



Safeguarders Panel

Safeguarders Panel Newsletter

Spring 2020

Welcome to the Spring edition of the Safeguarders Panel newsletter. The newsletter is designed to keep you updated with news about the Safeguarders Panel and the Children's Hearings System, as well as highlighting relevant issues. We hope you enjoy reading.



SPT updates

Covid-19

The SPT would like to start by reassuring Safeguarders that your commitment and dedication to the national Panel is highly valued during these uncertain times. Please also be assured that advice and guidance is always available from the team via our 'duty' system. Please contact safeguarderspanel@children1st.org.uk and we will ensure that your query is passed onto the relevant person. For guidance on case specific arrangements (e.g. virtual Children's Hearings), it may be more appropriate to contact the relevant social work department/ SCRA staff directly. Please let us know if you have any difficulty with this and we will try our best to help where possible.

The Scottish Government has issued guidance on looked after children and Children's Hearings following the passing of emergency Coronavirus legislation. This is available [here](#) and explains the changes in the legislative framework, as well as further sources of information and guidance on pages 19-20. Supplementary national child protection guidance has also recently been published and is available to download [here](#), alongside the existing national child protection guidance. All other Scottish Government coronavirus guidance is [available here](#) related to business, healthcare, education and housing.

Counselling services

The SPT recognise that the very nature of the Children's Hearings System means that all appointments have the potential to cause

significant upset to anyone involved. We are keen to support the health and wellbeing of all Safeguarders where possible. If there are circumstances where you, as Safeguarders, feel your emotional well-being is at risk, particularly in light of working under the current conditions, our individual counselling service may be appropriate and available to you. Please contact your Support Manager or a Service Manager for further information.

CJSM

The SPT appreciate that a number of Safeguarders have recently reconsidered their position in relation to owning a secure CJSM email address. Safeguarders who don't yet have a secure email address are encouraged to make a CJSM account ASAP to ensure the secure transmission of all data in the coming weeks and months while remote working is essential. Step by step guidance is available on P39 of the [Data Management Policy for Safeguarders](#)



Allocations

We would like to extend a thank you to all Safeguarders for your patience during these uncertain times. Many of you have identified further availability to take on cases and this has been really useful in monitoring potential risks and operational need. The last few weeks have seen exceptionally low numbers of Safeguarders appointments, which would be expected in the present context. We have been, and continue to be, actively working with partner agencies and the Scottish Government, to support the highlighting of the Safeguarders. We have sent you a separate update regarding this.



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Allocations (contd)

As new processes are put in place to address Hearings remotely we may see these numbers change and we will continue to monitor with partners and communicate to you any updates by email and on our webpages. It's even more important during these times that you check these avenues of communication to keep up to date with developments. We will be continuing to monitor figures and will be working in tandem with our partner agencies to ensure that decisions to appoint Safeguarders are still being considered and made in the best interests of children and young people.

[Click here](#) for the latest figures for Safeguarder appointments by Children's Hearings and Sheriffs across Scotland.

The Scottish Court and Tribunal Service (SCTS) and Scottish Children's Reporters Administration (SCRA) have also been working continuously to establish safe and effective procedures to allow essential business to continue. Please continue to check their websites regularly for updates or contact your local Reporter/ Sheriff Clerk for information.

SCTS <https://www.scotcourts.gov.uk/home>
SCRA <https://www.scra.gov.uk/>

Children's Hearings Scotland (CHS) and SCRA have issued a joint statement on virtual hearings (issued on 20 April 2020). This focuses on children, young people and relevant persons being able to participate in Hearings remotely and is [available to read here](#).

Safeguarders Panel letterheads

New emailable letterheads have been developed for Safeguarders' use and are [available here](#). Safeguarders may find this useful for contacting families digitally. Hard copies will also be available in due course.

Staff update

In recent weeks and months, the SPT have said goodbye to two very valued colleagues who are moving onto new adventures. Jodie Fleming and Sylvia Blenkinsop, both Support Managers, have contributed massively to the team over the last few years and we wish them well in their new endeavours.

Safeguarders Panel contract

Safeguarders were informed in February of this year that Children 1st was awarded the new contract for operating the Safeguarders Panel from 1 July 2020 (for 2 years initially until 30 June 2022, with the option of this being renewed annually for a further 2 years until 30 June 2024). We had hoped to communicate some information about the finer details of our plans for going forward, however the current circumstances have taken precedence in recent times. Please be assured that more information will be forthcoming in the near future.

Safeguarder recruitment

Following a successful recruitment campaign, the SPT are pleased to advise that 18 new Safeguarders will officially be joining the national Safeguarders Panel on 1 May 2020. Unfortunately, due to Covid-19, the planned induction day in April has been postponed until further notice and Safeguarders will only be in a position to start accepting allocations once this full process is complete. We would like to welcome the new Safeguarders on board and are confident that current Safeguarders will join us in supporting them to feel at ease in their new role when these opportunities arise.





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Children 1st news

Message from fundraising

With the country in lock down, everyone being told to stay at home with their families and without the safety offered by the school day, children are at higher risk of neglect and abuse. Demand for our existing services has never been higher and we are responding to new, previously unimaginable needs.



On the 23rd March we launched our Emergency Appeal to enable us to keep families safe, connected and active during this difficult time. To date, thanks to our generous supporters, the appeal has raised over £40,000 – which has enabled Children 1st to provide emergency support to 306 families in need. Our team have delivered games and activities to keep children active and healthy and new mini-Kitbags to help them communicate and live together in a calm and safe environment. Provision of tablets and mobile phones are keeping families connected to their support networks and supermarket vouchers are ensuring that families have access to essential food and household items. If you would like make a donation please visit www.children1st.org.uk/appeal

Parentline

Safeguarders are reminded that Parentline Scotland continues to offer help and advice to families to cope through coronavirus via their free helpline, website or webchat. Further details can be [found here](#).

Research, Policy and Practice

‘Doing good does you good’ Now more than ever, it is important that we help others where possible, particularly those more vulnerable and isolated than ourselves. The Mental Health

Foundation publication ‘Doing good does you good’ suggests that helping others is actually good for our own mental health and wellbeing. It can reduce stress and improve overall emotional wellbeing. [Read the publication here](#).

Children’s Parliament are compiling children’s responses to understand how their feelings change throughout the coronavirus pandemic. The April survey closed on the 26th April however the May survey will be available shortly and can be [found here](#). Safeguarders can share this with family members or children and young people.

Coronavirus book

[Here](#) is a short book to support and reassure children under age seven regarding coronavirus. The aim is also to reduce any anxieties and it is available in 25 different languages. A coronavirus social story, produced by Little Puddins Autism Educators is also [available here](#).

Play in crisis

There is a heightened need to support children’s right to play at this time, and to provide a sense of normality and joy. The International Play Association (IPA) recognises playing as a basic and vital part of the pleasure of childhood. IPA have developed a resource available to [download here](#); to support parents and carers to actively think about children’s play time and manage trying experiences as well as to provide ideas for play using basic household items.





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Training & learning opportunity

'More than my trauma' international child trauma conference with speaker Dr Bruce Perry.

17-18 September 2020, SEC Glasgow

Please [click here](#) for more information on cost and booking.

Please note the SPT are not in a position to fund Safeguarders' attendance at this event.

Celebrated days

Foster care fortnight 11 May – 24 May 2020 This is the Fostering Networks annual campaign to raise the profile of fostering and to show how foster care transforms lives. More information can be found on the Fostering Networks website [here](#) including how you can get involved.

Mental Health Awareness Week 18 May – 24 May 2020 Organised by the Mental Health Foundation, this event focuses on a major issue every year. Last year was body image and this year's theme is 'kindness'.

You can [click here](#) for the latest information, FAQ's and how you can get involved. Information on how to look after your mental health during the coronavirus is also [available here](#).

Some 'Good News'

In recognition of people's concerns and anxieties on a global scale, American actor and film maker John Krasinski has created a YouTube channel to spread good news stories from around the World. This channel brings together recognition of people's achievements and positivity (and comedy) in light of the current situation – with messages of hope and happiness in times of crisis. [Click here](#) to access some stories to make you smile.



contact the Safeguarders Panel Team:

Call us on **0345 60 44 296**

Email us at **safeguarderspanel@children1st.org.uk**

Visit **www.children1st.org.uk/safeguarders** to find out more



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