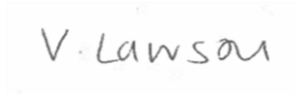




Partnership Plan

2026 - 2028

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1. Introduction

This business plan sets out the strategic direction for our Safeguarding Partnership for the period 2026–2028, following a comprehensive away-day review of local needs and the identification of new priorities for the next cycle of focus.

The release of Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026, published on 18 March 2026, represents a significant update to national statutory guidance and formally supersedes the 2023 edition. The 2026 guidance introduces strengthened expectations for inclusive, child centred, multi-agency safeguarding practice, including enhanced clarity on accountability, anti-discriminatory working, information sharing, and a more seamless, integrated Family Help model.

In line with these developments, this business plan ensures that our local Multi Agency Safeguarding Arrangements (MASA) is aligned with revised national framework. The updated guidance reinforces the responsibility of our safeguarding partners to demonstrate impact, improve data sharing, and ensure that all agencies work together effectively to protect children and promote their welfare.

At the heart of our approach is the shared commitment of our three statutory safeguarding partners—the Local Authority, Police and Integrated Care Board (ICB)—to work collectively with transparency, accountability and a unified focus on keeping children safe. Working Together 2026 emphasises the central role of these three partners in providing strategic leadership, ensuring effective multi agency arrangements, and evidencing improved outcomes for children and families. This business plan outlines how these partners will continue to collaborate to deliver robust governance, strong practice oversight, and a culture of continuous learning and improvement.

Guided by the latest national expectations and local intelligence, our priorities for 2026–2028 reaffirm our ambition for a safeguarding system in which every child is protected, heard and supported to thrive. Through renewed focus, strengthened partnerships and improved multi agency coordination, we will continue to build a safeguarding landscape that responds effectively to emerging challenges and reflects the diverse needs of our community. In line with the Children Act 2004, every Borough participates in a Local Safeguarding Children Partnership. The Islington Safeguarding Children Partnership (ISCP) works to ensure that all children and young people in Islington are safe, supported to thrive, and have their voices heard. The ISCP is dedicated to making sure that staff and volunteers across Islington who interact with children and/or parents understand their safeguarding responsibilities and possess the knowledge and skills required to fulfil these duties effectively, in accordance with Section 11 of the 2004 Act.

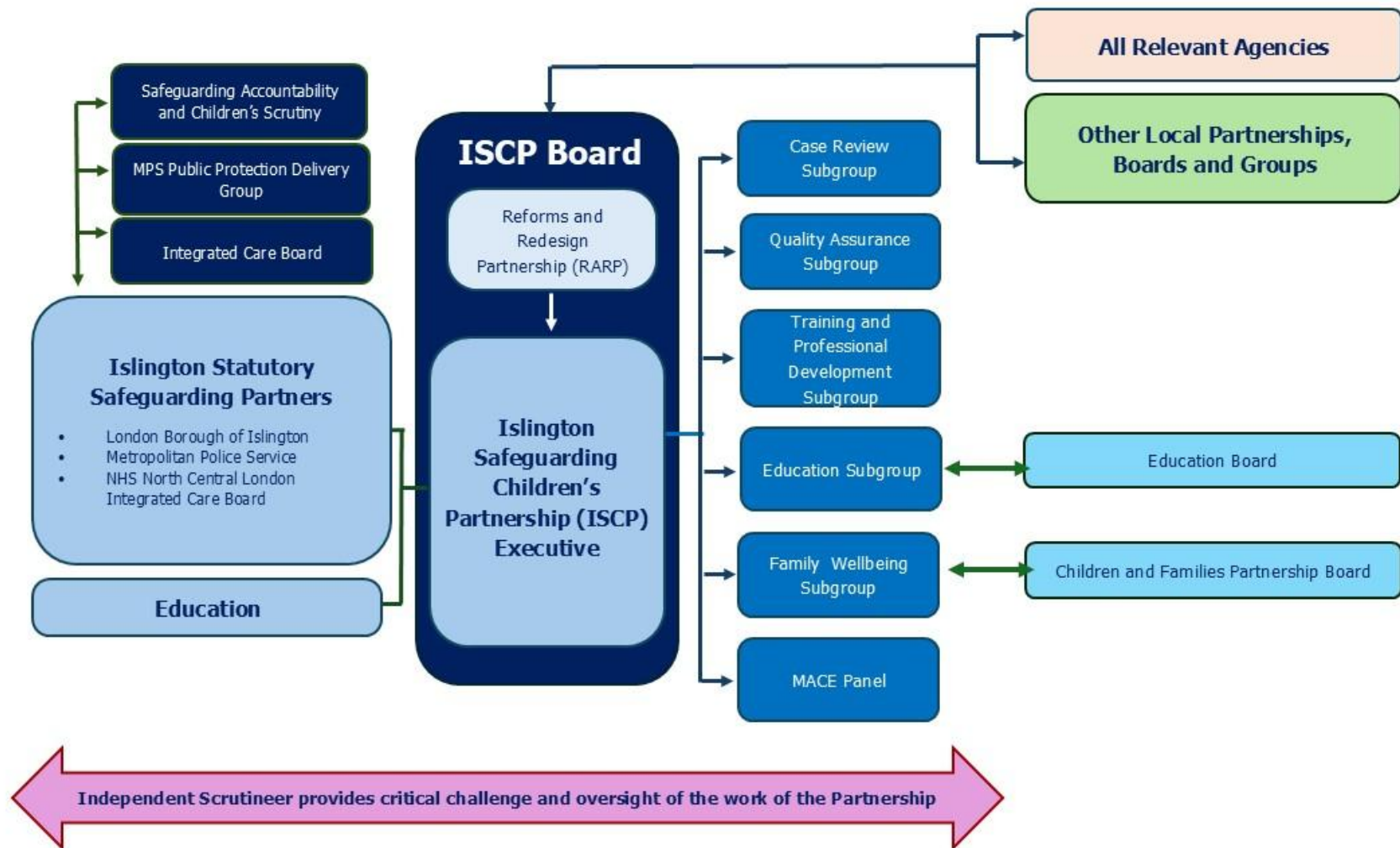
2. Partnership Plan Delivery Framework

Our Priorities are held throughout the Partnership and interweave throughout the Partnership's functions with linked forward plans and action plans. Progression and delivery of these are overseen by the identified subgroup, who will report on progress to the Executive Group.

Subgroups are chaired by representatives from across the partnership, who promote inter-agency collaboration and assist subgroup members in innovative problem-solving to ensure the implementation of the agreed action. Chairs also attend the Executive Group to:

- Report on their progress;
- Facilitate communication and collaboration across subgroups;
- Ensure joint responsibility and oversight;
- Provide a summary of data trends and key highlights relevant to the priorities;
- Facilitate links to other partnership groups and boards across Islington such as the Health and Wellbeing Board, Education Board and Islington Childrens Partnership Board. Alongside this, independent scrutiny will take place to provide critical challenge and provide assurance to the effectiveness of our arrangements in line with Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026 and included within this plan.

This plan is underpinned by our Updated MASA which can be read on the [ISCP Website](#)



Online Safety and Online Exploitation

Children's lives are now deeply embedded in the digital world, and risks such as online grooming, social media exploitation, coercion, and the sharing of abuse imagery are becoming more sophisticated. Safeguarding partnerships must therefore proactively build the capability of frontline professionals and multi-agency systems to identify, assess and respond to digital threats.

Online exploitation often crosses geographical boundaries, platforms and agencies—meaning no single organisation can manage the risk alone. Prioritising this area ensures all safeguarding are aligned in their approach, share intelligence effectively, and coordinate timely interventions to protect children from evolving online threats.

Hidden and Invisible Children

Hidden and invisible children—such as those missing from education, electively home educated without oversight, in transient living situations, or disengaged from services—are significantly more vulnerable to undetected abuse, exploitation and neglect. Prioritising them ensures the partnership improves visibility, proactive outreach, and earlier identification of risks.

If children are not seen, heard or engaged by services, the chances of spotting cumulative risk factors—such as domestic abuse, online exploitation, coercive control, or extra-familial harm—are drastically reduced. Prioritising hidden and invisible children ensures the partnership strengthens multi-agency data sharing, builds early-help pathways, and improves professional curiosity to reach children whose risk is not immediately apparent.

Alignment with National Reforms

The national reforms will be bringing with it major changes to how children are protected and changes to multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. By having this as a priority Partners will see the transition and embedding of the Reforms to meet the emerging statutory requirements effectively.

Aligning with national reforms ensures the partnership moves in step with updated inspection criteria, funding expectations, and national priorities. This supports more consistent multi-agency working, strengthens local governance, and ensures that the partnership can clearly demonstrate improvement and impact

Cross Cutting Themes Voice of Children & Young People Structural Inequalities

Cross-cutting themes typically involve behaviours, cultures or systemic barriers, goals and objectives that no single agency can resolve alone. These themes need leadership influence, multi-agency alignment, and shared accountability. By accepting these themes as everyday business of the Partnership, it strives to embed preventing gaps in practice.

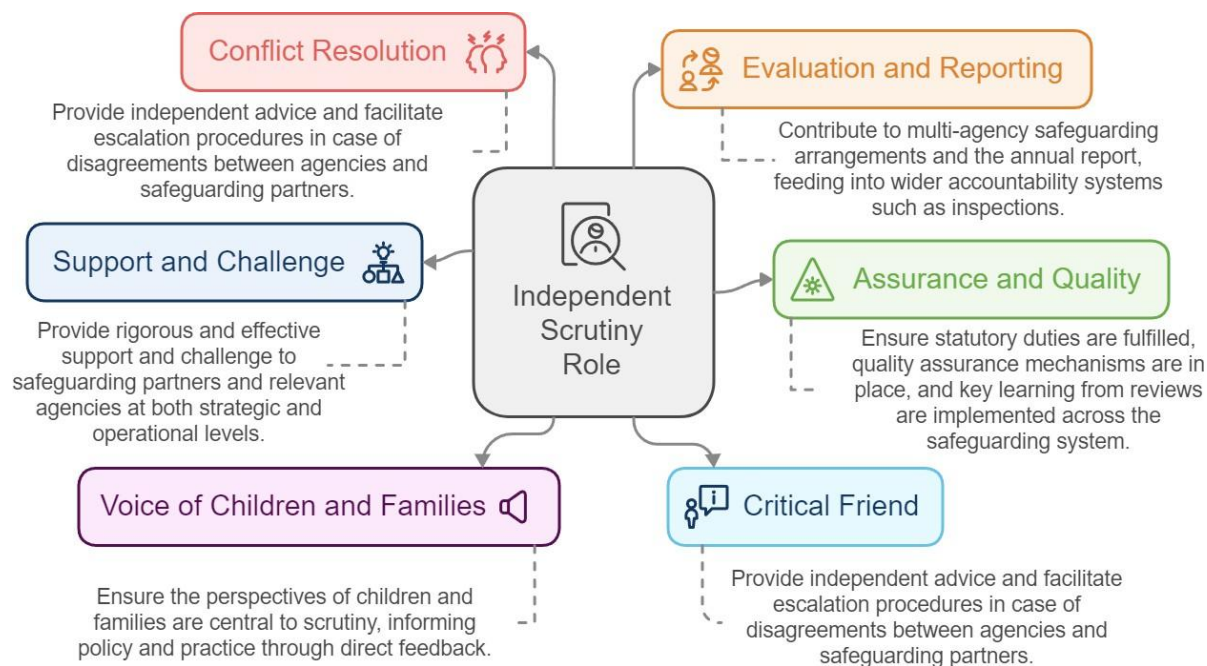
3. ISCP Independent Scrutiny

Independent Scrutiny is a core component of the multi-agency safeguarding framework set out in Working Together 2026.

The Partnership will ensure that robust and transparent independent scrutiny arrangements are in place to provide objective challenge and oversight of the effectiveness of our safeguarding partnership. This will include systematic evaluation of the impact of scrutiny activity, with a clear focus on how findings inform learning, strengthen accountability and drive continuous improvement across the partnership agencies. Evidence of the independent scrutiny will be embedded within the Partnership annual report which will ensure that scrutiny is not only present but demonstrably adds value to safeguarding outcomes for children and young people.

Over the duration of this plan, we will strengthen how children's and families' voices shape our Partnership's priorities and decision-making. This will be supported in part through our independent scrutineer function, which will ensure that feedback from lived experience directly informs practice, and service development.

Acting as a critical friend, the scrutineer will facilitate constructive dialogue between practitioners and senior leaders, offer independent advice where differences of opinion arise, and provide objective challenge across multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. Their contributions to assurance activity and reporting will reinforce accountability, promote learning, and drive continuous improvement across the Partnership.



Scrutiny Plan 2026 – 2028

Structured against the 6 steps of scrutiny that has recently been updated and relaunched, this scrutiny plan will be informed by the Executive, Subgroups, and priorities of the Partnership during this period.,

Providing Independent Support and Challenge	Voice of Children and Families	Assuring System Effectiveness	Learning from Reviews	Analysing Progress of the Alignment to the National Reforms
Aim: To ensure that safeguarding partners and relevant agencies receive rigorous and effective support and challenge, promoting robust and effective safeguarding practices.	Aim: To champion and involve children and families voice in the provision of services in the Partnership	Aim: To provide assurance on the effectiveness of multi-agency safeguarding arrangements through comprehensive scrutiny methods.	Aim: To ensure that lessons from local and national child safeguarding practice reviews are identified, disseminated, and effectively implemented.	Aim: To continually analyse and evaluate the alignment of the National Reforms to the Partnership ensuring their reshape and how agencies work together, ensuring national policy is bridged with local practice.
Plan: Attend and contribute to strategic meetings with safeguarding partners to provide independent perspectives. Review how strategic decisions address systemic issues and promote inclusivity. Feedback Sessions with frontline practitioners	Plan: Ensure that feedback from children and families is integrated into safeguarding policies, practices and annual report. Advocate for the needs and perspectives of children and families in all strategic discussions.	Plan: Respond to findings of multi-agency audits. Evaluate the effectiveness of early support measures and changes to Lead Practitioner role in line with Working Together	Plan: Monitor the implementation of recommendations from case reviews to ensure they are effectively integrated into practice. Draw attention to areas of development or delay and highlight strengths in practice, policy and procedure.	Plan: To oversee the governance arrangements for the Reforms and ensure compliance and implementation.
Priority link: All	Priority link: All	Priority link: All	Priority link: All	Priority link: All
Reporting/Evaluation: to the Exec and Board. Overview of report included in the Annual Report	Reporting/Evaluation: to the Exec and Board. Overview of report included in the Annual Report	Reporting/Evaluation: link to the QA Subgroup. Overview of report included in the Annual Report	Reporting/Evaluation: link to the Case Review Subgroup, Overview of report included in the Annual Report	Reporting/Evaluation: to the Exec and Board. Overview of report included in the Annual Report

1. Online Safety and Online Exploitation

Why

Children's exposure to online harm continues to grow, with risks including grooming, sexual and criminal exploitation, coercion, radicalisation, image-based abuse, and harmful online content. The increasing sophistication of offenders and the volume of online activity mean that harms may go undetected without coordinated multi-agency vigilance. Professionals, parents, and children often have inconsistent understanding of evolving risks, making early identification and intervention more challenging.

Aim

To strengthen the partnership's ability to identify, and respond to online harms by improving digital resilience, building professional competency, and enhancing intelligence-sharing to disrupt online exploitation at the earliest opportunity.

Going Forward

- Develop consistent multi-agency guidance on online harm
- Deliver joint training for practitioners to improve recognition of grooming, coercive control, and online behavioural indicators.
- Increase targeted work with children, young people, and parents/carers to develop awareness and promote safer online behaviours.
- Expand local data-sharing and analytical approaches to identify emerging patterns, hotspots, and perpetrator activity.
- Align education and prevention campaigns with national initiatives such as the Internet Safety Day

Reason for Selection

Online exploitation remains one of the fastest-growing threats to children's safety. Selecting this priority enables a proactive, coordinated response to a rapidly evolving risk landscape.

2. Hidden and Invisible Children

Why

Some children remain unknown or insufficiently visible to statutory and community services. This includes children experiencing significant non-attendance, being electively home educated without adequate oversight, those moving frequently between households, missing children, children in temporary accommodation, and those whose families disengage from services, this is alongside other children that are young carers and privately fostered children. These children are at heightened risk because safeguarding concerns may not be identified until harm has already occurred.

Aim

To ensure that all children—especially those who are less visible to services—are identified, monitored, and supported through strengthened cross-agency collaboration, improved data visibility, and proactive outreach.

Going Forward

- Improve multi-agency data sharing to identify children at risk of falling out of sight, including through school attendance data, health service non-engagement, and missing episodes.
- Strengthen engagement with families who are isolated or disengaged.
- Enhance practitioner understanding of indicators that suggest a child may be hidden, unsafe, or living in unstable circumstances.
- Work closely with education, health, housing, and community sectors to ensure consistent oversight of vulnerable children.
- Regularly audit cases of low visibility to identify gaps and strengthen the system's ability to intervene early.

Reason for Selection

National and local reviews repeatedly highlight that the most serious safeguarding incidents often involve children who were “out of sight” of services. This priority aims to reduce those gaps and ensure equitable visibility and support for all children.

3. Alignment to the National Reforms

Why

National safeguarding reforms, following on from the *Working Together 2023* changes and ongoing updates to Multi-Agency Child Protection arrangements and Family Group Decision Making, place new expectations on partnerships. These include strengthened leadership, clearer accountability, and a more robust multi-agency child protection system. Locally, aligning with these reforms is essential to ensure compliance, consistency, and high-quality safeguarding practice.

Aim

To embed the national safeguarding reforms across all agencies, ensuring that local practice, governance, decision-making, and child protection processes are fully aligned with updated statutory requirements and best practice.

Going Forward

- Review and refresh partnership governance, roles, and accountability to reflect requirements within the national reform programme.
- Strengthen multi-agency child protection processes, including decision-making, information-sharing, and quality assurance.
- Ensure practitioners understand and can implement the changes within their day-to-day practice.
- Align data, performance reporting, and learning cycles with national expectations to provide clearer oversight of impact and outcomes.
- Embed family-focused, relational approaches consistent with national direction, ensuring children's voices remain central.

Reason for Selection

Compliance with national reforms is essential for ensuring a strong, high-quality safeguarding system. This priority supports systematic, sustainable improvement and ensures the partnership remains aligned with national standards and expectations.