Multi-agency safeguarding: Moving from 'Everyone's responsibility' to a 'Collective responsibility'

30th November 2023

National Children and Adults Services Conference, Bournemouth, UK

Professor Michelle McManus & Emma Ball
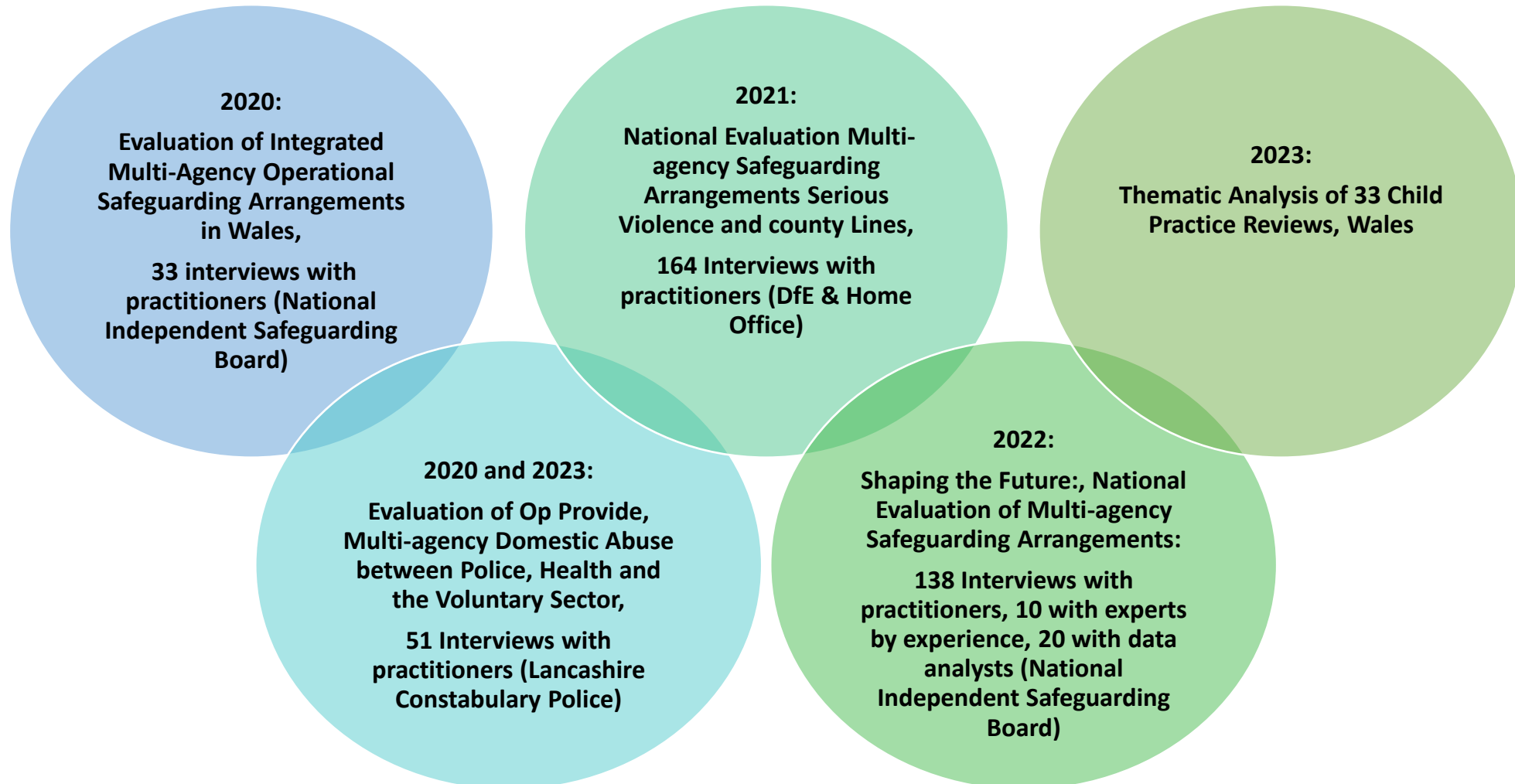**Chair: Lin Slater**

Agenda

- Welcome and Introductions

- Research Overview

- Activity 1: Assurance in Effectiveness

- Thematic Findings

- Activity 2: What Resonates?

- The Collective Safeguarding Responsibility Model: The 12Cs
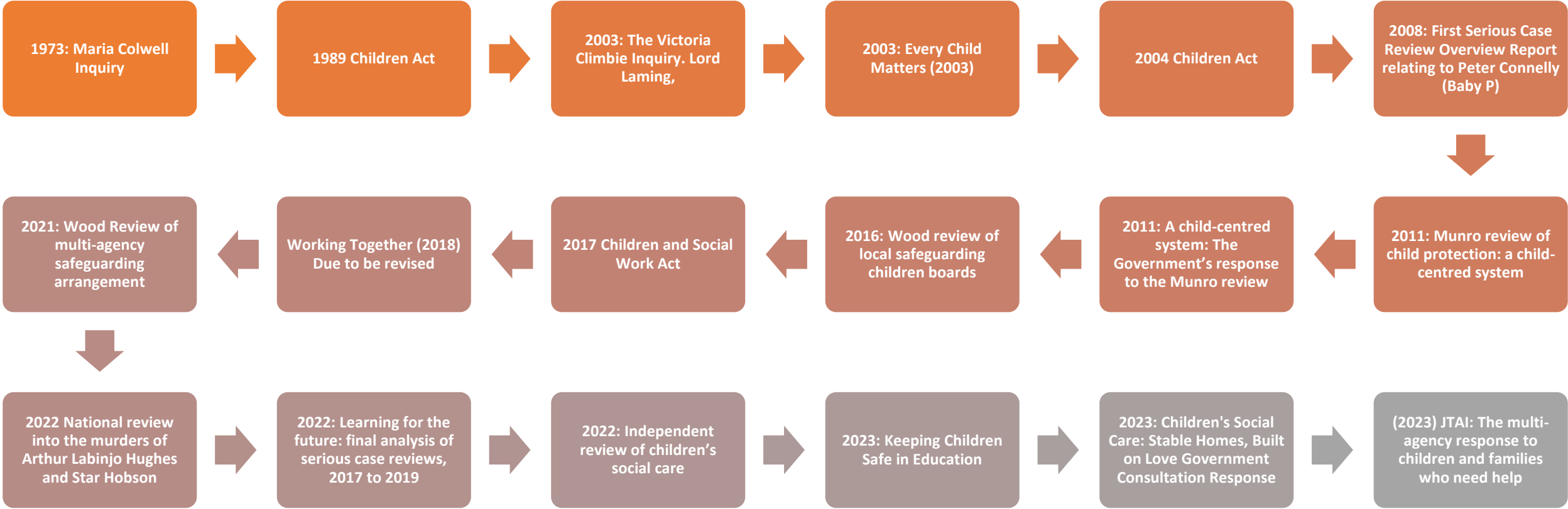
- Questions/Discussion

Research Context

Over 400 interviews with individuals: Practitioners, senior leaders, policy makers, data analysts, experts by experience


2020:

Evaluation of Integrated Multi-Agency Operational Safeguarding Arrangements in Wales,

33 interviews with practitioners (National Independent Safeguarding Board)

2021:

National Evaluation Multi-agency Safeguarding Arrangements Serious Violence and county Lines,

164 Interviews with practitioners (DfE & Home Office)

2023:

Thematic Analysis of 33 Child Practice Reviews, Wales

2020 and 2023:

Evaluation of Op Provide, Multi-agency Domestic Abuse between Police, Health and the Voluntary Sector,

51 Interviews with practitioners (Lancashire Constabulary Police)

2022:

Shaping the Future:, National Evaluation of Multi-agency Safeguarding Arrangements:

138 Interviews with practitioners, 10 with experts by experience, 20 with data analysts (National Independent Safeguarding Board)

50 Years of Learning in Safeguarding

1973: Maria Colwell Inquiry → 1989 Children Act → 2003: The Victoria Climbie Inquiry. Lord Laming, → 2003: Every Child Matters (2003) → 2004 Children Act → 2008: First Serious Case Review Overview Report relating to Peter Connelly (Baby P)

2021: Wood Review of multi-agency safeguarding arrangement ← Working Together (2018) Due to be revised ← 2017 Children and Social Work Act ← 2016: Wood review of local safeguarding children boards ← 2011: A child-centred system: The Government's response to the Munro review ← 2011: Munro review of child protection: a child-centred system

2022 National review into the murders of Arthur Labinjo Hughes and Star Hobson → 2022: Learning for the future: final analysis of serious case reviews, 2017 to 2019 → 2022: Independent review of children's social care → 2023: Keeping Children Safe in Education → 2023: Children's Social Care: Stable Homes, Built on Love Government Consultation Response → (2023) JTAI: The multi-agency response to children and families who need help

Activity 1: How Do We Know We Are Effective At Multi-agency Safeguarding?

[NCAS 23: Effective Safeguarding (padlet.com)](padlet.com)

- How do we evidence that we are effective at multi-agency safeguarding from an organisational, LA and National Level?

- How do we monitor and review our progression?

- How do we ensure accountability?
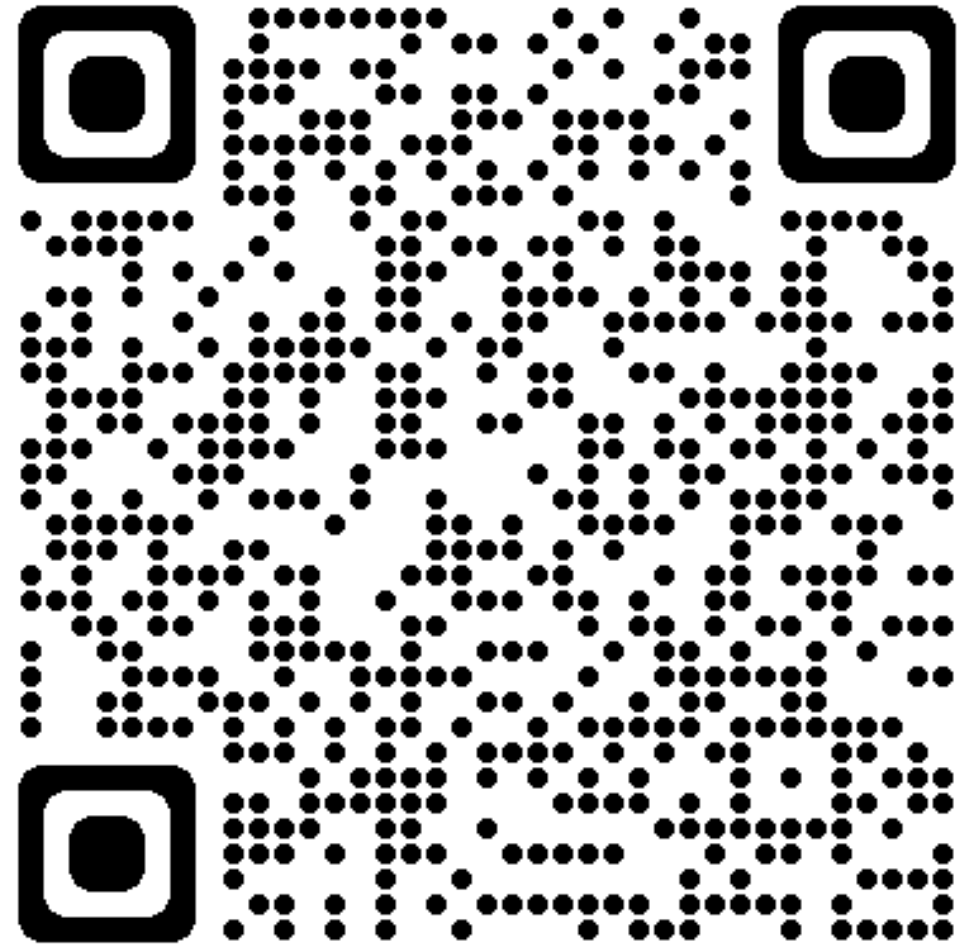
Overarching Research Themes across Projects

"In adding all of the factors together, a more worrying picture emerges"

Multi-Agency Workforce Challenges

- Stress, Pressure, Exhaustion

- Resources, Budgets and Funding

- Recruitment and Retention

- Increasing Demand: Volume and Complexity

Assessing Risk and Clarity

Transparency: Clear Understanding of Concerns, Risks and Expectations to families from all agencies

→

Over-reliance on Self-Report and Disguised Compliance- must triangulate sources

→

Victoria Climbie Enquiry 'respectful uncertainty'

Professional Curiosity

- A 'lack of' or 'increased need' for Professional Curiosity was noted in over **60% of CPRs.**

- Term 'Professional Curiosity' **is ambiguous** and does not fully acknowledge the potential **organisational and structural barriers** which may undermine the ability to exercise any such curiosity.

- This could suggest that practitioners may not have the experience, **confidence** or **competence** to consider or challenge alternative narratives to the accounts being put forward by families.

- Potential lack of **capacity** in having adequate time and resource to comprehensively respond to safeguarding referrals.

- Professional Curiosity needs further exploration: How is this curiosity **encouraged, facilitated** and **embedded** into practice?
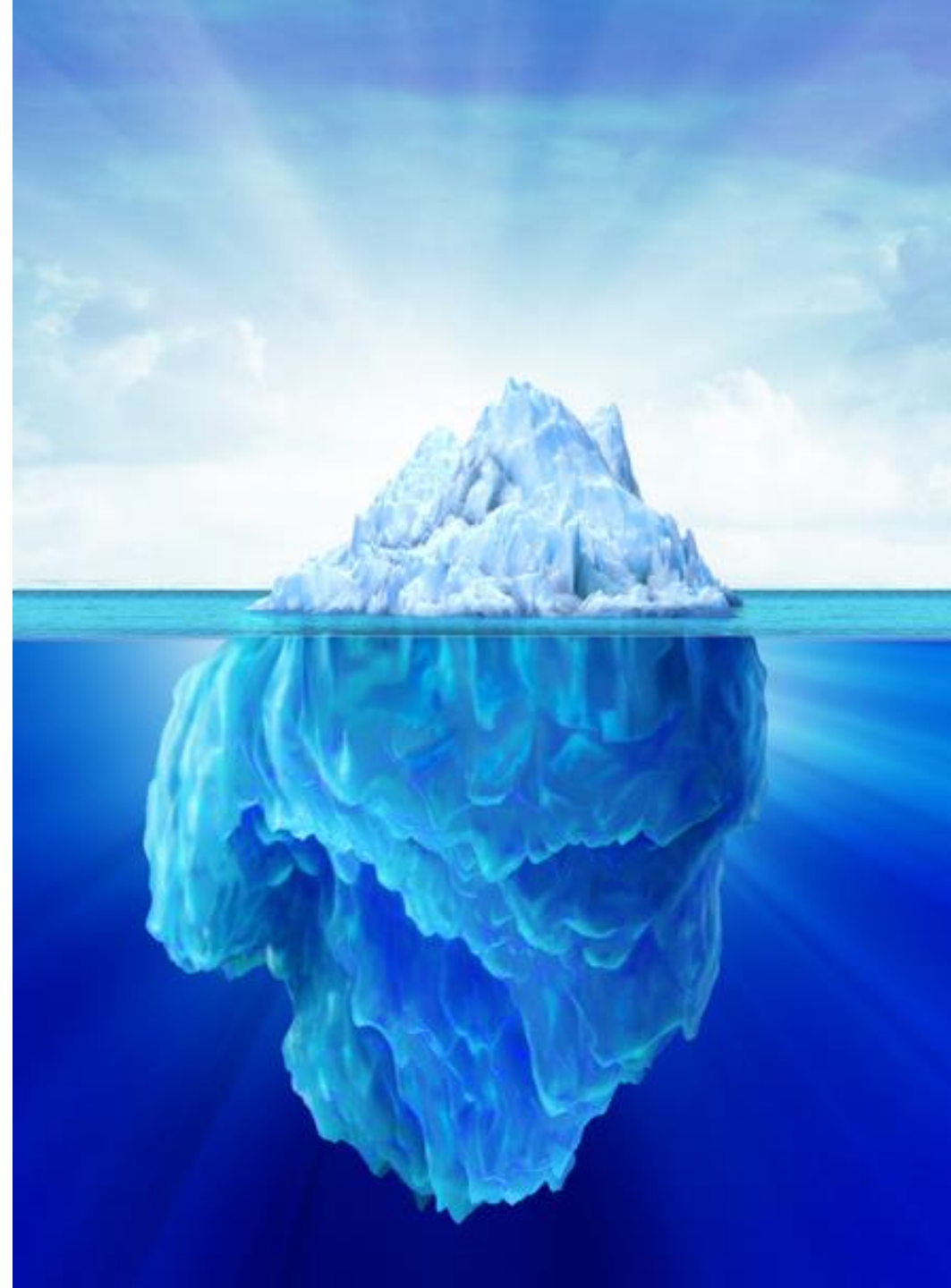
Whole Family Focus

1. Understanding the lived experience and impact upon siblings alongside the child who has been identified as at risk

2. Fully understanding the impact of parental unmet needs and ensuring these are addressed

3. CPRs showed a focus on the risk factors related to the mother and her ability to meet the children's needs and keep them safe, rather than the father or male figures within a child's life.

Co-occurring Harms and Interacting Risk Factors

Accumulation of risk factors can result in a **'cumulative effect'** of risk, which is not always duly considered.

One such example was the use of cannabis. Cannabis use by parents or carers may have no/little impact upon parenting ability. However, when there are other **co-occurring concerns alongside** such as potential neglect, the impact of cannabis use could be **more significant**.

"Risk assessments in relation to referrals had been too heavily weighted on episodic events"

Child's Voice: Capturing, Recording, Utilising

- Themes were identified around engaging and capturing the child's voice and understanding their **daily lived experience.**

- Questions around:
  - How and where are a child or young person's view **recorded**?
  - How do these views **influence future decision-making**?
  - How are the **outcomes shared** with a young person, in relation to their wishes and decisions and where is this documented?

Pathway and Coordination of Safeguarding Responsibility
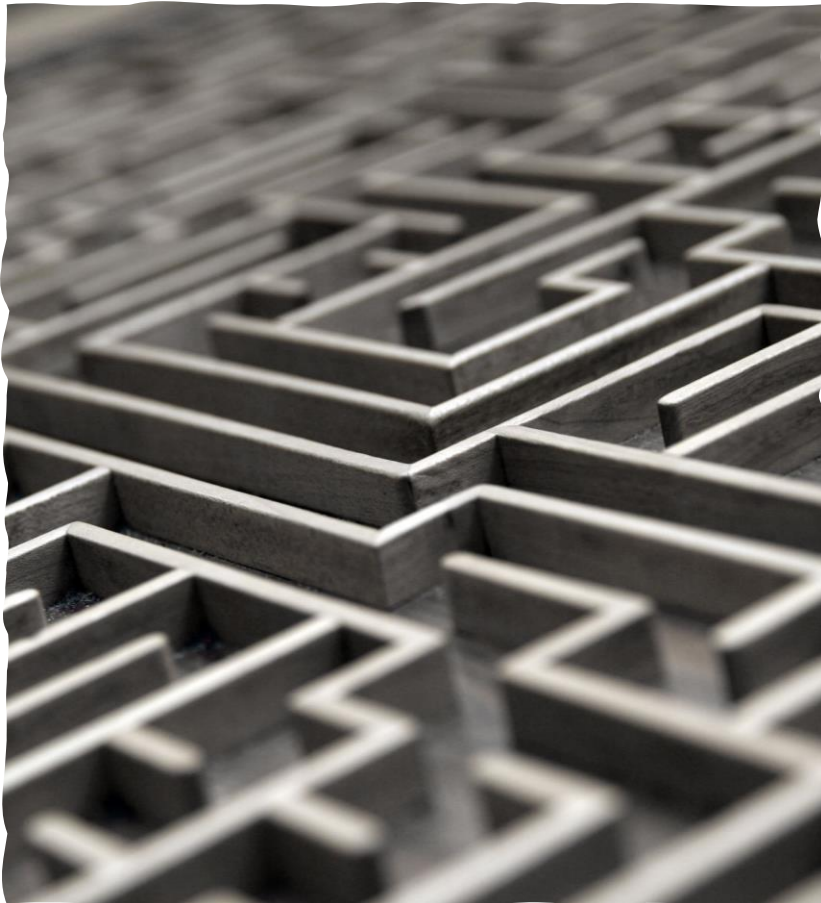
Longstanding observations that **information sharing** needs to be appropriate, more frequent and robust. However, **the structures and infrastructure** which support (or indeed, inhibit) this sharing of information, are often inadequate.

Lack of 'soft' information sharing ability.

"Agencies shared that there is often information that would assist decision making not known to Children's Services decision makers, as it is held on other agencies systems and has not met the threshold for a Child Protection referral"

Health Complexity

It must be recognised that Health as a sector **is segregated** by **diverse remits**, **complex structures** and **fragmented IT systems**.

CPRs show that information is often **known but not routinely shared.**

"Health Board does not have a single patient record"

"Health practitioners held a number of important pieces of information in respect of the family that could have assisted with decision making"

Deep Dive: Missed Health Appointments

- **'Was not Brought' Protocol:** there is a lack of ability to **record, collate and share** this information.

- **Ownership, accountability and coordination** of future action required to respond to this information through a safeguarding lens.

- Limitations with the ability to specifically:
    - **Code** (record) this key information (e.g., missed health appointments) clearly, easily searchable and extractable
    - **Trigger Point** to recognise when this information becomes a concern
    - **Notify** other agencies of this information (share information).
    - **Collate, Overlay and Progress** this key information and with other child/family/environment information to understand the wider child/family circumstances
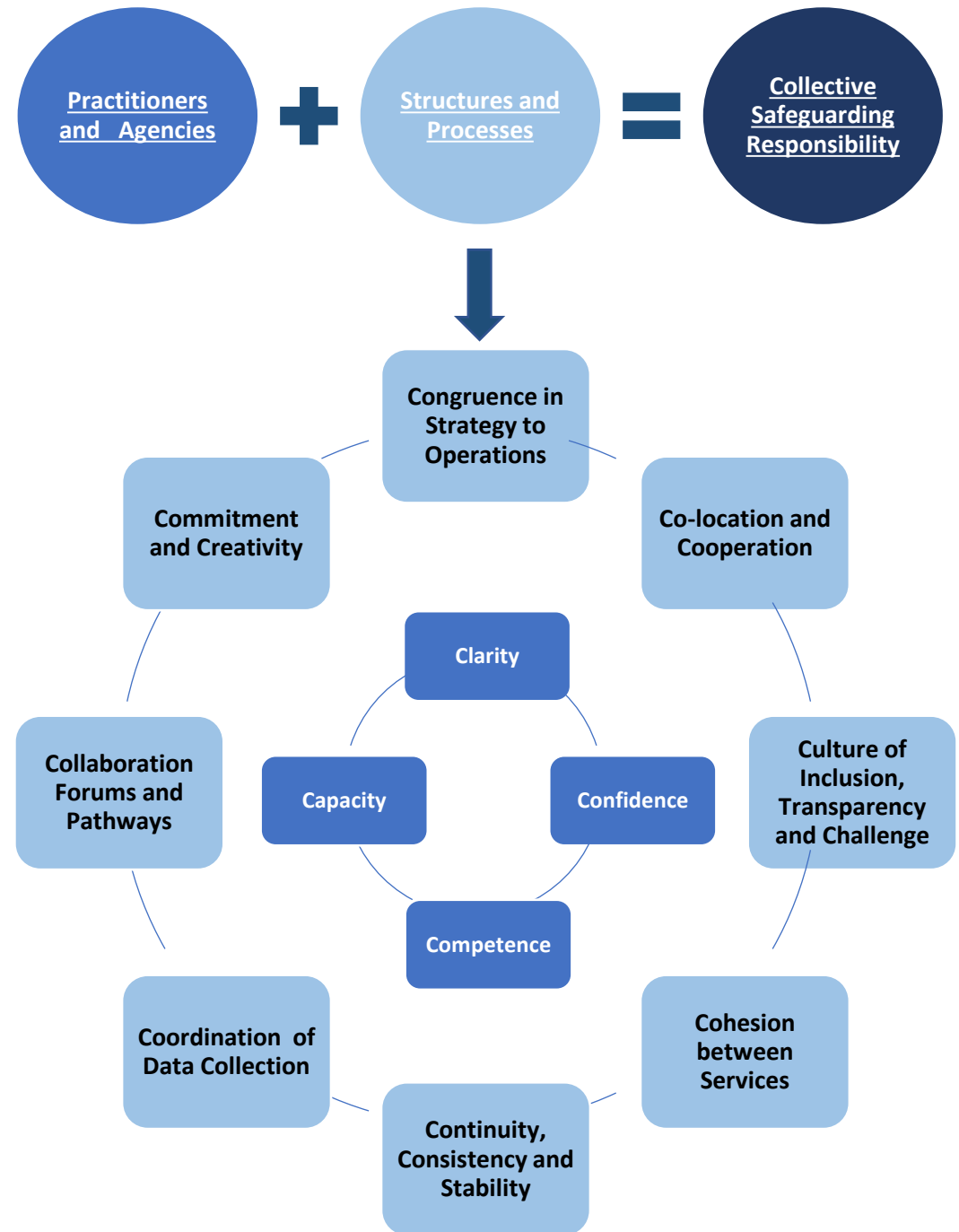
Does any of this resonate?

NCAS 23: Activity 2: Does this Resonate? (padlet.com)

- Do any of the themes resonate?

- What challenges, in your experience, need prioritising?
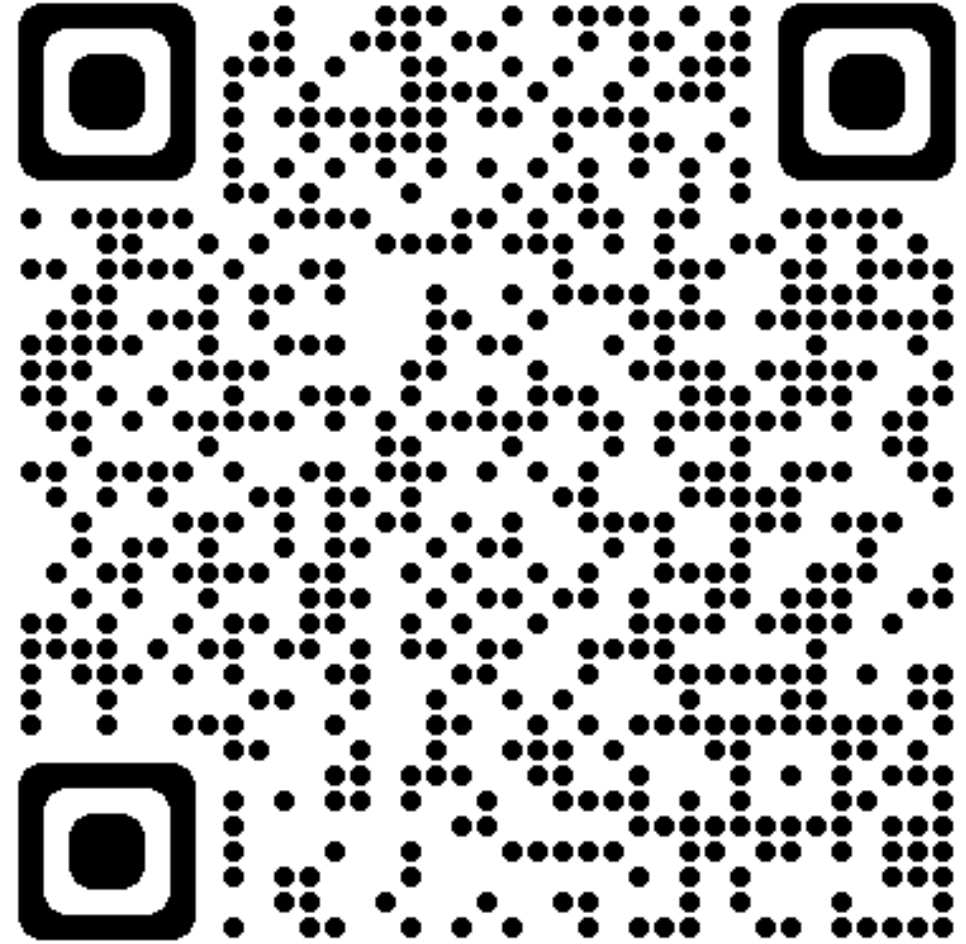
Collective Safeguarding Responsibility Model: The 12Cs

- Measuring Safeguarding Effectiveness

- Clearer evidence is required from LAs in **demonstrating the effectiveness** of their multi-agency safeguarding arrangements.

- 12Cs model details 12 components across "Practitioners and Agencies" as well as "Structures and Processes" to identify challenges and inform more targeted work and identify best practice.

Practitioners and Agencies + **Structures and Processes** = **Collective Safeguarding Responsibility**

- Congruence in Strategy to Operations
- Commitment and Creativity
- Co-location and Cooperation
- Clarity
- Collaboration Forums and Pathways
- Capacity
- Confidence
- Culture of Inclusion, Transparency and Challenge
- Competence
- Coordination of Data Collection
- Continuity, Consistency and Stability
- Cohesion between Services

12Cs: Practitioners and Agencies

Clarity

"We created a regional threshold document to outline how our processes would run and what would constitute a referral. It involves guidance on screening cases etc. So, the processes are mapped out"

Confidence & Competence

"I've always been very conscious of, training and safeguarding training. In a lot of LAs training is specifically for Adult Workers and you're thinking, DA effects everybody, exploitation. There's all these themes and you're like thinking why is that just for Children's Social Workers? Shouldn't Adult Social Worker's be aware of it?"

Capacity

"Workload's gone in one direction and staff numbers have gone in the other direction. It's a double whammy, really, and that's through Police, Health Board, Social Care, and everybody's in the same position"

12Cs: Practitioners and Agencies

Congruence in Strategy to Operations

"I think the work that senior managers do with other senior managers across agencies is positive, lots of positive relationships quite high up, I would say. Which does kind of trickle down, so there is a top-down approach to it"

Co-location & Cooperation

"Our relationship with the police, even though there is some challenge there at times when we see things very differently from different points of view, our relationships are much better with the police. Especially with more management of the police, because we see them every day. We say hello, make cups of tea with them and how was your weekend and that kind of general chitchat really. We get to know people a bit better and have relationships a bit more and personalities a bit more"

Culture of Inclusion, Transparency and Challenge

"It's a mutual respect for each other's professionalism and statutory responsibilities. We all recognise we have a job to do and we're all here to serve the public and the people that we we're obliged to... We don't come into the job to do harm to people, we want to do the best we can for everyone. We're all coming at that from a slightly different perspective, and it's learning to walk in each other's shoes can take some time"

Cohesion between Services

"So we do try and work closely with schools to offer them that line of communication with us in those instances to try and prevent a lot of report referrals going into social services where we know they're just gonna say no, you need to speak to the parent about that"

12Cs: Structures and Processes

Continuity, Consistency and Stability

"The annual recurring kind of funding, it doesn't lead to stability, it doesn't lead to practitioners knowing what their families can access. They come, they go, it leaves gaps, and then you are causing a change in the workforce"

Coordination of Data Collection

"It goes out to the whole organisation what the data looks like, but more importantly, the narrative around that, what does that mean and what do we need to do next, and how that informs our practice"

Collaboration Forums and Pathways

"When you listen to people and their experiences, you think, "But why would we have done that? Why did we do that that way?" or, "How did that make you feel?" It is quite grounding and makes you think"

Commitment and Creativity

"To have agencies sat around the table, to have training around thresholds or interpretation of the procedures and law…to go- this is what this means to me, in this situation I would do that. If you have that understanding, you can build relationships and share information"

C5: CONGRUENCE IN STRATEGY AND OPERATIONS:						
CIW Definitions	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**
CIW Definitions	**Unsatisfactory**	**Weak**	**Adequate**	**Good**	**Very Good**	**Excellent**
CIW Definitions	**Major weaknesses - urgent remedial action required**	**Important weaknesses - priority action required**	**Strengths just outweigh weaknesses**	**Important strengths, with some areas for improvement**	**Major strengths**	**Outstanding or sector leading**
12Cs Progress	Practice/ Intervention/ Policy identified but not progressed	Practice/ Intervention/ Policy identified, key partners consulted, logistical requirements discussed	Practice/ Intervention/ Policy agreed by key partners, implementation plan finalised, start date agreed	Practice/ Intervention/ Policy implemented and in early stages of operation, undergoing review	Practice/ Intervention/ Policy implemented operating well, undergoing refinements where necessary	Practice/ Intervention/ Policy embedded, functioning optimally and sustainable
Self-assessment score			X			
Evidence for self-assessment score	*Narrative explaining the evidence for self-assessment score reached? Examples should specifically identify any Policy or Practice interventions/support*					
Accountability, Ownership and Governance	*Who is the lead person/people/ agency responsible for coordinating/driving action on this?*					
Stakeholder Partners	*Which stakeholders/partners are part of the delivery/achievement of this component and what is their role?*					
Specific Action Plan	*What is required to implement, improve, or sustain work on this component?*					
Implementation Timeframe	*Strategic Longer-term/ Operational Shorter-Term, Or for Police: Gold (Strategic, Long-term), Silver (Tactical, Mid-term), Bronze (Operational, Short-term)What are the timeframes and review points.*					

"We think the 12C's model has potential for to be **applied across a wide range of multi-agency working, not only safeguarding,** and are considering how we can build it in our performance review work with local authorities and their partners. We can see the **development of a self- assessment based on the 12Cs** could also be a really helpful tool for safeguarding boards and many other partnerships"

Vicky Poole,
Deputy Chief Inspector,
Care Inspectorate Wales

"The Collective Safeguarding Responsibility Model : 12 Cs helped me visualise and map out complex internal and external processes and helped me better understand how to work together to address gaps and identify opportunities to share good practice. My **responsibilities tend to involve offender management, across Integrated Offender Management, Multi-Agency Public Protection and Management of Sexual Offenders & Violent Offenders**.

DCI Andy Horne,
Corporate Development
Lancashire Constabulary

I found the **12 Cs helped me to translate strategic objectives into tactical plans, and also offered an excellent communications plan to explain key operational priorities to the front line**. It also helped better understand how a flexible problem-solving approach focused on collaboration and co-production could ensure excellent partnership progress."

"Justice-involved children are often vulnerable to harm, and safeguarding should be present at all stages of work with these children, with practitioners making assessments of vulnerability and being alert to signs of harm, disclosures and third-party information. **Children at risk are often known to multiple agencies and siloed thinking can lead to information vital to safeguarding not getting to those who need it.** Sound multi-agency working and information sharing is thus vital for youth justice services, particularly with key partners such as the police, children's social care, and health.

Dr. Robin Moore,
Head of Research,
HMI Probation

The 12 C's framework usefully highlights the key features of effective collaborative multi-agency operational safeguarding arrangements and how practitioners, agencies, structures and processes must all work together".

Everyone's responsibility vs Collective Responsibility

- Moving from 'Everyone' to the 'Collective'

- Factors which facilitate multi-agency collective safeguarding responsibility must be:
  - **Identified**
  - **Implemented**
  - **Reviewed**
  - **Refined**

- Ensuring Consistency

- Evidencing Safeguarding Effectiveness

- Demonstrating Impact
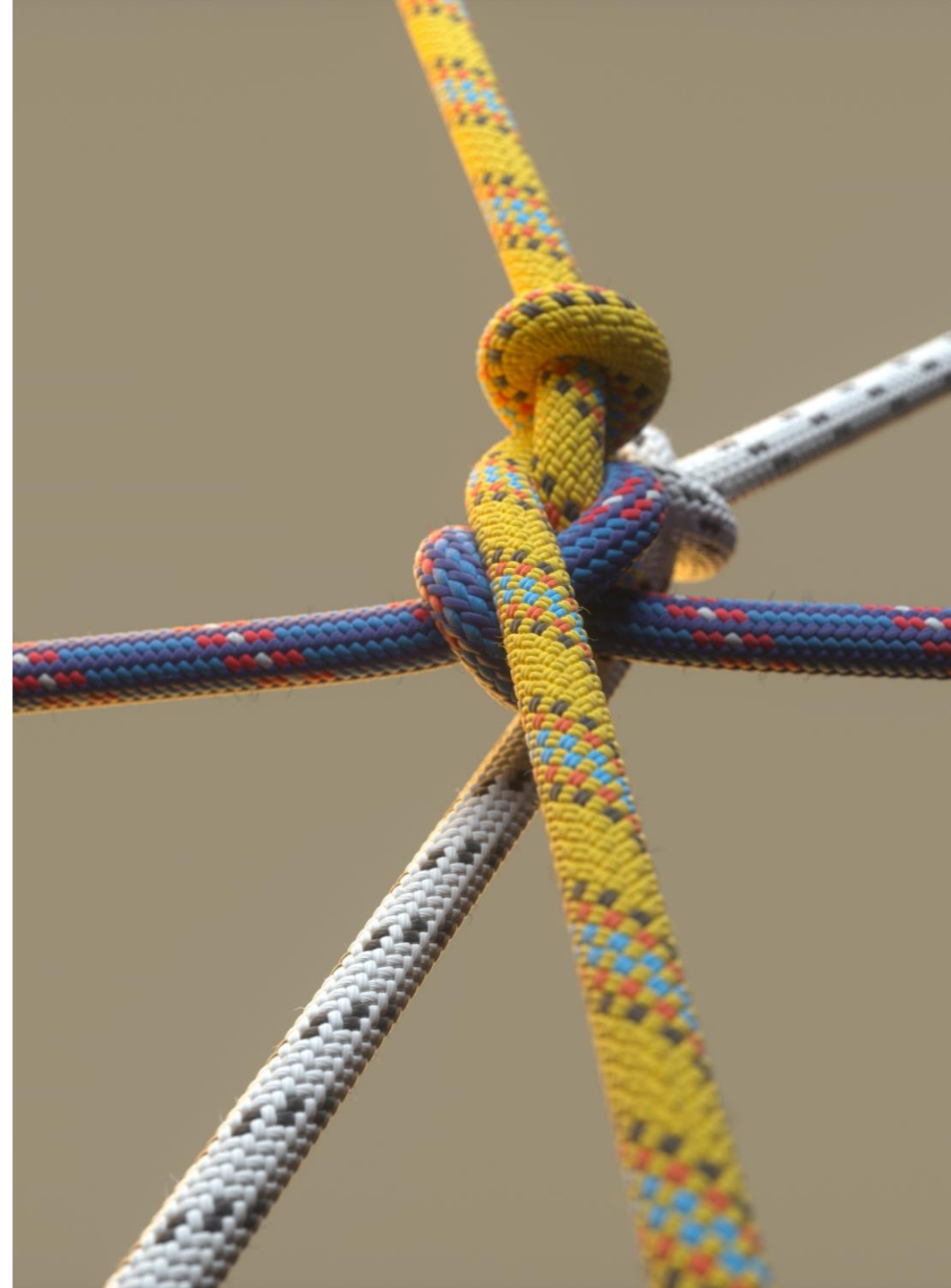
Questions and Comments

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Recent Research Reports:

- CPR Thematic Analysis Risk, Response, review 2023 and Collective Responsibility Model 12Cs

- Shaping the Future of Safeguarding in Wales project: Findings from Liverpool John Moores University - Safeguarding Board Wales

- Operation Provide Lancashire – Homicide Prevention

Manchester Metropolitan University