

Briefing Paper: Child Protection Authority (CPA) – Consultation

Newcastle Safeguarding Children Partnership (NSCP)

Date: 2nd April 2026

Audience: Statutory and relevant safeguarding partners across education, local authority services, health, police, voluntary and community sector

Purpose of this briefing

This briefing summarises cross-sector feedback on the Government's consultation to establish a Child Protection Authority (CPA). It is intended to support safeguarding partners in understanding the emerging direction, shared priorities, and areas where organisations express differing or strongly-held views. It draws on responses from local and national partners across policing, health, social care, youth justice, safeguarding partnerships, professional regulators and inspectorates.

Context and Rationale

Across all responses, there is broad support for a national CPA to address persistent weaknesses in England's child protection system. Partners highlight:

- Fragmented national oversight, with no single body consistently tracking recommendations or identifying themes linked to serious harm.
- Inconsistent data quality and limited analytical capability, hindering early identification of risks.
- Weak dissemination and application of learning, despite repeated findings across reviews and inquiries.
- Need for clearer accountability, especially where agencies hold overlapping responsibilities.
- Systemic pressures, including workforce gaps, structural reform and rising complexity of harm.

A national CPA is seen as a mechanism to bring coherence, authoritative leadership and a more proactive, preventative approach.

What This Means in Practice

A national CPA would likely provide:

- System leadership and oversight – tracking recommendations, analysing risk, and holding government and partners to account.
- Improved learning and evidence use – a hub for high-quality resources, research, and what-works guidance.

- Enhanced data capability – shared minimum datasets, better interoperability, and national dashboards.
- Stronger multi-agency accountability – clearer expectations for joint action on persistent failings.

Partners also emphasise:

- The CPA must strengthen, not duplicate, the roles of existing inspectorates, panels and regulators. [
- Any new duties must avoid adding unnecessary burden to an already stretched system.
- The CPA's remit must avoid creating an unhelpful divide between child protection and wider safeguarding.

Key Messages for Partners (Cross-Sector Consensus)

1. Strong appetite for a national, authoritative oversight body

All organisations recognise the value of national leadership to address fragmentation, inconsistent practice and recurring learning.

2. Data, intelligence and horizon scanning must be significantly strengthened

Partners consistently highlight the need for standardised datasets, cross-government data sharing, and analysis that combines quantitative and qualitative intelligence.

3. Learning must be translated into real system improvement

Responses stress that learning often fails to change outcomes unless backed by aligned inspection, joint accountability and practical resources.

4. The CPA must embed lived experience and equity

Co-production with children, families and survivors is a shared expectation across sectors. Equity, diversity and inclusion must be integral.

5. The CPA must recognise multi-agency realities

Partners expect the CPA to work across health, education, policing, justice, social care and the voluntary sector—not just local authority children's services.

Safeguarding / Quality Impact

If implemented effectively, the CPA could:

- Improve consistency and clarity in safeguarding practice nationally.
- Strengthen early identification of emerging risks, especially online harm, exploitation and extra-familial risk.
- Reduce duplication and allow partners to focus on delivery rather than navigating multiple oversight routes.
- Improve outcomes by embedding evidence-based and trauma-informed approaches across agencies.
- Create a more proportionate and consistent system for responding to system failures.

Risks to Mitigate

- Over-centralisation or “mission creep,” leading to confusion or duplication.
- Additional burden in a system already under workforce and financial strain.]
- Insufficient representation of specialist sectors (youth justice, health, education, voluntary sector).

Engagement and Next Steps

For children’s social care and early help services, the White Paper reinforces:

- The CPA consultation closed 5 March 2026, with a government response expected Summer 2026.
- Partners should remain engaged in national discussions—via sector bodies, Policy Lab, inspectorates, regulatory forums and existing safeguarding networks.
- Organisations are encouraged to:
 - Map implications for their local systems.
 - Identify data and learning readiness gaps.
 - Consider opportunities for shared accountability and cross-boundary working.
- NSCP will continue to share updates and support local partners to prepare for potential changes.

Organisation-Specific Responses (Summary)

Northumbria Police

- Strong emphasis on data standardisation, overlaying datasets across police, health and education.
- Advocates for stronger focus on online harms, exploitation and grooming.
- Supports CPA powers but cautions against it being seen as “additional workload” rather than improving wider crime and safeguarding outcomes.

Independent Office for Police Conduct

- Supports a CPA but highlights the importance of avoiding overlap with existing policing oversight.
- Emphasises the need to protect the integrity of criminal investigations.
- Sees opportunities for the CPA to integrate learning from serious policing investigations.

TASP (Association of Safeguarding Partners)

- Strongly warns against creating an artificial divide between safeguarding and child protection.
- Advocates for CPA acting as a system owner, not an operational delivery body.
- Calls for stronger national focus on perpetrator disruption as a multi-agency responsibility.

ADCS (Association of Directors of Children’s Services)

- Supports focus on children experiencing or likely to face significant harm.
- Highlights risks of system overload, structural reform pressures, workforce issues and unclear accountability.
- Calls for clearer alignment with sector-led improvement structures (RIAs).

AYJ (Alliance for Youth Justice)

- Strongest emphasis on youth justice inclusion within the CPA remit.
- Warns that children in the justice system are often omitted despite being among the most vulnerable.
- Calls for explicit data sharing with youth justice inspectorates and institutions.

RCPCH (Paediatrics)

- Advocates for strong clinical representation within CPA leadership.
- Supports statutory powers for data sharing and a public-health-oriented prevention model.
- Emphasises practical implementation challenges for clinicians and need for accessible, relevant learning resources.

Social Work England

- Supports the CPA's focus on consistency, learning, and oversight.
- Highlights need to build on positive relationships with existing bodies (e.g., national panel) and ensure clarity on its future role.
- Welcomes stronger mechanisms for embedding learning from reviews.