

# Safeguarders Panel Team – Support for Safeguarders when raising issues

## GENERAL

1. The Safeguarders Panel Team has responsibilities to ensure that
  - Safeguarders are supported appropriately when they raise concerns related to other organisations or services
  - the Team works with children and families, Safeguarders and partner agencies to address issues that impact on Safeguarder performance, whether relevant to an individual appointment or with local or national relevance
  - themes and issues are reported to the Scottish Government Team to support accountability and continual improvement<sup>1</sup>.

The Safeguarders Panel Team is committed to ensuring that wider system issues are addressed at both a local and national level<sup>2</sup>.

2. Safeguarders have responsibilities as individual Safeguarders in any appointment and as a Safeguarder who is a member of the national Safeguarders Panel. These include:
  - safeguarding the interests of children<sup>3</sup>
  - performing their role within the wider context of children's services, all of which are focused on the wellbeing of a child and improving outcomes where required
  - working within the current national policies and frameworks in support of collaborative approaches with particular reference to the principles of Getting it Right for every Child and Early Years Framework<sup>4</sup>.
3. The Safeguarders Panel Team cannot intervene with matters that are properly considered as part of any current proceedings, nor is it the Team's role to advise Safeguarders in any way that would compromise their independence in any appointment.
4. Safeguarders and the Safeguarder Panel Team should try to work together to identify the best way to raise issues so that these can be addressed where possible for the benefit of children.

## ISSUES OR CONCERNS IDENTIFIED BY SAFEGUARDERS

5. Issues or concerns should where possible be raised appropriately by Safeguarders as part of the proceedings surrounding the appointment. The Safeguarder has the details and knowledge required to do this most effectively. Safeguarders may wish to, and can do this without support.
6. Where Safeguarders need to discuss what they might want to raise as an issue, the Safeguarder Panel Team can be approached for information or to sound out an issue.

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<sup>1</sup> Support to Meet the Practice Standards, [Practice Standards for Safeguarders](#), June 2015, Page 15

<sup>2</sup> Practice Note on the Role of the Safeguarder – Dealing with conflict during appointment at 11.

<sup>3</sup> Children's Hearing (Scotland) Act 2011, section 30

<sup>4</sup> [Practice Standards for Safeguarders](#), June 2015, Page 5

7. Where Safeguarders need support in raising an issue, the Safeguarder Panel Team can be approached to see if support can be provided. The Team needs to consider if it can support the matter being raised. This includes looking at
- whether the Team holds the same view as the Safeguarder as to the issue,
  - whether the Team is able to be involved in raising the issue whether because the team's role does not let it or there are inadequate resources in the Team.

All these considerations will be fully discussed with the Safeguarder.

8. Where resolution by the Safeguarder has been tried but is not possible, the Safeguarder can raise this with the Team to see what further action if any can be taken.
9. Whilst issues can arise in individual appointments, issues can also arise in relation to wider concerns, for example about how a professional or a service is operating. Again this can be raised with the organisation or service in line with the Practice Note on dealing with conflict<sup>5</sup>.
10. Whilst Safeguarders can and do raise and address issues themselves without support, it is helpful for the Safeguarders Panel Team to be aware of issues in case there are patterns of concern that affect local or national areas.
11. The Team promotes the role and value of Safeguarders at a national level and is representative of Safeguarders' interests with key partners in the children's hearing system. The Team has the ability to raise matters with organisations at a senior and national level.



## SUMMARY OF SUPPORT FROM THE TEAM

### WHAT CAN THE SAFEGUARDERS PANEL TEAM PROVIDE TO YOU AS SUPPORT?

- A conversation to allow you to explore your thinking
- Information that helps you decide what you want to or can do
- Clarity about what parts of an issue you want to deal with and what parts you don't
- Clarity about what particular additional support can help you deal with an issue
- Clarity about what the Safeguarders Panel Team will do with and for you

### WHAT CAN THE SAFEGUARDERS PANEL TEAM DO?

- Raise an issue that cannot be solved locally with the senior people in an organisation
- Link up similar issues raised by different Safeguarders and take these issues up
- Put you in contact with other Safeguarders who have raised or tried to tackle similar issues before
- Provide feedback on issues that are raised by all Safeguarders and their resolution
- Facilitate discussion amongst Safeguarders to help find the most effective way to solve local or national issues (through local engagement events when established)

### WHO DOES THE SAFEGUARDERS PANEL TEAM HAVE CONTACT WITH AT SENIOR LEVEL?

- Scottish Children's Reporter Administration - in relation to children's reporters
- Children's Hearings Scotland – in relation to panel members
- Scottish Courts and Tribunal Service – in relation to sheriff clerks and courts
- Judicial Institute – in relation to sheriff's training
- Children's Hearings Team at Scottish Government – in relation to contractual responsibilities
- Social Work Scotland – in relation to social workers
- Members of the Children's Hearings Improvement Partnership (CHIP) – including all partners to the hearing system not covered above including – Education Scotland, Scottish Police, Health, The Law Society of Scotland, Scottish Legal Aid Board and 3<sup>rd</sup> sector interests.