity / gender / (dis)ability).

Despite the impact of the pandemic, judgements of improvement over time (since participants’ involvement in the LSCP) were more common than those of deterioration. That was the case for all statements concerned with leadership and accountability. However, ‘stayed the same’ was the most common response for over half the survey

items (for a list of survey statements, see Appendix II, table A5). No notable differences were detected between the perceptions of participants with experience of working in an LSCB (i.e., prior to the introduction of tripartite responsibility for arrangements) and those without.

We asked whether any changes in outcomes for children may be attributable to the transition from LSCBs to LSCPs. Three participants considered that the new arrangements were less effective in their local area and 27 felt that the reforms had had no or little impact. Seventeen considered the reforms had brought or contributed to a range of advantages. These included improved awareness by statutory partners (now lead safeguarding partners (LSPs)); stronger collective effort and understanding; better shared accountability, including through the independent scrutineer role; a more proactive approach to early help and emerging issues; and improved strategic discussion.

Some core challenges identified in relation to the work of Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs) remained, including capacity and consistency of leadership, ensuring broad representation across agencies at appropriate seniority, and inclusion of education providers in strategic decision-making. Participants highlighted factors pertaining to effective joint working which were beyond the control of LSCPs, including systemic challenges in staff recruitment and retention and resourcing constraints across agencies.

Fifty-five per cent (n=125) of survey participants answered 'true' to 'The LSCP takes strategic lead to address frontline weaknesses, pressures and risks'. The extent to which the work of LSCPs can realistically impact on practice and how that can be evidenced was a core concern for survey and workshop participants, including whether staff know about the local partnership and what it does; whether recommendations from the LSCP filter into organisations and get attention there; and whether frontline practitioners contributed to, understood and owned the shared vision (*"The partnership has no powers in agencies...the LSCP appears to be ineffective at targeting and changing practice despite our best efforts"*, Business Unit: Region 9). Recommendations may not be taken up by agencies, which *"can't magic up"* resources (LSCP 1).

1.1.3 Leadership

Horwath (2010) found good leadership to be critical to the strength and influence of LSCBs, observing the need for joint leadership. A review of LSCB Ofsted reports concluded that the role of the independent chair had a positive impact on leadership and challenge and on influence with partners (AILC, 2016). However, McElearney and Cunningham (2016) found that more effective LSCBs often relied on significant work by senior leadership (particularly the Chair) to nurture relationships and promote engagement with other agencies. LSCB staff in Baginsky and Holmes' study (2015) noted that chairs had limited ability to achieve impact at the frontline.

The new arrangements initially typically comprised a two-tier structure of small strategic meetings of the partners, coupled with wider forums including relevant agencies (Clements et al., 2019; Briggs and Harris, 2021). Kantar (DfE/Kantar, 2021) found that smaller strategic groups facilitated better engagement from senior leaders but could reduce the contribution of other agencies and frontline staff, leaving them feeling

undervalued, a concern acknowledged by Wood (2021). This was more problematic in larger partnerships where informal networking occurred less readily and was exacerbated by remote working during the COVID-19 pandemic (DfE/Kantar, 2021). Partnership working tended to cede priority to other demands on senior staff's time (DfE/Kantar, 2021).

Seventy-three per cent of our survey participants considered that 'decision-making in/by the LSCP is genuinely tripartite'. Where arrangements were working well, partners' / LSPs' equal status coupled with independent challenge *"affords a forum of open and honest conversation...without undue pressure from any single agency agenda"* (Business Unit). Potential problems included dilution through shared responsibility (*"Issues now can be lost, not pushed or seen as a priority, with each agency looking to the other to lead"*, LA: Region 6). Twenty-two qualitative comments indicated that the local authority still tends to lead (*"The changes have made very little practical difference - the LA mostly leads, the ICB follows, with an occasional raising of a key concern / complaint, the police go with the flow, and by the time the police rep is familiar with the system and process, they get promoted or move on"*, Business Unit: Region 3). Participants suggested perceived imbalances could be attributable to differences in funding, the tendency for business managers to be employed by the local authority, or the perception of children's social care as the experts. Several survey participants considered that although decision-making was shared, the quality had been impaired through deficiencies in consultation and/or weakened representation at the strategic level (*"the tripartite system...has focused relationships between the 3 partners to the detriment of other partners"*, Probation: Region 9; *"Changes in structure have meant that decisions are made without consultation and are therefore not as effective. This was more transparent in a board structure previously"*, Health: Region 3).

Survey and workshop participants emphasised the importance of committed and stable leadership. This remained problematic for some (*"Engagement of the statutory partners at the most senior level remains a challenge...this group does not effectively drive the agenda for the Partnership, it rather seeks updates and progress reports"*, Business Unit: Region 9). Effective multi-agency governance requires flexibility and understanding at a senior level of how the other organisations in the partnership work, their priorities and the challenges they face (LSCPs 1, 2, 6, 7 and 8). Developing a shared vision between three large organisations *"takes a huge amount of work"* (LSCP 6). Leaders influence the tone of the collaboration and need to permit and model a culture of challenge and the ability to apologise for mistakes. Consistency of leadership was regarded as very important (LSCPs 5 and 6). Six survey participants were concerned that turnover of leaders impacted on decision-making and six that leaders were overburdened.

1.1.4 Accountability

The reforms removed Ofsted inspections of the partnership/board as a whole. Independent scrutiny was introduced as part of a wider system of accountability, including the independent inspectorates' single assessment of partner agencies and Joint Targeted Area Inspections. Independent scrutiny has been identified by partnerships as 'a defining feature' of the new arrangements (Briggs and Harris, 2021). A range of mechanisms have been implemented, including appointment of one or more independent

scrutineers, engagement of children and young people, lay forums, and external scrutiny and assurance measures, such as commissioned external reviews (Briggs and Harris, 2021; Clements et al., 2019; Wood, 2021). Clements et al.'s work with early adopters identified difficulties in holding to account senior partner representatives. A model to support independent scrutineers has since been developed (TASP, 2024). Wood (2021) highlighted a lack of clear evidence of the impact of scrutiny and independent challenge, recommending development of LSCP regulation and inspection programmes; the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel (CSPRP) has also called for more comprehensive inspection of LSCPs (CSPRP, 2024).

Just over two-thirds (68%, n=185) of survey participants considered it 'true' that 'organisations and agencies are challenged appropriately, holding one another to account effectively', with 48% (n=131) identifying improvement over time and 8% (n=21) deterioration. Seventy-two percent (n=195) answered 'true' to 'The independent scrutineer (or equivalent) provides a strong and constructive critical voice': 46% (n=125) stated this had improved over time. Three comments noted the importance of scrutineers not being overly influenced by the local authority. Resource limitations had inhibited the maturity of multi-agency audit and scrutiny in LSCP 4.

Sector reorganisation in health and the police could impact on the operation of LSCPs. In particular, creation of ICBs could cause instability in accountability mechanisms and more widely (*"The development of the ICB... has... detracted from progressing key aspects of partnership work... colleagues in health feel negatively impacted... at both strategic and operational level"*, IS: Region 4; *"provider services due to ICB changes are not included"*, Health: Region 6; *"the creation of the ICB has been extremely damaging in [X]"*, Local Authority: Region 5).

1.1.5 Participation

Engagement with children and young people appears to have been underdeveloped in LSCEs (France et al., 2010; McElearney and Cunningham, 2016). Clements et al. (2019) acknowledged that it was difficult to know whether young people's participation in early adopters was meaningful or impacted on outcomes. Although Briggs and Harris (2021) identified consultation with young people as a significant strength in many local areas, evidence of feedback from children, young people and families in LSCP annual reports was often limited or non-existent. Over a third of published reviews examined by Dickens et al. (2021) did not include families' and children's views.

Five survey questions to LSCE members asked about the participation of children and young people, families and communities. For all five, the most common response for change over time since participants' involvement in the partnership was 'stayed the same'. Sixty-six per cent (n=145) of participants answered 'true' to 'The experiences and views of children and young people influence the development of local child safeguarding services (excluding Looked After Children services)', while 23% (n=50) responded 'not true'. The equivalent statement was 'true' in relation to parents and carers for only 37% of participants (n=89) and 26% (n=56) in relation to communities. Only nine of the 102 LSCEs responding to the survey stated that they had a young scrutineer group, although 62 participants expressed interest in setting up arrangements. Case studies highlighted the critical importance of understanding how services are experienced (*"So often we get*

caught out when we have inspections and we think we're doing a fab job and actually the feedback from our...community is something completely different", LSCP 3).

Four comments in the survey alluded to mechanisms for child voice being embedded in services but not reaching the LSCP. Three highlighted the challenges of including insights from communities, including engaging wider partners to do so. Participants cautioned against making changes based on small groups of people with individual experience, points endorsed in case studies. Capturing the collective voice of diverse service users (i.e., users of the many different services as well as services users from different community groups) across sectors was a significant challenge for case study areas (LSCPs 1, 2, 7 and 8).

Workshops with young people elicited strong feedback on the need for LSCPs to ensure representation from diverse backgrounds, including those who have had experience of different aspects of safeguarding services, and on inclusivity (*"for me, it's like participation through inclusive messages and inclusive methods"*, CYP group 1: participant 2). Young people wanted to be involved directly in LSCP decision-making processes, with direct feedback to guard against tokenism and mechanisms to ensure and demonstrate how their contribution influences the work of LSCPs. They elicited interest in participating in a variety of activities such as scrutiny, focus groups, meetings, policy development, inclusion in subgroups and panels, and the development of accessible outputs tailored for other young people. Parents and carers similarly emphasised the need for LSCPs to include a diverse range of perspectives, including those at the *"extreme end"* of safeguarding (Parent/carer group 1: participant 2) and for two-way communication, but particularly the importance of listening to parents.

1.1.6 Collaboration

Broad representation from agencies was identified as a successful achievement of LSCBs by France et al. (2010). However, communication between the Board and partner organisations was often weak. Participation by representatives of different agencies was mixed, with challenges in achieving full representation of the health sector and in continuity of Board membership (France et al., 2010; Baginsky and Holmes, 2015). Our survey showed strong agreement that health providers ('true' for 87%, n=209) and designated health professionals (82%, n=196) were included in discussions leading to multi-agency strategic decisions. Despite this, a few comments suggested that representation was not always sufficient or at the right level of safeguarding and clinical expertise (*"as des dr [designated doctor] I am about the only professional on LSCP who actually sees families / children. I have often been frustrated at the lack of on the ground experience and understanding of many of the LSCP"*, Region 9). Although our survey provided evidence of strong and beneficial engagement with relevant agencies, five participants considered that the new arrangements had led to less robust involvement by these groups.

Dudau et al. (2016) and Crawford and L'Hoiry (2017) both highlighted the significance of individual 'boundary-spanners' (professionals who overcome the hindrances of organisational and professional structures), in successful inter-organisational collaboration. This was reflected in workshops, in which participants stressed that LSCPs needed professional representation that is *"close enough to operational delivery and*

leadership to make a difference and to feed that through” (LSCP 6). Regular engagement with community leaders and voluntary and community services (LSCP 2), and representation in subgroups from different levels and parts of a service (such as different tiers of the education system), were also important.

The engagement of schools at a strategic level of LSCPs has been incorporated within [*Working Together 2023*](#) (HM Government, 2023). Previous research found local areas to be motivated to ensure that schools had strong influence in arrangements (Baginsky et al., 2022). Some good practice was identified (Clements et al., 2019; Wood, 2021). However, some partnerships reported exclusion of, or lack of engagement by, schools (Wood, 2021). ‘Schools, colleges and other educational providers are included in discussions leading to multi-agency strategic decisions’ was stated to be ‘true’ for 55% (n=131) of our survey participants (compared to 61% (n=147) for other relevant agencies): 40% felt it had stayed the same and 37% that it had improved. Comments confirmed that some LSCPs effectively operated as a four-agency partnership. Others incorporated education representatives in subgroups only, which could be problematic (*“I feel that we struggle to hold the multi agencies to account as education has little sway on thresholds, accountability and intervention”*, Education). Although inclusion was challenging because of the diverse education economy, this was seen as akin to the situation in health.

LSCPs appear to have taken advantage of engagement with other multi-agency bodies in the local area to complement rather than duplicate their work (Briggs and Harris, 2021; Clements et al., 2019), resulting in a more focused response to fewer priority areas (Briggs and Harris, 2021). Two-thirds (67%, n=160) of survey participants felt that ‘Partnership leads work closely with other boards (e.g., safeguarding adult board, community safeguarding partnership)’, with 49% (n=115) considering this had improved over time. Three participants felt that joint adult/child boards tended to divert attention from children, but a fourth identified opportunities for shared development and learning.

1.1.6.1 Information sharing

The introduction of LSCPs has not to date remedied the longstanding challenge of inter-agency information-sharing (CSPRP, 2020; DfE/Kantar, 2021; Wood, 2021; Dickens et al., 2021; MacAlister, 2022; CSPRP, 2024). This is despite LSCPs identifying it as of key importance. In a review of annual reports (Osthwaite and Briggs, 2022), information sharing was the second most commonly cited practice theme priority for LSCPs. ‘The LSCP exercises oversight of safeguarding information sharing between agencies at an operational level’ was considered to be true by 64% (n=153) of participants; 52% (n=122) identified no change over time.

1.1.6.2 Communication

The importance of engagement with operational staff and incorporation of their perspectives in setting strategic priorities was highlighted by France et al. (2010), who identified particular concerns around communication with GPs, schools and the voluntary sector. Barriers persisted following the introduction of LSCPs (DfE/Kantar, 2021): frontline practitioners were still likely to perceive the local authority as the lead agency, experience partnership communication as voluminous, and struggle with different thresholds and terminology between agencies.

Ongoing challenges in establishing strong lines of communication to and from front-line services were evident in some areas from our survey. Although 82% of participants responded 'true' to 'Information is effectively communicated by the LSCP to frontline staff', 18% (n=39) stated 'not true'. Fifty-two per cent (n=113) of participants agreed that 'The perspectives of operational staff from your agency are incorporated in setting and realising strategic priorities'; 12% (n=26) answered 'not true'. Sixty-eight per cent of participants (n=149) felt that it was true there was a 'shared understanding of thresholds across agencies and services', but 23% (n=25) felt that there had been a deterioration. 'Practitioners feel part of a collaborative safeguarding community' in their area was 'true' for 68% of participants (n=184), with 11% (n=30) reporting deterioration. Innovative practice to ensure the views and experiences of frontline practitioners were heard at strategic level included 'consultative visioning', in recognition that those closest to practice are most likely to have innovative ideas. Practitioner forums feeding into LSCP representation were regarded by all those who mentioned them as a valuable means to learn from as well as disseminate learning to the practice base. However, the busyness of services and the need to give people permission to speak out could impact on engagement and it tended to be the same small group of practitioners that took part.

1.1.7 Culture

Establishing a learning culture was identified as a focus by early adopters (Clements et al., 2019), alongside evidence of significant activity in LSCBs (McElearney and Cunningham, 2016). Reviews of annual reports (Briggs and Harris, 2021; Osthwaite and Briggs, 2022) and of serious incident reviews (CSPRP, 2020; Dickens et al., 2021; 2022) suggest progress is being made in establishing learning cycles, but more support is needed to help partnerships measure dissemination of learning and the impact of training on long-term cultural change and frontline practice. However, Dickens et al. (2021) warn against repeat training without consideration of the impact on workload: other avenues such as supervision, peer support or specialist contact points should also be considered.

Our study evidenced that much thought and work had been invested in establishing a supportive culture of learning: this was largely regarded as successful. Learning cycles were well-established. 'The LSCP has good understanding of the ways in which multi-agency learning is embedded in practice' was identified as a very important indicator of effectiveness by 92% (n=211) of survey participants (the highest of all statements). Sixty-six per cent of survey participants (n=152) considered the statement to be 'true' for their partnership. Ensuring lessons learnt from reviews were communicated to practitioners and effected change in practice was a focus for many partnerships but very difficult to achieve and demonstrate. Embedding learning at the frontline was further complicated where footprints were large, politically complex and/or diverse, with the need to ensure consistency in delivery by organisations such as district councils, housing authorities and the voluntary sector (LSCP 4). Five survey participants, and participants from LSCPs 4 and 7 mentioned resourcing constraints on embedding learning in practice. Participants in LSCP 4 noted the need for continuous training because of high staff turnover across all agencies and insufficient capacity to deliver training within services.

Four case study areas (LSCPs 1, 4, 5 and 7) drew attention to the way in which statutory processes focused on learning from tragedy or crisis. They called for greater attention to

celebrating, sharing (including with the community) and learning from innovation and good practice, reflecting findings by McElearney and Cunningham (2016) in relation to LSCBs. LSCP 7 had introduced appreciative enquiry as a learning tool, based on feedback from families. LSCPs 4, 5, 6, and 8 all used learning reviews where cases do not meet the threshold for a formal review, to support practitioners to feel more comfortable in reflective practice. The volume of review work and management of resulting action plans was a challenge for some survey participants.

‘The LSCP evaluates the outcomes of all new multi-agency safeguarding initiatives’ was ‘true’ for 55% (n=126) of participants. Seven participants added comments. One stated that partners were too stretched to adopt new initiatives. Six cited lack of capacity or funding (*“Evaluation takes time and money, and this is not always built into budget planning or time allocation. The pressures of work often overshadow time for evaluation, people are not always confident in methods of evaluating”*, IS: Region 3).

1.1.7.1 Addressing disproportionality

Dickens et al. (2022) found that many practitioners and reviewers appear poorly equipped to address the issues arising from minoritised status. CSRP (2024) has emphasised the need for intersectional thinking in practice to redress disproportionality. Diverse representation in safeguarding partnerships is important to ensure diverse perspectives, promote equity, and address systemic biases in safeguarding practices and aligns with the principles of *Stable Homes, Built on Love* (Department for Education, 2023b) and [Keeping Children Safe, Helping Families Thrive](#) (DfE, 2024). This was a priority for our consultation groups; however, only one survey comment identified disproportionality as a focus. Reflecting the priorities of participating young people, it is embedded in the MACS TOC and MACS framework.

1.1.8 Effective multi-agency safeguarding arrangements: enablers and barriers

Both the survey and case study workshops provided opportunities for participants to comment on cross-cutting factors that could support or present obstacles to effective multi-agency arrangements. These are reported below, with the exception of resource issues, which are addressed in the next section. They provide important considerations for the way in which the MACS TOC and MACS framework are used.

1.1.8.1 The breadth and complexity of the work of LSCPS

Partnerships are complex networks of multiple organisations: one of our case study areas stated that over a thousand private/voluntary/independent sector organisations (PVIs) were included in their list of relevant agencies. Six case study LSCPs drew attention to the way in which the breadth of their work and the multiple networks with which they were connected posed challenges to effective collaboration. It was easy to become paralysed or overwhelmed (LSCP 4); there was *“so much activity”* it was hard to *“pull that together and...keep that clear vision in sight”* (LSCP 1). Partnerships could *“get lost in the amount of detail that we see within case reviews”* (LSCP 2). This was contextualised by spontaneous reference in seven of the eight case study workshops that work for the LSCP is an ‘add on’ for most members (*“the partnership teams...are full-time resourced...but everybody else is coming with...incredibly busy...other to do lists...everyone’s on borrowed time”*, LSCP 1). Aims needed to be realistic and achievable (*“Otherwise you ... don’t deliver anything”*, LSCP 1). Consequently, the work tended to

be focused on particular cohorts of children: the choice of those was felt to be influenced by the status of child protection in partnerships' responsibilities and the fact that other boards covered the wider health and wellbeing remit.

1.1.8.2 The significance of local context

The local contexts within which LSCPs function vary enormously and have a significant impact on the structure and functioning of the LSCP. Case study areas included one partnership with more than one local authority; one which had previously been part of a multi-local authority partnership; and one in which the geographical boundaries of all three statutory partner agencies were the same. This provided a good opportunity to explore the strengths and weaknesses of these different arrangements. Commentary described the challenges for police and health partners covering a number of LSCPs. These primarily concerned the increased demands on senior personnel, necessitating delegation of some functions, and the desire for consistency of approach across the partner agency. While rare, large LSCP 'footprints' covering a number of local authorities introduced significant implementation challenges, including different accountability procedures, different population trends and needs in local authority areas, and the danger that the voice and needs of smaller authorities may be overlooked. The coterminous LSCP regarded that status as a significant advantage. Six of the eight partnerships drew attention to the rich demographic diversity within their LSCP areas and to the implications for serving the different communities with which they worked. Two areas were experiencing fast-changing demographics, necessitating additional resourcing to understand and support community needs. Even where all partners were committed and active, workshop participants suggested that the role of children's social care remains instrumental to success. Partnerships were more likely to struggle where children's social care was weak or not prioritising the partnership, while a local authority with stable political leadership enabling long-term investment provided strong foundations.

1.1.8.3 Close working relationships

All eight case study areas referred to the importance of strong inter-agency relationships in their work, echoing Baginsky and Holmes (2015) (*"I can pick the phone up to [P] and say there's a higher end escalation on its way...Don't think the police have done enough. And then there's an action"*, LSCP 1). The nature of LSCP work as an additional commitment for busy professionals heightened reliance on good relationships (*"to get people to...spend their time doing things that they that they wouldn't normally do just for their organisation, it is tricky, but doable, if you've got the right relationships"*, LSCP 8). Committing to those relationships meant meeting regularly and often (LSCP 6). Stability of relationships within the LSCP was a significant advantage (LSCP 5), while remote communication might inhibit the development of relationships that support effective professional challenge (LSCPs 2 and 3). Smaller partnerships might find it easier to build close relationships within the LSCP than larger ones; however, caution was needed to avoid overfamiliarity. Strong relationships within the LSCP were not easily replicated in practice: partnerships need to support frontline inter-professional relationships (LSCP 7).

1.1.9 Covid-19

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on child and family wellbeing and child protection is well-documented. In the wake of the pandemic, our survey participants described the enduring impact on partnership activity from pressures on services, withdrawal of training and a backlog of reviews. However, embedding of the new LSCP structures was accelerated as a result of lockdowns. Constraints imposed by the pandemic fuelled deeper collaboration; remote working practices improved efficiency and enabled greater engagement in multi-agency forums (Pearce and Miller, 2020; Driscoll et al., 2022).

Around two-thirds of survey participants stated that their area had retained increased virtual work with children and families post-COVID (66%, n=60) and increased use of virtual methods for child protection/safeguarding meetings (68%, n=62). Twenty-three percent (n=18) had maintained greater caution in stepping down cases. Sixty percent (n=58) had quite/very high confidence in their local emergency contingency plans. For 13% (n=14) confidence was quite/very low; 27% (n=26) had been unaware of any plans.

The 129 comments about the use of remote methods confirmed improved attendance for online meetings, which was valuable in facilitating professionals' attendance at strategy discussions and other short notice meetings. Some young people were said to prefer remote communication, including some who would not previously have reached out to services. It could be a good way of keeping in touch with children and families, particularly where children are placed outside the area, or the wider family is at some distance. The most common concerns related to engagement by parents (including disguised compliance) and ensuring child safety without visiting the home environment. Discussions might lack depth, with some families feeling less able to engage and some unprofessional behaviour by practitioners (such as evidently attending to other work during meetings). Seventeen participants felt that relationship building with families suffered and this would be detrimental in the longer term. Continued remote working was regarded as inevitable in light of increased pressures on services. However, participants felt *"there is less of a shared sense of ownership and approach and consequently services are less adaptive, less flexible and more silo based"* (LA: Region 4).

115 comments addressed oversight of the use of virtual methods with children and families. Thirty-six participants were not aware of any such arrangements and 33 stated there were none. Others reported a wide range of practice, mostly incidental to the regular work of the partnership, such as audit and evidence from case reviews. Two LSCPs had provided guidance on the use of remote communication and two reported monitoring attendance at certain meetings. Several reported experiencing staff resistance to increased face to face working, including for initial child protection conferences.

1.2 Resources, expenditure, cost and cost-effectiveness

1.2.1 Evidence from the literature

The scoping review of the academic literature identified no evidence relating to the cost or cost-effectiveness of LSCBs or LSCPs. This section summarises evidence from the academic and 'grey' literature focused on resources and resource limitations, primarily in LSCBs.

Resource-related impacts on the effectiveness of multi-agency working were both positive and negative. A number of studies argued that resource limitations are a barrier to multi-agency collaboration, with negative impacts on inter-agency objectives. There was some evidence to support this, with one study suggesting limited resources were an important barrier to greater collaboration which may reduce the likelihood of early identification and management of risk (Shorrocks et al., 2019) and a second study reporting agency withdrawal where another agency was involved (“well there’s no need for us anymore”) (Crawford and L’Hoiry, 2017, p651). Studies also described how lack of resources have a negative impact on the ability of multi-agency teams to work together to prioritise certain target populations, such as child sexual exploitation (Pearce, 2014) and fabrication or induction of illness (Ratcliffe et al., 2020). However, there was also evidence of improved partnership working resulting from the need to share resources and find better ways of working (“what it has done is actually help to think of new ways of working across partnerships”, Crawford and L’Hoiry, 2017, p652). This was particularly evident for interagency training provided through pooling of resources, with contributions from partners being ‘in kind’ and interviews with key staff suggesting interagency training had increased the effectiveness of training and led to more efficient use of resources (Patsios and Carpenter, 2010).

Establishing sufficient and dependable resourcing was a common theme in both academic and grey literature. Agencies’ reluctance to allocate resources (Dudau, 2009), disparities in the resources available (France et al., 2010), and difficulties in agreeing partner agencies’ contributions (France et al., 2010; Wood, 2016; Clements et al., 2019), could inhibit a genuine sense of equality and responsibility between partners. Uncertainty over resourcing could undermine effective multi-agency working (Baginsky and Holmes, 2015; Clements et al. 2019). Inadequacy of resources constrained the remit of boards’ activities (France et al., 2010) and exacerbated concerns around being held to account for matters beyond their control (Baginsky and Holmes, 2015). Using data for learning and improvement was identified as a significant challenge for LSCBs (Baginsky and Holmes, 2015; McElearney and Cunningham, 2016).

Although learning from early adopters suggested that the new arrangements could be more efficient in use of time and resources, including through encompassing larger geographical areas, slimming down structures and working with other partners such as adult safeguarding (Clements et al., 2019), changes in configuration of health services and the requirement for some agencies to contribute to several partnerships could exacerbate challenges (DfE/Kantar, 2021). Munro & France (2012) found that the most effective boards took a realistic approach to what they could achieve. After implementation of the reforms, KANTAR (DfE/Kantar, 2021) also highlighted ‘limited capability to analyse information and intelligence held by partners and relevant agencies’ (p. 19) as a key barrier to effective partnership working.

1.2.2 Evidence from the survey and workshops

Budgetary and expenditure related information, as well as information on the adequacy of current resources, were collected from Business Managers in the survey and are summarised in Appendix IV. Resource-related issues reported by survey participants and discussed by case study participants fell into three main themes: (1) local characteristics

impacting on funding; (2) resource constraints that reduce the effectiveness of partnership working; and (3) getting the most from and prioritising resources.

1.2.2.1 Local characteristics impacting on funding

Survey participants described a number of characteristics of their LSCP of importance in relation to funding, which fell into three categories: geography, population and funding arrangements. Geographical characteristics were the most commonly reported factors, with participants describing police and/or health funding being stretched across a significant number of partnerships (n=10), the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) funding being capped and shared across London (n=3), LSCPs covering multiple local authorities (n=1), and difficulties recruiting and retaining staff due to salaries in the local area (n=1). In terms of the population, participants reported a range of resource intensive characteristics, including high levels of diversity (n=3), poverty and deprivation (n=2), neglect (n=1), youth violence and child exploitation (n=1), large families (n=1), and the presence of a youth offending institution (n=1). Funding not keeping pace with increases in the population of children and young people was also reported (n=2). Characteristics relating to funding arrangements focused on problems caused by combined budgets (n=2), with some budgets covering both young people and adults or additional aspects of joint working, partner funding restrictions and delays in budget negotiations (n=1), and the need to part-fund some out of area activities (n=1).

1.2.2.2 Resource constraints that reduce the effectiveness of partnerships

A large proportion of resource-related comments from survey and case study participants focused on resource constraints that limit the effectiveness of partnership working.

Multiple governance structures

A number of survey participants and two case study areas (LSCPs 4 and 6) described difficulties resulting from multiple governance and geographical boundaries (e.g., *"It's about whether there is sufficient resource to meet the complexity of the governance arrangements that are in place"*, LSCP 6) or highlighted the difficulties by describing the benefits of having only one governance framework to work within (*"We've got one set of governance...to replicate that multiple times would spread resources relatively thin"*, LSCP 6).

Staff time/capacity

A number of case study participants raised concerns about lack of staff time or capacity to carry out a range of activities and tasks (LSCPs 1, 2, 4, 6, 7 and 8), including: training (*"We do like to train together and do multi agency joint training. But quite often because of the demands in the system, we don't afford staff the time to go and do that learning"*, LSCP 4); developing inter-agency relationships (*"That's the final challenge, being able to commit the time at a strategic level"*, LSCP 4); co-production (*"Co-production takes time...And sometimes you haven't got the time, and that's a really awful thing to say because I don't want to be that person. I don't want to be that kind of organisation"*, LSCP 8); and police engagement (*"Resourcing issues hinder police engagement"*, LSCP 1). Wider issues of systemic staffing challenges across partner agencies were raised in five of the eight workshops (LSCPs 2, 4, 5, 6 and 7). Reference was made to service delivery (*"You've got that systemic issue of workforce and staffing, and you know, how do you deliver that service appropriately to meet that child or that family's needs"*, LSCP 2),

including carrying out visits (*“the health visitors haven’t got enough time to do as many visits as they would like to. And the social workers haven’t either”*, LSCP 7), follow-up of cases, e.g., of missing children who have been found (*“resources don’t allow follow up”*, LSCP 1), and managing Ofsted inspections (*“Ofsted and how that can be really time consuming and resource consuming”*, LSCP 6).

Collection and analysis of data

A large proportion of participants in both the survey and the case studies described difficulties due to lack of data and data analysis. In the survey, less than 50% (n=109) agreed that their LSCP had access to adequate data to inform service design/respond to safeguarding issues across agencies. Slightly more (56%, n=128) agreed that ‘multi-agency scrutiny of data and trends needed to inform service design/respond to safeguarding issues is appropriate and timely’, but 10% (n=23) responded that this was ‘not true’. Access to and scrutiny of multi-agency data had deteriorated in the view of 10% (n=23). Sixteen survey participants reported concerns about the quality or utility of available data as one of the three most significant challenges to multi-agency strategic decision-making. Case study responses focused on lack of time (*“we’re missing time, resource, expertise to analyse the data as a multi-agency set with a view to inform safeguarding practice”*, LSCP 4) and lack of data (*“We need sight of reliable and multi-agency data to inform our thinking, priority setting etc.”*, LSCP 1; *“but then can we get data from health?”*, LSCP 8), as well as lack of systems to collect data from all agencies and lack of staff and expertise to analyse data to inform safeguarding practice and priority setting (*“not sure we use our data particularly effectively to overlay how we respond to issues”*, LSCP 8).

Specialised staff

As well as data analysts, survey and case study participants (LSCPs 4, 5 and 6) highlighted a more general lack of specialised staff, such as those with audit, training, policy or planning skills (*“The capacity is really difficult in terms of the numbers of people that we need”*, LSCP 4; *“We haven’t got any policy officers or people who write papers and do all the change work for us. We’ve got to do it ourselves with the day job”*, LSCP 5). This was particularly true for smaller authorities with fewer staff holding multiple roles and fewer specialist support staff (*“We are a small authority. A lot of people are wearing a lot of hats. So, you know, resources can be limited”*, LSCP 5; *“So, it’s often the same people in the same rooms having the same conversations”*, LSCP 4). Decisions around whether to carry out multi-agency audits or review single agency audits through independent scrutiny were often dependent on other work demands and staff capacity to undertake those activities.

1.2.2.3 Getting the most from and prioritising resources

A number of survey and case study participants described activities and priorities to focus resources on in order to improve the performance of LSCPs.

Data and data systems

Case study respondents (LSCPs 2, 3 and 6) noted the value of shared data and data systems to support the development of priorities (*“all of our priorities should be supported by data”*, LSCP 3; *“Data underpins how we create our priorities”*, LSCP 6). One participant reported improvements resulting from work to align computer systems and

reduce duplication of data entry and analysis (*“This led to an improvement to qualified staff spending more time analysing and interpreting data rather than just chasing it”*, LSCP 2); another reported work to explore the use of AI (*“So, one of the things that we’re doing is looking at AI system approach where the multi-agency partnership can access and input information into one space”*, LSCP 2). Two survey participants called for a national data sharing solution.

Identification of those at risk

A small number of case study participants discussed the need to target limited resources at those at most risk in order to improve outcomes for children (*“we’ve all got a limited amount of resource. What is the most effective way to spend public money to improve outcomes for children? The first thing would have to be to identify those that are most risk”*, LSCP 1).

Engagement with children, families and communities

Similarly, a number of case study participants (LSCPs 3, 7 and 8) discussed the importance of devoting resources to support meaningful engagement with children, families and communities in relation to priority setting (*“We need to learn from what communities are saying they need and want and what’s going on for them. So, the voices of children and families actually can inform your priority setting”*, LSCP 3). In particular, one participant highlighted the need to ensure that there is a focus on what children and young people are concerned about, and not just relying on reviews and data, which may suggest other priorities (*“There’s a real opportunity with co-production, speaking to children...We set our work plan priorities based on what data might be telling us, based on what we learned from reviews...But there’s a real opportunity to actually engage with children and I think schools are a brilliant opportunity to do this, ask those questions...And unless we ask those questions, I think, you know, there is a danger we run with our priority based on what the quality assurance stuff is telling us and not what children are telling us”*, LSCP 8).

Targeted training

A small number of survey and case study (LSCP 4) participants emphasised the need to ensure that training is accessed by all those who need it and not just those who like to attend training. To do this, targeted training was suggested, as well as monitoring of attendance (*“So, we should be potentially maybe targeting training where it’s needed most, but also recording who we’ve trained, when we’ve trained them”*, LSCP 4).

Adequate administrative support

In line with a number of survey responses stressing the importance of adequate administrative support, one case study participant felt it was important to focus on the basics and ensure adequate and appropriate administrative support (*“We make sure that we have got the correct amount of administrative support for example, that we’ve got fundamentals right”*, LSCP 6).

1.3 Discussion

Our findings suggest that shared responsibility for strategic decision-making is now embedded in most partnerships, with perceived improvements in leadership and

accountability mechanisms. Case study areas largely exhibited confidence in their arrangements and optimism as to their development and influence, as well as enormous dedication and a wide range of innovation. It is clear, however, that some of the core challenges identified in relation to LSCBs persist. These include capacity and consistency of leadership; ensuring broad representation of agencies at the right level of seniority; access to and use of multi-agency data; sharing of good practice; and engagement of children and young people and families. There remains a tendency for arrangements to be dominated by children's social care in some areas (something that was not regarded as a deficiency by all). The broad remit and limited resources available to partnerships dictate a realistic approach to what can be achieved. Changes in train during the project, particularly greater clarity over the role of lead and delegated safeguarding partners and introduction of rotating chairs, may ameliorate some difficulties. However, the introduction of ICBs has introduced additional complexity in accountability pathways in health. There are also implications for police working in a wider footprint. Factors such as good working relationships that overcome organisational differences and geographical and demographic contexts are difficult to control.

Areas of focus for future development include

- Ensuring representation across the LSCP enables a strong line of sight to and communication from frontline services.
- Establishing robust mechanisms to include education in strategic decision-making.
- Resolving challenges in representation of health as a result of the creation of ICBs.
- Ensuring capacity of health and police leads covering multiple LSCPs.
- Better understanding of how arrangements and services are experienced by, and the priorities of, children and young people, families and communities.
- Development of multi-agency data sets, including to improve understanding of EEDI concerns.
- Supporting learning from good practice.
- Oversight of the use of remote methods across agencies.

While no evidence relating to the cost-effectiveness of LSCPs or other multi-agency arrangements was identified in the literature review and it was not feasible to evaluate cost-effectiveness in the current study¹, evidence from the literature review, survey and case studies provides some useful indicators of factors that may support the cost-effectiveness of LSCPs and thus support improvements to outcomes for children and young people generated from the limited resources available. Priorities identified include the need for:

- Investment in, or support to access, specialist staff, particularly for smaller LSCPs.

¹ Cost-effectiveness analysis is comparative in nature and thus requires analysis of one intervention compared to another (i.e., LSCPs compared to no LSCPs). In addition, cost-effectiveness analysis requires individual-level data on both 'costs' and 'effectiveness' for end-users of the interventions of interest, which are usually collected within an evaluation. The current study is not an evaluation that collects data on the services that support CYP (to estimate costs) or the outcomes generated for CYP (to estimate effectiveness). Assessment of cost-effectiveness would require high quality routine data or prospective, individual-level evaluation of the impact of funding arrangements on the use and cost of a wide variety of services delivered by multiple agencies and associated outcomes for CYP.

- Investment in staff time in interagency working and interagency activities.
- Investment in co-production and consultation with CYP, families and communities.
- Investment in shared data systems, data collection and data analysts.
- Investment in mechanisms to minimise complexities of governance structures.
- Investment in supporting stable leadership willing to invest in long-term strategies.
- Investment in targeted and focused training with monitoring of uptake.
- Investment in priorities that are identified using both robust data and consultation with CYP and families.

Whilst not directly related to cost-effectiveness, a number of aspects of financing arrangements were highlighted as causing difficulties for LSCPs. Improvement in these areas has the potential to support LSCPs to better focus on the priorities for investment outlined above, including:

- Equitable financial contributions from partners.
- Timely agreement of partner budgetary contributions.
- Ring-fenced budgets and additional resources to support national priorities.
- Ring-fenced budgets to support the participation of children and young people.
- Funding that keeps pace with increases in responsibilities.
- Funding that keeps pace with increases in population sizes.
- Funding that better reflects high levels of diversity and deprivation.

1.4 Conclusion

The importance and value of the work of LSCPs came through strongly in this research. Our findings have significant implications for the implementation of the government's proposals, as set out in [Keeping Children Safe, Helping Families Thrive](#) (DfE, 2024). We have identified the need for strengthening of the ways through which LSCPs gain insight into the experiences and priorities of children, young people and families and into frontline strengths and weakness, pressures and risks. The creation of multi-agency child protection teams provides an opportunity to formalise the conduits between the practice base and LSCPs, as suggested in [Keeping Children Safe, Helping Families Thrive](#) (DfE, 2024). Care will need to be taken to ensure that other areas of work such as early help are not overlooked and that the voice of different levels and parts of services are appropriately represented. Our work confirms the importance of including all educational settings in multi-agency safeguarding arrangements and that the views and perspectives of education providers inform strategic decision-making. The requirement for Family Group Decision-Making provides a similar opportunity to introduce stronger mechanisms to ensure that perspectives of families are understood and influence priority-setting and service delivery.

Our work supports the proposals to improve data and information sharing. LSCPs are best informed when they have a system for collecting, sharing and scrutinising single and multi-agency data. They are currently hampered by inadequate access to single and multi-agency data sets and specialist support for analysis. In particular, tackling disproportionality across the system requires improved capture of demographic data by

agencies to enhance understanding of pathways and outcomes for different cohorts of children.

LSCPs also have potential to play a greater role in supporting the development of initiatives to improve safeguarding practice, in monitoring the impact of increased use of remote communication in safeguarding practice, and in promoting learning from innovation and good practice. To enable them to fulfil that potential, increased resourcing is needed. A MACS project TASP webinar in November 2024 elicited feedback that business units felt under unprecedented pressure following implementation of [*Working Together 2023*](#) in the context of budget reductions.

The project has highlighted the complexity of multi-agency safeguarding arrangements and the enormous breadth of responsibility carried by LSCPs. The findings on what is working well, where challenges remain and the enablers and barriers to improvement informed development of the MACS TOC and framework. It is, however, important to bear in mind the diversity of local contexts, needs and arrangements and to acknowledge the significance of local socio-economic context (Wilkins and Antonopoulou, 2020). Achieving and demonstrating impact at the practice base remains a core challenge in light of the nature of LSCPs' work and broader resource constraints within agencies, acknowledged by Wood (2021), CSPRP (2024) Dickens et al. (2022) and the National Audit Office (2022).

Part II of this report describes the MACS TOC (section 2.1) and MACS framework (section 2.2) which we have developed through the project to support LSCPs in driving improvement. Section 2.3 explains how LSCPs can use the MACS TOC and MACS framework both to assess their overall effectiveness and to plan LSCP priorities.

Part 2: MACS TOC and framework

2.1 MACS TOC

2.1.1 Introduction

The TOC has been co-created with key stakeholders to reach consensus about all the core elements required to ensure that organisations and agencies work together to safeguard children and promote their welfare. The MACS framework is based on the TOC. It is designed to support LSCPs to evaluate, monitor and learn from outcomes of multi-agency partnership working using a systematic, structured format. Together, we refer to them as the MACS TOC and framework.

This section begins by defining Theory of Change and explaining how the MACS TOC can be used to support LSCPs to reflect on what they are trying to achieve. It introduces the MACS TOC tree to support facilitation of collective reflection using visualisation. It details each key element of the MAC TOC as organised around the TOC tree for ease of accessibility.

2.1.2 What is Theory of Change?

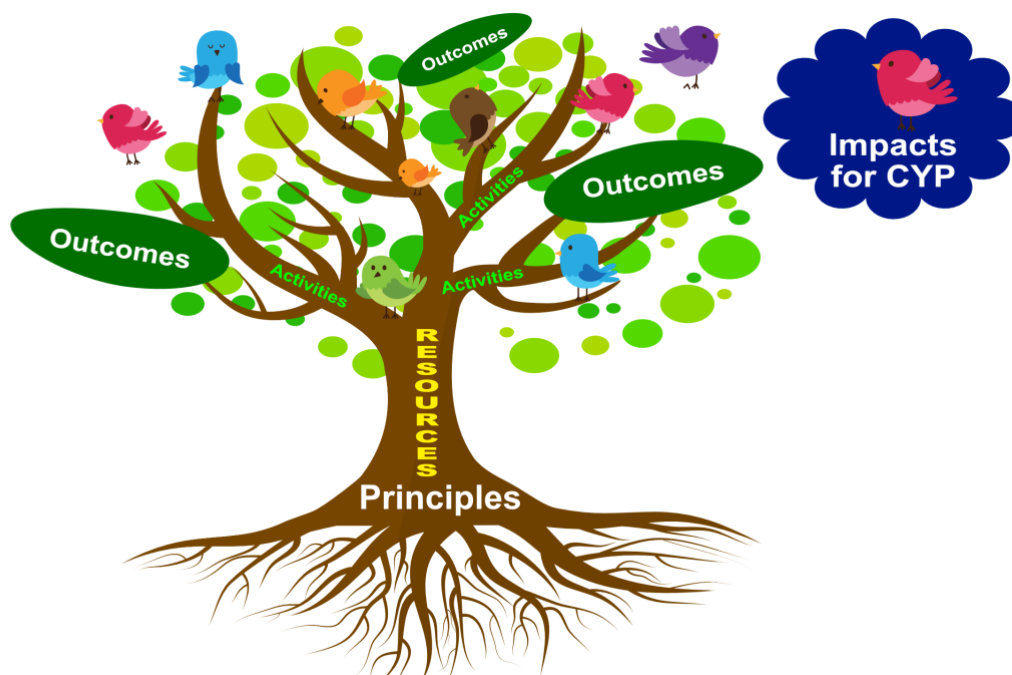
A Theory of Change is an explicit theory of how and why a given intervention (such as a project, programme, policy or initiative) will lead to specific change (Stein and Valters, 2012). Put simply, Theory of Change is 'a theory of how and why an initiative works' (Weiss 1995: 65). It is based on a consensus approach that is designed to bring together key stakeholders to generate agreement about what they are trying to achieve and how (Funnel and Rogers, 2011). Crucially, a Theory of Change identifies expected pathways or links between an intervention's activities and its intended impact, while considering contextual factors – or enablers and barriers - that might influence change (Rolfe, 2019). In other words, a Theory of Change requires stakeholders to articulate the underlying set of assumptions about why they think that the activities will lead to a long-term goal. This involves making explicit the relationships between activities and intended outcomes by surfacing why they are expected to lead to change (Stein and Valters, 2012).

2.1.3 The MACS TOC tree

TOC visuals are designed to help better understand the nuances of the, often, complex issues at hand. They support building of consensus (Koopmanschap and Schaap, 2013). The metaphor of a tree was chosen to depict the growth and development of change, reinforcing the importance of review, reflection and re-adjustment of the MACS TOC as appropriate to the context and priorities of individual partnerships. Figure 1 represents the MACS TOC tree. All elements are informed by our research evidence including findings from local and national reviews. The roots of the MACS TOC tree symbolise the underpinning principles, the trunk represents structure or resources needed by LSCPs for stable functioning, the branches illustrate LSCPs' activities, while the leaves are the outcomes of multi-agency child safeguarding. The birds represent impact for children, families and communities. The rest of this section details each key element of the TOC, beginning with impacts for children, families and communities. This is because a good TOC begins with defining its desired impacts, then it clarifies desired outcomes, the activities that might achieve the outcomes and the resources needed for the activities.

The MACS TOC is informed by the principles that are the foundation for multi-agency safeguarding.

Figure 1: MACS TOC tree



2.1.4 Impact for children, young people and their families and communities

Deciding which indicators need to be measured to assess whether LSCPs are effective requires addressing what longer-term impacts for children, families and communities are expected. We have aligned the expected longer-term impacts of LSCP activity on children, their families and communities with the outcomes identified in the National Framework for Children's Social Care (DfE, 2023a). These impacts are represented as the birds on the MACS TOC tree. The birds' health and wellbeing are dependent on the conditions created, in part, through the work of LSCPs. To capture the role of LSCPs in promoting the welfare of children in their locality, the MACS TOC includes a focus on the role of the wider community in safeguarding children. The MACS TOC identifies five impacts for children, young people and families and communities:

1. Children, young people and families stay together where safe and get the help they need to thrive and succeed.
2. Children and young people are supported by their family and community networks.
3. Children and young people are safe in and outside of their homes.
4. Children in care and care leavers have stable, loving homes.
5. Private and public sectors and the third sector safeguard children.

2.1.5 Outcomes of multi-agency child safeguarding partnership working

Achieving the above impacts for children, families and communities is, in part, determined by the long-term goals of LSCPs (adapted from La Valle, 2019). We refer to these as the "outcomes of multi-agency child safeguarding partnership working" or "outcomes" for simplicity. These outcomes are represented as green leaves in the MACS TOC tree, to indicate growth and regeneration or change over time subject to LSCP reflections. They are informed by all stages of the MACS work outlined in the report

above. The five outcomes are: leadership, accountability, participation, collaboration and culture.

The MACS Framework uses these outcomes rather than longer-term impacts for children, families, and communities because such impacts are not solely determined by LSCP activities. However, impacts for children, families and communities *are* influenced by the outcomes of multi-agency safeguarding partnership working at a strategic level. Section 2.2 presents the MACS framework which provides measurable indicators of the efforts made by LSCPs toward achieving longer-term impact for children, families and communities. It helps LSCPs to explore the relationship between outcomes and the indicators that can demonstrate outcomes are achieved.

2.1.6 What activities do LSCPs undertake?

In the MACS TOC tree, LSCP activities are represented as branches. They link the resources needed by LSCPs (tree trunk or core structure) and the desired outcomes of multi-agency child safeguarding (green leaves). Drawing on findings from case study sites, some – but not all – activities may include:

- Providing strategic leadership through review of relevant research, case studies and multi-agency data to develop recommendations for priority setting.
- Establishing, communicating and revisiting each subgroups' responsibilities and routes for accountability to the lead safeguarding partners.
- Involving children, young people and families and communities in the identification and review of strategic priorities and sub-group activities.
- Strengthening relationships via strategic meetings and informal forums to promote collaborative working.
- Using 'storyboard' techniques whereby each partner shares a succinct storyboard of activity and learning within their own agency.

The above activities are indicative only. An essential expectation of the MACS TOC is that individual partnerships will undertake their own reflective exercises to map their activities against outcomes. This could help them understand why LSCP activities are linked to outcomes of multi-agency child safeguarding.

2.1.7 What resources do LSCPs need to operate effectively?

Identifying what resources are required for LSCPs to operate effectively is essential to achieving their aims. In the MACS TOC tree, resources are represented as the trunk or core structure needed by LSCPs to function as effectively as possible. As with LSCP activities, it is the responsibility of individual partnerships to identify what resources are required to support their activities. Resources identified by case study sites included:

- financial contribution of statutory safeguarding partners.
- support for the business unit.
- access to and interpretation of multi-agency data.
- time, financial or other contributions from relevant agencies, including Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) partners.
- time contributions from frontline practitioners, children, young people, families and communities, for example in terms of participatory activities.

- contribution of private sector to community-based safeguarding responses.

2.1.8 What are the shared principles underlying the work of LSCPs?

The MACS TOC is founded on six principles that underpin the work of LSCPs. These principles are represented as the roots in the MACS TOC tree, to symbolise the stability provided through research evidence and safeguarding reviews. The principles are derived from consultation, survey responses and review of LSCP yearly reports. They are integral to the TOC because they influence how the change pathways between activities and outcomes interact. The MACS TOC assumes that by ensuring these principles are respected and embedded, partnerships will achieve more meaningful and sustainable impact for children, families and communities.

The MACS TOC principles are:

- We share responsibility and collaborate to deliver our vision for how our services work together to keep children safe in and outside their homes.
- We constructively challenge each other, irrespective of power differentials, to achieve the highest quality support and best practice with children and their families.
- We respect the rights of children and families and their communities, involving them in our strategic planning, service design and delivery.
- We are ambitious, and work with openness and transparency to align our resources to make a positive difference to the lives of children and families.
- We have a learning culture and work together in partnership to reflect, learn, and evaluate to ensure continual improvement.
- We promote equity, equality, diversity, and inclusion (EEDI) by challenging discrimination and involve, value, respect and respond to our diverse local community.

2.1.9 Pathways of change

Understanding how LSCP activities influence the outcomes of multi-agency child safeguarding is central to the Theory of Change process. This requires individual partnerships to articulate how they want people to engage with their activities to make outcomes more likely. This may include reading findings from local rapid reviews and CSPRs to make changes in practice and/or identifying what conditions are needed to create the practice change required.

Defining pathways that create change between activities and outcomes can be challenging. This is because assumptions about *why* change will occur are often implicit or not fully articulated between partners and relevant agencies. The process of mapping – or making explicit – the pathways of change ensure that LSCP activities are purposeful by surfacing the relationships between activities and intended outcomes. It can help to look at different outcomes in turn, taking a single outcome (for example, participation, as explained in the framework) to consider what will need to happen to bring about this outcome. It is also important to consider the enablers and barriers to change, and what steps partnerships can undertake to amplify enablers and address any barriers to ensure that their work is effective.

2.1.10 Enablers and barriers to change

Section 1.1.8 identified a series of enablers as well as barriers to the success of multi-agency partnership working. These included the strength of partnership relationships, availability of resources to undertake activities, including access to robust data sources and skilled data analysts to support monitoring and evaluation. Both the complexity of working in partnership at the strategic level, as well as the context within which LSCPs operate, were noted as impacting effectiveness. It is an expectation of the MACS TOC that individual partnerships will reflect together to understand change enablers as well as barriers as relevant to their local context.

2.2: MACS framework

Outcome Category 1: Leadership	
How effective is LSCP leadership?	
Outcomes	Indicators of outcome
1.1 Vision There is a co-created, clear, shared vision of how to continually improve outcomes for CYP across all levels of need and types of harm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Vision is co-created with CYP, families, communities, and practitioners ○ Vision is underpinned by agreed commitment to adequate and equitable resourcing by LSPs, including business support ○ Vision is clear and available in user-friendly, accessible formats on websites and other dissemination materials ○ Key stakeholders know about and are able to articulate the vision
1.2 Strategic direction Strategic direction including priority-setting and business planning is informed by shared principles, and early identification and multi-agency assessment of safeguarding risks and opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Strategy, including shared priorities, is jointly set by LSPs ○ Strategy is data-driven and informed by scrutiny and analysis of local data, reviews, and audits ○ Strategy is informed by consultation with safeguarding professional leadership including designated health professionals and relevant agencies including educational providers and VCSE sector ○ Strategy is informed by feedback from CYP, families and communities ○ Strategy is clearly communicated and available in user-friendly, accessible formats on websites and through other dissemination materials ○ Strategy is regularly reviewed against agreed targets
1.3 Strategic decision-making Joint decision-making is informed by partner and relevant agencies at strategic and operational levels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Strategic decision-making at the highest level is joint and includes representation from the education sector ○ Strategic decision-making is multiagency and includes safeguarding professional leadership including designated health professionals and appropriate leaders from relevant agencies ○ Joint decision-making is ensured by broad representation in the LSCP across agencies at appropriate levels of seniority

Outcome Category 2: Accountability	
How robust are mechanisms for accountability of LSCP partners to each other, CYP, families and communities?	
Outcomes	Indicators of outcome
2.1 Accountability - Professionals Partner and relevant agencies hold each to account through appropriate challenge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Organisational structure clearly articulates lines of accountability including LSP and DSP roles and includes links with other boards ○ Safeguarding practice is regularly reviewed via independent scrutiny, audit, and serious incident reports ○ Leadership has oversight of scrutiny via review of and response to independent scrutiny, audit and QA reports, action plans and recommendations ○ Escalation pathways and processes are clearly articulated, understood and used ○ Challenge is encouraged and mechanisms to support and review inter-agency challenge are in place
2.2 Accountability – CYP, families and communities LSCP provides opportunity for CYP, families and communities to hold it to account	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Scrutiny feedback is sought from CYP via young scrutineer/young advisor/youth advocates/young inspector groups ○ Scrutiny feedback is sought from CYP, families and communities via independent scrutiny, accessible consultations, and other means, including via advocacy / supported communication for marginalised groups
2.3 Assurance The LSCP has assurance of timely and effective multi-agency response to CYP and families at all stages of the safeguarding continuum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Senior leaders in the LSCP have good knowledge of the quality of local practice and the difference it makes to CYP, families and communities evidenced from data and regular provider reporting. ○ Senior leaders are assured that subgroups are delivering against the strategic and business plans and contributing to the aims, ambitions and priorities of the LSCP via review of and response to subgroup reports, action plans and recommendations ○ Data enables identification of local priorities, needs, horizon scanning and issues for improvement ○ Data analysis is prioritised and LSCP has (or has access to) a data analyst or named person responsible for multi-agency data analysis ○ Local trends are analysed regularly by need, type of harm and other relevant characteristics and disseminated via yearly report or as appropriate ○ Local trends are compared with national, regional and statistical neighbours and subjected to multi-agency scrutiny to inform strategy

Outcome Category 3: Participation	
How effectively are LSCPs ensuring participation of CYP, families and communities in safeguarding work?	
Outcomes	Indicators of outcome
3.1 Participation in strategy LSCP strategic direction is influenced by CYP, families and communities within child rights and EEDI approaches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ CYP participation in the work of LSCPs is embedded, valued and supported via young scrutineer/young advisor/young inspector groups and activities ○ Family participation in the work of LSCPs is encouraged, valued and supported via family advisory board or otherwise ○ Community participation in the work of LSCPs is encouraged, valued and supported, e.g., through a participation officer or a named person responsible for participation ○ CYP, family and community views inform LSCP decision-making at all levels
3.2 Participation in practice The views and experiences of CYP and families are respected and integrated into decision-making about children's wellbeing and safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ CYP wishes and feelings are heard and integrated into decision-making about their future care, safety, health and wellbeing ○ Family wishes and feelings are heard (where appropriate) and integrated into decision-making about the future care, safety, health and wellbeing of their children ○ CYP are actively involved in decision-making in plans for their transition points
3.3 Inclusivity LSCP promotes inclusivity and fairness and involve, value and respond to our diverse local community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Diversity in protected characteristics is demonstrated in CYP, family and community representatives engaged in work with the LSCP ○ Diversity in experiences is demonstrated in CYP, family and community representatives engaged in work with the LSCP (e.g., diversity across partner agencies, across levels of need and types of harm) ○ CYP / family / community identity (e.g., age, disability, race, ethnicity, culture, faith/belief, gender, gender identity, language, sexual orientation) and experiences are understood and valued and inform strategy and practice ○ Diverse individuals are included in safeguarding practice by advocacy and assisted communication where appropriate
3.4 Promoting safety CYP, families and communities can recognise and report risks and opportunities and participate in community-based responses to safeguarding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Guidance for recognising/reporting risk/contexts of concern is clear and accessible to CYP, families and communities on website and via other materials ○ Guidance for recognising/reporting risk/contexts of concern recognises intersectional discriminations and is disseminated via engagement with relevant community groups (e.g., schools/education providers, youth/parent groups, businesses, VCSE sector and faith groups) ○ LSCP website provides useful material, easily accessible by CYP, families and communities

Outcome Category 4: Collaboration	
How effectively are partner and relevant agencies working together to achieve LSCP objectives?	
Outcomes	Indicators of outcome
4.1 Multi-agency working LSCP partner and relevant agencies are working together in line with all aspects of the shared vision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Practitioners from all agencies and disciplines are a collaborative community, confident working across practice boundaries and in professional challenge (evidenced e.g., via s11 audit/staff feedback) ○ Data are shared and analysed jointly to support shared action plans and review of performance ○ Multi-agency priorities and action plans are agreed and disseminated widely via website and other dissemination materials ○ Practitioners from all agencies and disciplines have a shared understanding of and shared approaches to working with CYP and families (e.g., via appropriate training) ○ Successful initiatives promoting the safety of CYP are identified, shared and replicated where possible ○ Recurrent or significant reporting of risk/contexts of concern is escalated from practitioners to leadership with action loops recording relevant responses
4.2 Information sharing and communication Information sharing and communication are robust within and between partner and relevant agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Information sharing agreements are in place outlining how information is shared safely and effectively between partner and relevant agencies and disseminated on website ○ Information sharing procedures are secure and understood by practitioners and are reported on website and via other dissemination materials ○ Communication channels are clear to and from frontline practitioners
4.3 Skilled and supported workforce The workforce is equipped with the values, knowledge and skills to collaborate across practice boundaries and work equitably with a diverse range of CYP, families and communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Multi-agency training is co-developed and/or co-facilitated where possible by CYP and experts by experience ○ Uptake and evaluation of multi-agency training and workforce development activities are regularly reviewed for relevance and effectiveness ○ Multi-agency EEDI policies and EEDI training are clear, accessible and monitored for impact ○ Shared understanding of risk and referral criteria is assessed across agencies and services (e.g., via audit of referral quality) ○ Stability of workforce is monitored and discussed by leadership, including regular review of turnover and vacancies

Outcome Category 5: Culture	
How effectively are LSCPs promoting a just and fair culture of shared reflection and learning?	
Outcomes	Indicators of outcome
5.1 Learning culture Learning from research, national and local reviews and independent scrutiny is understood, acted upon and embedded in changing practice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ LSPs provide shared oversight of learning from independent scrutiny, serious incidents, local child safeguarding practice reviews, and national reviews ○ Recommendations from oversight of learning from independent scrutiny, serious incidents, local child safeguarding practice reviews, and national reviews are implemented (demonstrable impact on practice set out in the yearly report) ○ Learning is cascaded and integrated into dissemination and training activities ○ Learning is resourced via agreed allocation of budget for local reviews ○ Good news and positive feedback are disseminated widely and regularly via clear mechanisms
5.2 Just and fair culture CYP, families and communities experience a just and fair culture in line with EEDI principles and non-discriminatory practices.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ CYP demographic and community characteristics are understood (e.g., deprivation, ethnicity, household income/employment) and central to work with CYP ○ CYP's characteristics and identity are considered in reviews and data analysis to support practice and service improvements ○ Characteristics of LSCP members are reviewed against local population norms to raise awareness in discussions of disproportionality ○ Reviews and audits explicitly identify and address any potential aspects of disproportionality ○ LSCP has oversight of complaints relating to safeguarding, including aspects of EEDI
5.3 Reflective practice Reflection is driven from leadership and focused on driving continual improvement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Reflective practice is celebrated and encouraged, e.g., through use of the National Panel's reflective questions to support LSCP decision-making ○ Reflective practice is reviewed, e.g., through independent scrutineer assessment of collective reflection and opportunities for safe learning environments ○ Obstacles to reflective practice are explored via review of perceptions of a culture of reflective practice

2.3 Using the TOC and framework: Monitoring progress against outcomes

2.3.1 Introduction

The MACS TOC and framework are designed to support LSCPs to assess their overall effectiveness against agreed, evidence-based outcomes and impacts for children and young people, families and communities. The LSCP leadership (LSPs and DSPs) and relevant LSCP subgroups can also use the MACS TOC and framework when priority setting and reviewing, and in planning LSCP activities towards the desired outcomes. Caution needs to be applied to avoid inappropriate delegation of the totality of this work to business units.

2.3.2 How to use the MACS TOC

The MACS TOC is designed to be used in two main ways:

- To review the overall effectiveness of LSCP work to support evaluation, improvement and learning and
- To identify desired outcomes, activities and resources for a specific priority and review progress against outcomes to support learning and improvement.

It is important to note that the MACS TOC is not static but should be used to consider context and change over time through reflection and re-adjustment to evidence the impact of LSCP activities (Technopolis, 2021). It is designed to support collective decision-making about the activities needed to achieve the outcomes and the resources required to support those activities, underpinned by agreed shared principles guiding the work. When using the MACS TOC it is important to return to the principles underpinning the work of LSCPs (see Section 2.1.8). The principles are integral to working together and they influence how the change pathways between activities and outcomes interact. It is important to embed these principles to ensure impact is meaningful for children, young people, families and communities both when reviewing effectiveness and priority setting.

2.3.2.1 Assessing the overall effectiveness of the LSCP

The MACS TOC starts by identifying the five outcomes of multi-agency partnership working at a strategic level: leadership, accountability, participation, collaboration and culture. The MACS framework is structured around the outcomes, with sub-categories to consider under each outcome. The framework identifies outcome indicators that could be used to assess progress against the outcome categories. Once outcome indicators are agreed, the next step is to identify activities that are needed to achieve each outcome category.

Evidence suggests that activities should be realistic and achievable. Section 2.1.6 details some indicative activities that were identified from our research. The extent of the applicability of these activities to all LSCPs will depend on local context. LSCPs may draw on these, or different and additional activities, depending upon what partner and relevant agencies are able to deliver. It is this collective exercise of working together across the partnership and with children, young people, families and communities that creates an effective TOC.

Finally, ensuring that the activities are realistic and achievable involves considering what resources are needed to facilitate their delivery. This involves undertaking collective

reflection by partners and relevant agencies to identify the resources that are available within their local context. The TOC tree notes that children, young people, families and communities are themselves a significant resource to supporting activities. While due attention is applied to recognising the scope and capacity of children, young people, families and communities, appropriate consultation can respectfully engage with the power, experience and resource of those living with the LSCP footprint.

As noted above, the core principles underpin each stage of the TOC and are integral considerations to shared planning and decision-making.

2.3.2.2 Planning and delivering LSCP priorities

We have created five steps to help LSCPs apply the MAC TOC to planning work to achieve LSCP priorities. These are designed to get LSCPs started but it is possible that further training and support may be required by partnerships to help them think through the change pathways – or why activities are expected to impact outcomes – to fully realise the benefits of the MACS TOC process for priority setting.

Step one: Identifying the issue

This involves describing the problem that the priority is attempting to address. This includes understanding the context and any background factors that might impact. The following questions are designed to support this step.

- What issue is the identified priority aiming to tackle? Can this be defined in one or two sentences?
- Who is affected (target group/s)?
- What change is the priority hoping to achieve overall?
- How will the MACS TOC principles influence or impact on the choice of priority?
- Are there any contextual factors that might impact the change that the priority is intended to achieve? What are the opportunities to overcome these barriers?²

Step two: Identifying the outcomes and outcome indicators (the TOC tree leaves)

This step involves identifying the short or medium-term changes for the target group/s. It is helpful to identify the impacts that you are trying to achieve for each target group one at a time, focusing on how the target group will be better off in a years' time. Useful questions include:

- What is the priority hoping to achieve in the short to medium term? (For instance, children feel more listened to by their carers).
- What kinds of changes – in terms of experiences, knowledge or skills or organisations involved – you be expected as result of priority activities?
- What processes are in place to show that you are 'on course' to achieve priority objectives? What are the relevant outcome indicators?¹

Step three: Activities and change mechanisms or pathways (the TOC tree branches)

The next step involves thinking about activities and change mechanisms, or in other words, how activities will cause the intended outcomes. It is useful to think about what you are doing or plan to do to achieve your outcomes. Questions to be asked include:

² Questions adapted from [NPC's Theory of Change in 10 steps](#) (NPC, n.d.).

- What activities will be undertaken? What are the key features? (For instance, supporting relationship building between practitioners and young people).
- Who will deliver these activities and for how long? (For instance, multi-agency training sessions, co-delivered with young people on relationship-based practice and developing listening skills).

Step four: Identifying resources (the TOC Tree trunk)

Each activity that has been identified as necessary to achieve a desired priority outcome will require resourcing. Section 2.1.7 identifies examples of resources required for achieving overarching LSCP outcomes. These give examples of the resources that you might want to consider for supporting activities targeted towards specific priority areas. Some may be more accessible and realistic than others and you may identify other resources that could support an activity. The aim is to ensure that partners and relevant agencies involved work together to identify and deliver resources supporting activities.

Step five: checking your proposed work is adhering to, or working towards agreed principles (the TOC Tree roots)

The TOC tree identifies key principles that can underpin all TOC activity. The principles are evidence-based and, as with all aspects of the TOC, designed to promote shared discussion and collaboration about how they can be achieved. As the tree cannot exist without strong and functioning roots, neither can shared resources, activities and desired outcomes exist without full consideration of each principle listed. Each principle is equally important and will require opportunities for reflection about how it applies to the achievement of an agreed desired outcome, to the identification and engagement of activities to achieve that outcome and to the allocation of resources to facilitate these activities. This requires the creation of safe spaces for recognition of the challenges presented by each principle, a transparent approach to meeting these challenges and a supportive environment to addressing the learning opportunities that may emerge. This will be central to improving practice to deliver meaningful outcomes for children, young people, families and communities.

2.3.3 Monitoring progress against outcomes

The MACS framework is designed to help all LSCPs work towards achieving evidence-based outcomes for CYP, families and communities within their geographical footprint. It is focused on the five outcomes of multi-agency working child safeguarding. There is no one prescriptive list of what can be used to monitor progress against specific outcomes applicable for all LSCPs. LSCPs should construct a considered, locally relevant, set of monitors, dependent on their footprint, demography, resource allocation and community contexts. Some possible sources of evidence used to monitor progress towards achieving outcomes are listed below. Different partnerships may have equally valid, other sources of evidence.

- Feedback from children, young people, families and communities.
- Single and multi-agency data sets.
- Single and multi-agency self-assessment audits.
- Independent scrutiny reports.

- Inspection and statutory inspectorate reports.
- External expert audits and reports.
- LSCP subgroup audits and reports.
- Targeted task and finish group reports.
- LSCP annual reports.
- Multi-agency team reports (e.g., Multi-agency safeguarding hubs (MASH) or Multi-agency Child Protection Teams)
- Single agency reports.
- Minutes of LSCP meetings.
- Minutes of LSCP meetings with other boards and partnerships.
- Minutes from single-agency meetings.
- Records of staff attendance at relevant LSCP meetings (e.g., from minutes).
- Seven-minute or other briefings.
- Data on engagement with LSCP website materials (e.g., newsletter, protocols, surveys).
- Findings from safeguarding practice reviews.
- Findings from staff surveys including Section 11 reports.

2.3.4 Cumulative summary of work towards achieving outcomes

The final review of progress in working towards the agreed outcomes can be documented in the LSCP Yearly Report. This will provide a coherent national picture of shared activity and achievement towards safeguarding children.

2.3.5 Feedback on the MACS TOC and framework

The MACS TOC and framework were well received by case study participants. There was general acknowledgement that demonstrating the effectiveness of the work of LSCPs was challenging and would benefit from having a structured framework through which to review progress. The MACS TOC was described by case study participants as ‘really comprehensive’ (LSCP 4) and the tree analogy was found to be a helpful way to visualise the process. While participants identified some caveats, including readiness and securing buy-in across the partnership, overall, there was a clear message that the MACS TOC and framework offered a systemic, structured approach to support learning and evaluation (see Appendix V for further details).

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Legislation:

Children and Social Work Act 2017 c.16
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2017/16/contents>

Appendix I: Project advisory groups

Table A1. Research Advisory Group.

Organisation	Name
Association of Child Protection Professionals (AoCPP)	Sam Warner
Camden SCP	Dinishia Mitford
Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC)	Emma Simpson
DHSC	Helen Steele
DHSC	Josie Regan
Durham University	Carlene Firmin
Family Rights Group	Angharad Davies
King's College London	Mary Baginsky
King's College London	Jenny Driscoll
King's College London	Michael Sanders
National Association of Head Teachers	Rob Williams
National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR)	Nicholas Chandler
National Police Chiefs' Council	Maggie Blyth
National Society for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (NSPCC)	Claire Sands
The Association of Safeguarding Partners (TASP)	Alison Thorpe
University of Bedfordshire	Tim Bateman
University of Bedfordshire	Lisa Bostock
University of Oxford/Royal College of General Practitioners	Sharon Dixon
University of Oxford	Anne Edwards
University of Oxford	Catherine Pope

Table A2. Practice Advisory Group

Collaborator/Sector/Role	Name
Camden Safeguarding Children Partnership / Young adviser	Kelvin Lotsu
Camden Safeguarding Children Partnership / Young adviser	Tinnea Perez-Duah
Children's Social Care	Debbie Johnson
Education	Jemma Kirby
Education	Victoria Ruddell
Family Rights Group / Parent/carer	Angela Addison
Family Rights Group / Parent/carer	Ray Gritton
Health	Kirsty Cleary
Health	Sharon Conlon
Health	Sandra Garner
Health	Pauline Owens
LSCP	Julia Caldwell
LSCP	Abigail McGarry
LSCP	Tim Woodings
Voluntary Sector	Amanda MacIntyre

Table A3. National Strategic Committee

Organisation	Name
Association of Directors of Children's Services	Martin Pratt
Department for Education	Oliver Brooke
Department for Education	Philippa Murphy
Department for Health and Social Care	Rachel Conner
Department for Health and Social Care	Isabelle Griffin
Department for Health and Social Care	Grace O'Brien
Department for Health and Social Care	Hannah O'Sullivan
Department for Health and Social Care	Josie Regan
Department for Health and Social Care	Emma Simpson
Home Office	Nicola Stockton
Home Office	Samuel Taylor
National Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel	Renuka Jeyarajah-Dent
National Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel	Ian Critchley
Home Office	Umama Khanom
National Safeguarding Partner Facilitator (Education)	Jon LeFevre
National Safeguarding Partner Facilitator (Health)	Helen Adams
National Safeguarding Partner Facilitator (Health)	Kenny Gibson
National Safeguarding Partner Facilitator (Local Authority)	Deborah McMillan
National Safeguarding Partner Facilitator (Police)	Lorraine Parker
National Safeguarding Partner Facilitator (Police)	Nicky Porter

Table A4. TOC Working Group

Name	Role	Region
Ginika Achowu	Designated Nurse	London
Laurelle Brown	Scrutineer / Safeguarding Consultant	London
Sharon Conlon	Head of Strategic Safeguarding, NHS	Midlands
Edwina Harrison	Scrutineer / Safeguarding Consultant	North East
Ashley Kenyon	Learning & Improvement Officer, LSCP	North West
Tony Lewis	Business Manager, LSCP	London
Lorraine Parker	National Safeguarding Partner Facilitator (Police lead)	England
Medina Patel	Senior Business Manager, LSCP	North West
Vicky Vickerson	Performance & Programme Coordinator, LSCP	North East
Tim Woodings	Strategic Safeguarding Lead	London
Laura Wright	Learning & Development / Policy Advisor, LSCP	South East
Louise Wright	Training & Development Manager, LSCP	North West

Appendix II: Survey development, administration and analysis

The survey was developed based on findings from the literature reviews and consultation with groups from The Association of Safeguarding Partners (TASP), The Association of Child Protection Professionals (AoCPP), the MACS project advisory groups, and parents and carers from Family Rights Group's panels. The content was also informed by relevant theoretical and conceptual work on interorganisational and interprofessional collaboration in welfare systems, including that of Easen (2000), Huxham (2003), Pederson (2020), Wenger (1998) and Willumsen (2012). In part the survey was used to procure feedback from professionals involved in LSCPs on the items in the draft TOC. It was piloted by representatives from each of the following groups: children's social care, health (ICB and acute trust), police, business managers, independent scrutineers (x 2), the VCSE sector and the education sector.

Contents of the survey

Introduction

At the beginning of the survey, participants were asked to identify the LSCP(s) in which they were currently working. These questions were used to ascertain representation from different regions and LSCPs: anonymity is respected in reporting of findings. Participants were also asked about their years of professional experience, their length of service in LSCPs and LSCBs, their position within their LSCP, and their sector or service.

Budget

The second part of the survey was only visible for business managers. Questions covered the overall budget for the LSCP, contributions by sector/service, additional income, funding for child safeguarding practice, changes in funding over time, the expenses of the LSCP, "in kind" resources received, and the significance of characteristics of the LSCP or the local area (e.g., socioeconomic or ethnic profile, or covering a number of local authority areas) for funding arrangements.

General questions

All participants were asked about a range of general issues, including: the LSCP's use of key performance indicators; what they considered might be the most appropriate measures to evaluate the effectiveness of the work of partnerships; the practice of challenge in the LSCP; the representation of the education sector; whether the LSCP had a young scrutineer group and whether they would be interested in developing youth scrutiny work; and any stated values driving the work of the LSCP.

Effectiveness questions

This section presented a series of statements (set out in table A5 below), to each of which participants were asked three questions:

- i. To what extent is [statement] true:

Response options: Completely true, mostly true, sometimes true, mostly not true, not true at all, don't know.

- ii. During your involvement with the LSCP, [statement] has:

Response options: improved, stayed the same, deteriorated, inconsistent picture, don't know.

- iii. How important is [statement] as an indicator of LSCP effectiveness?

Response options: very important indicator of LSCP effectiveness, quite important, quite unimportant, indicator of no importance for LSCP effectiveness, don't know.

For each of the categories in table A5, survey participants were also invited to provide open text commentary on 'how changes introduced since the introduction of LSCPs have impacted on [corresponding section, e.g., leadership and accountability] in LSCP areas with which you are involved, including i) any examples of recent innovative / successful practices, and/or ii) any barriers/challenges'.

Table A5. List of survey statements on effectiveness of the work of the LSCP.

Categories	Topics
Leadership and accountability	The LSCP has a shared vision for how to improve outcomes for children locally
	Safeguarding practitioners in the LSCP area feel part of a collaborative professional safeguarding community
	Decision-making in/by the LSCP is genuinely tripartite
	Organisations and agencies are challenged appropriately, holding one another to account effectively
	The LSCP exercises good oversight of the work of multi-agency panels and arrangements (e.g., MACE)
	The independent scrutineer (or equivalent) provides a strong and constructive critical voice
Multi-agency collaboration	Partnership leads work closely with other boards (e.g., safeguarding adult board, community safeguarding partnership) to address safeguarding risks
	The LSCP exercises oversight of safeguarding information sharing between agencies at an operational level
	Assistant Directors (ADs) or Directors answerable to Directors of Children's Social Care (DCSs) are included in discussions leading to multi-agency strategic decisions
	Schools, colleges and other educational providers are included in discussions leading to multi-agency strategic decisions
	Health provider safeguarding lead professionals are included in discussions leading to multi-agency strategic decisions
	Other relevant agencies, excluding schools and health providers, are included in strategic discussions leading to multi-agency decisions
	Designated Safeguarding health professionals are included in discussions leading to multi-agency strategic decisions
Learning informs change	The LSCP successfully promotes a culture of multi-agency learning from our experience without blame
	The LSCP has good understanding of the ways in which multi-agency learning (e.g., from case reviews) is embedded in practice
	The LSCP evaluates the outcomes of all new multi-agency safeguarding initiatives
Responsiveness of services	The LSCP takes strategic lead to ensure effective provision of early help services
	The LSCP takes strategic lead to address frontline weaknesses, pressures and risks
	The LSCP has access to adequate data to inform service design/respond to safeguarding issues across agencies
	Multi-agency scrutiny of data and trends needed to inform service design/respond to safeguarding issues is appropriate and timely
	The LSCP influences provision of specialist safeguarding services (e.g., secure children's homes)

	The LSCP influences the local area response to intra-familial harm (e.g., neglect, CSA)
	The LSCP influences the local area response to extra-familial harm (including county lines, CCE, CSE, prevent)
Skilled and supported workforce	Multi-agency training responds to identified local safeguarding issues and service weaknesses, pressures and risks
	Disproportionality (unequal representation of and outcomes for young people, particularly depending on ethnicity / gender / (dis)ability) is addressed at all levels of the workforce
	There is a shared understanding across agencies of the local context relating to child protection, safeguarding and wellbeing (e.g., specific safeguarding issues)
	There is shared understanding of thresholds across agencies and services
	The perspectives of operational staff from your agency are incorporated in setting and realising strategic priorities
	Information is effectively communicated by the LSCP to frontline staff
Engagement of children and young people (CYP), families and communities	The experiences and views of children and young people (CYP) influence development of local child safeguarding services - excluding Looked After Children (LAC) services
	The experiences and views of children and young people (CYP) influence development of local Looked After Children (LAC) services
	The experiences and views of parents, carers and families influence development of local child safeguarding services (excluding LAC services)
	The experiences and views of parents, carers and families influence development of local Looked After Children services
	The experiences and views of local communities influence development of local child safeguarding services

Joint decision-making and accountability

In this section, participants were asked about the relative weight of different agencies in decision-making in their LSCP; the strengths and challenges of multi-agency decision-making, accountability and joint working in their area; and measures that might be used to assess the impact of the work of the LSCP on improving outcomes for children.

Emergency preparedness

Questions addressed the extent to which adaptative practices during the COVID-19 pandemic had been retained and their confidence in contingency planning in the event of future emergencies.

Resourcing

All participants were asked about the perceived adequacy of financial resources, staffing, the LSCP's multi-agency training offer, and data.

Demographic information

For the purposes of Equity, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion monitoring, participants were asked demographic information, including ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age, parental occupation, disabilities, and religion.

Distribution

The survey used the Qualtrics platform and was distributed using an open link. The link was sent through TASP to business managers, who were invited to answer it themselves as well as forwarding the link to all those involved in the work of their partnership through their LSCP's distribution channels. The survey was also distributed through a number of

other professional networks, including the National Network of Designated and Named Health Professionals and the National Association of Head Teachers.

Responses

A total of 514 people responded to the survey, from which 322 were retained as entries, as a result of high dropout near the start of the survey, likely reflecting pressures on staff time. The open questions received a total of 133 responses for the leadership and accountability section, 80 for multi-agency collaboration, 55 for learning informs change, 65 for responsiveness of services, 62 for skilled and supported workforce, and 27 for participation of children and young people, parents and communities. Some comments included elements from multiple categories or were repeated in different sections and this was taken into account in analysis as described below.

The survey received representation from all geographic regions. The following table A6 includes information regarding participants' geographic region, length of service in their LSCP, and professional experience. The information is divided by the sector the participants belong to including employed directly by the LSCP, health, local authority, education and the police. All other participants from relevant agencies, including those who are part of CAFCASS, Probation, the faith sector, the voluntary sector, youth offending services, community youth services, sexual and housing are grouped within "Other". As seen in table A6, participants were most commonly employed by the LSCP, with a high representation from business managers (n=82), followed by the health sector (n=81).

Table A6. Survey participants' professional information

	IS (N=34)	IC (N=4)	BM (N=82)	BU (N=22)	Health (N=81)	Local authority (N=51)	Education (N=21)	The Police (N=9)	Other (N=18)	Overall (N=322)
Region										
East England	3 (8.8%)	0 (0%)	3 (3.7%)	2 (9.1%)	7 (8.6%)	2 (3.9%)	1 (4.8%)	0 (0%)	5 (27.8%)	23 (7.1%)
Greater London	7 (20.6%)	0 (0%)	14 (17.1%)	4 (18.2%)	18 (22.2%)	10 (19.6%)	8 (38.1%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	61 (18.9%)
North East	3 (8.8%)	0 (0%)	7 (8.5%)	2 (9.1%)	4 (4.9%)	4 (7.8%)	2 (9.5%)	1 (11.1%)	1 (5.6%)	24 (7.5%)
South West	5 (14.7%)	0 (0%)	20 (24.4%)	2 (9.1%)	14 (17.3%)	10 (19.6%)	2 (9.5%)	2 (22.2%)	3 (16.7%)	58 (18.0%)
Southeast	1 (2.9%)	0 (0%)	13 (15.9%)	5 (22.7%)	9 (11.1%)	4 (7.8%)	0 (0%)	3 (33.3%)	1 (5.6%)	36 (11.2%)
West Midlands	3 (8.8%)	0 (0%)	5 (6.1%)	0 (0%)	3 (3.7%)	2 (3.9%)	2 (9.5%)	2 (22.2%)	1 (5.6%)	18 (5.6%)
Yorkshire and Humber	6 (17.6%)	0 (0%)	8 (9.8%)	2 (9.1%)	10 (12.3%)	6 (11.8%)	1 (4.8%)	0 (0%)	4 (22.2%)	37 (11.5%)
North West	0 (0%)	1 (25.0%)	1 (1.2%)	0 (0%)	4 (4.9%)	1 (2.0%)	1 (4.8%)	0 (0%)	1 (5.6%)	9 (2.8%)
East Midlands	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	3 (3.7%)	2 (9.1%)	4 (4.9%)	3 (5.9%)	1 (4.8%)	0 (0%)	1 (5.6%)	14 (4.3%)
Missing	6 (17.6%)	3 (75.0%)	8 (9.8%)	3 (13.6%)	8 (9.9%)	9 (17.6%)	3 (14.3%)	1 (11.1%)	1 (5.6%)	42 (13.0%)
Total length of service										
> 4 years	19 (55.9%)	3 (75.0%)	52 (63.4%)	8 (36.4%)	47 (58.0%)	29 (56.9%)	12 (57.1%)	3 (33.3%)	10 (55.6%)	183 (56.8%)
1-2 years	5 (14.7%)	0 (0%)	10 (12.2%)	3 (13.6%)	16 (19.8%)	11 (21.6%)	2 (9.5%)	0 (0%)	3 (16.7%)	50 (15.5%)
3-4 years	4 (11.8%)	0 (0%)	6 (7.3%)	6 (27.3%)	7 (8.6%)	6 (11.8%)	7 (33.3%)	3 (33.3%)	5 (27.8%)	44 (13.7%)
less than 1 year	3 (8.8%)	0 (0%)	12 (14.6%)	3 (13.6%)	7 (8.6%)	3 (5.9%)	0 (0%)	3 (33.3%)	0 (0%)	31 (9.6%)
Missing	3 (8.8%)	1 (25.0%)	2 (2.4%)	2 (9.1%)	4 (4.9%)	2 (3.9%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	14 (4.3%)
Years of experience in safeguarding leadership										
>20 years	19 (55.9%)	1 (25.0%)	11 (13.4%)	3 (13.6%)	5 (6.2%)	13 (25.5%)	2 (9.5%)	0 (0%)	3 (16.7%)	57 (17.7%)
10-20 years	8 (23.5%)	2 (50.0%)	28 (34.1%)	5 (22.7%)	23 (28.4%)	22 (43.1%)	12 (57.1%)	1 (11.1%)	6 (33.3%)	107 (33.2%)
6-9 years	4 (11.8%)	0 (0%)	14 (17.1%)	3 (13.6%)	27 (33.3%)	8 (15.7%)	4 (19.0%)	1 (11.1%)	5 (27.8%)	66 (20.5%)
1-2 years	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	6 (7.3%)	1 (4.5%)	9 (11.1%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (22.2%)	0 (0%)	18 (5.6%)
3-5 years	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	14 (17.1%)	2 (9.1%)	15 (18.5%)	4 (7.8%)	2 (9.5%)	3 (33.3%)	4 (22.2%)	44 (13.7%)
less than 1 year	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4 (4.9%)	5 (22.7%)	1 (1.2%)	2 (3.9%)	0 (0%)	2 (22.2%)	0 (0%)	14 (4.3%)
Missing	3 (8.8%)	1 (25.0%)	5 (6.1%)	3 (13.6%)	1 (1.2%)	2 (3.9%)	1 (4.8%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	16 (5.0%)
Years of professional experience in safeguarding										
>20 years	17 (50.0%)	3 (75.0%)	16 (19.5%)	4 (18.2%)	22 (27.2%)	31 (60.8%)	7 (33.3%)	2 (22.2%)	4 (22.2%)	106 (32.9%)
10-20 years	8 (23.5%)	0 (0%)	29 (35.4%)	7 (31.8%)	32 (39.5%)	13 (25.5%)	9 (42.9%)	4 (44.4%)	11 (61.1%)	113 (35.1%)
3-5 years	4 (11.8%)	0 (0%)	8 (9.8%)	0 (0%)	3 (3.7%)	1 (2.0%)	0 (0%)	2 (22.2%)	1 (5.6%)	19 (5.9%)
6-9 years	1 (2.9%)	0 (0%)	11 (13.4%)	5 (22.7%)	19 (23.5%)	0 (0%)	3 (14.3%)	1 (11.1%)	0 (0%)	40 (12.4%)
less than 1 year	1 (2.9%)	0 (0%)	12 (14.6%)	2 (9.1%)	2 (2.5%)	2 (3.9%)	2 (9.5%)	0 (0%)	1 (5.6%)	22 (6.8%)
1-2 years	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	3 (3.7%)	1 (4.5%)	2 (2.5%)	1 (2.0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	7 (2.2%)
Missing	3 (8.8%)	1 (25.0%)	3 (3.7%)	3 (13.6%)	1 (1.2%)	3 (5.9%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (5.6%)	15 (4.7%)
Experience with LSCBs										
No	2 (5.9%)	0 (0%)	22 (26.8%)	6 (27.3%)	11 (13.6%)	4 (7.8%)	4 (19.0%)	6 (66.7%)	3 (16.7%)	58 (18.0%)
Yes - over 10 years	12 (35.3%)	1 (25.0%)	14 (17.1%)	3 (13.6%)	11 (13.6%)	16 (31.4%)	4 (19.0%)	1 (11.1%)	5 (27.8%)	67 (20.8%)
Yes - up to 5 years	6 (17.6%)	1 (25.0%)	23 (28.0%)	8 (36.4%)	41 (50.6%)	20 (39.2%)	11 (52.4%)	2 (22.2%)	8 (44.4%)	120 (37.3%)
Yes 5-10 years	11 (32.4%)	1 (25.0%)	21 (25.6%)	3 (13.6%)	17 (21.0%)	9 (17.6%)	2 (9.5%)	0 (0%)	2 (11.1%)	66 (20.5%)
Missing	3 (8.8%)	1 (25.0%)	2 (2.4%)	2 (9.1%)	1 (1.2%)	2 (3.9%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	11 (3.4%)

Data analysis

Quantitative survey data were analysed using descriptive statistics, mainly the percentage of responses for each question and their breakdown by sector, position, and years of experience. Percentages were calculated based on the total number of responses for each of the questions. The tables and plots were created using R version 4.1.1.

Qualitative responses from the survey were analysed using template analysis (King, 2012). Template analysis uses a coding 'template', in the which the codes summarise themes which have been identified by the researcher(s) as important in a data set. We developed the template based predominantly on the statements and categories at table A5. **Error! Reference source not found.** above, in order to support ongoing refinement of the TOC. All responses from the same participant were coded at the same time to avoid duplication. Where responses included information which aligned more closely with a different category or question than the position in which it appeared in the survey response, coding focused on the content of the comments rather than their location in the survey. The template analysis was performed with NVivo 14. Additional codes were identified inductively where material did not fit the template but offered important insights into the work of partnerships. These were developed manually using thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2022).

Appendix III: Case study selection, workshops and data analysis

The aim of the case study workshops was to test and refine the TOC in order to develop a tool to support LSCPs in self-evaluation, monitoring and learning which allows sensitivity to the local context. We undertook two workshops in each of eight LSCP areas. We carried out further workshops with three groups each of parents and carers and children and young people to explore the ways in which LSCPs do or could include insights from these groups in their work.

Workshops with members of LSCPs

Selection and recruitment of case study areas

We selected a total of 10 partnerships initially, one from each geographic region and an additional one from Greater London. The process involved the consideration of the following criteria to ensure a diverse sample of areas:

- **Rural/Urban Classification:** We selected areas from both rural and urban classifications. The classification was obtained from the 2011 census, which classifies all settlements above 10,000 inhabitants as urban.
- **Socio-economic Status:** We considered both the child poverty index and the deprivation index, which combines income, employment, health deprivation and disability, education, skills training, crime, barriers to housing and services, and living environment into a single score.
- **Multiple Authority Footprint:** We ensured we included at least one area covering more than one local authority.
- **Merged with Adult Board:** We ensured we included at least one area where the LSCP was merged with the adult safeguarding board.
- **Early Adopters:** We ensured we included at least one LSCP early adopter.
- **Children's Social Care Ofsted Ratings:** We looked at the most recent Ofsted inspection rating to include diversity in the assessment of child safeguarding performance of the local authority.
- **Engagement with Survey:** Areas demonstrating good engagement with the survey were prioritized.
- **Ethnicity:** We made sure to select areas that covered different proportions of ethnic groups.

The selected case study areas were contacted via TASP and invited to participate in the workshops. They received the information sheet and consent form for the study and an overview of the project and TOC in advance. In the event that selected areas declined to participate, an alternative LSCP from the same region was invited in its stead. In order to preserve the anonymity of participating LSCPs, we have not provided the specific characteristics of each case study area. Table A7 below provides information on the characteristics of the case study areas.

Table A7. Characteristics of case study LSCPs.

Characteristics	Number of case study areas
Geography	
Urban	2
Rural	6
Merged with adult board	
Merged	2
Not merged	6
Early adopter	
Yes	3
No	5
Last Ofsted rating	
Outstanding	3
Good	2
Good/Requires improvement	1
Requires improvement	2
Coverage	
Covering more than 1 local authority	1
Previously covering more than 1 local authority	1
Coterminous (LA, health and police areas the same)	1
Single LA; health and police areas are wider	5
Child poverty	Range 0.2-0.45
White British	Range 41% - 98%

Workshop structure

The case study workshops comprised four main sections:

- 1. Introduction** - the research team provided an overview of the project and the work undertaken to date, including an explanation of the preliminary MACS TOC in the form of the tree and the logic model.
- 2. Activity 1 - activities and indicators.** During this activity, we explored one outcome category from the TOC with participants. The questions for this activity included:
 - Do these outcomes look right? Anything missing? Can we leave any out?
 - What would you do as an LSCP to achieve these outcomes?
 - How does your context influence your ability to achieve the outcomes?
 - Why do activities lead to outcomes and what might get in the way of that?
 - How useful are our proposed indicators? What other indicators might you use?
- 3. Activity 2 - working with a priority.** During this activity, we asked participants to complete a blank logic model table for a selected priority area of work (such as neglect) that they had preselected. This enabled us to work through a full TOC with them and ascertain how useful they found the process and the tool. We asked:
 - Who are your target groups for change?
 - What change are you hoping to achieve (what are your intended outcomes?)
 - Are there any contextual factors that might impact the change that you hope to achieve?
 - What activities will you undertake to achieve your outcomes?
 - Who will deliver these activities and for how long?
 - How will these activities make your outcomes more likely?

- vii. How would you know that you are 'on course' to achieve priority objectives?
Can you identify outcome indicators, including using data that you already collect.
- 4. **Feedback** - We asked the participants to provide feedback on both the tool and the session.

Facilitation and data collection

The workshops were facilitated by a member of the MACS team and a professional facilitator with previous experience with TASP and LSCP professionals. One or two additional research team members were present during each session for notetaking and helping with the logistics of the workshop. A case study facilitation guide containing the script for the entire session was developed and used to maintain consistency across workshops. All workshops were conducted online through Microsoft Teams. A team debrief was conducted after each to reflect on what went well and whether any changes in timings or wording would be beneficial.

Data were collected in three ways:

- **Xleap** - participants used this platform while working on both activities. This allowed professionals to anonymously add information regarding the activities, outcomes, causal pathways, and indicators relevant for the effectiveness of LSCPs. Participants were able to enter the site for a week after the session to add any further comments.
- **Session recordings** - the sessions were video recorded and transcribed using Microsoft Teams.
- **Notes** - the MACS team members took and shared notes for further analysis.

Case study participants

A total of eight LSCPs and 90 people participated in our workshops. We planned separate sessions with the executive group (or LSPs, DSPs and the business manager) and non-executives from each partnership, which led to a total of 16 sessions. Actual attendance did not always match those groups. We achieved coverage for seven of the nine geographic areas, with two missing and one region represented twice. Table A8 below includes a summary of the attendees for each participant LSCP.

Table A8. Case study participants

LSCP	Participants – executive	Participants – non-executives	Total*
1	Total: 7 LA: 2 Health: 2 Police: 1 Business Unit: 2	Total: 6 Health: 2 Education (LA): 1 Business Unit: 3	11
2	Total: 5 LA: 2 Police: 1 Independent Scrutineer / Chair: 1 Business Unit: 1	Total: 10 LA: 2 Health: 3 Education (LA): 1 Business Unit: 1 Youth Justice: 1	13
3	Total: 7 LA: 2 Health: 2 Police: 1 Business Unit: 2	Total: 6 Health: 2 Business Unit: 2 Voluntary Services: 1 Youth Justice: 1	11
4	Total: 5 LA: 2 Health: 1 Police: 1 Business Unit: 1	Total: 6 Health: 2 Police: 1 Education (LA): 1 Business Unit: 2	11
5	Total: 3 LA: 1 Health: 1 Police: 1	Total: 6 LA: 3 Health: 1 Education (LA): 1 Business Unit: 1	9
6	Total: 5 LA: 1 Health: 1 Police: 1 Independent Chair: 1 Business Unit: 1	Total: 5 LA: 1 Health: 1 Education: 2 (1 x LA, 1 x MAT) Business Unit: 1	9
7	Total: 3 Police: 1 Business Unit: 2	Total: 14 LA: 2 Health: 4 Police: 1 Education (LA): 1 Business Unit: 4 Voluntary Services: 1 Probation: 1	15
8	Total: 5 *No LSPs/DSPs LA: 1 Health: 1 Police: 1 Independent Scrutineer: 1 Voluntary Services: 1	Total: 8 LA: 2 Police: 1 Education (LA): 1 Business Unit: 3 Lay members: 1	11

* Where numbers do not sum, a number of participants attended both sessions.

Workshops with children and young people

Recruitment and participation

The recruitment of young people was facilitated by Camden Safeguarding Children Partnership (CSCP) and the young researchers group. A poster, the information sheet, and consent form were sent through CSCP's communication channels targeting young people with experience working with their LSCP. Recruitment was also conducted through TASP's communication channels. A total of 11 young people with varied experiences with their LSCP, mostly as young scrutineers or young advisors, attended our three workshops. Two sessions were conducted online via Microsoft Teams and a third in-person in the facilities of one of the case study LSCPs (outside London).

Workshop structure

The workshops were designed and structured by the young researchers and comprised:

1. **Introduction** - after an ice breaker and setting the ground rules, participants were introduced to the project and to the preliminary TOC, particularly the Participation of category.
2. **Activity** - Participants could choose to speak or write either on Post-its or on the Miro board (online) their thoughts on successful participation of young people in the work of LSCPs. The following questions were included:
 - i. What does successful participation of young people in LSCPs look like to you? What outcomes would be expected?
 - ii. How do LSCPs currently include the views and experiences of children and young people? How do they try to achieve these outcomes?
 - iii. How would you like them to include young people? What could LSCPs do to encourage participation of children and families? How could they try to achieve these outcomes?
 - iv. What works well and what does not work so well?
 - v. How do you / would you know they are achieving these outcomes?
3. **Feedback and checking out**- Participants were asked about their feedback on the tool and the session and how they were feeling at the conclusion of the workshop.

Facilitation and data collection

The case studies were facilitated and led by the team of young researchers. At least one MACS team member was present during each session for notetaking, helping with the logistics of the workshop and in case any safeguarding concerns arose. A case study facilitation guide containing the script for the entire session was used to maintain consistency across workshops.

Data was collected in the following ways:

- **Miro Board** - participants from the online workshops used this platform to add information on outcomes, activities, causal links, and indicators.
- **Post-its** - participants from the in-person session used post-its to write their ideas and organize them through different colours and placements.
- **Session recordings** - the sessions were video recorded and transcribed using Microsoft Teams.
- **Notes** - the MACS team members took and shared notes for further analysis.

Workshops with parents and carers

Recruitment and participation

Parents and carers groups were contacted through Family Rights Group (FRG). Due to the difficulty in identifying and recruiting parents and carers working directly with their LSCP, the selection criteria included parents and carers with experience of children's social care services. We held three workshops with participation by 11 people in total.

Workshop structure

The workshops with parents and carers included three main sections:

1. **Introduction** – an explanation of the work of LSCPs, an overview of the MACS project and the work undertaken to that point and exploration of the MACS TOC.
2. **Activity - activities and indicators.** Discussion of the outcomes from the Participation category using the following questions:
 - i. What does successful participation of parents and carers, children and young people in LSCPs look like to you? What outcomes would be expected?
 - ii. How do or could LSCPs include the views and experiences of parents and carers, children and young people? What works well and less well?
 - iii. How could LSCPs encourage participation of children and families?
 - iv. How would you know LSCPs are achieving these outcomes?
3. **Feedback** - We asked participants to provide feedback on the tool and session.

Facilitation and data collection

The case studies were facilitated by a member of the MACS team. Another MACS team member was present during each session for notetaking, helping with the logistics of the workshop and in case any safeguarding concerns arose. A case study facilitation guide was used to maintain consistency. Two of the workshops were conducted online through Microsoft Teams and the third one was conducted in-person.

Data was collected in the following ways:

- **Miro Board** - participants from the online workshops used this platform to add information on outcomes, activities, causal links, and indicators.
- **Session recordings** - the sessions were video recorded and transcribed using Microsoft Teams.
- **Notes** - the MACS team members took and shared notes for further analysis.

Data analysis

The recordings from the sessions were transcribed using the Microsoft Teams automatic feature and verified by a member of the team. Each transcript was qualitatively analysed using template analysis. The template was taken from the structure of the preliminary TOC. The codes included the Activities, Outcomes, Causal Pathways, Facilitators, Challenges, and Indicators from each of the TOC sections. Data from the Miro Board, notes, and session materials were also coded and cross-checked with the transcripts. Coding and analysis were performed using NVivo 14. The coding was carried out by one member of the MACS team and cross-checked by two additional team members. Additional codes that did not fit the template were developed manually using thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2022).

Appendix IV: Survey data on LSCP Resources and Expenditure

Eighty-three business managers responded to the survey and were eligible to respond to the questions on LSCP resources and expenditure. A total of 66 business managers answered all or some of the survey questions focused on LSCP budgets and expenditure.

LSCP budgets and other sources of resources

Partner contributions to budget

Local authorities provided the largest proportion of LSCP budgets (almost 60%), with 30% from health, 10% from the police and 2% from 'other' sources (probation, CAFCASS, fire brigade, etc.). The majority of participants noted that the proportion of funding provided by each of the three partner agencies had remained about the same since LSCPs were introduced (77%; n=58), with 23% (n=17) reporting proportions had changed. The nature of reported changes varied, with four participants reporting equal contributions from the three agencies and 10 participants reporting moves towards equal contributions (increase in police and/or health contributions and/or reductions in local authority contributions). However, five participants reported increases in local authority contributions and/or losses in funding from other agencies, including CAFCASS, probation and the fire brigade.

Annual funding

Participants were asked whether total annual funding had increased (by a small or substantial amount), stayed about the same, or decreased (by a small or substantial amount) since LSCPs were introduced in 2019. The majority of participants reported that funding had stayed about the same (61%; n=46), 13% (n=10) reported that funding had increased by a small amount and 23% (n=17) reported that funding had decreased either by a small amount (11%; n=8) or a substantial amount (12%; n=9).

Additional income

Thirty-six per cent (n=25) of participants reported generating additional income. The amount of additional income reported ranged from approximately £450 to £100,000 per annum (mean £21,000) and the principal source was the provision of training to external agencies (92% of those responding). Other sources included service level agreements with schools, child death administration support, and safeguarding assurance work.

Resources in-kind

Participants also reported receiving resources "in kind" (n=58; 77% of participants). The most frequently reported in-kind resources were training/learning and development (n=45), general administrative and business support, including financial, legal, data and IT (n=16), staff management support, including HR, occupational health and line management (n=7), provision of rooms, venues and accommodation (n=8), and chairing, hosting or attending meetings (n=7). Other responses included communication and media support, access to electronic resources, project management, police staff time, and project management.

LSCP expenditure

Business managers were asked to report what the LSCP budget was spent on. Responses were received from 76 business managers (summarised in table A9). All but

two participants reported expenditure on staff (n=74) and all but five reported IT-related expenditure (n=71). Other common expenses included training (n=66), consultant fees (n=61), and expenses related to the involvement of CYP and/or families (n=26).

More detailed information on staff is provided in table A10. Staff most commonly reported as being employed using LSCP annual budgets included: business managers and deputy managers (n=65); independent scrutineers and independent chairs (n=58); administrative staff (n=31); business support and business development officers (n=21); and training and development/learning and development officers/managers (n=14).

Table A9. Categories of expenditure.

Item	Number of responses
Staff	74
IT related expenses	71
Training	66
Consultant fees	61
Involvement of children & young people or families	26
Child safeguarding practice review/case reviews/rapid reviews	17
Room bookings/venue hire/refreshments	9
Conferences/workshops/meetings	8
Policies & procedures/procedure manuals	5
Reported by <5 respondents: membership fees/subscriptions, audit/independent scrutiny, child death overview panel/resources, Tri.x manual/contract, stationery/postage, publications/leaflets/report design, community events/projects, suspicious activity reports, MARAC co-ordinator within the police, independent authors, marketing, quality assurance and data support, chronolator	

Table A10. Staff employed using LSCP budget.

Staff	Number of responses
Business/partnership manager, deputy/assistant manager	65
Independent scrutineer/chair	58
Administrator/training administrator	31
Business support/development officer, business co-ordinator	21
Training/training & development lead/co-ordinator/officer/manager	14
Learning & improvement/learning & development officer/manager	11
Practice/policy/workforce development co-ordinator/ officer	8
Project co-ordinator/officer, project support/programme officer	8
Case review/safeguarding practice review officer/manager	7
Quality assurance officer/manager	6
Performance/planning & performance officer/co-ordinator	6
Communications & media/social media officer	5
Advisor/independent advisor/professional advisor	5

Reported by <5 respondents: Trainer/independent trainer, local authority designated officer, apprentice, inspection readiness officer, children's lead, independent rapid review lead, child death overview panel chair, participation officer, exploitation co-ordinator, safeguarding children information management team officer

Adequacy of resources

Questions relating to the adequacy of available resources were asked of all survey responders, not just business managers, and responses were received from 198 participants (summarised in table A11). Financial resources, staffing and administrative/data systems, data collection and data analysis were considered to be inadequate by just over half of all responders. Training resources were reported to be inadequate by 26% of responders.

Table A11. Adequate financial, staff, training and administrative resources.

	Yes n (%)	No n (%)
Adequate financial resources?	60 (44%)	76 (56%)
Adequate staffing?	85 (45%)	103 (55%)
Adequate admin/data systems, data collection and analysis?	90 (48%)	98 (52%)
Adequate training?	142 (74%)	51 (26%)

When asked what was needed in relation to staff, a number of responses focused on the general need for additional staff (n=12) or the need to fill current vacancies (n=4). More specific commonly reported responses included data analysts (n=19), business support (n=17), administrative support (n=13), training officers (n=12) and quality assurance officers (n=11).

When asked what was needed in relation to administrative and data systems, the most common response was data analysts/expertise to analyse data (n=25). A large number of responses focused on cross-agency sharing, with participants noting a need for better sharing of data and better quality of data from partners (n=14), a shared cross-agency data system (n=13), greater commitment and engagement from partners (n=6) and a national, consistent data set (n=3). Other responses focused on the need for more data, particularly on performance, quality assurance, scrutiny and outcomes (n=8) and more administrative, business and financial support for data-related activities (n=7).

When asked what was needed in relation to training, the most common responses focused on the general need for more time and money to train more people and increase the availability of training (n=15 responses). More specific responses focused on the need for more trainers (n=6), the need for more multi-agency training and other joined up events (n=5), the need for more training focused on safeguarding and safeguarding reviews (n=4) and the need for an increased variety of training to enhance learning (n=3).

When asked if any other resources were needed, most responses focused on needs highlighted in the previous questions, such as the need for more staff, analysts, money, time, administrative support, better websites, IT systems and sharing of information, and greater commitment from partners. In addition, participants noted the need for funding to

better reflect increased population sizes and increased responsibilities, the need for dedicated/ring-fenced budgets for specific activities, more equitable financial contributions from partners, better links to front facing staff, and greater engagement with children and young people.

Appendix V: Feedback on the MACS TOC and framework

The MACS TOC and framework were well received by case study participants. Participants welcomed the focus on overall effectiveness of the work of partnerships, highlighting their current difficulties in demonstrating what was working well and where development is needed.

The following advantages of the MACS TOC were identified:

- **Familiarity:** Theory of Change was a widespread approach used by the sector to develop new projects, facilitate change and achieve outcomes.
- **Flexibility:** to apply the TOC in a variety of ways, including to underpin partnership work, learning from statutory reviews, compliance with Working Together 2023, and a more consistent approach to priority areas of work.
- **Strategic planning:** through a focus on planning for improvement, to enable more reflective conversations about what LSCPs are trying to achieve, rather than auditing of past activity.
- **Logical and transparent:** to help clarify thinking by enabling a clearer understanding of how activities impact on outcomes and how outcomes can be measured through transparent processes.
- **Focus, structure and consistency:** through a systemic approach that can be embedded in existing processes, helping to focus discussion and action as well as being used to provide a common approach to work in priority areas.
- **Tangible outcomes and measures:** to interrogate assumptions about intended outcomes, identify achievable objectives, and support the evaluation of effectiveness through early identification and shared understanding of what success looks like and how it might be measured/demonstrated.

Three caveats were identified:

- **Readiness:** was raised by two partnerships. One raised the time required to embed the TOC into existing processes, highlighting that it might be seen 'as too much of a luxury', given the fast-paced nature of the work. They also highlighted the importance of ensuring that partners, stakeholders and service users were aware of the principles of the MACS TOC, noting that there may be some challenges that accompany the change process. Another partnership reflected that their governance processes needed to be strengthened first, meaning that they were 'not in a position to be doing this yet'.
- **Buy-in:** was dependent on establishing 'culture' across the partnership to engage all agencies. It was acknowledged that working across agencies was always complex, meaning that the process was likely to take time to embed.
- **Applicability:** While participants generally saw the value of using the MACS TOC to support priority setting for example, there were isolated queries about whether the process was suitable for all programmes of work.

Participants welcomed the focus on overall effectiveness of the work of partnerships, with reference to the difficulty in demonstrating what was working well and where development is needed, and to correcting the tendency to evaluate success in relation to discrete areas or programmes of work. The MACS TOC was described as ‘really comprehensive’ (LSCP 4), and participants found the tree analogy and the principles very helpful. Partnerships commented that the MACS TOC would support development under the new requirements for multi-agency safeguarding arrangements (LSCP 8) and help inform yearly reporting (LSCP 5). There was a sense that the framework was complementary to existing regulatory activity and that there were some similarities (LSCP 5), but a standard platform was useful to provide clarity (LSCP 7) and show the interconnections and interdependence between the outcome areas (LSCPs 5 and 8). A few participants stressed the need to ensure that use of the framework was proportionate and did not distract from the strategic and delivery work of partnerships.

The outcomes were described as ‘the right things to focus on’ and considered to be clear, sensible and achievable (LSCP 5). The challenging of measuring progress was highlighted, with recognition that *“it often lies in the soft data rather than the hard”* (LSCP 6). The following areas were noted as particularly challenging to measure: the degree of shared vision; strong or improved relationships; and embedding a learning culture in practice. Other comments related to ensuring measures reflected the multi-disciplinary work of partnerships and the ambiguity of much data in safeguarding work. There was a plea to ensure that any outcome measures do not conflict with existing performance measures. Working Together 2023 provides guidance for LSCPs but is not a formal basis for detailed benchmarking. Benchmarking was, in itself, generally not regarded as appropriate because of the significance of local context to the performance of partnerships. Including evidence of good practice in evaluation to counter a tendency to learn from failure was suggested.

Refinements to the MACS framework were made in response to more detailed feedback on the specific focus and wording of each element from sector experts and a webinar with the research advisory groups.