



HM Inspectorate
of Probation

The '12Cs' Collective Safeguarding Responsibility Model

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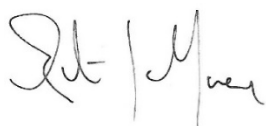
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Foreword

HM Inspectorate of Probation is committed to reviewing, developing and promoting the evidence base for high-quality probation and youth justice services. *Academic Insights* are aimed at all those with an interest in the evidence base. We commission leading academics to present their views on specific topics, assisting with informed debate and aiding understanding of what helps and what hinders probation and youth justice services.

This report was kindly produced by Emma Ball and Professor Michelle McManus, introducing the '12Cs' Collective Safeguarding Responsibility Model. The importance of a multi-agency approach and partnership working in safeguarding cannot be underestimated, with the relevant agencies needing to provide the right support at the right time to address current harms and prevent future harms. Recognising the lack of a consistent approach in measuring and evidencing multi-agency safeguarding practices, the 12Cs Model was developed using research evidence and in partnership with key stakeholders.

The 12Cs sets out 12 key components which facilitate effective multi-agency safeguarding practice, encompassing distinct yet interlinked issues relating to 'practitioners and agencies' and those relating to 'structures and processes'. Crucially, the model can be used to measure and evidence the effectiveness of multi-agency collaboration across all 12 components and determine the impact of any collective safeguarding efforts. This builds consistent understanding of good practices and challenges – at local, regional and national levels – with clear accountabilities and a shared commitment to future improvements. The key aim of the 12Cs is to facilitate and operationalise the transition from safeguarding being 'everyone's responsibility' to an accountable 'collective responsibility'.



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The authors are part of the Safeguarding and Violence Prevention Research Team within the Faculty of Health and Education at Manchester Metropolitan University. Ball and Professor McManus have worked together on various national projects and evaluations examining multi-agency safeguarding arrangements under various thematic umbrellas, such as county lines, serious youth violence, domestic abuse, with a recent review analysing Child Practice Reviews across Wales. The vast evidence bases accumulated from over 500+ interviews with practitioners and experts by experience, alongside reviewing systems and processes and statistical analyses of large safeguarding datasets, have led to the development of key frameworks and recommendations, to enable safeguarding partnerships and organisations to understand and evidence their effectiveness. Their work has been utilised to evidence 'smarter practice' in approaches within national homicide prevention frameworks and informing future work plans in fulfilling statutory duties for safeguarding (National Independent Safeguarding Board, Wales).

The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the policy position of HM Inspectorate of Probation

1. Introduction

Living in a post Covid-19 era and during a cost-of-living crisis, there is acute pressure on a whole range of public services in being able to effectively respond to rising demands and increasing complexity in safeguarding concerns. The requirement for a multi-agency approach, whereby relevant agencies can provide the right support, at the right time, has never been more integral to ensuring people are safe. Partnership working allows for more robust identification of harms and more appropriate safeguarding responses, to address current harms and prevent harms in the future. Working in partnership encourages safeguarding to be everyone's responsibility, with this phrase mandated in a plethora of legislation, guidance and policy. Yet, despite decades of research, reviews and inquiries, there are long-standing challenges in evidencing how making safeguarding everyone's responsibility allows for a collective responsibility in bringing together relevant expertise, skills and information.

Multi-agency working is embedded into much of the work of the Probation Service and practitioners play a key role as partners within multi-agency arrangements. This is evident in managing the risks posed by certain sexual and violent offenders through Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA), which were established to bring together the police, probation and prison services to coordinate their statutory responsibilities (Ministry of Justice, 2022). In addition, probation are considered an important partner at Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC), sharing information and contributing plans to prevent harm to those at risk of domestic abuse. Within youth justice, multi-agency youth offending teams/services were established through the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 which imposed a duty to cooperate across agencies such as children's services, police, probation, and health services, to prevent offending (HM Inspectorate of Probation, 2021). The Working Together to Safeguard Children guidance (HM Government, 2023) notes the requirement of professionals to ensure a shared responsibility, ensuring collective understandings and collective decision making. However, whilst this illustrates a strategic commitment to expectations of multi-agency working, implementation is not without its challenges.

In their 2022/2023 annual report of probation services, HM Inspectorate of Probation (2023) state that there are examples of probation practitioners struggling to work with other agencies when assessing risk. For example, where inspectors judged that enquiries needed to be made by the probation practitioner, child safeguarding enquiries were carried out in 55 per cent of relevant cases, and domestic abuse enquiries were only carried out in 49 per cent of relevant cases; the Probation Service has since invested in additional resources to improve the process by which enquiries are undertaken. The then Chief inspector Justin Russell also noted that there were constraints for probation leaders regarding decision-making, flexibility and advocacy, and that there needed to be a focus on local partnership development with agencies to foster such relationships. These agencies include local police services, local authority housing and social service departments, local mental health trusts, and local drug and alcohol services.

The imperative nature of partnership working in safeguarding cannot be underestimated within any sector or organisation. This Academic Insights paper will introduce a framework to guide the implementation of multi-agency safeguarding responsibility. The 12Cs Model can be used as a tool to measure and evidence the effectiveness of multi-agency collaboration and determine the impact of any collective safeguarding efforts.

2. The development of the Collective Safeguarding Responsibility Model

2.1 The research evidence base

The '12Cs' Collective Safeguarding Responsibility Model (Ball and McManus, 2023) is derived from a robust research evidence base and has been developed in partnership with key stakeholders. The research has explored multi-agency safeguarding in relation to children, adults and families, through a variety of thematic areas (e.g. domestic abuse, child criminal exploitation, serious violence, neglect). In addition to previous work involving over 200 interviews with multi-agency safeguarding practitioners across England, a national evaluation was undertaken in Wales by McManus, Ball et al. (2022) – commissioned by the National Independent Safeguarding Board (NISB, Wales) – exploring multi-agency safeguarding arrangements to determine what 'good' looks like.

This *Shaping the Future of Safeguarding in Wales* evaluation utilised the following three workstreams.

Workstream one: interviews were conducted with 138 practitioners across seven local authorities, involved in both strategic and operational roles, and a wide range of sectors such as children's and adults services, various health organisations, police, youth justice, education, and the specialist agencies from the voluntary and charity sector. Thematic analysis was undertaken through analysis of interview transcripts, which identified the following key themes for effective practice:

1. governance and guidance
2. joined-up safeguarding processes
3. partnership working and collaboration
4. staff investment, recruitment and retention
5. impact of the Covid-19 pandemic
6. data, audit and performance management
7. lived experience voice and participation.

Workstream two: interviews and focus groups were undertaken with 10 experts by experience who had accessed services, either adult's services or parents whose children had accessed services. Three out of seven local authorities were able to participate in the study. Thematic analysis was undertaken through analysis of interview and focus group transcripts, which identified the following key themes based upon their experiences and understandings of accessing safeguarding service support:

1. types of support
2. communication
3. service user groups
4. impacts of effective support.

Workstream three: interviews were conducted with 20 individuals with responsibility for data/performance metrics from six local authorities. Thematic analysis was undertaken through analysis of interview and focus group transcripts, which identified key themes relating to their

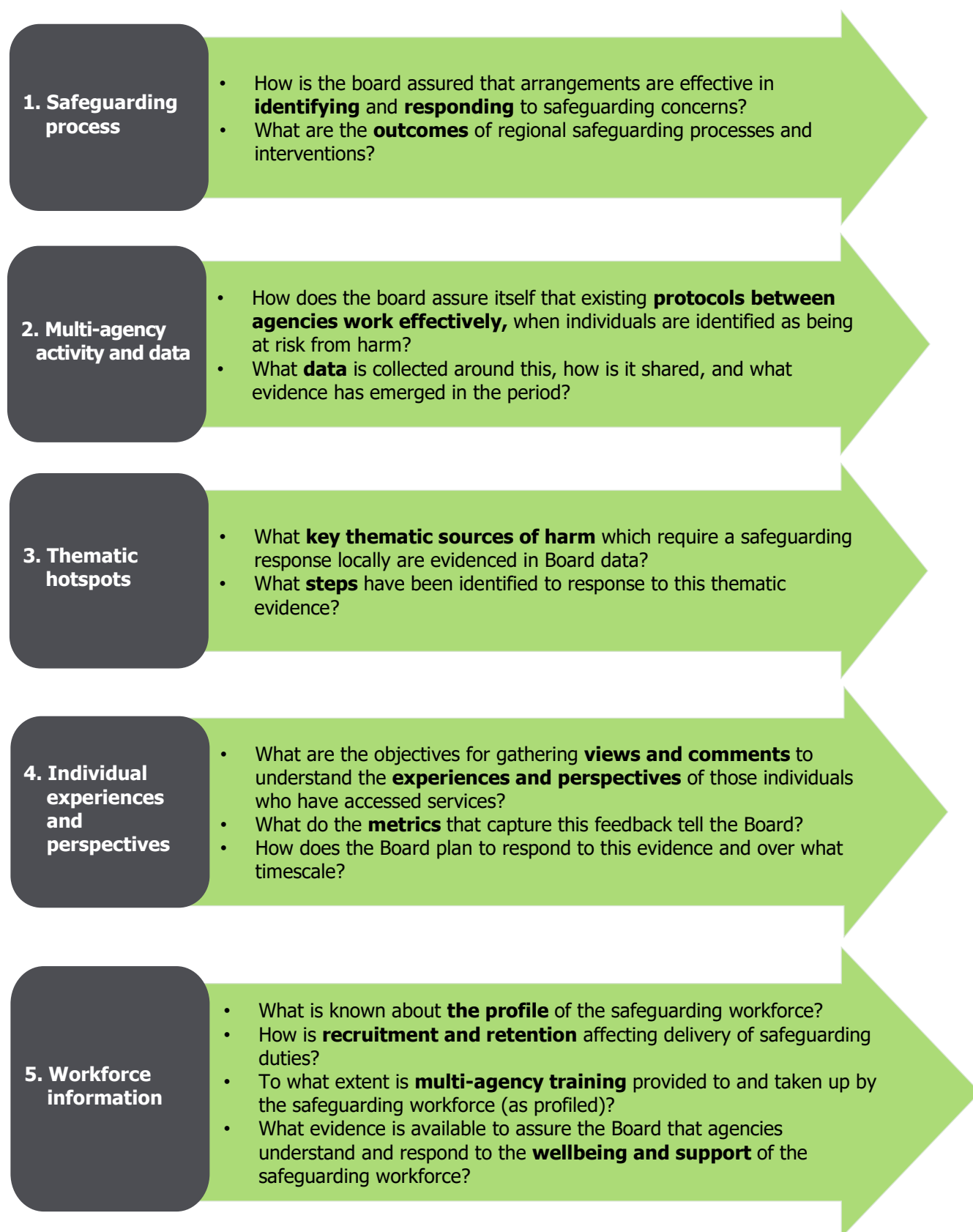
experience of collecting and analysing safeguarding metrics. Additionally, over 600 data safeguarding metrics collected by local authorities (including those mandated by the Welsh government) were analysed.

The NISB's fundamental duty to report on 'the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements in Wales' is limited by the absence of agreed national quantitative and qualitative intelligence/data to report and assess safeguarding effectiveness. The *Shaping the Future of Safeguarding* evaluation (McManus, Ball et al., 2022) enabled an understanding of issues experienced with the Welsh Government requested safeguarding returns, alongside the variances across local authorities and Regional Safeguarding Boards (RSBs) in what was being collected and relied upon within their reporting and quality assurance. This led to a collaborative group in co-producing an *All-Wales National Multi-Agency Safeguarding Performance Framework for Children (NMSPF-C)*, identifying key domains. Figure 1 highlights the five domains of safeguarding effectiveness, as well as the key questions required to be answered within each domain – the metrics within each domain will undergo further RSB refinement and testing during 2024.

The creation of the NMSPF-C is intended to provide a coherent, accurate, and appropriately balanced national picture of safeguarding effectiveness in Wales and a shared national understanding of whole-system strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement and development. Above all, the NMSPF-C is designed around a single fundamental question:

'How are we assured that our multi-agency safeguarding processes are effective?'

Figure 1: Key domains within the National Multi-Agency Safeguarding Performance Framework for Children



2.2 The 12 Cs Model

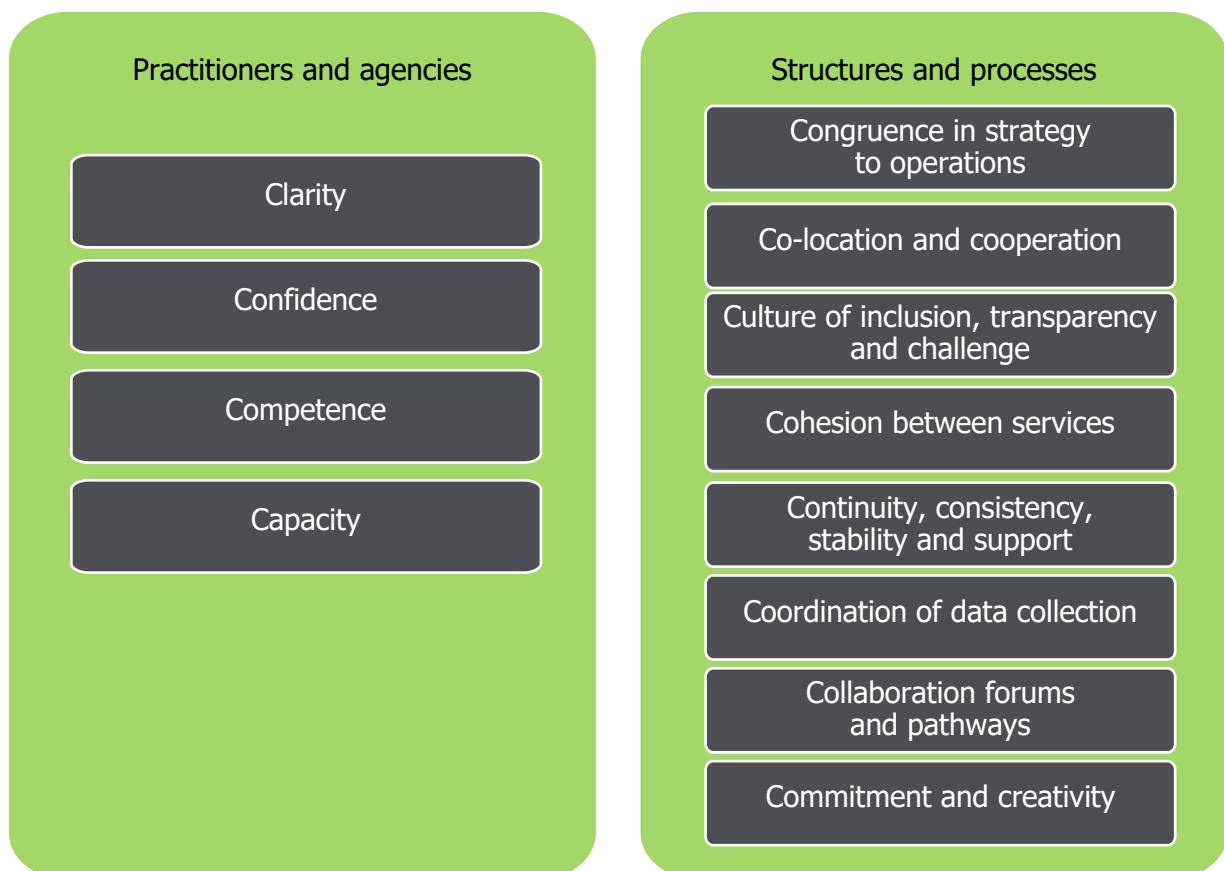
Whilst the NMSPF-C focuses on safeguarding metrics (qualitative and quantitative) to evidence safeguarding effectiveness, the Collective Safeguarding Responsibility Model (12Cs) focuses on multi-agency practice and policy interventions and how to evidence and assess the effectiveness of these interventions, with clear accountability and commitment to future improvements.

The model sets out key factors which facilitate effective multi-agency safeguarding practice, based upon real examples of good practice across all 12 components. The model illustrates the enactment of 'Safeguarding is Everyone's Responsibility' and offers a tool for safeguarding boards/partnerships, local authorities, and organisations to demonstrate the measures being adopted locally to facilitate, coordinate, and evidence the implementation of multi-agency safeguarding.

The model recognises the distinct yet interlinked relationship between issues relating to 'practitioners and agencies' and the 'structures and processes' which underpin practice (see Figure 2). The requirement of the 12Cs is to evidence any practice/policy/activity across all components to help identify and understand (i) areas of good practice and (ii) areas for improvement. This includes recording which partners contributed to outcomes within the multi-agency arrangements and which are then assigned specific actions in terms of the sustainability and/or improvement of components. This localised framework can then be utilised to measure effectiveness of any relevant practice or policy to:

- (i) optimise multi-agency safeguarding and ensure that a collective endeavour is achieved
- (ii) direct attention to components where further improvements are required.

Figure 2: The 12Cs



12C Model definitions

The 12 components are defined as set out below to qualify what is meant by each of the terms. Further examples of good practice within each of the components can be found at Ball and McManus (2023).

Practitioners and agencies

- *Clarity*: clarity must be provided to practitioners regarding the expectations of safeguarding responsibilities. This is within their own role, as well as partner agencies' roles and remits, particularly regarding anticipated outcomes and likely timelines. Seeking clarity must be an ongoing process at various stages in the safeguarding process.
- *Confidence*: practitioners must have belief in their ability and skill set to fulfil their safeguarding role. This occurs within their own agency and in partnership with others through collaboration. Practitioners require opportunity and space, to process and reflect on their own experiences and to learn from other agencies. Building confidence is an ongoing process that requires support from leaders and peers.
- *Competence*: practitioners must have investment into developing their skills, experience, and knowledge to fulfil their safeguarding role within their own agency and in partnership with others, through collaboration. Practitioners require opportunity and space to process and reflect on their own experiences and to learn from other agencies. Developing competence is an ongoing process.
- *Capacity*: practitioners must be provided with adequate time, space, and resource to effectively fulfil their safeguarding duties and to do so in partnership with the relevant partner agencies.

Structures and processes

- *Congruence in strategy to operations*: congruence between senior leadership teams, the frontline workforce, and all levels in between, is imperative. Implementation of this congruence should facilitate a 360-degree, fluid exchange of communication which promotes achievable objectives and shared understanding, and provides a comprehensive overview of any safeguarding challenges, as and when they arise.
- *Co-location and cooperation*: to establish, develop and sustain partner relationships, there should be protocols and working arrangements which guide, facilitate, and support this process. Relationships must be continually and actively invested in, and not assumed to be an automatic by-product of safeguarding being legally mandated as 'everyone's responsibility'.
- *Culture of inclusion, transparency and challenge*: consideration should be given as to how all relevant agencies and practitioners can be meaningfully included in safeguarding processes. Promotion of ongoing, open dialogue between all relevant partners is required and must be maintained. Professional challenge should be enabled and encouraged, to advocate for appropriate and holistic safeguarding support. This must actively be implemented into a workplace culture, which is endorsed both strategically and operationally.
- *Cohesion between services*: the potential fragmented nature attached to working with multiple agencies should be recognised, acknowledged and addressed. Actions must be taken to align safeguarding processes to enable seamless transitions between services. This can include shared responsibility, joint ownership, and collaborative case management between agencies, enabling a flexible and personal safeguarding response which reflects the evolving nature of concerns.

- *Continuity, consistency, stability and support:* service delivery should have consistency in the support provided. There should be stability in workforces to allow for relationships to develop with families and individuals and to offer continuity with development plans. This requires ongoing strategic planning in the long-term and the short-term, investing in current retention of staff and future recruitment. The funding of commissioned services should endeavour to be long-term wherever possible. Appropriate support and supervision must be provided to staff, in addition to promoting opportunities for career development and progression. Organisations should seek to understand and respond to staff wellbeing.
- *Coordination of data collection:* performance management data and frontline practice are inextricably linked. Practice should be accurately reflected in data collection and data collection should meaningfully inform practice. This requires both qualitative and quantitative data analysis. Multi-agency data should be coordinated, collated, analysed, and disseminated to understand not only any safeguarding activity undertaken, but to determine the effectiveness and impact of any activity.
- *Collaboration forums and pathways:* understanding the experiences of those who have accessed safeguarding services is paramount in determining the effectiveness of any safeguarding intervention. Collaboration forums and pathways should be developed and promoted to ensure the perspectives of those individuals and families are heard, understood, and acknowledged. Collaboration should be facilitated during periods of service intervention and feedback sought retrospectively after intervention. This process must be widely accessible, with appropriate support provided. Prioritisation, management and ownership of collaboration forums and pathways should hold both strategic and operational level responsibility and be utilised to inform future service delivery.
- *Commitment and creativity:* creativity, innovation, and a progressive approach are integral to collective safeguarding responsibility. There must be a commitment to the sustainability and evolution of multi-agency working within safeguarding, with designated leadership and accountability across sectors.

12Cs self-assessment tool

To accompany the 12Cs Model, an accompanying self-assessment tool was co-created to assist safeguarding arrangements in recording, evaluating, and monitoring progress of any policy or element of practice across each of the 12 components. This was initially aligned to Care Inspectorate Wales inspection category criteria, where the research which underpinned the model was primarily conducted, but subsequent versions have been revised to align to HMICFRS and HM Inspection of Probation categories to demonstrate its adaptability. The tool has been subject to a consultation exercise with key stakeholders to support its refinement.

Table 1: 12Cs Model self-assessment framework

C8: Congruence in Strategy to Operations				
Probation inspection	1. Inadequate	2. Requires improvement	3. Good	4. Outstanding
	There are causes for concern and recommendations must be made and addressed	Intervention has demonstrated few, if any, of the characteristics of good performance, and substantial number of areas require improvement	Intervention substantially demonstrated all the characteristics of good performance	Intervention substantially exceeded the characteristics of good performance
12Cs Progress	Practice/ intervention/ policy identified but not progressed	Practice/ intervention/policy identified and agreed by key partners. Implementation plan finalised, start date agreed	Practice/ intervention/ policy fully implemented, embedded and functioning well	Practice/ intervention/policy embedded, functioning optimally, sustainably and exceeding expectations
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	What are the timeframes and review points: strategic longer-term/operational shorter-term?			

2.3 Model utilisation

The 12Cs Model and accompanying assessment framework has been included in the NISB's Work Plan 2023-24 in fulfilment of their Strategic Duty 2: 'To report on the adequacy and effectiveness of arrangements to safeguard children and adults in Wales' (see National Independent Safeguarding Board, 2024). Operationally, the 12Cs Model has been adopted in police forces within England and Wales to use alongside other partners, including statutory agencies, to guide and measure their multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. Within Corporate Development in Lancashire Police, DCI Horne notes:

"The Collective Safeguarding Responsibility Model: 12Cs 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 and Violent Offenders. I found the 12Cs 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".

3. Conclusion

Safeguarding systems cannot operate in isolation and are fundamentally reliant upon partnership working within and across sectors. Probation and youth justice services are dependent upon partnership working not only to meet the needs of the individuals they work with, but as part of their responsibility to meaningfully contribute to a wider safeguarding system. The implementation of multi-agency working is often variable and there is a lack of consistency in measuring the impact of instilling a multi-agency safeguarding responsibility and being assured of its effectiveness. This is both within and across organisations. There has been an absence of a framework which can:

- detail the intricacies involved in fulfilling a multi-agency safeguarding responsibility
- evidence the impact of a particular policy or practice interventions within multi-agency safeguarding.

The 12Cs Model ensures that the 12 components, as identified from a vast research evidence base, are addressed in a way in which all relevant partners can comprehensively understand what is expected of themselves and of others; and where challenges and good practice is swiftly recognised, understood and acted upon. Across probation and youth justice services, the 12Cs has the potential to assist with an understanding of effective partnership and multi-agency working, allowing for more evidence-based decisions, targeted actions, and improvements going forward. Use of a consistent framework will increase connectivity and understanding across the 12 components at the local, regional and national level, informing future funding requirements, alongside policy and practice needs/gaps. Ultimately, the model applies research to build on the notion that safeguarding is 'everyone's responsibility' towards establishing an accountable 'collective responsibility'.

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