

Improving Safeguarding through Audited Father Engagement

ISAFE is an online learning package we developed with support from [CASCADE](#) (the Children's Social Care Research and Development Centre, based at Cardiff University), to improve engagement with fathers and father-figures, by local authority children's social work departments.

Thanks to funding from [Foundations](#) (the What Works Centre for Children and Families), we delivered ISAFE to social workers in seven English local authorities as part of a [randomised controlled trial](#), with [Ipsos](#) as independent evaluator (2022-4). The independent evaluation of ISAFE found that it can bring significant improvements in social worker confidence and competence in engagement with fathers.

ISAFE is designed to address services' failure to routinely and systematically engage, assess, support and challenge men in families – which has been highlighted repeatedly over several decades, in inquiries into cases where children have died or been seriously injured. This practice deficit was highlighted in our evidence reviews for the National Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel, and its influential report, [The Myth of Invisible Men](#) (2021).

Our approach is to address both individual social workers' practice, and the systems that surround them - helping children's social work departments better identify and work systematically with men in families, thus preventing harm to children, and increasing the chances of children staying in the care of family members, where this is safe.

The ISAFE package includes:

- Training for social workers, to help them engage effectively with men in families, and make use of 'motivational interviewing'
- Training for quality assurance staff, in how to monitor social workers' father-engagement routinely and systematically (using a father-inclusion audit tool)
- Training for team leaders to help them lead and support their colleagues to do the best possible job of engaging with fathers
- A webinar for senior leaders, to help them push through changes in policies and systems that will make father-engagement part of LAs' routine, everyday work

To discuss bringing ISAFE to your area, contact training@fatherhoodinstitute.org