

POSTER ABSTRACT

From silos to shared responsibility: How the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Tracker (MAST) connects agencies in real time

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Background: Decades of safeguarding inquiries and reforms have identified the same core issue: professionals across agencies lack real-time visibility of each other's involvement with children and adults at risk. As Ball, McElwee and McManus (2024) argue, multi-agency safeguarding has progressed from being "everyone's responsibility" toward requiring a "collective responsibility", one built on shared evidence, accountability, and data visibility. Yet no coherent framework exists to evidence the effectiveness of multi-agency arrangements.

Approach: The Multi-Agency Safeguarding Tracker (MAST), developed by Policy in Practice, addresses this gap by providing a secure, interoperable system that makes agency involvement visible while maintaining robust information governance.

MAST is a digital tool that securely links headline data across adults' and children's social care, health, police, and fire services, giving practitioners daily-refreshed, real-time visibility of safeguarding activity across the last 12 months. Partners retain control of their data while enabling authorised professionals to see where others are involved.

Developed through sustained collaboration between Policy in Practice and safeguarding boards in West Glamorgan and South Wales, MAST demonstrates how coordinated governance and shared standards can unlock safe, privacy-conscious data sharing at scale and turn the principle of collective safeguarding responsibility into daily practice.

Results: Evaluation of the live pilot in West Glamorgan and the wider South Wales deployment demonstrates both tangible efficiencies and transformational change across agencies:

- £2 million estimated annual savings across partners
- £130 000 avoided costs per council from reduced high-cost placements
- 4 + hours saved per referral through faster access to information
- Over 1 million cross-agency interactions made visible across safeguarding partners

Beyond the numbers, MAST has shifted practice from reactive case management to proactive, intelligence-led safeguarding. Practitioners report being able to spot risks earlier, understand complex family networks in context, and collaborate confidently across traditional service boundaries.

The system has strengthened inter-agency trust, reduced referral fatigue, and improved data quality by minimising duplication and transcription errors. Crucially, it has reframed data sharing as a safeguarding enabler, not a compliance burden, fostering a culture of shared accountability and evidence-based decision-making.

By embedding daily data flows and transparent governance, MAST is also raising digital maturity standards across the safeguarding sector. It provides a common data language for multi-agency partnerships, allowing leadership teams to analyse trends, identify hotspots and plan preventive action rather than respond to crises.

Implications: MAST demonstrates that secure, interoperable data sharing is achievable within existing legal frameworks. By showing who holds which piece of the safeguarding puzzle, it builds trust, reduces administrative burden, and allows professionals to focus on people rather than processes.

As deployment expands across Wales, MAST provides a scalable model for integrated, privacy-aware safeguarding that can inform national interoperability policy and inspire similar approaches internationally. Its deployment complements ongoing interoperability initiatives such as WCCIS, creating a foundation for an all-Wales model of secure, real-time safeguarding intelligence.