



Safeguarders Panel

Safeguarders Panel Newsletter

Spring 2021



Welcome to the Spring edition of the Safeguarders Panel newsletter. Spring has sprung and we hope you are enjoying the longer days. We are delighted that lockdown restrictions continue to ease, allowing more opportunities to spend time with family and friends. We hope you continue to keep safe as the country continues on its road to recovery.

SPT Updates

ICO Registration

As you know, it is part of the terms of appointment of a Safeguarder and an element of compliance with the Practice Standards for Safeguarders that the Safeguarder is registered with the ICO as a data controller. We want to remind all Safeguarders you must keep your ICO registration up to date annually.

To avoid any lapses in registration, we recommend you set up a direct debit to pay your annual registration fee with ICO. The direct debit will automatically be collected on or around the expiry date annually. By setting up a direct debit, you will receive a £5 discount on the fee payable (i.e. the fee will be £35 and not £40).

Your ICO fee can be reimbursed by completing the Expenses section of the usual Safeguarders Panel Fees & Expenses [claim form](#). If you need to claim for any backdated ICO fees, you are welcome to submit a claim along with relevant ICO receipt(s).

Instructions on how to register with ICO can be found in the [Data Management Policy and Guidance for Safeguarders](#).

Learning & Development Updates

We would like to share with you a brief update about Learning and Development and some of the courses we plan to deliver in the coming months. Although we are excited about the future prospect of seeing you again in person, we continue to focus on our digital strategy for the time being.

Upcoming Courses

In line with forthcoming legislation and policy we are working in partnership with CHS and eCom Scotland on the following e-learning modules:

- Children's Rights
- Best Interests
- Children (Scotland) Act 2020

Alongside the above modules we have extended our partnerships to design and produce the following e-learning modules:

- Unconscious Bias
- Drug Awareness
- Engaging with Children, Young People and Families in a Rights Based way
- Right's Based Report Writing
- Right's Based Language
- The Role of the Safeguarder
- The Role of the Safeguarder in Court

Virtual Learning Academy

The following presentation slides, notes and supporting resources from previous face to face learning opportunities are now live on Virtual Learning Academy:

- Domestic Abuse
- Understanding Refugee Families
- Children and Families Social Work



More presentations from our previous face to face learning opportunities will be added over the coming weeks and we will let you know when these are available for you to access on the [Virtual Learning Academy](#).



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(Learning & Development contd.)

Court Practice Note

Over the past few months we have redesigned the Court Practice Note which is now a fully digital document (PDF), which can be stored on tablets and Smart phones and has a search function included (Ctrl and F when in the PDF document) to make it more accessible. You will find this [on our website](#) beside the original Court Practice Note which will remain for several weeks to allow you to familiarise yourself with the new version.

Website

We are excited to let you know that we are in the early stages of redesigning our website to make it more accessible for children, young people and families. We look forward to sharing updates with you as we move through the project.



Requisite Training

It is also likely that some digital courses (Children's Rights, Unconscious Bias & Trauma-Informed Practice) will be deemed requisite training for Safeguarders in the year 2021-2022 and must be completed to ensure compliance with your terms and conditions. This is as a result of their inclusion within the new draft Practice Standards and we will confirm the specific requirements in the near future.

Safeguarders are encouraged to record external CPD by updating the online personal training record on the Virtual Learning Academy. Step by step guidance on how to do this is [available here](#).

Upcoming External Learning Opportunities

NHS Tayside are offering free, facilitated awareness sessions to support businesses in providing a safe and healthy workplace for employees. A full list of topics, more information and how to book can be [found here](#).

Update on the Practice Standards for Safeguarders

Thank you to those Safeguarders who provided feedback on the draft Practice Standards (deadline 17 March 2021). With all feedback now received (Safeguarders and partner agencies e.g. CHS, SCRA), Laura Lebec will commence work on collating the responses to inform a further draft. Once this is complete, we will again circulate this draft for final comments and revisions – which we hope will be towards the end of May 2021. Again, your thoughts and views will be valuable in ensuring the Standards reflect the changing environment and role of the Safeguarder.

Update on Conflict of Interest Consultation

A further thank you to all those who have either taken part in one of the three focus sessions or have arranged to speak with Dr Susan Elsley – we have received a great response from Safeguarders. As previously mentioned, she is also meeting with partner agencies over the coming weeks to seek their views, prior to drafting a paper outlining her findings and recommendations. We will update you further on the progress of this work in the May email update.



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Performance Support and Monitoring Framework (PSMF)

In the previous newsletter, we shared that work is to commence on the review and revision of the PSMF, which in light of the changes to individual and group support, introduction of mentoring support and developments in the digital learning opportunities is now out of date. Safeguarders were significantly involved in the development of the current PSMF and therefore we wish to invite volunteers to take part in a focus group which will inform these revisions. Given the work that Laura Lebec has undertaken already regarding the Practice Standards, we have asked her to assist us with this.

In consulting with Safeguarders, Laura has set up three on-line meetings dates:

Tuesday 25th May 2021 10am – 12 noon

Thursday 27th May 2021 10am – 12 noon

Monday 31st May 2021 2 – 4pm

These will allow for a more in-depth discussion and we invite Safeguarders to register their interest in attending by emailing

safeguarderspanel@children1st.org.uk

A member of the core team will send a meeting request to join the discussion with Laura.

In addition, Laura is happy to receive the submission of written views and comments for those unable to attend any of the above dates, which can be sent via email to

safeguarderspanel@children1st.org.uk.

Once again, a huge thank you for your contributions and participation. Finally, should you require further clarification regarding any of the above, please feel to contact Paula Gaunt-Richardson, Service Manager (Quality and Development) on 07919398943 or via email paula.gaunt-richardson@children1st.org.uk.

Message of Condolence

It is with great sadness that the SPT share the news of Claire McGuffie's death, after passing away from a sudden illness. Claire joined the national Safeguarders Panel in 2013 and was a Safeguarder for 14 years in total. Over the years, Claire's Support Managers have noted her skills in gathering the views of children and prioritising their needs and best interests in her work. Claire's commitment to ongoing learning was evident and her respect to difference and diversity was well demonstrated. She worked respectfully with all persons whom she came into contact with, in the course of her role. Our deepest condolences go out to Claire's family and friends.

Safeguarder Resignations

The SPT would like to extend a warm thanks to Safeguarders Barbara Knight, Hayley Mullen and Jennifer Pennington who have recently resigned from the national panel to attend to and focus on other commitments. The three Safeguarders devoted a combined total of over 15 years on the national panel and we are grateful for the commitment and dedication to the role provided by each individual during this time.





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Allocations Update and Stats

For the latest statistics on Safeguarder appointments throughout Scotland, please [click here](#).

The number of Safeguarder appointments has dropped by about 50% nationally since the pandemic began. The first quarter in particular (Apr–Jun 2020) saw very few appointments as agencies worked hard to find a way of continuing business as usual in abnormal circumstances. This drop in appointments was seen in every local authority area however some areas have seen a larger drop than others.

To put this into context, Glasgow saw a drop of approximately ten Safeguarder appointments in a three-month period whereas West Lothian only appointed two Safeguarders across the entire year (Apr 2020-Mar 2021). This drop has evidently had a direct impact on the number of appointments that Safeguarders have been offered.

There has also been changes regarding Safeguarders' availability in these challenging times. This has understandably impacted the number of appointments that individuals have been able to accept and therefore affected the operational need in these areas. Appointment figures are monitored and reported on a quarterly basis to identify patterns and measure operational need. We cannot predict what the future levels of appointment will look like as we move out of lockdown into the Tier system but we are actively linking with SCRA and CHS to best understand potential demand and will provide updates when we can. Thank you all for your continued support and understanding in these unusual times.

We want to ensure that we use an evidence-based approach to determine operational need and therefore as the number of Safeguarder appointments are still low we will not be actioning any requests to move local authority areas at this time. We will review this decision in another six months when we have further evidence. We have several key areas that we will be monitoring carefully in that time, which may need to be looked into with the six-month review period. All areas are continually reviewed and monitored for any changes.

Mentor and Mentee Support Update

We are delighted to let you know that we now have 12 Mentors who are committed, engaged and are now supporting the development of fellow Safeguarders. To prepare Mentors for their new role, and to ensure that the mentoring support provided is of the highest quality, all Mentors who applied, have undergone rigorous training, including training designed and developed by Scottish Mentoring Network. Mentors have attended two training sessions and also completed eight online training units developed by Scottish Mentoring Network (SMN). Training has been delivered by SMN and the Mentoring Co-ordinator. Mentors have agreed to continue meeting together, as a group, on a 4-6 week basis. To date, 12 Mentees have applied, and almost all of them have completed their induction.

Matching

An important milestone was achieved this month - *Matching!* Ten Mentors and ten Mentees have now been matched. It is hoped that the remaining mentors and mentees will be matched before the end of this month. It is sometimes the case that there isn't the right match in terms of knowledge, skills and experience, however, every effort will be made to ensure that appropriate matches are made.



Mentees

Applications are still being sought from Mentees. If there is an area of your practice that you would like to develop or in which you would benefit from support, for example, building confidence, please get in contact. The Mentee application form is [available here](#).

Mentors

If you are interested in becoming a Mentor, the next induction and training sessions will take place in June/July 2021. The Mentor application form is [available here](#).

A copy of the Mentoring Handbook is [available here](#) for information.

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(Mentoring Update contd.)

Please do not hesitate to contact Eileen Paterson on eileen.paterson@children1st.org.uk or 07958 281823 if you are interested or have any questions. A huge thank you to every Mentor and Mentee who has become involved with the aim of ensuring that the best interests of children are safeguarded throughout their involvement in Children's Hearings.

Research, Policy & Practice

Children (Scotland) Act 2020 Updates

The rules for the sections of the Children (Scotland) Act 2020 which are coming into force on 26th July 2021 have been [published](#) along with the [policy briefing](#). For Safeguarders, the biggest changes relate to siblings' rights, rights of exclusion and the right for Local Authorities to receive Safeguarder reports.

In short, siblings will now have a right to attend Hearings, bring a representative and/or legal representative if they meet the following criteria:

- (a) the individual is living or has lived with the child,
- (b) the individual and the child have an ongoing relationship with the character of a relationship between siblings (whether or not they have a parent in common),
- (c) the Children's Hearing is likely to make a decision significantly affecting contact or the possibility of contact between the individual and the child, and
- (d) the individual is capable of forming a view on the matter of contact between the individual and the child.

The changes directly respond to the conclusions of *The Promise* in ensuring wherever possible sibling relationships are maintained, takes on board the findings of the Supreme Court relating to cases ABC and XY, and supports the ethos of the *Stand Up For Siblings* Campaign.

A relevant person can also now be required to attend

a Children's Hearing virtually only (if decided by a Pre-Hearing Panel) or excluded from a Children's Hearing for unacceptable behaviour or preventing the views of another relevant person (e.g. in domestic abuse cases). Exclusions are limited to situations where the impact on the child is severe enough to cause significant distress or is directly preventing them from giving their views. This also applies to the exclusion of relevant persons representatives and journalists.

The new provision on sharing Safeguarder reports with the Local Authority is detailed below:
s.23A (7): Where the Reporter is required by these Rules to give a copy of a report or other document to the members of a Children's Hearing before the Hearing begins, the Reporter must also give a copy of the report or other document to—
(a) the chief social work officer of the relevant local authority for the child, or
(b) if the child is subject to a compulsory supervision order or an interim compulsory supervision order, the Chief Social Work Officer of the implementation authority.

UNCRC Incorporation into Scottish Law

On Tuesday 16th March, by a unanimous vote, the Scottish Parliament passed [a Bill](#) that will incorporate the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) into Scots law. This was a

momentous move and a historic day in the lives of Scotland's children and young people, which involved years of campaigns by many organisations. The Bill places duties on services across a range of different areas - including schools, hospitals, policing and transport - to protect and uphold the rights set out in the Convention. In the most serious of cases, if children's UNCRC rights are breached, children will be able to complain to the courts. Without incorporation, the rights remained guiding rather than binding in law. The passing of this legislation means that the Scottish Government, public authorities and those providing services for children and families must do everything possible to embed children's rights into everything they do. You can read more about the [new law here](#).



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(UNCRC Bill contd.)

The Children & Young People's Commissioner Scotland has published [UNCRC simplified articles](#). Safeguarders who wish to refresh their learning on Children's Rights are encouraged to access these.

The Promise 2021 to 2024 – 3-Year Plan



Following on from the Independent Care Review and publication of 'The Promise', 'The Plan' sets out key areas organisations must focus on to ensure the most vulnerable children in Scotland feel loved, respected, listened to and heard in decisions that affect them. Under 'The Plan', five key areas that must be prioritised are:

- A good childhood
- Whole family support
- Supporting the workforce
- Planning
- Building capacity

These key areas touch on things like family therapy, support for children and young people, schools and exclusion, the importance of safe, loving relationships, youth justice, advocacy, independent living, values and the workforce, investment, information-sharing, data, legislation, Children's Hearings System and inspection and regulation, and more. [Read more about The Plan here.](#)

Recent Court Decisions Affecting Children & Young People

Clan Childlaw have provided case summaries from recent court decisions which may be of interest to Safeguarders.

[Sheriff appeal court: Scottish Borders council v Z 2020 summary](#) or read the [full decision](#). The length of time a child is settled elsewhere may be taken into account when considering whether a permanence order can be granted.

[JS v Decision of a Children's Hearing \[2021\] SC EDIN 1 summary](#) or read the [full decision](#). Sheriff finds a Hearing should have included an order for a DNA test in a Compulsory Supervision Order.

Tools/ Resources for Getting Children's Views

Safeguarders may find this [toolbox](#) helpful for gathering the views of children of all ages, in line with Practice Standard 1 'The views of the child are actively sought and the child's participation is encouraged, where possible, to inform the Safeguarder's recommendations'.

Parental Imprisonment & Children's Contact Visits

Families Outside has highlighted research published by Dr Shona Minson at the University of Oxford; noting that prior to the first lockdown, 96% of children with a parent in prison were visiting them regularly. Since lockdown restrictions were introduced, thousands of children have not seen their parents in prison for over a year. Families Outside have called upon the Scottish Government to recognise the impact of this disrupted parental contact on children, outlining measures they believe will minimise this issue; including stopping courts from remanding parents with dependent children in custody unless there is a compelling public safety reason. [Read the news release here.](#)



Book Recommendations

'How to listen: tools for opening up conversations when it matters most' by Katie Columbus. This book draws on the extensive experience of Samaritans in offering practice advice and tips on how to listen in a way that can prevent the escalation of emotions in complex situations.

Connecting with Young People in Trouble; Risk, Relationships and Lived Experience by Andy Brierley and Lisa Cherry. This book notes that positive outcomes cannot be imposed but can stem from 'presence, attunement, connection and trust (PACT)', an approach that can be used by anyone.



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Celebrated Days



Foster Care Fortnight 11th-23rd May 2021

Foster Care Fortnight is The Fostering Network's annual campaign to raise the profile of fostering and to show how foster care transforms lives. It is also the UK's biggest foster carer recruitment campaign. Thousands of new foster families are needed every year to care for children, with the greatest need being for foster carers for older children, sibling groups, disabled children and unaccompanied asylum-seeking children.

[Read more here.](#)

National Children's Day UK 16th May 2021

This marks the importance of protecting the rights of freedoms of children and providing children with a healthy childhood to ensure they grow into happy, healthy adults. Individuals and local councils are encouraged to create child-centred opportunities, events and activities, getting as many people involved as possible. [Click here](#) for more ideas and on what to do and how to get involved.

Care Experienced Day of Remembrance 30th April 2021

The first ever International Care Experienced Day of Remembrance is on 30th April 2021, as part of Care Experienced History Month. Honouring the legacy of Care Experienced people who have made an

impact on societies across the world, you are invited to share the symbol of remembrance of Care Experienced people. Created by Care Experienced people, the symbol of a bridge represents a bridge from the past to present; a bridge to the people, a bridge to the future and bridging the divide in understanding of the history of Care Experienced people. [Find out about Care Experienced History Month here.](#)

Children 1st News

If you would like to catch up on Children 1st news, the latest issue of Supporters News includes details of a recent questionnaire to children and families, updates on services and fundraising activities. It also features stories from two families - it is so important that donors are informed of the practical and emotional support provided and the impact that donations make. You can read the Newsletter [here](#).

#LetTheKidsWin

The Virtual London Marathon will take place on Sunday 3rd October 2021. You can be part of this iconic event by running 26.2 miles in your local community. The Official Virgin Money London Marathon App will enable participants to log their 26.2 miles and earn their coveted medal and New Balance finisher T-shirt. For more information on how to register your charity place with Children 1st visit the website or email fundraising@children1st.org.uk



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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