



Department
for Education

KANTAR PUBLIC

Multi-agency reform: Key behavioural drivers and barriers

Summary report

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1. Introduction

This summary report outlines key findings emerging from research exploring behavioural barriers and drivers to successful multi-agency partnership working for children's safeguarding following recent reforms. The research included a rapid evidence assessment and scoping stage, creation of a Theory of Change, case study research with five partnership areas, and co-creation and exploration of potential behavioural interventions to overcome remaining barriers. This report summarises key findings and themes.

1.1 Background to the research

Following the Wood Review 2016, the government introduced legislation in the Children and Social Work Act 2017 to reform the way in which local partners and relevant agencies work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. The legislation placed a statutory duty on health, police, and local authorities to work together to plan and deliver local safeguarding arrangements. The reforms included: greater clarity around roles and expectations; equal accountability for each of the three partners; and a move away from a prescriptive system to one that gives local areas the flexibility to determine how they organise themselves.

Following the multi-agency safeguarding reforms, safeguarding partners must now work together in a jointly designed and locally owned partnership arrangement. This is the first time there has been a joint duty on local authorities, health, and police to work together to safeguard children. This approach relies on new ways of working and a culture change in the way that partners behave and collaborate.

1.2 Research aims

The Department for Education (DfE), Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC) and the Home Office (HO) commissioned this research alongside the Wood review, a sector expert review of multi-agency safeguarding arrangements (2021)¹. This research supplemented the Wood review by focusing on behavioural drivers and barriers for effective practice, creating behavioural interventions and exploring the feasibility of implementing these to overcome remaining barriers.

The main aims of the research were to:

- Examine how partnerships were working together following the reforms and identify and understand key behaviours required for successful multi-agency working.

¹https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/987928/Wood_Review_of_multi-agency_safeguarding_arrangements_2021.pdf

- Provide robust insight into the drivers and barriers of ideal behaviours at all levels within partner agencies, and recommendations for interventions that may facilitate good practice.
- Provide a Theory of Change describing the actions and behaviours needed for agencies to work in partnership to deliver optimal outcomes for at-risk children.

Following a temporary pause in Spring 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic, an additional aim was added. The research sought to understand how multi-agency working evolved during the Covid-19 pandemic and to identify best practice to share with wider partnerships.

1.3 Methodology

The research took an iterative, three-phase approach including a scoping phase, case study phase and intervention phase. Insight from each phase informed the design of subsequent phases.

Kantar's **Organisational Practice Model** (OPM) (see figure 1) was used throughout the research to inform our research design and analysis. The model outlines four key elements that need to be in place for a partnership to deliver against specified goals:

- **Consideration** of the need to act (understanding the benefits of partnership working and how to achieve it)
- **Creation** of appropriate policies for partnership working
- **Communication** of policies and requirements
- **Commitment** to delivering the goals set out by the partnership

For each element, the model also highlights the roles different partnership stakeholders need to play in order to deliver against specified goals – including frontline staff, mid-level managers, strategic leaders – alongside the wider context in which the partnership operates (for example, prior experience of multi-agency working and local levels of need). The model has been used throughout the research process to identify key barriers to partnership working within a partnership and target interventions at the appropriate stage in the journey and level in the organisation to reduce barriers and facilitate positive behaviours.

More information on the OPM as well as a more detailed explanation of the methodology of each phase can be found in Annex 2.

1.3.1 Scoping phase

The research began with a scoping phase to build an understanding of the varying contexts in which the reforms were being implemented, and the approaches that different partnerships were taking. This phase ran from November to December 2019. The

emerging findings from this phase fed into the research material design for subsequent phases, allowing interview discussions to be targeted, relevant and tailored for the different audiences. The scoping phase took a multi-pronged approach, and included:

- A systematic Rapid Evidence Assessment (REA), reviewing partnership documents and literature around multi-agency working in safeguarding and other contexts.
- Stakeholder interviews with representatives from ten partnerships at a strategic level.

1.3.2 Deep dive case study phase

The case study phase built on the scoping phase to provide a more nuanced understanding of how partnerships were working together, of the key behaviours required to embed new multi-agency working arrangements to safeguard children and the remaining behavioural barriers to implementing these arrangements. This phase ran from February to November 2020. The barriers identified were taken through to the final phase of research, to explore how to address them. Kantar conducted an in-depth exploration of five partnerships, chosen to reflect a range of local contexts, partnership arrangements for multi-agency working and previous performance as an LSCB. Within each partnership case study, we conducted:

- 12 interviews with strategic and managerial staff (approximately 4 at senior and 8 at managerial levels in each agency);
- 3 paired interviews with staff at the frontline level;
- A review of key documents (for example, governance plans).

1.3.3 Intervention generation and testing

The intervention phase ran from November 2020 to March 2021. This phase took barriers identified in the case study phase and used co-creation sessions with cross-governmental stakeholders to develop behavioural interventions to overcome them. The interventions were then tested with partnership areas, through:

- Three 60-minute interviews with strategic leaders in three agencies who had not been involved in the research so far to explore and assess the intervention ideas in a partnership context.

1.3.4. Limitations

The research took a thorough and deep dive approach but does have some limitations. Firstly, five partnerships were explored in depth as case studies. While a larger number of partnerships contributed to scoping and intervention testing phases, findings may not be generalisable to the many and varied partnerships working across the country. This report provides general guidance and findings, but it is important to note that a level of flexibility and tailoring will be essential in taking forward behavioural interventions.

Secondly, the primary research revealed a range of remaining barriers across partnerships. It was not possible to explore all these barriers in the intervention development stage of the research. Best efforts were made to select those barriers and behaviours with the greatest impact on partnership working and this report provides insight and guidance on those aspects. Implementation guidance is presented in overarching themes to be applicable across interventions. However, there may be remaining challenges within partnerships that are not covered in this report.

2. Drivers and barriers to multi-agency working

This section provides an overview of the key barriers to successful multi-agency working within each of the four stages of the OPM, before exploring drivers and barriers in further detail.

2.1 Overview of barriers to successful multi-agency working

Within each stage of the OPM, key drivers and barriers to multi-agency working were identified. Using insight from the scoping and case study phases, remaining barriers to implementing the new arrangements have been highlighted in Figure 1. While there were good practices and room for improvement at each stage, the blue boxes highlight key areas requiring focus. More detail can be found in Section 2.2-2.5.

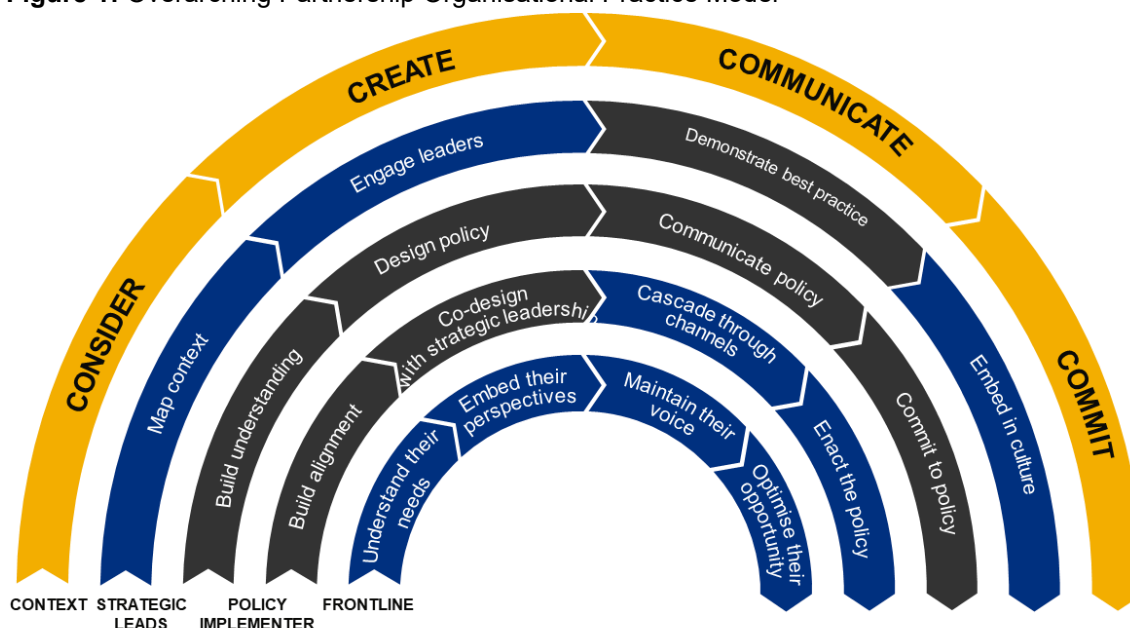
Consider: Through active participation in multi-agency working, and reflecting on both internal and external feedback, partnership staff generally understood the purpose and benefits of multi-agency working. However, frontline staff had a lower understanding of how to achieve effective multi-agency working. They were uncertain of the specific roles of each agency in safeguarding and recognised inconsistencies in practice.

Create: Consulting a broad range of individuals across levels/agencies on how to implement the reforms was found to increase overall partnership buy-in to steps that were put in place. Slimmed down strategic meetings enabled more active engagement from senior leaders. However, the change in structure of the meetings left leaders from wider organisations and frontline staff feeling less valued, and less able to contribute. As such, the understanding of the issues the partnership faced in safeguarding were not complete.

Communicate: Consistent communication between strategic and managerial staff equipped staff with contacts and positive relationships with those in other agencies. Communication of partnership information with frontline staff was less effective. Frontline staff highlighted that the high volume of information received made it difficult to assess what was relevant to them.

Commit: Cross-agency training was a success in building relationships across agencies, while upskilling staff in skills needed for multi-agency working. Where possible, co-location was also found to build trusting relationships. However, remaining barriers persisted because complex data sharing protocols left staff nervous to share information across agencies. Partnership staff recognised that competing demands for their time meant partnership working was sometimes deprioritised.

Figure 1: Overarching Partnership Organisational Practice Model



2.2 Consideration of the need for multi-agency working

Key Findings

- Actively encouraging reflective practice on multi-agency working through formalised processes is likely to further encourage buy-in across different roles.
- Understanding of cross-agency roles, responsibilities and thresholds needs to be more consistent to avoid steps being missed or duplicated.
- Wider organisations such as voluntary organisations and schools are missing opportunities contribute. Input was found to be more efficient, comprehensive and useful where these organisations fed into the subgroup structure.



2.2.1 Drivers

An understanding of the benefits of multi-agency working for safeguarding was present across agencies and levels, with efficiency and better outcomes for children being commonly mentioned. Key behaviours and drivers in achieving this understanding were:

Active participation of strategic and managerial staff in multi-agency working:

Strategic and managerial staff observed how multi-agency working could benefit outcomes for children through frequent and consistent experience of seeing it work in action. They were regularly involved in multi-agency scenarios, for example strategic staff were involved in partnership board meetings, and managerial staff commonly sat on

partnership subgroups involving those from other agencies and fed into broader partnership plans. They were able to discuss tangible examples of where more efficient decisions had been made and how this would go on to benefit the safeguarding of children. They were therefore bought into the reforms and advocated for them within their partnerships.

Reflecting on the role of multi-agency working in safeguarding practice: Where partnership-wide processes were put in place to reflect on multi-agency working, staff across levels were better able to articulate the benefits of the new multi-agency arrangements and discuss where lessons had been learnt. Rapid Reviews played a key role in developing this understanding. The reviews flagged where multi-agency working could be improved to learn lessons capable of driving service improvement at an organisational and individual level, deliver policies and procedures to improve multi-agency co-ordination (for example, through information sharing agreements) as well as building up an evidence base of good practice and benefits of multi-agency working.

Learning from formal feedback: Outcomes from Ofsted reports published prior to the reforms had highlighted a need for some partnerships to focus on multi-agency working as a priority. The reforms were considered as a method of enabling agencies to work more closely and effectively, and therefore improving practice. The consistency of feedback from inspectorates and national reforms increased buy-in to changing ways of working. While this was a positive outcome, it should be highlighted that cross inspectorates were not referenced to the same degree, suggesting a continued need for greater tri-partite balance.

Using the reforms as an opportunity to review shared aims of joint working: The purpose of having three partners jointly responsible for children's safeguarding was clear to strategic leaders. The reforms cemented joint responsibility for partners in a statutory way and this was further reinforced through the partnership agreement. The shift in responsibility provided an opportunity for partnerships to review and reassess their shared aims and goals with a clear child-centred focus. Therefore, the new arrangements for children's safeguarding drove positive realignment of responsibility and goals and provided clarity of purpose.

2.2.2 Remaining barriers

Despite a good understanding of *why* partnership working could be effective, there were lower levels of understanding of *how* to effectively achieve this goal, particularly at the frontline level. Several barriers remained at this stage:

Cross-agency understanding of operational roles: Frontline staff had different perspectives on the roles that each agency should take when safeguarding a child and found that differing threshold levels and terminology bred misunderstandings, missed actions and sometime unnecessary duplication of work. While this was found to be the

case across partnership areas, it was further confounded where there were more complex area boundaries (for example, where police colleagues worked across several partnership areas). In these cases, frontline staff were not only navigating understanding within one partnership area, but across multiple areas with different ways of working.

Some partnerships areas had recognised this as an ongoing issue and were working to overcome these challenges through joint training, and discussions of responsibilities and thresholds in different agencies to foster better understanding of ways of working. Others used 'learning circles' or presentations to educate each agency on the roles they should be taking. Frontline staff felt these efforts were worthwhile and that shared working and events had helped them to understand other agency roles, as well as build relationships with individuals.

Challenges in agencies working across multiple geographic areas (for example, health CCGs or police areas): The flexibility within the reforms allowed partnerships to take on approaches and processes that suited their given context. In some cases, agencies were working across multiple partnership areas, therefore having to adapt their practice depending on who they were working with at any given time, causing confusion and additional workload. This made it more difficult to understand how to work together effectively. The recent legislative proposals for Integrated Care Systems² have the potential to exacerbate these challenges through creating additional boards with potentially different processes.

Staff who worked across multiple areas gained insights into the strengths of different approaches. This was not always fully utilised by partnerships, for example through understanding what other areas were doing in meetings and reviews. That said, regional conversations with equivalent roles in partnerships were in progress for some areas who saw a joined up regional approach as a future priority for partnerships.

Reduced input from wider organisations such as the education and voluntary sectors: Whilst there were some positives to the reduction in size of previous LSCBs (for example, more consistently attended and more streamlined meetings), there were reduced opportunities for input and engagement from wider organisations and schools. As such, the understanding of the issues the partnership faces in safeguarding were not complete. This was found to be a more substantial issue in larger partnership areas where perspectives were less commonly gained through informal channels and networking and where partnership working was less well established at the time of the reforms. Additionally, this could lead to wider organisations feeling undervalued and less motivated to proactively engage with the partnership.

In some partnerships, this issue had been recognised, and they had put steps in place to overcome this challenge by incorporating wider organisations into subgroup structures

² <https://www.kingsfund.org.uk/publications/integrated-care-systems-explained>

that fed into partnership work. Some areas had allocated a safeguarding representative for schools to enable schools to feed into the work of the partnership and to discuss any arising issues quickly.

2.3 Creation of appropriate policies

Key Findings

- Broad consultation with staff at different levels, and across agencies and wider organisations ensures a higher level of knowledge and buy-in to subsequent policies.
- More targeted meetings at the strategic level encourage effective cross-agency decision-making and can be complimented by more widely attending subgroups.
- Funding decisions have the potential to disrupt positive working relationships. Pragmatic discussions about funding and resource are essential to reforms working as planned.



The reforms generally stimulated wider involvement of the core partnership agencies in the creation of multi-agency policies, and in the ongoing management of the partnership. There was a greater level of knowledge and buy-in to partnership policies where those at all levels were involved in discussions, rather than just at a strategic and managerial level. Wider organisations had less involvement at this stage, meaning they felt less engaged in multi-agency safeguarding than they had done previously.

2.3.1 Drivers

Broad and effective consultation when creating partnership agreement and related policies: Consulting a broad range of individuals on how to implement the reforms was found to increase overall partnership buy-in to steps that were put in place. Staff were better able to discuss specifics of partnership agreements where they had been given the opportunity to feed into plans for implementing reforms. This included cross-agency participation in workshops, as well as opportunities to feedback on proposals. In these instances, frontline staff discussed feeling included and empowered in acting on the new arrangements.

Smaller, more targeted meetings at the strategic level: Strategic staff welcomed the change in structure of strategic board meetings, highlighting how it enabled them to feed into the ongoing evolution of partnership policies more effectively. Previously, meetings were considered too large and therefore required minimal input. Because of this, strategic staff sent junior representatives. Under the new streamlined structure, strategic meetings felt more relevant to those involved, generating more preparation and effective input.

Inclusive approach to decision-making: Decisions at strategic board meetings were more inclusive since the reforms. Police and health representatives consistently cited feeling more involved in decision making. Where they may have previously been informed of changes, or consulted for any disagreements, they were now actively involved at all stages and felt a greater level of responsibility.

2.3.2 Remaining barriers

Narrow consultation on implementation of reforms: In partnerships where multi-agency working was more established at the time of the reforms, consultation across staff at different levels was less prominent. Strategic leaders thought that they had a good understanding of what was needed to ensure effective multi-agency working without wider consultation. In these cases, although frontline staff tended to know there was a new partnership agreement, they were less aware of what the decision-making processes were and what this would mean for frontline practice. This meant that frontline workers felt less engaged in the partnership and continued to work as they had been prior to reforms. In general, frontline workers felt they were working well and in a multi-agency way prior to the reforms, so this lack of change was not necessarily seen as negative. However, it did mean that they did not perceive any real positive impact resulting from the reforms.

Low engagement of wider organisations in the creation of policies: While the reforms were generally found to stimulate a greater level of involvement and ownership within the core agencies, wider organisations commonly cited feeling less involved and engaged in the creation of policies than they had been previously. In some cases, policies and ideas were checked with wider agencies but often at a later point in their development where the core idea had already been confirmed. This was more apparent where wider agencies had previously played a more substantial role.

While this remained a barrier, some partnerships had put in steps to overcome these challenges through including them in subgroups to feedback to the strategic board or through other engagements such as consultations and collecting feedback.

Funding decisions and inequity: In some cases, funding decisions acted as a barrier to productive discussions around partnership working or were an initial hurdle that partnerships needed to overcome. This was particularly noticeable in partnerships which had complex boundaries, meaning some agencies needed to contribute financially to multiple partnerships. It was also noted that partnerships had different levels of resource available in terms of time and people available to work on children's safeguarding.

Where partnerships had overcome these hurdles, they had held pragmatic cross-agency discussions. In one case this involved keeping funding stable until the partnership was more established post-reforms, whereas others agreed resource in staff time rather than monetary contributions. Good relationships between strategic leads helped to overcome

some of these barriers however these discussions appeared to be ongoing and there were anticipated challenges depending on the amount of future funding that would be secured for each agency.

2.4 Communication of policies and requirements

Key Findings

- Readily available, well-signposted materials increased partnership accountability, allowed for a quick reference point and ensured wider organisations felt more included in partnership level communication.
- Multi-agency working was perceived to be working more effectively where formal cross-agency communication structures were put in place at both the managerial and strategic levels, with each part of the structure having a key area of focus.
- Strategic and managerial staff have more work to do to engage frontline staff in changes to multi-agency working. Communications should be more consistently delivered and targeted to ensure frontline staff can engage effectively.



Communication of post-reform policies and requirements was strong across strategic and managerial staff. The strategic board had regular meetings with a high level of engagement and had two-way communication with managerial staff through subgroup structures. However, barriers generally remained when communicating with those at the frontline level. Partnership leaders were still finding a balance between ensuring staff were informed about partnership activity, and overloading staff with information that was not relevant or that they did not have capacity to digest.

2.4.1 Drivers

Structured communications between managerial and strategic staff: Strategic board meetings were streamlined, well-structured and enabled an environment of productive and open discussion about partnership policies and actions. Managerial staff formed cross-agency subgroups that were structured to focus on specific elements of partnership working and feed into strategic meetings. This ensured that ideas presented to strategic leaders incorporated cross-agency perspectives. The relationships formed through these formal set-ups were commonly translated into more informal relationships, and equipped staff with the contacts in other agencies for when issues arose.

Availability of collective resources for those working within and with the partnership: Partnerships hosted resources, including partnership agreements, newsletters and service delivery information, on their website to communicate with wider organisations linked to the partnership. The purpose was to ensure that the partnership was visible, accountable and that others were aware of the reforms and the impact on the

partnership's ways of working. These resources had become more commonly used during the Covid-19 pandemic, where the majority of communication was moved to a digital format.

Using virtual methods of communication during Covid-19 disruption: Covid-19 also impacted the effectiveness of communication within partnerships. Communication became more regular, as it was easier to meet remotely. For example, strategic leads made meetings weekly or fortnightly (rather than monthly, or quarterly) to discuss issues that were upcoming and plan for the pandemic in terms of children's safeguarding services. The shift to virtual meetings and resulting reduction in travel time also led to better attendance across levels.

2.4.2 Remaining barriers

Communication of partnership information with frontline staff was less effective and these individuals were therefore less aware of the content of the reforms and did not always understand what the changes meant for them.

High volume of information directed to frontline staff: Frontline staff referred to high volumes of information that they received from different working groups, and different areas of practice (for example, new policies and guidelines). As a result, they found it difficult to make time to engage with all the information they received, and partnership information was missed. While they recognised that they did not need or want to know every detail of the partnership, they suggested they would benefit from more targeted communication of the information relevant to their position. This was particularly relevant for frontline staff in health and police, for whom safeguarding was perceived to make up a less prominent part of their role. It was also considered a greater issue in areas where agencies worked with multiple partnerships, and therefore had less capacity to digest communications from across different areas.

In some cases, partnerships recognised that communications were less effective with frontline staff. They aimed to make materials more digestible by including click through links so individuals could choose what was relevant for them, held '7-minute briefings'; and produced A4 bullet points of key information. Additionally, some managers summarised key reports to disseminate to frontline staff where relevant. Frontline staff welcomed these formats and found them highly useful in reducing the time needed to digest communications.

Inconsistent channels for communicating to frontline staff: Communication of information to the frontline commonly depended on managers who took different approaches. Agencies tended to cascade information separately or by team rather than across agencies. Because of this, the level of understanding of partnership information and the details involved varied across frontline staff. Health agencies commonly described this as a challenge, as they had more complex hierarchical structures and less

clear ways to distribute messages. Partnerships with a central business unit, were generally more effective at disseminating information across the partnership because the central team took responsibility for ensuring a consistent message. However, resource within partnerships made this more difficult to embed in other areas.

Virtual working as a result of Covid-19: As well as providing opportunities, for example through better meeting attendance, Covid-19 presented some communication barriers. Informal communication channels were more fragmented from home working and there were fewer opportunities to work in the same space and ask informal questions to other team members. It also meant that if there were staff changes then integration into the team was less smooth and cross agencies relationships were harder to foster and build.

2.5 Commitment to delivering the goals

Key Findings

- Cross-agency relationships at the frontline level were essential to multi-agency working reforms being effectively embedded. Shared time and space fostered a greater sense of shared culture and should be encouraged more widely.
- Information sharing across agencies remained a key area for partnerships to focus on to ensure safeguarding could operate effectively. Clear guidelines were not commonly in place leaving staff nervous to share information.



As well as effectively communicating with staff, partnerships needed to embed goals and ways of working into their everyday practice. Shared time between agencies was the key facilitator for this, through shared training, and workspaces. However, demands on time and entrenched siloed cultures meant that there was still work to do in creating a partnership with full commitment to delivering the goals.

2.5.1 Drivers

Facilitating shared time and space across agencies: Shared time between agencies was an effective method of establishing buy in across levels in the partnership. Multi-agency training was a key method of achieving this. It provided a forum for staff at different agencies to come together formally, to understand each other's perspectives, viewpoints and responsibilities and ensured that staff were using the same language. For example, Signs of Safety training meant that agencies were using similar language and talking about safeguarding instances in the same way. It also provided a forum for informal networking, and relationship building across agencies.

Alongside this, co-locating was perceived as a positive way to foster informal relationships across agencies. While this was somewhat threatened by Covid-19 at the

time of fieldwork, staff wanted this to be something that would return in the future. The benefits were perceived to be the fostering of informal and lower-level conversations around safeguarding that could prevent an escalation of a safeguarding incident later on through understanding context or sharing of information from different staff working with a child or family.

Healthy challenge through Independent Scrutiny: Partnership leaders welcomed the healthy challenge brought by the Independent Scrutineer. Strategic staff welcomed the assurance of effective practice that this brought to the partnership. Despite some partnerships maintaining the independent chair role, partnerships had largely appointed a new individual to fulfil the role. This allowed for a change in perspective to be brought into the reforms.

2.5.2 Remaining barriers

Practical issues around information sharing between agencies: Staff across levels lacked clarity over what personal safeguarding information could be shared, and with who. Data sharing agreements were considered confusing, and so requests either took time to resolve or were rejected as default. This caused frustration for those making requests and had wider consequences for safeguarding where potential serious harm to a child could be missed. This was particularly an issue with health agencies, given the different organisations connected to health and the sensitive nature of the information. Clear information sharing protocols between agencies was a priority for partnerships who were continuing to create a culture of data sharing producing positive results for children.

Competing demands and pressures from stakeholders and government bodies across agencies: Competing pressures could occasionally lead to tension between agencies. Individual agency demands, for example inspections, could necessitate duplication of work already done elsewhere in the partnership. This was found across partnerships, as all interacted with regional and national bodies. However, the barrier was intensified where police and CCG's worked across boundaries and had to work with several local authorities' priorities. Where this issue had been recognised, it was addressed by having open dialogues between agencies to understand each other's priorities, roles, and limitations within the partnership. This was more frequently done at a strategic level and therefore could be cascaded down and communicated in future.

Frontline staff were less confident communicating and challenging staff from other teams or organisations: Frontline staff were less certain of who to contact in other agencies which led to some delays in communication and information sharing as they would have to go through managers. Consistency of communication was often dependent on individuals, for example some social workers proactively kept health visitors in the loop, whilst others were difficult to reach. Frontline staff could find this frustrating as it slowed processes and could make them feel undervalued as part of the safeguarding team. This barrier was particularly relevant in large areas where staff were

geographically distant, and those which had high staff turnover as staff had less opportunity to develop the close relationships essential for effective communication. It was also more relevant in areas where partnership working was less embedded prior to the reforms. Multi-agency reviews and learning events enabled staff to develop relationships and better communicate as well as through sharing of details and multi-agency documents.

Perceptions that the local authority held overall responsibility for safeguarding remaining amongst frontline staff: The reforms had been effective at embedding shared responsibility and accountability at strategic and managerial level. However, at frontline level the local authority was often still seen as having overall responsibility for safeguarding and staff from other agencies were not always aware of how decisions were made. This was not always seen in a negative light, although some staff did express a desire for greater equity, others accepted this as the status-quo and felt the LA was best placed to take overall responsibility. However, in areas where this was the case, staff could feel less informed and less confident to challenge decisions. This barrier was found across partnerships, but more commonly where partnership working was less embedded prior to the reforms. Partnerships were generally aware of this as an ongoing process and were seeking a visible strategic leadership, through strategic meetings with the frontline, to highlight equal involvement and training.

3. Insights from interventions

3.1 Intervention Development

Following the deep dive case study research, Kantar and DfE prioritised four key problem statements according to their perceived commonality and impact on effective multi-agency working. These statements summarised the key remaining barriers to effective partnership working that had the potential to be offset through behavioural interventions. The problem statements selected were:

- **Information sharing:** Information relating to safeguarding children (for example, children’s health records or relevant family records) was not always shared consistently or effectively across agencies. Agencies had limited capability to analyse information and intelligence held by partners and relevant agencies.
- **Effective cross-agency communication:** Frontline staff do not communicate effectively across agencies.
- **Effective within-agency communication:** Partnership information is not effectively communicated to frontline staff.
- **Engagement of wider organisations:** Input and engagement of wider agencies (for example voluntaries and schools) is low.

A workshop using Kantar’s Moments of Change ideation game used these problem statements as a basis for intervention development. Attendees made up of DfE and cross-governmental stakeholders were assigned to groups, and each group was allocated one problem statement. Kantar researchers broke down each problem statement into a multi-step behavioural journey and highlighted key barriers (emerging from the case study research) at each stage. Participants then used behavioural insight game cards to ideate interventions for each barrier. The outcome of this workshop was a long list of intervention ideas, which were then prioritised by the DfE and Kantar for further development and testing, according to their likely impact, effort and amenability to behavioural intervention. The table below summarises these eight shortlisted intervention ideas including the barrier each was designed to target and a summary of how the intervention aimed to overcome it. Further methodological detail of this stage can be found in Annex 2.

Table 1: Summary of shortlisted interventions

Barrier	Intervention Description
Information sharing: Frontline staff did not always see the value in sharing information and were concerned about the consequences of wrongful sharing. This led to hesitancy, tensions between organisations, and potentially missed safeguarding issues.	Leaders in each agency would emphasise the need to share information, highlighting the usefulness of doing so, and the benefits to safeguarding outcomes. This would be done through communications in team meetings,

	<p>speakers at events (including involving wider organisations), or newsletter sections.</p> <p>The intervention aimed to increase awareness of the benefits of sharing information and reduce anxieties around doing so.</p>
<p>Information sharing: Frontline staff found information sharing guidance complex and difficult to understand. This led to hesitancy in sharing information and slowed processes.</p>	<p>Provision of simplified information sharing guidance to present guidance in a clear format designed to aid decision making. For example, flow charts asking key questions about the case and outlining what can be shared and with whom at each stage. Guidance would signpost where individuals could go for further information when unsure or when handling complex cases (for example contact details, links to further resources).</p> <p>The intervention aimed to ensure partnership staff understood how the guidance applied to their case and could make faster and be more confident in, decisions around information sharing.</p>
<p>Effective cross-agency communication: The Local Authority was often still considered as the 'lead' agency in decision making. As a result, partnerships had not achieved parity in ownership and accountability for safeguarding across the three agencies, particularly at frontline level.</p>	<p>Meeting structures would be used as an opportunity to shift away from this 'default' of the Local Authority taking a lead. Meeting agendas would use questions, rather than statements, to facilitate a more open approach to decision making and allocation of work. This approach would be supported through raising awareness of the new agendas through multi-agency training, partnership communications and championing the approach in line management and supervision meetings.</p> <p>This intervention aimed to encourage all agencies to question who should take the lead on safeguarding work and increase perceptions of parity in ownership.</p>
<p>Effective cross-agency communication: Multi-agency action plans were not always created or followed collaboratively or effectively. Uncertainties around roles, responsibilities and limitations of other agencies could prevent effective collaboration.</p>	<p>Individuals within partnership agencies would take on 'Champion' or 'Role Model' roles, and would take a lead in promoting collaboration, sharing examples of good practice, and acting as a point of contact for queries from colleagues. Examples of good practice, such as positive stories of plans working well and contributing to positive outcomes, could be shared via partnership newsletters or other communication channels.</p> <p>Sharing this message and guidance would be intended to improve staff perceptions and confidence to work together.</p>
<p>Effective within-agency communication: Information was not always communicated to</p>	<p>Nominated frontline staff would act in a 'communications representative' role. This would</p>

<p>frontline staff in an engaging, concise or tailored format. This meant frontline staff were less aware of partnership information and were less engaged.</p>	<p>involve checking partnership communications and providing feedback and suggestions for improvements before sending out to all staff.</p> <p>This would ensure communications were using suitable language, presenting relevant content, and using the most effective channels.</p>
<p>Effective within-agency communication: Staff were not motivated to feedback on communications which limited opportunities for improvement and engagement.</p>	<p>Frontline staff would be incentivised to provide feedback. The incentive could be a tangible reward (for example, teams who achieve feedback goals could be given a reward). It could also come in the form of providing salient examples of how the feedback had been incorporated and acted upon (i.e. using value as an incentive).</p> <p>This aimed to encourage staff to see the value in providing feedback and enable improvements to communications.</p>
<p>Engagement of wider organisations: Streamlining of core partnership meetings meant there was less interaction between core partners and wider organisations. This reduced communication and opportunities for collaboration.</p>	<p>Stories and examples of effective collaboration and outcomes would be shared through partnership communications. Occasional slots at meetings and events could also be designated to sharing these stories.</p> <p>This aimed to enhance perceptions of the value of the wider organisations and encourage core partners to engage them.</p>
<p>Engagement of wider organisations: Partnership staff did not always fully understand the roles of wider organisations and how they could work together. This meant wider organisations were not always consulted or engaged in partnership work.</p>	<p>Visual guides and one-page summaries would be created to summarise the roles and responsibilities of each organisation in relation to safeguarding children.</p> <p>These aimed to ensure staff understood the value of involving these organisations, and act as an easy to reference guide when making decisions on who to involve in a case.</p>

3.2 Intervention Feedback and Recommendations

The interventions detailed above were discussed with strategic leaders in three partnership areas, one from each of the three core agencies (local authority, police and health). Discussions were structured around the APEASE³ criteria, seeking feedback on the affordability, practicability, effectiveness, acceptability, side effects and equity of each intervention if it were to be implemented, as well as more general opinions on the feasibility of each intervention.

This section summarises the feedback and organises it thematically, presenting key aspects of feedback and associated recommendations. These recommendations present

³ Michie S, Atkins L, West R. The APEASE criteria for designing and evaluating interventions. In: The Behaviour Change Wheel: A Guide to Designing Interventions. London: Silverback Publishing; 2014.

guidance for partnerships to consider and apply when taking interventions forward, and for government to ensure partnerships are supported to implement interventions.

Table 2: Feedback and Recommendations

Theme	Feedback	Guidance and Recommendations
<p>Messengers</p> <p><i>Who is best placed to drive and communicate interventions?</i></p>	<p>'Leaders' existed at every level within a partnership. It was acknowledged that there were certain individuals within agencies/teams that would have greater influence over colleagues.</p>	<p>'Leaders' can be identified at all levels within the partnership (strategic to frontline). It is important to understand which individuals or groups are respected and trusted within each organisation and partnership.</p>
	<p>Trusted messengers were often those which staff respected and knew well, such as their direct managers.</p>	<p>Familiar and respected figures should be the key messengers for communication. Middle managers are likely to play an important role in influencing frontline staff in particular, but these 'leaders will likely vary across agencies.</p>
		<p>Individuals at every level should be supported to play a role in intervention delivery, for example through training and information sessions to ensure all staff understand the motives behind the intervention and their roles in implementation. Individuals could also be supported through progression and career development opportunities.</p>
	<p>Partnerships which had a multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH), saw this function as being the main messenger, which could act as a trusted and consistent voice across agencies.</p>	<p>Creating an established partnership voice, for example a MASH or partnership 'brand', may fulfil a leadership role, which is respected and consistent across agencies. This can be initiated through partnership launch events, and bolstered through more regular branded events, conferences, and communications.</p>
<p>Consistency</p> <p><i>How can interventions be applied in a consistent way across areas and agencies?</i></p>	<p>The three core agencies often had different styles of communication and approach to work which could cause tensions.</p>	<p>Creating an established partnership voice (for example a MASH) could facilitate consistent processes and communication across agencies within a partnership.</p>
	<p>The three agencies could also have inconsistencies in processes, which could add burden when working together, particularly in areas where agencies work across multiple areas.</p>	<p>Ensuring agencies have ample opportunities to work together and network informally will support relationship building and increase understanding of the different cultures and ways of working. This in turn may help overcome difficulties and tensions when working together. This can be achieved through shared training (with adequate opportunities for networking and collaboration), co-location, work shadowing, joint meetings and events.</p>

	The differences between agencies were often felt to result from long standing differences in the culture of organisations (for example, different attitudes towards communication or task completion).	Recommendation for government: Guidance distributed on a national level (for example, from a cross-government working group) could be needed to effectively address inconsistencies across agencies within a partnership (for example data sharing agreements). This may be particularly helpful in partnerships where agencies work across multiple areas.
Communication <i>What are the most effective methods and formats for communications?</i>	Feedback suggested that frontline staff wanted more formal, written information, particularly around challenging aspects such as data sharing.	Where written information is used (for example, emails and newsletters), communications could clearly highlight key information and which individuals/teams it is most relevant for. Communications could signpost further information through additional links. In line with the <i>Messenger</i> feedback above, respected individuals could be used to share relevant information with frontline staff to maximise engagement.
	Written communications and emails offer the opportunity to save information that was received at inconvenient times, to revisit when relevant. This was also important to have to reference when unsure and as back up evidence for decisions.	Partnerships could better understand and use more effective communication channels, as opposed to relying on emails – for example online forums or promoting in-person communication through line management/meetings.
	However, excessive written information was seen to add to workload, and unlikely to be engaged with.	Interventions are likely to require multiple channels, including both written and in-person formats to ensure staff needs are met. Using multiple formats will ensure staff are engaged with information and can easily reference and revisit important information.
	In-person communication was felt to be more engaging and was particularly vital for relationship building across the partnership.	Interventions, particularly those aimed at enhancing relationships between individuals, or requiring strong relationships to be effective, should avoid reliance on written communications. Formal and informal in-person contact is likely to be more effective at relationship building and maximising engagement. Examples of how to achieve this include: virtual or in-person ‘coffee roulette’ style chats, where staff are assigned a partner they rarely engage with, work shadowing, networking events, and ensuring adequate time around meetings for informal conversations.
Maintaining Momentum <i>How can interventions be sustained over time?</i>	There was an openness to try new things and a high initial drive for trialling interventions across partnerships.	It is important to have support and commitment from senior staff members, particularly meeting chairs, and from the supportive functions which assist with organisation and agenda creation in meetings. This buy in is essential to drive continued momentum from the top. To achieve this, it may be important to ensure intervention discussions are on senior management

		meeting agendas. Consultation and feedback from frontline and management staff may also be useful to provide an evidence base to support the need for interventions.
	However, over time busy workloads and competing priorities could reduce momentum and practice could revert back to normal.	Interventions could be supported by the creation of templates (for example, meeting agenda templates, communication email templates) to aid habitual implementation and ensure consistency across meetings.
Time and Resource <i>How can interventions be implemented in a time and cost-effective manner?</i>	The capacity and resources for children's safeguarding (and related interventions) was different across agencies. Time and resource were the biggest barriers to implementing interventions.	Interventions must minimise burden on staff time and be cost-effective. The differential capacity and budget of agencies must be considered and supported through shared resources and administrative functions where possible. Where interventions do require staff to play a significant role, they need to be given support, for example through providing opportunities to discuss and allocate workload. Roles could be incorporated into personal development and career progression plans.
Staff Engagement <i>What are the best methods for engaging staff in interventions?</i>	Material rewards for positive outcomes (for example, financial bonuses) were considered contentious and inappropriate.	Frontline staff should be supported to engage with interventions, not through material incentives, but through ensuring staff have opportunities and support to engage, provide input and receive feedback.
	Staff were motivated to achieve positive outcomes - feedback on performance and receiving evidence of outcomes were important in ensuring staff felt engaged and valued.	Staff could benefit from two-way communication to ensure they feel valued and believe in the value of interventions. It is important that staff have opportunities to share opinions and experiences, and that they receive feedback on their engagement and views. These conversations could be improved through line manager training and informal networking to build relationships.

ANNEX 1: Theory of Change

A Theory of Change is an illustration of how and why a desired change is expected to happen in a given context. In this context, the ToC details the process through which the desired outcomes related to effective partnership working can be achieved. The ToC details the relationship between inputs, outputs, immediate and longer-term outcomes.

Findings from the scoping and case study phases were structured around the OPM and used to add detail at each stage of the ToC.

The OPM and ToC map onto one another as outlined in Table 4. Key behaviours identified within each stage of the OPM are represented in the corresponding stage of the ToC.

Overall, the ToC represents the behaviours which must be in place across all levels, in order to achieve effective multi-agency partnership working.

Table 3: Table outlining Theory of Change and Organisational Practice Model elements

Theory of Change	Organisational Practice Model	Description
Inputs	Create	Partnership’s policies, guidelines, arrangements
Outputs	Communicate	Understanding and knowledge of policies
Intermediate Outcomes	Commit	Delivery of the policies
Ultimate Outcomes	Consider	Understanding of partnership goals

1.1 Assumptions

Beneath every Theory of Change lie several assumptions, which identify conditions which must be true in order for the theory to hold true. These assumptions are drawn from insight from the scoping stage of the research. In the instance of multi-agency children’s safeguarding partnerships, the assumptions are as follows:

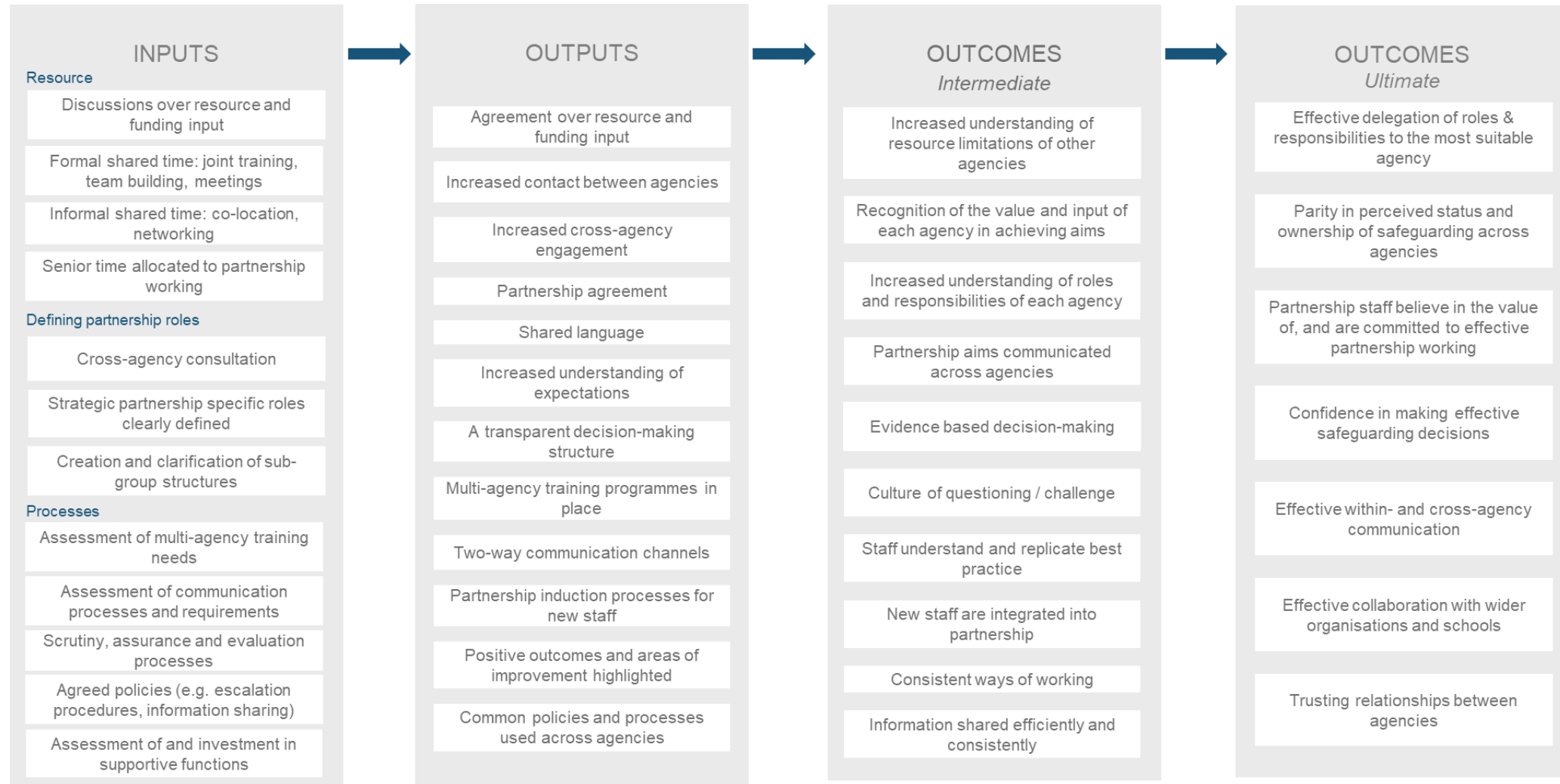
- The reform is pitched at the right level: achievable but forward-thinking enough to promote change
- DfE provide general parameters for ways of working but allow for significant autonomy within partnerships to make it work in the given context
- It is feasible to adapt processes across agencies to be compatible
- Partnerships have adequate funding and resource to deliver plans
- The reform is perceived as an important step rather than being seen as a tick box exercise
- Partnerships have clarity over purpose and reasons for reform

- All partnership agencies want to be involved in the reform
- Effective partnerships working leads to improved safeguarding outcomes
- Senior partnership staff turnover during implementation of the initial changes won't disrupt delivery
- Partnerships have the necessary skills across agencies to deliver plans
- Changes in multi-agency working is a result of reform, rather than other influences

The image below summarises the Theory of Change for effective multi-agency partnership working for safeguarding children.

1.2. Theory of Change

Figure 2: Theory of Change for multi-agency safeguarding partnership working



Annex 2: Methodology

This research was a behavioural insights project aiming to understand and change behaviours to facilitate effective multi-agency partnership working.

In order to change behaviour, it is first essential to gather an in-depth understanding of behaviours, and the facilitators and barriers promoting or preventing them from occurring. This enables the development of targeted interventions, designed to overcome and leverage specific barriers and drivers. Behavioural interventions are grounded in behavioural science concepts which are proven to be effective in changing behaviour across multiple behavioural contexts. This ensures interventions are based on evidence.

The research involved three key phases. The scoping phase and deep dive case study phase were used to generate a thorough understanding of the behaviours, barriers and drivers involved. This was followed by an intervention development and testing phase, to develop evidence-based behaviour change interventions. This stage drew on behavioural expertise from Kantar, and subject matter expertise from cross-governmental stakeholders to develop targeted interventions based on emerging findings and behavioural science concepts.

2.1 Organisational Practice Model

To achieve comprehensive and consistent insight, Kantar's Organisational Practice Model (OPM) (Figure 1) was used. This is a framework developed to examine behaviours and identify opportunities for change within organisations. The OPM outlines four key stages that need to be in place for an organisation (or in this case, a partnership) to deliver against specified goals and how behaviours at different levels of the organisation or partnership interconnect.

Consider: First there must be an understanding of the need to act, the benefits of partnership working and how to achieve it.

Create: Secondly, formalised, consistent, and appropriate policies for partnership working need to be created.

Communicate: Once created, policies and procedures need to be communicated clearly and consistently across partnerships.

Commit: Finally, policies and ways of working should be embedded into partnerships. Organisations must be committed to delivering the goals set out by the partnership and to working together in partnership.

Improving multi-agency working for safeguarding children uptake should be approached in this order, as a journey towards best practice. Progressing onto a subsequent step before overcoming barriers at a previous stage is likely to be inefficient and largely ineffective at improving behaviour.

The scoping phase identified different levels that have a role to play at each stage in the journey. Input at each level influences the extent to which partnership working aims can be achieved. These levels include:

Context: partnership context and the factors that influence this, including previous experience of multi-agency working, demographics of the area and area boundaries.

Strategic leaders: senior leaders within a partnership that are responsible for strategic decision-making.

Mid-level employees: middle managers that commonly handle day-to-day management and requests.

Frontline employees: employees completing day-to-day tasks in the partnership.

To summarise how the journey fits together, and the role of each level at each stage, an Organisational Practice Model (OPM) for partnership working has been created (Figure 1). The OPM has been used throughout the research process to:

- Identify where the key barriers to partnership working are within a partnership
- Target interventions at the appropriate stage in the journey and level in the organisation to most effectively reduce barriers and facilitate positive behaviours.

2.2 Scoping phase

The purpose of the scoping phase was to develop an initial Theory of Change (ToC) describing how multi-agency partnerships should function to protect children at risk, drawing on a wide range of evidence.

This was necessarily broad-based, reflecting the fact that the guidelines set out in Working Together to Safeguard Children are intended to be delivered in ways most suited to the local context.

Further detail on the Theory of Change and how it was used within this research can be found in Annex 2.

2.2.1. Rapid Evidence Assessment

The Rapid Evidence Assessment (REA), reviewed 20 partnership documents describing governance arrangements, goals and the roles of agencies and individuals, as well as 20 other sources of literature around multi-agency working in safeguarding and other contexts.

REAs enable a thorough understanding of the context and existing literature on a behavioural problem and provide a solid starting point for further research⁴. This was an essential stage in developing the initial Theory of Change.

The REA was based on PRISMA and GSR principles⁵. Before the REA began, we produced a review protocol detailing the research questions, inclusion/exclusion criteria, search terms, and databases and websites to be searched.

Two overarching questions were identified at the outset:

- What is the Theory of Change for why and how multi agency partnerships should work?
- What are the key behaviours, barriers and facilitators associated with successful multi-agency partnership working?

The REA drew from a mix of academic and grey literature, and included sources recommended to us by stakeholders. Partnership plans were selected based on DfE recommendations and existing reports on the new safeguarding arrangements. Plans were chosen to reflect a range of criteria including: geography (a spread of regions), quality of submitted plans (DfE informal assessment – mixture of strong/weak plans), early insight on working arrangements (DfE informal assessment – mixture of strong/weak), approach to independent scrutiny, model of working (for example areas with and without learning hubs) and areas working across multiple area boundaries.

During the search we reviewed titles and abstracts/introductions to identify documents for inclusion. The output was organised according to the COM-B model of behaviour change⁶.

2.2.2. Stakeholder Interviews

The scoping phase also involved stakeholder interviews with representatives from ten partnerships at a strategic level. Kantar conducted 60-minute telephone interviews with a suitable representative from each to seek more detail on what was in place. The criteria for inclusion were the nature of working arrangements, rather than effective delivery (since it was too early in the life of the new partnerships to determine this objectively). These interviews broadly covered the four aspects of the OPM, and explored topics such as the partnership working context, staff impressions of multi-agency working,

⁴ REAs are a frequently used methodology when assessing existing literature within shorter timescales than a systematic review allows. More information can be found online

<https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20140402164155/http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/networks/gsr/resources-and-guidance/rapid-evidence-assessment>

⁵ PRISMA – Moher, D., Liberati, A., Tetzlaff, J., & Altman, D. (2009). Preferred reporting items for systematic reviews and meta-analyses: the PRISMA statement

GSR – Gough, D., Oliver, S., & Thomas, J. (Eds.). (2012). An introduction to systematic reviews. Sage. Government Social Research Service (2009) GSR rapid evidence assessment toolkit (Online), www.civilservice.gov.uk/my-civil-service/networks/professional/gsr/resources/gsr-rapid-evidenceassessment-toolkit.aspx

⁶ COM-B is a model that identifies the three components: capability, motivation and opportunity are required for an intervention to be effective in changing behaviour. More can be read about COM-B at <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3096582/>.

comparisons to before the reforms and factors which facilitated and prevented effective partnership working.

2.3 Deep dive case study phase

This phase aimed to add detail to the initial ToC, based on plans and actions taken in specific partnerships; identify the factors that promoted or inhibited effective partnership-working behaviours and to make recommendations for how agencies should work together to deliver optimal outcomes for children.

Kantar conducted an in-depth exploration of five case study partnerships. Partnerships were chosen from across the country and with different characteristics to include a wide range of contexts for partnership working. Within each partnership, we conducted:

- 12 interviews with staff (approximately 4 at senior and 8 at managerial levels in each agency)
- 3 paired interviews with staff at the frontline level
- A review of key documents (for example governance plans)

Interviews were broadly structured around the OPM. Timings for the case study phase of the research were impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic and therefore interviews were conducted by phone or online meeting to accommodate social distancing and as a response to the public health context.

2.4 Intervention generation and testing

This phase aimed to utilise the shared expertise of Kantar and wider stakeholders to co-create behavioural interventions designed to overcome the barriers to multi-agency working identified throughout the prior research stages.

2.4.1 Intervention development workshop

Kantar conducted a workshop with cross-government stakeholders from across the DfE, National Health Service, Police, Department for Health and Social Care and the Home Office. The workshop used Kantar Public's Moments of Change ideation game. This game encourages users to apply behavioural insights to ideate on a behavioural journey. Players emerge with a long-list of evidence-based intervention ideas designed to overcome the barriers and challenges at each stage of a behavioural journey. Workshop attendees were allocated to one of four groups, with each group assigned one key problem emerging from the case study research (outlined in Section 3.1). Kantar researchers broke down each problem statement into a multi-step behavioural journey, and highlighted key barriers (emerging from the case study research) at each stage.

During the game, participants were allocated a hand of 'game cards', each detailing a behavioural insight and a referenced study from the behavioural science literature. For each journey stage, attendees were invited to choose a card and present an intervention idea, based off the insight on the card, which they feel could work to overcome one of the barriers.

The outcome of this workshop was a long list of intervention ideas, which were then prioritised by the DfE and Kantar for further development and testing, according to their likely impact, effort and amenability to behavioural intervention. Based on this prioritisation, and researcher opinion over which ideas would benefit from further contextual insight, two intervention ideas for each problem statement were chosen to explore further with partnership areas.

2.4.2 Intervention testing

To provide an assessment of ecological validity (the extent to which interventions will be acceptable and effective in the real world), each selected intervention was discussed in a 60-minute interview with strategic leaders in three agencies who had not been involved in the research so far.

These interviews were structured around the APEASE criteria, a framework for designing and evaluating interventions in a real-world context⁷.

⁷ Michie S, Atkins L, West R. The APEASE criteria for designing and evaluating interventions. In: The Behaviour Change Wheel: A Guide to Designing Interventions. London: Silverback Publishing; 2014.

Table 4: APEASE Criteria

Criteria	Description
Affordability	The extent to which organisations / individuals can afford to implement the intervention
Practicability	The extent to which the intervention is practical for an organisation / individual to implement
Effectiveness	The extent to which the intervention will effectively improve outcomes
Acceptability	The extent to which the subjects of the intervention would perceive the impacts as acceptable
Safety / Side effects	Ensuring that unintended outcomes are minimised
Equity	Ensuring that the effects of the intervention are felt fairly across the target audience

Findings and recommendations from these interviews are detailed in this report.

ANNEX 3: Longlist of interventions

Barrier	Intervention Description
Information Sharing: There is a lack of consistency in how personal and sensitive information related to families and children is shared between partnerships	
Staff are uncertain whether they can share information and do not recognise or understand the value of sharing information.	Increase salience of negative consequences from lack of information sharing. For example, sharing a case study of a child who has died. This could be done through newsletters, meetings and case reviews. It is important to think about how this information could be made most salient at point of information sharing, perhaps through a 'case study box' on information sharing protocol documents.
Negative consequences (e.g. media, bad press) of information sharing are top of mind, and can overpower perceptions of positive consequences.	Information could be attached to information sharing requests providing information on the positive aspects of what could happen if the information is shared (e.g. contributing to positive outcomes).
Effective Communication: Frontline staff do not communicate effectively across agencies	
There is no consistent information sharing channel/platform/protocol across agencies. Frontline staff do not always know who to contact or what the best methods are to do so.	Use cross agency interaction to build a basic platform to share information to enable easy understanding of roles and responsibilities across agencies. The platform could enable easier discussions and sharing between employees in different agencies.
Multi-agency plans are not followed in a timely or effective manner.	Plans could highlight the outcome as a goal and break this goal down into achievable steps. This could be supported through goal based reminders and deadlines delivered through line management or employee apps/systems where they exist (e.g. You have completed 2/5 steps towards this goal, the deadline for step 3 is Tuesday 17th).
Multi-agency plans are not followed in a timely or effective manner.	Communications should emphasise the importance of communicating across agencies to complete the action plan. Social norms could be leveraged by messaging which infers that other employees are successfully collaborating or emphasising that other employees think that people should be doing this. This could be supported through case studies where teams have successfully followed multi-agency plans.
There is uncertainty over roles and responsibilities in other agencies. Staff do not know who best to contact in other organisations.	Reduce uncertainty about roles through two-way feedback to aid learning about others' roles and responsibilities. This could be done through FAQs and myth-busters, relationship building (e.g. speed-dating), role play and adopting each other's roles and feedback.

Time and geographical constraints can reduce capacity to collaborate.	Virtual working could be made the 'norm' for collaboration and developing plans to maximise attendance. N.B. Virtual working due to Covid-19 was saving time and facilitating scheduling and attendance of meetings. However, virtual meetings reduced informal relationship building and were not appropriate for all cases. Partnerships would need to work to find the optimal balance between the two.
Frontline Communication: Partnership information is not effectively communicated to frontline staff	
Currently the default is to send out a mass email to entire teams, and not think about targeting the email to a specific audience.	A weekly/fortnightly calendar invite could be put into strategic/communications staff diaries to hold time to think about and plan communication strategy.
Staff may overestimate the reach and impact that non-targeted communications have. There is no consistent way to measure engagement and highlight areas for improvement.	Metrics for engagement could be added in the form of read receipts or other email engagement measures. This could provide motivation for staff to actually read and spend time on emails or could work to emphasise the low engagement and encourage strategic leaders to think more about what they need to do to increase engagement.
Information feels generic and therefore is not engaged with.	Rethink how to begin emails - saying 'dear all' can make people disregard information as unimportant. Emails could begin with something more personalised, for example by team, function or individual where possible.
Staff face information overload with too many emails.	Have one verbal meeting to discuss information, rather than multiple emails. Staff tend to engage with information more when they are immersed and involved in it rather than just being given something to read. This could be followed up with an email summary of the information.
Staff may see the information as additional to their day-to-day role and not prioritise engaging with it.	Engaging with information should be framed as a task rather than just as information to read. This would help promote the idea that reading and engaging with communications is part of the frontline role.
Staff do not prioritise, forget or don't have time to provide feedback on communications and performance.	Line managers could play a greater role in encouraging frontline staff to feedback on communications during regular meetings. Providing and asking for feedback could also be built into individual performance objectives.
Staff do not feel their feedback is valued and therefore do not prioritise providing or seeking feedback.	In communications and meetings, strategic leaders could specify when and how they will implement feedback and demonstrate how they have incorporated feedback previously.
Engagement of wider organisations: Input and engagement of wider agencies (e.g. voluntaries and schools) is lower than it has been previously	

<p>Staff are unsure when to raise a safeguarding concern (due to being less involved in core meetings where concerns are discussed).</p>	<p>A staff forum could be created to increase awareness and understanding of what other staff and organisations are doing. A forum would enable staff to discuss cases and see the cases they are raising issue for. It could also encourage and promote sharing and open discussion.</p>
<p>Staff habitually think about and include core partners in decisions, but do not always consider wider organisations.</p>	<p>Action needs to be taken to shift the default from 'Taking no action' when unsure who to include, to 'check whether schools/other organisations should be involved'. This would need to be supported with tools to help staff understand when wider organisations should be involved (e.g. decision flow charts). The default could also be shifted through processes for example sending information to schools through automated email chains. Behaviour could be shifted through creating 'habit' loops or memorable phrases to help staff remember who to include when.</p> <p>N.B. This was done to some extent in some partnerships who consider schools to be almost a 'fourth partner'.</p>
<p>The key three agencies take the lead in organising meetings/schedules/plans. Schools and wider organisations can feel like an 'add-on' and schedules might not enable them to attend.</p>	<p>Involve wider organisation and schools more in planning and scheduling relevant meetings and contributing to agendas. This could be done by identifying a representative to sit in the partnership meetings. This could also be supported through consultation sessions to ensure wider organisations voices are heard.</p>
<p>Wider organisations and schools are not involved in feedback channels (either giving feedback on involvement or getting feedback on their input).</p>	<p>Encourage wider organisations to seek feedback and give feedback on their involvement by highlighting the commitment they have put in to the safeguarding partnership so far. This works by highlighting how much effort the organisation/ employee has already put into the issue or task, and therefore motivates them to put in the extra effort to see it through and see the impact of their effort.</p> <p>This could be done through setting automated reminders when someone raises a concern or shares information using commitment based language. e.g.- 'Last week you shared information about case X and contributed to the work of the safeguarding partnership. Make sure you get the most out of this by asking for feedback on the impact of your efforts'.</p>
<p>Staff do not fully understand the value of wider organisation input. Wider organisations do not prioritise gaining feedback on their input so miss opportunities to develop.</p>	<p>Use messaging which emphasises what employees or organisations will lose out on through their action or non-action. e.g. 'When you don't ask for feedback you lose an opportunity to learn...'</p>

<p>Staff do not collect feedback.</p>	<p>Creating if-then plans for asking for feedback on input. For example, 'If I raise a safeguarding concern, then I will ask for feedback one week afterwards'. This could be supported through implementing calendar reminders. Line managers could be trained to ensure they are able to assist employees to create achievable and measurable plans.</p>
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