

safeguarders panel team

Summary Annual Report 2015-16

Children 1st 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 and Amendment Regulations 2016

Vision

The overarching Vision for the Safeguarder Panel is to be:

Excellent: what every child deserves, we will aspire to and support excellence

Transparent: be fair, equitable and accessible

Accountable: through ownership our actions stand up to scrutiny

Respectful: to the role and in all relationships and actions to fill it

Summary of Achievements:

This year the Safeguarder Panel Team has continued to deliver strongly on all operational requirements – with a focus on ensuring that all children who require a safeguarder get one allocated to them in timely fashion. Our commitment to sound strategic and operational planning, and to delivery of key actions against well-publicised timeframes, has secured an increasingly consistent and transparent service. That, with the valued support of safeguarders, has ensured delivery of the modernisation programme on time and according to plan. Of particular note has been the introduction of national Practice Standards for Safeguarders and an allied Performance Support and Monitoring Framework. In the newly-reformed regulatory context, these actions now put safeguarders on an improved footing for the challenges of providing an excellent, transparent, accountable and respectful service.

Key milestones

The Safeguarder Panel Team have:-

Collaborated with safeguarders to create Practice Standards for Safeguarders, setting out the minimum expectations of practice and conduct with a focus on maintaining children at the centre of all safeguarder practice.

Created a Performance Support and Monitoring Framework (PSMF) with and for safeguarders, to secure the vision of an excellent, transparent, accountable and respectful service for children and families.

In the summer of 2015, held 11 events across the country to engage with the body of safeguarders and stakeholders to support the transition to the operation of the Standards in April 2015 and phased implementation of the Framework from September 2015.

Supported the Scottish Government in the consultation process towards regulatory change and the resultant Amendment Regulations planned for April 2016.

Collaborated with the Scottish Government in developing the new letter of appointment to the national Safeguarder Panel and the supporting transitional plan.

Collaborated with Scottish Government in their production of new Fees Expenses and Allowances and communicated with safeguarders and supported the transition.

Communicated effectively with safeguarders the proposed changes through engagement events, information packs, newsletters etc.

Began phased implementation of the PSMF in accordance with timeline:

Increased attendance of safeguarders and successful completion of planned events from 202 (2014/15) to 569 an increase of 181% on the previous year.

All safeguarders allocated a designated support manager

Designed and delivered 2 mandatory training days for safeguarders including input on child protection, communicating with children and GIRFEC.

Delivered one individual support session to all active safeguarders.

Collaborated with Scottish Children's Reporter Administration (SCRA) and Children's Hearings Scotland (CHS) to deliver a mechanism for local feedback on safeguarders' contribution to proceedings.

Created practice and recording tools and mechanisms for assessment of safeguarders against the Standards.

Created a quantitative database to capture safeguarder engagement with the PSMF for assessment purposes and to meet reporting requirements

Recruited to the roles in the Safeguarder Panel Team

Collaborated with safeguarders to:

Coproduce a new leaflet for children on the role of safeguarder,

Coproduce 6 Practice Notes to support greater clarity for safeguarders and stakeholders on: parameters of the role, reasons for appointment, explaining the role, meeting, communicating and listening, dealing with conflict and contact beyond appointments.

Create a linked training framework for safeguarders that joins pre-appointment training, mandatory training and reappointment training by a modular approach.

Identify areas of inconsistent practice, to inform policies and practice expectations. For example: confidentiality and data management compliance.

Also:

Presented annual update to Minister for Children and Young People.

Maintained strong working relationships with key partners, in particular SCRA, CHS, Scottish Court and Tribunal Service (SCTS) and Scottish Government.

Supporting increased awareness of modernisation programme with Local Authorities, Judiciary and local Panel Member events.

Contributed to whole system improvement, partner in Children's Hearings Improvement partnership (CHIP) Learning and Development sub group and Tri-partite group.

Key Performance Indicators

1. Recruitment and Selection

KPI: Children 1st will be responsible for the recruitment and retention of safeguarders ensuring that the number fully trained meets demand. (SOR Ref 3)

Target: 100%

Achieved: 100% - recruitment is a standing item on the agenda for the monthly contract meeting and contract papers

Table 1.1: Safeguarder Recruitment

Appointed Safeguarders at 1 April 15	212
Resignations between 1 April 15 and 31 March 16	59
New Safeguarder Appointments	0
Total Number of Appointed Safeguarders at 31 March 16	153
Numbers of re-appointment to Safeguarders Panel (6 months notice)	
May 16	10
June 16	72
July 16	33
August 16	5

A Recruitment programme is planned to commence in June 2016. Work is underway to update the recruitment process to ensure this reflects the new regulatory context. We hold about 200 notes of interest from individuals wishing to become safeguarders.

Table 1.2: Safeguarder Gender and Age Range

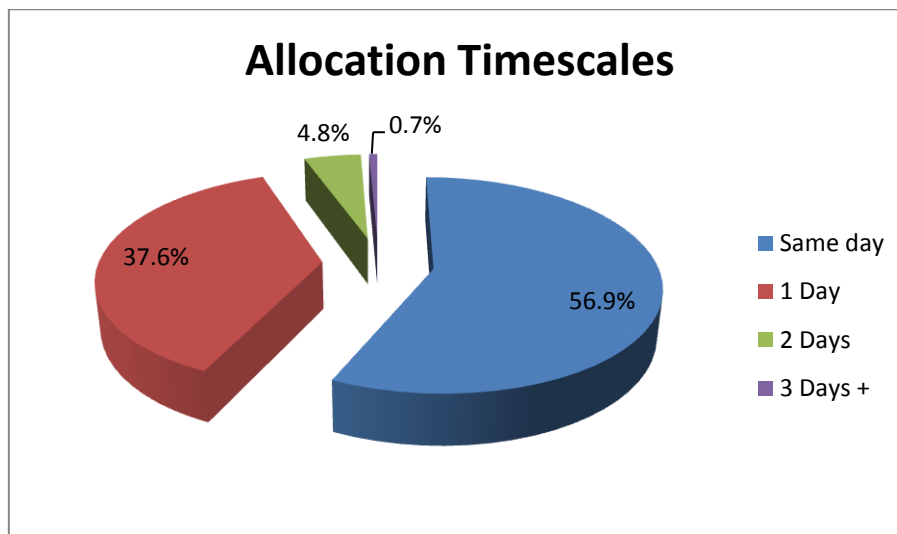
Gender	Under 40	40-49	50-59	60-69	70-79	80+	Total
Female	9	15	20	39	11	1	95
Male	3	5	25	20	5		58
Total	12	20	45	59	16	1	153

2. Service Delivery

KPI: Appointments will be made as soon as reasonably as possible within two days of referral (SOR Ref 4)

Target: 98% Achieved: 99%

Table 2.1: Allocation Timescales



The majority of appointments are allocated within one day. This strong performance is reliant on the safeguarders' prompt response and good management processes.

Table 2.2: Safeguarder Allocations and Availability across Scotland: 2015-16

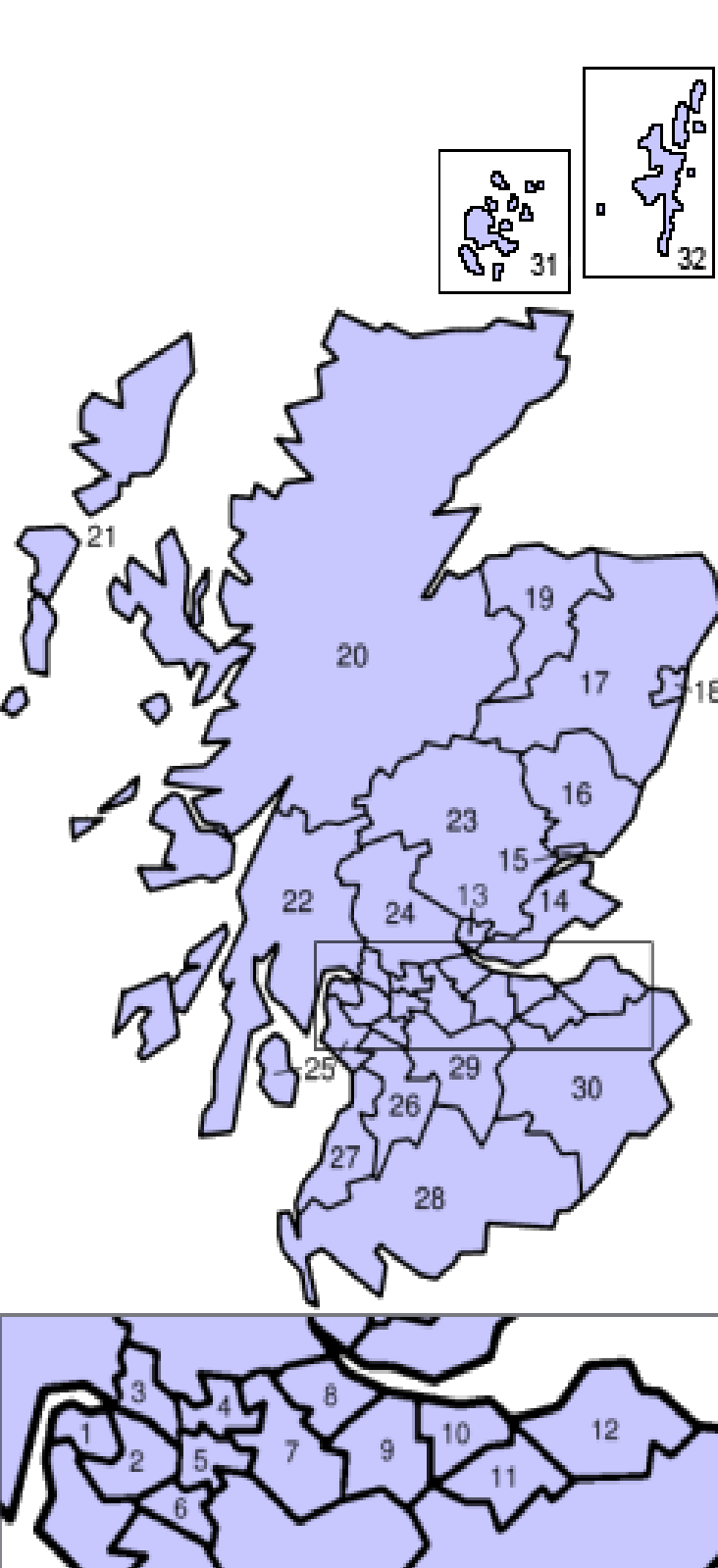
20. Highland Safeguarders - 12 Appt by hearing – 18 Appt by Court – 22	31. Orkney Islands Safeguarders - 6 Appt by hearing – 3 Appt by Court – 3	32. Shetland Islands Safeguarders - 5 Appt by hearing – 2 Appt by Court – 2	19. Moray Safeguarders - 13 Appt by hearing - 6 Appt by Court – 3
21. Eilean Siar Safeguarders - 6 Appt by hearing - 0 Appt by Court – 1			18. Aberdeen Safeguarders - 10 Appt by hearing - 13 Appt by Court - 15
22. Argyll & Bute Safeguarders - 7 Appt by hearing - 6 Appt by Court – 9			17. Aberdeenshire Safeguarders - 11 Appt by hearing - 11 Appt by Court – 7
23. Perth & Kinross Safeguarders – 15 Appt by hearing - 17 Appt by Court – 40			16. Angus Safeguarders - 13 Appt by hearing - 16 Appt by Court – 27
24. Stirling Safeguarders - 17 Appt by hearing - 6 Appt by Court – 19			15. Dundee Safeguarders - 24 Appt by hearing - 67 Appt by Court – 81
29. South Lanarkshire Safeguarders - 14 Appt by hearing - 43 Appt by Court – 28			14. Fife Safeguarders - 19 Appt by hearing - 55 Appt by Court – 116
25. North Ayrshire Safeguarders - 13 Appt by hearing - 41 Appt by Court – 5			13. Clackmannanshire Safeguarders - 15 Appt by hearing - 13 Appt by Court – 35
26. East Ayrshire Safeguarders - 13 Appt by hearing - 29 Appt by Court – 4	30. Borders Safeguarders - 5 Appt by hearing - 12 Appt by Court – 1		
27. South Ayrshire Safeguarders - 11 Appt by hearing - 29 Appt by Court – 6	28. Dumfries & Galloway Safeguarders - 4 Appt by hearing - 29 Appt by Court – 2		
1. Inverclyde Safeguarders - 6 Appt by hearing - 12 Appt by Court – 0	7. North Lanarkshire Safeguarders - 17 Appt by hearing - 42 Appt by Court – 22		
2. Renfrewshire Safeguarders - 9 Appt by hearing - 23 Appt by Court – 14	8. Falkirk Safeguarders - 14 Appt by hearing - 20 Appt by Court – 4		
6. East Renfrewshire Safeguarders - 10 Appt by hearing - 7 Appt by Court – 0	9. West Lothian Safeguarders - 17 Appt by hearing - 9 Appt by Court – 29		
5. Glasgow Safeguarders – 30 Appt by hearing - 85 Appt by Court – 97	10. Edinburgh Safeguarders - 27 Appt by hearing - 74 Appt by Court – 71		
4. East Dunbartonshire Safeguarders - 8 Appt by hearing - 11 Appt by Court – 2	3. West Dunbartonshire Safeguarders - 11 Appt by hearing - 32 Appt by Court – 31	11. Mid Lothian Safeguarders - 21 Appt by hearing - 11 Appt by Court - 9	12. East Lothian Safeguarders - 22 Appt by hearing - 25 Appt by Court - 6
N.B. safeguarders may choose to cover more than one local authority within reasonable travelling distance			

Table 2.3: Safeguarder Allocations by Type of Proceeding

Type of Hearing	Nos.	%
Sheriff Court	711	48%
Children's Hearing	767	52%
Total	1478	100%

The 1478 appointments relate to 2114 children. This is a decrease in appointments of 107 from 2014-15, relating to a proportionate decrease of 213 children, with significantly lower number of safeguarders active. There continue to be inconsistencies in the allocation of safeguarders across the country as depicted in the table 2.2..

3. Performance Support and Monitoring Framework

KPI: Two mandatory training days will be delivered to safeguarders per annum with failure to attend reported to Scottish Government (SOR Ref 6)

Target: 100% delivered Achieved: 100% delivered
 Target: 95% attendance Achieved: 86% attendance

Table 3.1: Training and Elements of Framework

Date	Course Name	No. of Events	No. of Safeguarders Attending
June/July 2015	Practice Standards Engagement Event	11	125
Sept/Oct 2015	Mandatory Training 1	11	151
Feb/Mar 2016	Mandatory Training 2	7	137
Nov-Mar	Individual Support Sessions	156	156

The new Performance, Support and Monitoring Framework is now being implemented. This model will provide support mechanisms each year through mandatory elements: two training events, three individual support sessions, two reports sampled, feedback and local engagement events. This activity will build an evidence bank to demonstrate safeguarders practice against the Standards, to form a recommendation on reappointment and continued appointment to the Safeguarder Panel for decision by Scottish Ministers.

4. Safeguarders

4.1 Investigation of Complaints about safeguarders

Table 4.1: Summary of Complaints

Source of Complaint	Complaints Received
Family Member	18
Local Authority	8
SCRA	1
Total	27

Reasons for Complaint	Nos.
Safeguarder conduct	17
Content of report	8
Conduct and report content	2
Total	27

Complaint Outcome	Nos.
Fully upheld	0
Part upheld	5
Not upheld	3
No Further Action	16
Beyond scope of SPT	2
Decision pending	0
Under investigation	1
Total	27

Notes

1. Complaints classified as "No Further Action" were not progressed by the complainant following initial contact with Children 1st

The policy was updated in 2015 to include issues and concerns as well as complaints. There is a small reduction in complaints from 29 last year to 27 this year. Last year two complaints were fully upheld and nine partly upheld. This year of the total complaints five were partly upheld.

An important development in undertaking complaint activity has been the ability to dispatch to complainants the Practice Standards for Safeguarders. Similarly the Framework's implementation from September has proved helpful in appropriately de-escalating matters: on five out of eight occasions when early resolution was agreed, the matter raised was appropriately diverted to a safeguarders individual support session for reflection and discussion rather than being pursued as a complaint.

The Safeguarder Panel Team has delivered strongly on the intentions set out in the Annual Report of 2014-15. The Team has greatly valued the contributions of, and adjustments made by, safeguarders in the progress made this year. We have also benefited considerably from strong and constructive working partnerships with SCRA, CHS and SCTS. Our engaged and collaborative partnership with the Scottish Government Children's Hearings Team is central to the significant progress made this year.

Looking ahead

The plan for the next year is to build on the implementation of the Framework

Within this the priority is to introduce all the distinct elements of this, in particular the required mandatory elements: two cycles of report sampling and three individual support sessions, and two training days for the first time

Most significantly in February 2017 and beyond this will mean this evidence recorded for each safeguarder will then be triangulated to make recommendations to Scottish Ministers for their decision on reappointment.

In collaboration with a working group of Safeguarders the “linked” Training Framework will be completed.

Distinct training modules designed and delivered, including reappointment training.

Set up a working group to review local engagement events.

The Practice Notes working group to continue to deliver supportive notes on the parameters of the role.

Build the views of children, young people and stakeholders into the ongoing developments; review this through feedback mechanisms and review of the leaflet.

Instigate review activity of the first year of the implementation of the Standards and Framework to demonstrate impact of the Framework.

Complete review of recruitment strategy and agree to implement new process with Scottish Government in June 2016, with planned review.

Continue to build profile and regard for the national Safeguarders Panel and awareness of the modernisation programme, including through children’s panel training, SCRA and judiciary events.

Build further awareness of the developments in the wider system and continue to contribute to whole system improvement through attendance at CHIP and sub groups.

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