

Assuring safeguarding at scale

A strategic approach to developing
robust review systems in school trusts

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**Confederation
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The voice of school trusts



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Foreword

Across education, safeguarding is rightly treated as a statutory priority. Most trusts have policies, operational systems, and reporting cycles that appear robust. But close examination sometimes reveals a gap between what is designed and what is delivered.

Safeguarding is not absent from any trust but can be inconsistent. It can vary between schools, depend heavily on individual capability, and at times be sustained through professional goodwill rather than systemic strength.

Leaders are frequently reassured by what is visible through reporting and compliance, but do not always have a clear or reliable understanding of how safeguarding is experienced in practice.

That gap between reassurance and reality is where risk sits.

This paper does not argue for more process. In many cases, what trust leaders really need is a clearer understanding of whether existing approaches are truly working and delivering the intended outcomes, or only appearing too. The focus here, then, is implementation.

I have spent my career working in safeguarding at scale, including as a national executive director of a school trust. I have led safeguarding across complex organisations, supported schools through serious incidents, and investigated practice when systems have come under pressure.

This paper is shaped by that experience, but it has not been developed in isolation. It builds on previous work by CST, particularly [*Safeguarding at scale*](#) and [*Governance at scale*](#).

I am grateful also to the National Association of Academy Safeguarding Advisors and to the 21 school trust safeguarding directors, including colleagues operating at executive level within trusts, who contributed insight and challenge to this work. Their collective perspective has helped to ground this paper in the realities of practice.

Louis Donald FRSA



Introduction

The reality of safeguarding in trusts

Safeguarding in school trusts operates in a complex environment. Trusts increasingly span different local authorities and community contexts, each bringing its own risks and pressures. Statutory expectations stay consistent, but delivery can become more complex as scale increases.

Creating common approaches and procedures is a sensible response to this, and can help share good practice. Working across a trust offers the chance to share best practice, support colleagues, and operate more efficiently – in safeguarding just as it does in other areas of school life. As trusts mature, it is no surprise then that more than half of trusts direct safeguarding centrally.¹

The risk is that some trusts operate with a degree of hidden variability, where the lived experience of safeguarding can differ significantly between schools undetected. That variability is often invisible through traditional reporting.

In *Governance at scale*, we explained the risks presented by scale.² Many of these risks can be mitigated through intentional design: clarifying accountability, strengthening information flows, ensuring stakeholder voice can travel through the organisation, and balancing stewardship with adaptation. Drawing on systems thinking, it argues that trusts remain viable when governance is designed as a coherent system that can coordinate, assure, learn, and adapt as complexity grows.

This paper applies several of the concepts from that paper specifically to safeguarding. It sets out a five-pillar model of safeguarding assurance and explores what effective safeguarding looks like across a trust, where it fragments, and why.

It examines leadership, culture, systems, professional practice and safeguarding intelligence, recognising that no single element provides assurance on its own.

In safeguarding at executive level, the numbers of concerns, audits and training sessions matter, but they do not by themselves show whether safeguarding is effective.

From assurance to understanding

A central theme of this paper is the distinction between reassurance and assurance. Reassurance often comes from documentation, compliance checks, and professional confidence. Assurance requires evidence that systems work in practice.

Assurance requires leaders to interrogate evidence, test how systems work in practice, and seek insight beyond formal reporting. It also requires honesty about where safeguarding is strong, developing, or fragile.

One of the greatest trust-level risks is not weak safeguarding, but the assumption that it is stronger than it is. That assumption often rests on process, confidence in individuals, or the absence of visible issues.

This perceptual gap is explained in CST's [Next-gen governance](#) guidance:³

“Strong governance is based on assurance not reassurance. Assurance is focused on ‘improving not proving’ and provides evidence-based confidence with an inherent trust in professional judgement. Reassurance is about ‘proving’. It focuses on comfort and aims to prevent worry.”

Trust leaders often receive reports on activity: concern volumes, training

¹ CST (2025), [National school trust report](#)

² CST (2026), [Governance at scale](#)

³ CST (2024), [Next-gen governance](#)

completion, or audit results. Useful though these are, they do not on their own show safeguarding effectiveness. To move from reassurance to understanding, leaders must ask deeper questions: what is happening, why is it happening, and what risks are emerging?

This requires triangulation through multiple evidence sources, including staff experience, system walkthroughs and qualitative insight. It also requires a willingness to engage with uncertainty and complexity, rather than seeking simple answers.

Understanding safeguarding as a complex ecosystem

This paper therefore encourages a shift in perspective. Safeguarding should not be viewed as a collection of discrete activities or responsibilities, but as an ecosystem. One where leadership decisions shape culture, culture influences practice, operational systems enable or constrain behaviour, and intelligence determines how effectively the organisation learns and improves.

In CST's *Safeguarding at scale*, we set out models for designated safeguarding leads and linked operational roles to work across a trust.⁴ The models focus on three strands:

- Leadership structure, roles, and communication
- Safeguarding delivery across the trust
- Developing your safeguarding strategy

This paper builds on that approach, expanding the perspective to consider how senior executive leaders and boards can support and challenge that operational work. The role of executive leaders and trustees is not to manage individual cases, but to ensure that systems are coherent, aligned and working across all schools.

This work is demanding. It requires disciplined leadership, sharper questions, disconfirming evidence, and a focus on risk rather than activity. It also requires accepting that safeguarding assurance is rarely absolute.

The aim is not to add complexity, but to provide clarity: not to increase tick-box compliance, but to strengthen understanding. And not by offering simple solutions, but by setting out what it takes to lead safeguarding in a way that is consistent, sustainable, and grounded in reality.

Because ultimately, safeguarding at trust level is not defined by what is written, reported or assumed. It is defined by how effectively the whole ecosystem operates when it is tested, and by whether leaders have the visibility and insight to understand that in real terms.

Safeguarding at scale emphasised three watchwords for effective operations: communication, consistency, and continuous development. These remain keenly relevant in assurance; all three are needed.

A common misconception is that safeguarding quality can be assured solely through consistency of process. While consistency is important, it does not guarantee effectiveness.

Communication – honest, meaningful, two-way, and timely – is a core part of true assurance. Information for the sake of it is not enough; what is needed is understanding.

And assurance is never-complete: continuous development recognises that, even aside from a rapidly changing world, no approach is perfect. We can always learn, and always improve.

⁴ CST (2024), [Safeguarding at scale](#)

The implication is clear: safeguarding cannot be assumed to be effective because operational systems exist. The whole safeguarding environment must be understood, tested, and refined.

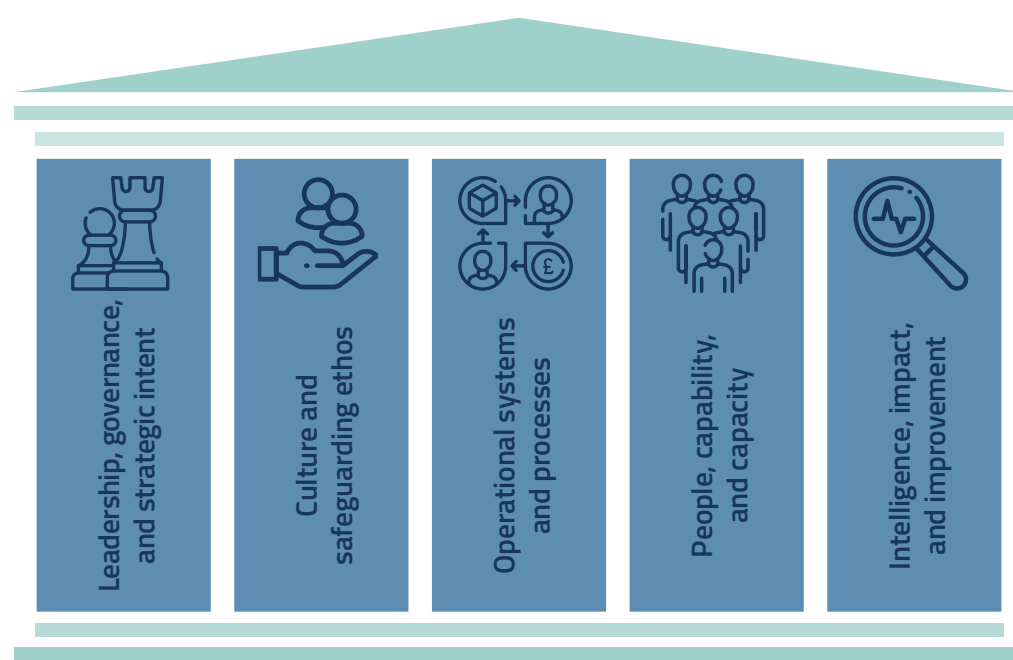
The pillars of assuring safeguarding at scale

Safeguarding assurance is not delivered through one role or process. It depends on interconnected elements working together to identify risk, respond effectively, and improve over time.

Too often, safeguarding is understood through isolated components: policies, training, case management systems, and audits. All matter, but none is a reliable indicator in isolation. Strong safeguarding comes from how these elements are aligned, led, and experienced across the organisation.

Safeguarding assurance reflects this system-level reality. Responsibility extends beyond operational delivery and sits within leadership and governance. The task of executive leaders and trustees is not to manage individual cases, but to ensure that the conditions for effective safeguarding are in place across all schools.

To support this, safeguarding assurance can be understood through five interdependent pillars. These pillars represent the core components that, when aligned, create a coherent and effective safeguarding ecosystem at trust level:



- **Leadership, governance, and strategic intent:** how safeguarding is prioritised, owned and overseen. Whether safeguarding is embedded within strategic decision-making and whether governance arrangements provide credible, evidence-based assurance.
- **Culture and safeguarding ethos:** how safeguarding is experienced in practice. The extent to which staff feel confident to raise concerns, challenge decisions, and engage with safeguarding processes, and whether expectations are consistent across the organisation.
- **Operational systems and processes:** the structures that underpin safeguarding activity. How concerns are identified, escalated, and managed, and whether operational systems are clear, coherent, and capable of supporting effective decision-making.
- **People, capability, and capacity:** the people delivering safeguarding. Whether staff have the knowledge, confidence, and time required to carry out their roles effectively, and whether support structures such as supervision are in

place.

- **Intelligence, impact, and improvement:** how information is used. Whether data and insight are used to understand risk, inform decisions, and drive continuous improvement, not solely to report activity.

These pillars are not a checklist or a set of discrete judgements. They are a way of understanding how safeguarding functions as an ecosystem, with strength in one area potentially masking weakness in another.

For leaders, this model provides a structured way to think beyond compliance, to test assurance, and to strengthen practice over time.

The sections that follow outline what strong implementation looks like, where common challenges arise, and what distinguishes resilient safeguarding ecosystems from fragile or inconsistent ones.



1. Leadership, governance, and strategic intent

Effective safeguarding governance depends on a clear and well-understood relationship between executive and non-executive leadership. Trustees hold ultimate accountability for safeguarding across the trust, but their role is not to manage safeguarding operationally.

The *Academy trust handbook* sets out that trust boards have a legal duty to:⁵

- safeguard and promote the welfare of children
- have regard to any statutory guidance on safeguarding, issued by the Secretary of State for Education
- ensure the suitability of staff, supply staff, volunteers, contractors and proprietors

As in other areas of trust operations, trustees role is to set expectations, maintain strategic oversight, seek assurance, and test whether the trust has the right culture, systems, leadership capacity, and risk management arrangements in place.

Executive leaders, by contrast, are responsible for translating those expectations into practice. They lead the safeguarding ecosystem across the trust, support schools, ensure consistency, identify and escalate risk, and provide trustees with clear, analytical and evidence-based assurance.

This relationship works best when it is based on openness, professional trust, and appropriate challenge. Trustees should not become operational, but neither should they accept information passively or rely on reassurance alone. Executive leaders should welcome scrutiny as a way of strengthening safeguarding practice, not simply as a governance requirement.

In strong trusts, the executive leads and manages the safeguarding ecosystem, while trustees test, assure, and hold that environment to account. When this relationship is mature and clearly understood, safeguarding is more likely to be treated as a live strategic priority than a delegated operational function.

At trust level, safeguarding is a question of ownership and assurance. Delivery largely sits in schools, but responsibility for effectiveness and consistency sits with executive leaders and trustees. The critical question is not whether activity is happening, but whether leaders can show how they know it is effective.

That requires active oversight: interrogating multiple sources of evidence, testing assurance, and ensuring that safeguarding informs both strategic and operational decisions.

In trusts where the governance pillar is well established, safeguarding is a core strategic priority. Executive leaders can identify the trust's main risks, explain how those risks are identified and mitigated, and show what evidence underpins their assurance, including where assurance is less secure.

Reporting in these trusts is analytical rather than descriptive. It focuses on patterns, trends and emerging risk, and trustees use it to test validity and inform decisions on resourcing, staffing, and priorities.

In these trusts, leaders draw on data, professional dialogue and direct insight into practice. Engagement with designated safeguarding leads (DSLs) and exploration of real scenarios helps create a more reliable and consistent picture of safeguarding across the trust.

Leaders also accept that safeguarding assurance is rarely absolute and are able to hold a balanced view, recognising both strengths and areas of potential fragility.

5 DfE (2026), [Academy trust handbook](#); [The Education \(Independent School Standards\) Regulations 2014](#)

This allows for more honest conversations and more effective prioritisation of improvement. Communication is robust, two-way, and pro-active.

Where this pillar is weak, reassurance is often mistaken for assurance. Leaders may rely on positive reports, completion metrics or confidence in headteachers without testing the underlying evidence. This can create a false sense of security, where systems appear robust but have not been critically evaluated. Reporting in these contexts tends to describe volume and activity without explaining risk, meaning or impact. As a result, leaders and trustees receive regular updates without meaningful understanding of safeguarding effectiveness.

Over-delegation is another common weakness. Safeguarding is treated as the responsibility of DSLs or individual schools rather than a trust-level leadership priority. Approaches are inconsistent without justification. Operational ownership remains important, but the absence of strong executive oversight reduces the ability of the trust to identify and manage systemic risk. Governance may also lack clarity. Trustees and local committee members may receive information but not feel equipped to challenge it or judge the quality of assurance. This is critical when primary safeguarding assurance is delegated to the local level, as is the case in around two-thirds of smaller school trusts – as proprietor, boards ultimately retain responsibility and must keep themselves assured.⁶

Over time, processes can become routine and stop being critically tested, even as contexts change and new risks emerge. This creates a drift towards procedural compliance, where safeguarding activity continues but its effectiveness is not actively tested.

Strong leadership is therefore defined less by structures than by behaviour: seeking evidence, questioning assumptions, and maintaining a clear focus on risk. The approach is regularly reviewed and developed.

Where leadership and governance are strong, safeguarding is clearly owned, assurance is grounded in evidence, and decision-making is informed by a realistic understanding of risk. Where they are weak, safeguarding becomes procedural, assurance becomes assumption, and the ability to identify and respond to evolving and emerging risk is diminished.

The role of leadership at trust level is therefore not simply to oversee safeguarding, but to actively understand and shape how it operates across the organisation, ensuring that systems, behaviours, and priorities remain aligned over time.

⁶ CST (2025), [National school trust report](#)

2. Culture and safeguarding ethos

Safeguarding culture is influenced by what is written but it is defined by what staff and pupils consistently experience across the trust. It reflects how people behave when faced with uncertainty, pressure or ambiguity, and whether the system supports or inhibits appropriate action. This pillar requires deliberate and sustained leadership attention. It cannot be secured through policy, training, or messaging alone.

While leadership and governance establish direction, culture determines whether safeguarding systems are used as intended. The critical issue is not whether expectations are clear, but whether they are understood, trusted, and acted upon in practice. Communication in its fullest sense is central.

In strong trusts, culture is marked by openness, consistency and psychological safety. Staff understand that safeguarding is a shared responsibility, feel able to raise concerns, and trust that those concerns will be handled properly. Escalation is seen as a professional duty rather than a risk, and challenge is both accepted and expected.

Leaders in these trusts do not assume culture; they test it through structured engagement with DSLs, practitioners, staff, and external stakeholders. They seek out insight into how decisions are made, where pressures exist, and how consistently expectations are applied across schools.

A defining feature of strong culture is alignment. There is coherence between:

- What leaders say about safeguarding
- How systems are designed
- What staff and stakeholders experience in practice

Where culture is weaker, compliance may exist without confidence. Staff may follow process but still feel uncertain about thresholds, escalation, or challenge.

Quiet compliance is a recurring risk. Staff complete required actions, but do not feel fully able to challenge decisions or escalate beyond immediate line management, or question established practice. This creates risk, particularly in more complex or sensitive situations where professional judgement is required, and a lack of continual development means approaches may not meet current need.

Psychological safety is often the key differentiator. Where challenge feels difficult or unwelcome, decisions may be delayed, concerns underplayed, or issues contained locally.

Variability between schools is another common challenge. Central expectations may be clear, but local interpretation can differ significantly. This creates potentially unwelcome inconsistency in safeguarding practice, which may not be visible through standard reporting mechanisms but becomes apparent through staff experience and outcomes. The oversight challenge is knowing when consistency is needed: ⁷

“Variability is not inherently problematic. Some variation reflects local context and can be a source of innovation and responsiveness. The challenge is distinguishing between purposeful variation and unhelpful inconsistency that weakens organisational coherence, hinders learning, or creates duplication.” - Governance at scale

⁷ CST (2026), [Governance at scale](#)



Leaders may also overestimate the strength of culture based on limited feedback or positive relationships with senior staff. Without structured and deliberate engagement, there is a risk that leadership understanding is shaped by a partial view, rather than a comprehensive picture of how safeguarding is experienced across the trust.

This pillar is measured not by the existence of policies or training, but by staff confidence, behaviour, and consistency in practice.

In strong trusts, leaders actively seek to understand culture through multiple sources of evidence and interrogate the evidence to build a triangulated understanding of operations. Evidence includes:

- Direct engagement with DSLs and safeguarding practitioners
- Staff surveys and qualitative feedback
- Exploration of real scenarios and decision-making processes
- Robust relationships with external agencies for advice and support

Leaders also test culture deliberately. This may involve exploring how staff would respond to challenging scenarios, such as raising concerns about senior colleagues, or questioning decisions that do not align with their professional judgement. These tests provide valuable insight into whether safeguarding expectations are truly embedded.

Importantly, strong trusts recognise that safeguarding culture is not static. It is influenced by changes in leadership, workload pressures, organisational growth, and external context. Sustaining an effective culture therefore requires ongoing attention and reinforcement.

Where culture is strong, escalation is timely – including externally – and staff act with confidence. Where it is weak, even good systems are undermined by hesitation and inconsistency.

Ultimately, the strength of safeguarding culture is reflected in how people behave when faced with real decisions. Leadership must therefore do more than define culture; it must shape, test and sustain it.

3. Systems and processes

Operational systems and processes are the mechanisms through which safeguarding intent is translated into action. The key question is not whether systems exist – though that is clearly a pre-requisite – but whether they are clear, coherent, and usable under real conditions.

Leaders therefore need to test how operational systems function in practice, including how concerns move through the organisation and how safeguarding connects with HR, IT, estates, and governance. This extends to interactions with external agencies.

In strong trusts, operational systems are clear, consistent, and usable. Staff know what to do, when to do it, and how decisions will be made. Where this pillar is weaker, systems often exist in form but lack coherence in practice. A common problem is over-complexity; layers of process can feel reassuring at a design stage, but make systems harder to use and less consistently applied in practice. At worst, they promote the assumption that someone else will take responsibility at a later stage, leading to tragic inaction.

Fragmentation is another risk. Different functions may develop their own processes, creating misalignment and weak information flow. Unclear escalation pathways can also delay action or lead to inconsistent responses. In some contexts, systems become procedural rather than purposeful, with completion valued more than quality.

This pillar is judged not by the simple presence of procedures, but by whether operational systems support effective decision-making in practice. Where systems are effective, decisions are timely and staff work with confidence. Processes are regularly reviewed in a collaborative way, and co-created with internal and external colleagues to reduce friction. Where they are weak, variability and risk increase. Processes are followed from tradition instead of current need, and may actively conflict with the needs of colleagues.



4. Practice, capability, and capacity

Safeguarding effectiveness ultimately depends on the quality of professional practice. While operational systems provide structure, the decisions made by staff, often in complex and uncertain circumstances, determine outcomes for children.

The issue is not only whether staff are trained, but whether they are capable, confident, and supported to apply professional judgement consistently. Role descriptions can set out expected responsibilities, but these may not translate to the daily reality.

In strong trusts, practice is marked by confidence, consistency, and professional curiosity. Staff make child-centred decisions and do not default to process when judgement is required.

Where this pillar is weaker, practice becomes inconsistent and fragile, even where operational systems appear strong. A common problem is over-reliance on individuals. When expertise sits with a few people, the system becomes vulnerable to absence, turnover, and overload.

Training can also fail to translate into practice. Staff may know procedure, but still feel uncertain in complex or ambiguous situations. Training is not solely an issue for operational staff: while trustees and local committee members do not need to be safeguarding experts, as with staff they need sufficient understanding to have the confidence to challenge where necessary.

Workload pressure is critical. When safeguarding is added to already demanding roles without enough capacity, practice can become procedural and reactive.

Lack of structured supervision is another weakness. Without space to discuss cases and reflect on decisions, staff may work in isolation with the potential minimising of review and challenge; a more stressful working environment; or a lack of professional growth. Trusts have the ability to promote networks for sharing across the organisation, and participation in external professional groups, but this requires dedicated time, and a culture that prioritises collaboration as an essential, not a nicety.

This pillar is measured not by training programmes or role descriptions, but by the quality, consistency and confidence of safeguarding practice.

Where practice, capability and capacity are strong, decisions are timely, proportionate and consistent. Where they are weak, the organisation depends too heavily on individual resilience.

5. Safeguarding intelligence and improvement

Safeguarding intelligence is how leaders develop a clear, evidence-informed understanding of risk, performance, and impact. It enables the organisation to move beyond describing activity and towards understanding what that activity means, where vulnerabilities lie, and how practice should improve.

The question is not whether data exists, but how effectively it is interpreted, challenged and used. Dashboards and reporting cycles provide an outward show of compliance, but are of limited use if they are not understood and interrogated.

Where this pillar is weak, intelligence is often present but underused. Reports may contain data but little interpretation, leaving leaders with figures but not understanding. Information should be provided in timely ways, that allow for sufficient time for analysis and reflection before, during, and after meetings.

Another common problem is reporting activity without explaining patterns, variation, or links between indicators. There is also often a disconnect between data and decision-making. Information is reported, but does not consistently shape strategic or operational action.

Weak learning loops are another potential issue. Themes and case reviews may be recorded, but the learning is not consistently captured, shared or embedded. A lack of high-quality communication risks mistakes being repeated.

A lack of consistency in data quality between schools, with information being recorded differently or to different thresholds, can reduce the reliability of safeguarding intelligence.

The strength of this pillar is therefore not determined by the presence of consistent data systems or reporting formats, though these are foundational. It is defined by the extent to which intelligence is used to understand, challenge, and improve safeguarding practice through a cycle of continuous development.

Ensuring an integrated approach

Safeguarding effectiveness is determined not by the strength of individual components in isolation, but on their alignment as a coherent whole. Strength in one pillar cannot compensate for weakness elsewhere.

Leadership, culture, systems, practice, and safeguarding intelligence must operate in combination. When aligned, they create consistency, clarity and confidence; when misaligned, they generate variability, reduce staff confidence and increase the risk that concerns are missed or managed poorly.

Less effective arrangements often contain isolated strengths: strong operational systems but a culture that inhibits challenge, or active leadership oversight without reliable intelligence. In these circumstances, safeguarding may appear robust while underlying fragility remains.

Effective trusts recognise safeguarding as an ecosystem, not a set of discrete functions. Leaders therefore take a global view of the whole environment, considering how leadership shapes culture, how culture influences operational systems, and how intelligence informs practice and strategy. This alignment requires intentional design, not assumption. Consistency, communication, and continual development work in concert, with structures, processes and expectations mutually reinforcing and clearly understood. They must be actively maintained as organisations grow, contexts shift, and new risks emerge.

Sustaining an integrated safeguarding system depends on disciplined leadership, effective governance and continuous reflection. Leaders must test whether the system works as intended, identify misalignment, and take corrective action.

Where integration is strong, safeguarding is consistent, reliable and resilient. Where it is weak, even well-developed elements may fail. Leadership must therefore ensure not only that each pillar exists, but that the system operates with coherence and purpose.

Next steps for trust leaders

For executive leaders and trustees, the implications are immediate. Safeguarding cannot be assured through compliance activity alone, nor delegated without clear, active oversight.

At trust level, safeguarding is a strategic responsibility requiring sustained attention. Leaders must hold a credible, evidence-informed understanding of how safeguarding operates across the organisation, including strengths, emerging risks, and areas of fragility.

This means moving beyond reporting cycles to active engagement. Leaders should interrogate safeguarding information, test assurance, and understand how systems and decisions operate in practice, including variability across schools and emerging risk. A key implication is clarity about meaningful assurance: not simply policies, completed audits, or positive reports, but evidence from multiple sources that together provide a reliable picture of safeguarding effectiveness.

Leaders must also challenge long-standing assumptions, test positive narratives where evidence is thin, and remain alert to unseen or developing risk.

A system-level perspective is essential. Leaders must understand how leadership, culture, systems, practice,



and intelligence interact to shape outcomes, enabling more coherent safeguarding decision-making across the trust.

This also affects how leadership time is used. Effective safeguarding requires deliberate investment in reflection, practitioner engagement and ongoing review of systems and performance.

Where these conditions are met, trusts are better able to respond to complexity, adapt to change and sustain effective safeguarding. Where they are not, safeguarding risks becoming procedural, assurance becomes assumption, and leaders lose visibility of emerging issues.

The role of executive leaders and trustees is therefore not simply to oversee safeguarding, but to ensure it is actively understood, appropriately challenged and consistently prioritised.

Conclusion

Safeguarding within school trusts is complex and critical. Statutory expectations provide a baseline, but effective safeguarding at scale requires more than structures, policies, or procedural compliance. It depends on alignment across leadership, culture, systems, professional practice, and the intelligent use of information.

This paper sets out a model for understanding safeguarding in practice, moving beyond activity-based reassurance towards a disciplined, evidence-informed approach. Safeguarding effectiveness is defined not by the presence of processes, but by how they are experienced, applied, and sustained, through communication, consistency, and continuous development.

A core challenge is closing the gap between intention and reality. Trusts may have strong frameworks, but without active leadership, system coherence and a strong safeguarding culture, they will not translate consistently into effective practice.

Where this is achieved, safeguarding becomes more than compliance. It becomes a coherent ecosystem that identifies risk, supports professional judgement, and evolves over time, enabling leaders to make informed and timely decisions.

The implications are clear: safeguarding at trust level requires clarity of ownership, strong governance, and ongoing reflection and improvement. Leaders must move beyond reassurance towards credible assurance grounded in evidence, insight and professional understanding.

Ultimately, effective safeguarding is not static but a continuous process of alignment, challenge and refinement. Trusts that adopt this approach are better placed to sustain strong practice, respond to emerging risks and ensure that children are consistently protected and supported.

Strengthen safeguarding across your trust with CST

As safeguarding expectations evolve and challenges become increasingly complex, leaders, safeguarding professionals and trustees need opportunities to learn, connect and develop effective practice. At CST, we bring together sector expertise, professional networks, and trust-focused development opportunities to help strengthen safeguarding across the system.

Safeguarding Professional Community

CST's [Safeguarding Professional Community](#) connects safeguarding leaders and practitioners from trusts across the country. Through expert input, peer discussion, and shared learning, the community provides a supportive space to explore emerging issues, strengthen practice and build valuable professional networks.

The community is an integral part of your trust's CST membership, and open to all staff and governance volunteers in CST member trusts.

CST Safeguarding Conference

The annual [CST Safeguarding Conference](#) brings together trust leaders, safeguarding professionals and sector experts to explore current priorities and emerging challenges. Designed specifically for the trust sector, the conference offers practical insights, strategic thinking and opportunities to learn from peers.

Training for your trust

The challenges faced by trusts keep changing, and CST offers a range of training backed by our expertise and unique understanding of school trusts. This includes our [Your role as a safeguarding trustee course](#), aimed at helping those fulfilling this important link role to understand their responsibilities, strengthen oversight, and develop the confidence to provide effective challenge and assurance.



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