



# Safeguarders Panel

## Summary Annual Report 2012 – 2014

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CHILDREN 1<sup>ST</sup> is contracted by the Scottish Government to assist Scottish Ministers with the management and operation of the national Safeguarders Panel in terms of the Children's Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011 (Safeguarders Panel) Regulations 2012

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**The role of the Safeguarders Panel team includes recruitment and selection, training, managing appointments, complaints and monitoring performance of Safeguarders across Scotland.**

### **Summary of Achievements: April 2012 until 31 March 2014**

The Children's Hearings (Scotland) Act 2011 heralded significant changes for Safeguarders across Scotland. The introduction of their continuing role across both children's hearing and court processes brought a steep learning curve for many with particular 'whole process' training needs. The setting-up included the development and implementation of national frameworks for the allocation and remuneration of appointments. The challenge of driving this major change programme was considerable, requiring detailed planning and recognition of the impact on Safeguarders as individuals.

One of our most significant achievements was the development of a comprehensive recruitment plan which included the recruitment of new and serving Safeguarders. The initial challenge faced was determining the numbers of Safeguarders who were appointed by local authority panels. This proved a considerable task as some lists were out of date.

In consultation with the Scottish Government, guidance and procedures were produced relating to; operating context, records management, fees and expenses, complaints procedure and Safeguarder code of conduct. In addition, the Safeguarders Panel website was developed as a useful tool to enhance communication and provide information.

An allocation system of Safeguarder appointments was developed for 'go live' in June 2013. The system needed to be fair and transparent whilst at the same time taking account of the availability of individual Safeguarders. The paramount requirement was to ensure operational flexibility to cover all areas of Scotland during periods of peak demand.

As the 2011 Act gives continuity of the Safeguarder's role across hearing and court proceedings, appointments appear to last longer and this has impacted on accurate comparisons of 'numbers' of appointments under the 1995 legislation.

We prepared a training plan which was responsive to requests and need from Safeguarders, including events on practice and legislation. Prioritised court training was carried out, initially in Glasgow with national roll-out later in the year.

The immediate priorities at the beginning of 2014 included a targeted recruitment campaign for areas of specific need. In addition, a third mandatory pre-appointment training day for new Safeguarders was introduced to allow further training on the role of the Safeguarder in court, child protection and communication with children.

Developing the national Safeguarders Panel in this set-up phase has required operational agility and flexibility in response to the range of issues arising. However, the foundation is in place to improve support to Safeguarders and to develop consistent standards for their practice across Scotland when they engage in their work with vulnerable children and young people at critical points in their lives.

## 1. Recruitment and selection

The key objective was to ensure that sufficient Safeguarders were recruited, trained and appointed to the national Safeguarders Panel in time for 'go live' on 24 June 2013. From the group of 200 local authority Safeguarders, 152 were appointed to the national Panel by 31 March 2014, thereby ensuring a continuing service to children under the 2011 Act.

The first public advert for new Safeguarders posted online in early 2013 attracted 94 responses. Recruitment from these applications was split into two tranches. The first successful group of 28 were appointed in time for 'go live' in June 2013 and the second group of 18 began pre appointment training in March 2014.

By 31 March 2014, the combination of existing and new Safeguarder recruitment gave an appointed complement of 178 across Scotland. This number was sufficient to meet demand during the transition period with projected complement by September 2014 of 200.

**Table 1.1: Safeguarder Recruitment**

	As at 24/06/2013	As at 31/03/14
Existing Safeguarders appointed from Local Authority panels	145	152
Resignations between 24 June 13 and 31 March 14		-3
New Safeguarder Appointments trained May 2013	28	29
<b>Total Number of Appointed Safeguarders</b>	<b>173</b>	<b>178</b>

**Table 1.2: Safeguarder Gender and Age Range**

Gender	Under 40	40-49	50-59	60-69	70-79	80+	Total
Female	12	14	33	35	8	0	102
Male	1	10	29	26	8	2	76
<b>Total</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>178</b>

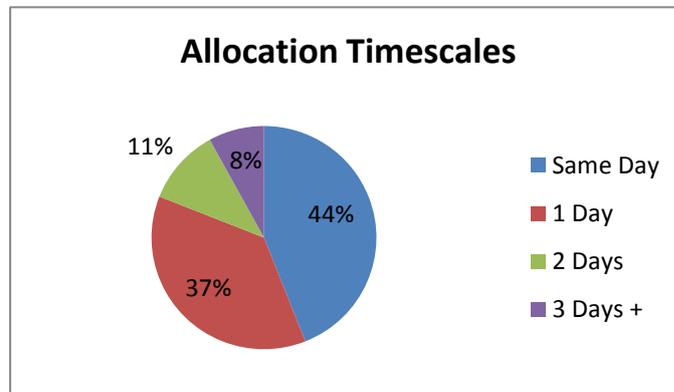
## 2. Service Delivery

A total of 1043 safeguarder appointments were made from June 2013 until March 2014. Safeguarders report that there has been an increase in the duration of their involvement across court and children's hearings proceedings. The approach to allocation of appointments is using a 'taxi rank' system. The allocations system is kept under constant review as it is the intention that allocations are fair and transparent.

Members of the Safeguarders Panel team continue to have regular meetings with partner agencies such as senior management at Scottish Children's Reporters Administration and Scottish Court Service, as well liaison meetings with Children's Hearings Scotland and the Scottish Safeguarders Association.

An out of hours contact system has been arranged in conjunction with another CHILDREN 1<sup>ST</sup> service, ParentLine which allows Safeguarders to phone in to record attendance at any visits where they feel their safety may be compromised.

**Table 2.1: Allocation timescales**



### Notes

1. Time periods apply to 'working days'
2. The operation of a 'fair and transparent' allocation process has to take account of:
  - Safeguarders availability during holiday periods
  - Re-allocation of the same appointment when original Safeguarder unable to continue due to conflict of interest
  - Specific requests from a children's hearing or sheriff for a Safeguarder with specific skills to meet the needs of a particular child(ren)
 Taking account of these requirements can on occasions unavoidably prolong the 2 day turnaround.

**Table 2.2: Safeguarder allocations by type of proceedings**

Type of Hearing	No.	%
Sheriff Court	517	49.57%
Children's Hearing	526	50.43%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1043</b>	

### Notes

1. These tables refer to safeguarder appointments under 2011 Act. During the transition period from 24 June 2013 local authorities continued to make appointments under the 1995 Act. Therefore it will be difficult to project appointment trends until a full 12 months data is available from January 2014 to December 2014.
2. Appointments under 2011 Act require Safeguarders to support children across Children's Hearing and court processes as appropriate.

**Table 2.3: Safeguarder allocations and availability across Scotland: 2012-2014**

<p><b>20. Highland</b> Safeguarders - 15 Appt by hearing – 11 Appt by Court – 16</p>	<p><b>31. Orkney Islands</b> Safeguarders - 11 Appt by hearing – 5 Appt by Court – 2</p>	<p><b>32. Shetland Islands</b> Safeguarders - -11 Appt by hearing – 1 Appt by Court – 1</p>	<p><b>19. Moray</b> Safeguarders - 14 Appt by hearing - 7 Appt by Court - 12</p>
<p><b>21. Eilean Siar</b> Safeguarders - 10 Appt by hearing - 1 Appt by Court – 1</p>			<p><b>18. Aberdeen</b> Safeguarders - 13 Appt by hearing - 3 Appt by Court- 12</p>
<p><b>22. Argyll &amp; Bute</b> Safeguarders - 11 Appt by hearing - 7 Appt by Court – 8</p>			<p><b>17. Aberdeenshire</b> Safeguarders - 15 Appt by hearing - 4 Appt by Court - 6</p>
<p><b>23. Perth &amp; Kinross</b> Safeguarders - 18 Appt by hearing - 11 Appt by Court – 20</p>			<p><b>16. Angus</b> Safeguarders - 17 Appt by hearing - 9 Appt by Court - 22</p>
<p><b>24. Stirling</b> Safeguarders - 18 Appt by hearing - 7 Appt by Court – 17</p>			<p><b>15. Dundee</b> Safeguarders - 23 Appt by hearing - 73 Appt by Court - 69</p>
<p><b>29. South Lanarkshire</b> Safeguarders - 12 Appt by hearing - 21 Appt by Court – 22</p>			<p><b>14. Fife</b> Safeguarders - 22 Appt by hearing - 34 Appt by Court - 81</p>
<p><b>25. North Ayrshire</b> Safeguarders - 17 Appt by hearing - 40 Appt by Court – 3</p>			<p><b>13. Clackmannanshire</b> Safeguarders - 19 Appt by hearing - 7 Appt by Court – 27</p>
<p><b>26. East Ayrshire</b> Safeguarders - 15 Appt by hearing -16 Appt by Court – 0</p>			<p><b>30. Borders</b> Safeguarders - 28 Appt by hearing - 2 Appt by Court – 0</p>
<p><b>27. South Ayrshire</b> Safeguarders - 17 Appt by hearing - 26 Appt by Court – 8</p>			<p><b>28. Dumfries &amp; Galloway</b> Safeguarders - 10 Appt by hearing - 27 Appt by Court - 4</p>
<p><b>1. Inverclyde</b> Safeguarders - 13 Appt by hearing - 8 Appt by Court – 2</p>			<p><b>7. North Lanarkshire</b> Safeguarders - 12 Appt by hearing - 28 Appt by Court - 12</p>
<p><b>2. Renfrewshire</b> Safeguarders - 15 Appt by hearing - 26 Appt by Court – 4</p>			<p><b>8. Falkirk</b> Safeguarders - 17 Appt by hearing - 16 Appt by Court – 4</p>
<p><b>6. East Renfrewshire</b> Safeguarders - 16 Appt by hearing - 3 Appt by Court – 5</p>	<p><b>9. West Lothian</b> Safeguarders - 21 Appt by hearing - 5 Appt by Court – 10</p>		
<p><b>5. Glasgow</b> Safeguarders – 23 Appt by hearing - 56 Appt by Court - 43</p>	<p><b>10. Edinburgh</b> Safeguarders - 32 Appt by hearing - 30 Appt by Court - 69</p>		
<p><b>4. East Dunbartonshire</b> Safeguarders - 14 Appt by hearing - 4 Appt by Court – 4</p>	<p><b>3. West Dunbartonshire</b> Safeguarders - 15 Appt by hearing - 22 Appt by Court – 23</p>	<p><b>11. Mid Lothian</b> Safeguarders - 30 Appt by hearing - 6 Appt by Court - 0</p>	<p><b>12. East Lothian</b> Safeguarders - 34 Appt by hearing - 10 Appt by Court - 10</p>
<p><b>N.B. Safeguarders may choose to cover more than one local authority within reasonable travelling distance</b></p>			

### 3. Training, development and regional networks

Pre-appointment training was provided in June 2013 for 148 serving Safeguarders and 28 new applicants. This training was facilitated by Children's Hearing Training Officers in consultation with the national Safeguarders Panel team and designed to cover all aspects of the role of the Safeguarder. The training days for new applicants were supported by serving Safeguarders and they were an invaluable source of experience and practice-based information. Further pre-appointment training was held in March 2014 for the remaining successful applicants.

**Table 3.1: Regional Network Events (RNEs)**

Date	Number Held	Total Safeguarder Attendance
September/October 2012	9	115
February 2013	4	91
November 2013	7	97

Topics covered at RNEs include an introduction to the Safeguarders Panel, Child Protection, Court Practice and Communicating with Children.

**Table 3.2: Practice training for Safeguarders**

Date	Sessions Held		Safeguarder Attendance
	Court	Practice & Legislation	
June 2013	2		22
January 2014		6	99
January 2014	2		20

Between June 2013 and January 2014, 10 training sessions were arranged for court skills, practice and legislation following requests from Safeguarders. The court modules have now been developed into three levels and delivery nationally by cl@n childlaw which has been very well received by Safeguarders.

**Table 3.3: National conference 2014**

Date	Safeguarder Attendance
March 2014	113

The national conference was held in March 2014 with input from Scottish Government, Children's Hearing Scotland, Judiciary, Scottish Children's Reporter Administration and Dr Susanne Zeedyk.

### Looking ahead

The input from serving Safeguarders will be critical to the development of the service going forward and we look forward to working alongside you as part of the whole system approach to the modernisation of the Children's Hearing System. The body of Safeguarders remains a vital role within the Hearing System by acting in the best interests of the most vulnerable children and young people at critical times in their lives.