



Safeguarders
Panel Team



SAFEGUARDERS PANEL TEAM

ANNUAL REPORT 2018-19



INVESTORS
IN PEOPLE



CONTENTS

Page 4 - Introduction

Page 6 - The Role of the Safeguarder

Page 8 - Safeguarder Appointments

Page 9 - Quality & Recruitment and Induction of Safeguarders

Page 10 - Induction Day

Page 12 - Profile of Safeguarders

Page 13 - Continuing Professional Development

Page 14 - Looking to the Future

Introduction

The Children 1st Safeguarders Panel Team is proud to operate the Safeguarders Panel on behalf of Scottish Ministers.

Our Vision for the Safeguarders 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 of our actions, we will stand up to scrutiny

Respectful: in all relationships and to the roles and responsibilities of all in the Children's Hearings System

Children 1st have been the operational managers of the national Safeguarders Panel since 2013, supporting Safeguarders across Scotland in their unique role for children. Children 1st is committed to improving the lives of children and we support Safeguarders to uphold the rights of children, working for children's interests.

This Annual Report highlights key achievements over the last year in delivering this vision, developing a quality service, supporting respectful relationships, fairness and accountability whilst ensuring children's best interests are represented in the Children's Hearings System.

The Safeguarders Panel Team and Safeguarders work together by building strong relationships with children and young people, families and partner agencies. Safeguarders are accountable through the Practice Standards to "provide an active and positive contribution to the development of good and effective interpersonal and professional relationships with all involved, including the child, parents and carers, and representatives from services and agencies." (PS 2) In order to do this the Safeguarders Panel Team focus on providing relational and restorative support for Safeguarders, developing effective relationships through which feedback, training, support and respectful challenge can enable Safeguarders to be the best they can be.

The Safeguarders Panel Team and Safeguarders are committed to continually improve our contribution to the Children's Hearings System. We work together with the wider **Children's Hearings Improvement Partnership (CHIP)** to achieve our vision, and the wider CHIP Vision:

CHIP Vision

Respect for children and young people: by respecting each other's roles and responsibilities

Positive, constructive behaviours

The welfare of children and young people is our paramount concern

A culture of learning and improvement

Most importantly, the Vision of the Safeguarders Panel Team and CHIP is child-focussed. At Children 1st, we want you to see the shared commitment we have with Safeguarders. As one Safeguarder said when asked why he became a Safeguarder:

The CHIP brings together a range of people from organisations across Scotland who have a common interest in developing and improving the Children's Hearings System. Chaired by the Scottish Government, it includes representatives from all key partners in the Hearings System including, Scottish Children's Reporters Administration, (SCRA), Children's Hearings Scotland (CHS), Social Work Scotland, Our Hearings Our Voice, and Police Scotland amongst others.

“ I wanted to ensure that there was someone in the room who would bring the conversation always back to the needs of the most important person: the child. ”

Safeguarder



The Role of the Safeguarder

A Safeguarder is appointed by a Children's Hearing or Sheriff and they have a specific role - to safeguard the interests of the child in the proceedings. Within this role they report to a Children's Hearing and/or any related Court proceedings. The Safeguarder is an independent person, not employed by an organisation in this role, who is accountable to the Scottish Ministers, through the Practice Standards. It is vital that Safeguarders speak with children, families and other agencies involved with a child, in order to represent the child's best interests. The Safeguarder cannot get involved beyond that role i.e. by helping families or children where another agency should have responsibility

Practice Standards

Standard 1 - CHILD AT THE CENTRE

Standard 2 - RELATIONSHIPS

Standard 3 - INDEPENDENCE

Standard 4 - REPORTS

Standard 5 - CONFIDENTIALITY

Standard 6 - PERSONAL CONDUCT

Standard 7 - KEEPING UP TO DATE WITH SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE

<https://www.children1st.org.uk/media/7074/practice-standards.pdf>

Did You Know?

There were a broadly similar number of appointments (16 fewer) this year compared to last year. However, since 2014-15 there has been an overall decrease of 274 appointments. The proportion of Court and Children's Hearing appointments show that there has been a small increase in the percentage of appointments from Children's Hearings, from 61% to 64%, and a corresponding decrease in Court appointments.

Across Scotland there remains a variation in appointments (see appendix on page 15). This has impacted on our decision making regarding recruitment needs and communication with partner agencies.

We want to ensure that the appointment of a Safeguarder is considered and that, in circumstances when this would be beneficial, an appointment is made to ensure that the interests of children and young people are the focus of any decisions. We continue to liaise with all partner agencies and stakeholders, to raise awareness and understanding of the role of the Safeguarder and the Safeguarders Panel Team.





138

Safeguarders
operating in
Scotland

**Fife
Edinburgh
North Lanarkshire**

The three local authorities where
Safeguarders are appointed most
frequently by a Hearing

1,311

**Safeguarder
appointments
made in 2018-19**

Fife | Glasgow | Dundee

The three local authorities where
Safeguarders are appointed most
frequently by a Sheriff

10%

Percentage of
children and
young people
who have an
appointed
Safeguarder

Safeguarder Appointments

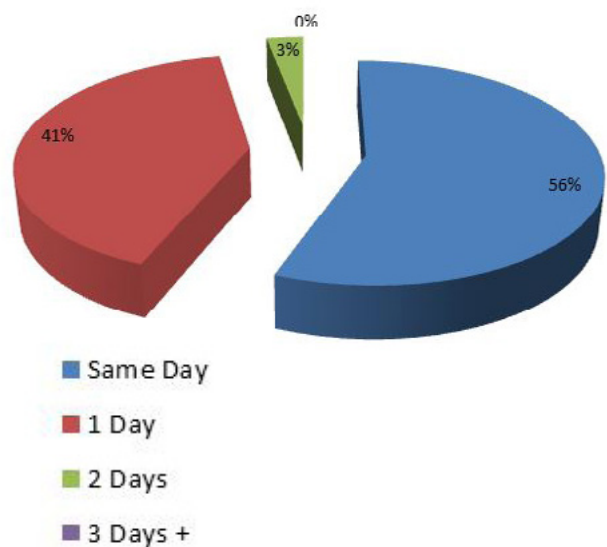


When a Safeguarder is appointed by a Hearing or a Court, the Safeguarders Panel Team allocate this appointment to a Safeguarder. We want to ensure that this process happens as quickly as possible, minimising the delay for children and young people.

The potential for delay in the Children's Hearings System is one of the key issues which the wider Children's Hearings Improvement Partnership is focussed on minimising.

The diagram below explains that we have achieved our target of allocating a Safeguarder within 2 days in 100% of cases, and in 97% of occasions within 1 day.

Allocation Times



Quality


We continue to work hard in collaboration with Safeguarders and our partners for continuous improvement. In the next several pages we highlight our work in recruiting new Safeguarders and building our learning and development programme, focusing on how in these areas we develop the quality of our work with Safeguarders.

Recruitment of Safeguarders

During this year the Safeguarders Panel Team recruited Safeguarders to ensure that nationally we can allocate Safeguarders for Children's Hearings and related Court processes.

A rigorous recruitment process took place over a number of months. After shortlisting around 150 applicants against the competencies and criteria, we interviewed nearly 50 applicants asking them also to complete a written exercise. The final phase of recruitment was the six day Pre-Appointment Assessment and Training completed by 20 prospective Safeguarders.

This element of the process is particularly rigorous and includes ongoing feedback between the Service Manager at Safeguarders Panel Team and the applicant, use of self-directed learning resources, expert speakers leading learning and discussion sessions, identification of training needs and agreement to an individual Development and Requirement Plan for those who were recommended for appointment to the Minister.



“ I am a Safeguarder because I feel I can make a critical difference in the lives of children and families at critical times ”

Induction Day - April 2019



Following the Pre-Appointment Assessment and Training, 18 prospective Safeguarders were recommended for appointment, and were appointed by Maree Todd, Minister for Children and Young People.

The Minister opened the Safeguarders Induction day in April 2019 and spoke of the range of backgrounds from which Safeguarders were drawn.

She drew attention to the “rigorous recruitment process” for Safeguarders – “that’s as it should be for such vital work.” Going on she stated: “Not everyone can be a Safeguarder. It is only those with “that special something” who can be appointed.”

The attendance of the Minister was a great encouragement for Safeguarders and the Safeguarders Panel Team. The Induction day provided an opportunity for Safeguarders to meet the wider Safeguarders Panel Team, start to build relationships and understanding of the practical information and guidance in readiness for taking appointments from 1 May 2019.

New Safeguarders particularly appreciated the opportunity to hear from Safeguarders who had been practicing for some time.

“
I understand your own individual and professional backgrounds are diverse. That will be a great asset to the Safeguarder role. Your individuality will enrich the work of the National Safeguarders Panel, bringing an abundance of life experiences and perspectives.”

Maree Todd

“ It was good to meet all members of the SPT and feel ready for my first appointment. ”

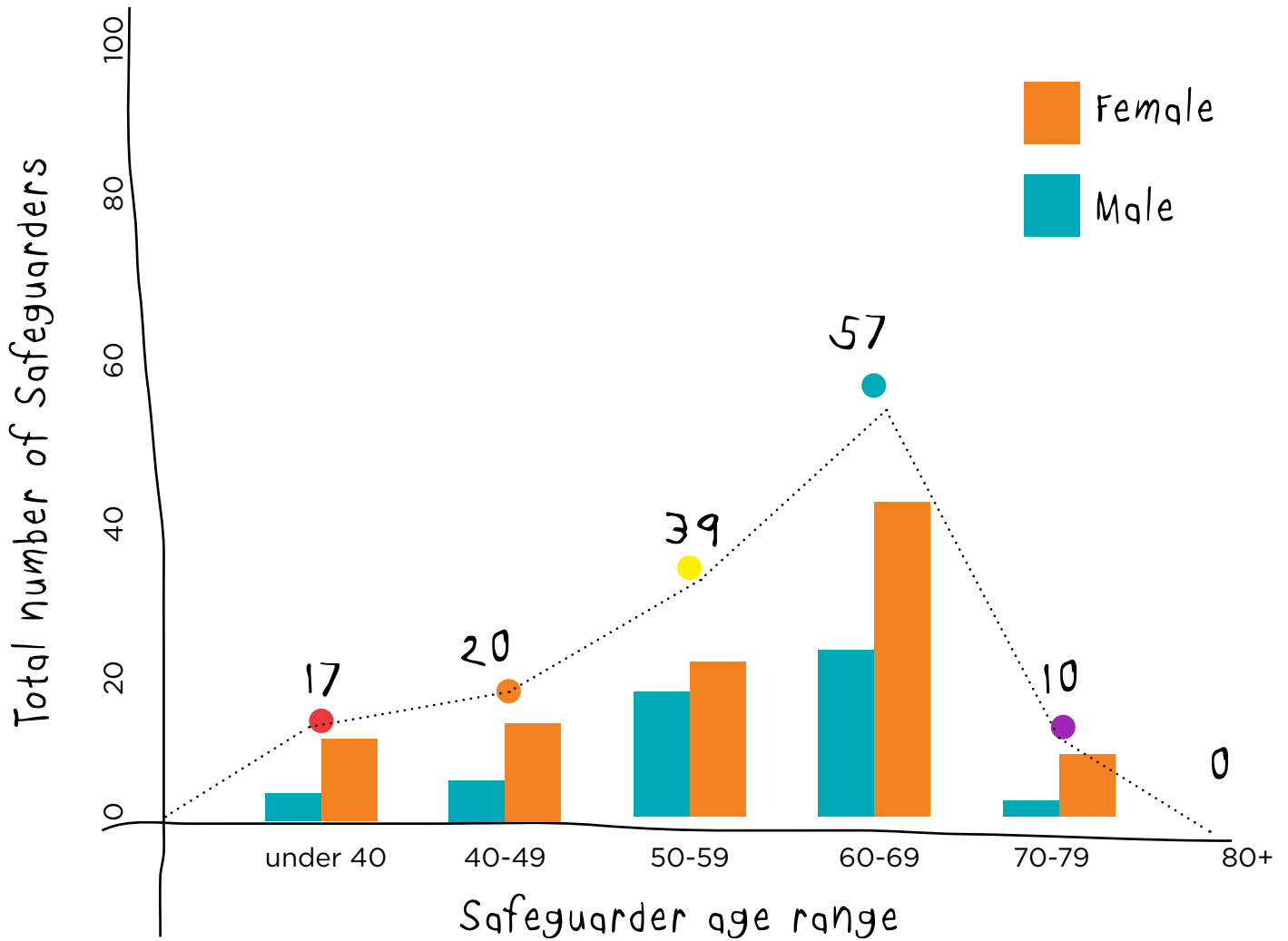
“ Input from current Safeguarders was useful and gave some reassurance of the role. ”

“ The Q and A with the Safeguarders was really, really important, and although I get that we will all have different approaches, I like the “realness” of the experience they shared.. ”



Profile of Safeguards

Table 1.2: Safeguarder Gender and Age Range at 31 Mar 2019



We value the contribution of all Safeguards, and welcome greater diversity. We have noticed within the most recently recruited cohort that there is a significantly higher proportion who are under aged 40 as well as a greater number from a Health background. We are pleased to extend the range of Safeguards working within the system and we want to encourage greater diversity.



Continuing Professional Developments

Continuing Professional Development is crucial for the growth and maintenance of quality, so that Safeguarders can be the best they can be in their role for children. We ensure that Safeguarders can develop knowledge and skills, in accordance with their individual needs, and in order to support this, the Safeguarders Panel Team provides a range of learning and development opportunities.

In order to ensure this work is shaped collaboratively with Safeguarders we established a Safeguarders Panel Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Group.

This currently consists of 8 Safeguarders from across Scotland, with varied backgrounds and experience, working alongside a Service Manager and Support Manager from the Safeguarders Panel Team.

This group has shaped and reviewed the CPD calendar since 2017/2018 and meets four times per year. With the support of this group, the Safeguarder Panel Team provide a range of blended learning opportunities, including workshops, full day training and online learning. We also provide opportunities for Safeguarders to meet each other and share practice and experiences through Network Meetings.

“Considerations around contact” Training

This course is a mixture of theory, research and the opportunity to discuss practice. Topics covered include up-to-date research on contact, contact in different settings (including prison visits), sibling contact, and the impact of reduced/no contact with parents/carers on children and young people.

The course was written in collaboration with Dr Lucie MacKinlay, Psychology Service Scotland, a chartered Clinical Psychologist with 10 years' experience working for the NHS.

The training was developed because this topic is critical for Safeguarder practice. Feedback from Safeguarders informed the training content and many Safeguarders commented very positively regarding this training:

“Always think what is the aim of observing contact before writing a report”

“Better understanding of sibling contact”

Looking to the future

Children 1st are delighted to manage the Safeguarders Panel and are committed to working collaboratively to ensure children's best interests are the focus of the Children's Hearings System.

Our priorities for the coming period will be:

A continued focus on Children's Rights, supporting Safeguarders to promote this as central to their role, and for the voice of children and young people to be heard more clearly.

The provision, through our restorative relationships with Safeguarders, of the best quality of support, learning and developmental opportunities, so that Safeguarders can be the best for children and young people.

Continued and growing collaboration with Safeguarders, and realising the potential within the Safeguarders Panel for the development of high quality practice.

A continued commitment to listen to and learn from the experiences of children and young people, particularly through the Independent Care Review and Our Hearings, Our Voice. We will work with partners in the Children's Hearings Improvement Partnership, including Our Hearings, Our Voice, to improve the experiences and outcomes of children and young people.



“The main reason I became a Safeguarder was to ensure that children's voices are heard within the court and Panel system”

Safeguarder

“I think being a Safeguarder is such a valuable role to have, bringing that extra bit of insight and clarity that is often needed to move a child's case forward”

Safeguarder

Appendix 1

Safeguarders Panel Annual Report 2018-19

Table 2.3: Safeguarder Allocations and Availability across Scotland: 2018-19

20. Highland Safeguarders - 10 Appt by hearing – 28 Appt by Court – 13	31. Orkney Islands Safeguarders - 4 Appt by hearing – 4 Appt by Court – 4	32. Shetland Islands Safeguarders - 4 Appt by hearing – 1 Appt by Court – 0	19. Moray Safeguarders - 8 Appt by hearing - 8 Appt by Court – 8
21. Eilean Siar Safeguarders - 5 Appt by hearing - 6 Appt by Court – 0			18. Aberdeen Safeguarders – 9 Appt by hearing – 24 Appt by Court – 28
22. Argyll & Bute Safeguarders - 7 Appt by hearing - 13 Appt by Court – 8			17. Aberdeenshire Safeguarders - 11 Appt by hearing - 18 Appt by Court – 6
23. Perth & Kinross Safeguarders – 13 Appt by hearing - 14 Appt by Court – 30			16. Angus Safeguarders - 14 Appt by hearing - 22 Appt by Court – 13
24. Stirling Safeguarders - 8 Appt by hearing - 8 Appt by Court – 21			15. Dundee Safeguarders - 23 Appt by hearing - 39 Appt by Court – 38
29. South Lanarkshire Safeguarders - 13 Appt by hearing - 46 Appt by Court – 34			14. Fife Safeguarders - 21 Appt by hearing - 68 Appt by Court – 78
25. North Ayrshire Safeguarders - 11 Appt by hearing - 27 Appt by Court – 3			13. Clackmannanshire Safeguarders - 8 Appt by hearing - 16 Appt by Court – 5
26. East Ayrshire Safeguarders - 11 Appt by hearing - 37 Appt by Court – 0			30. Borders Safeguarders - 7 Appt by hearing - 15 Appt by Court – 1
27. South Ayrshire Safeguarders - 10 Appt by hearing - 41 Appt by Court – 2			28. Dumfries & Galloway Safeguarders - 6 Appt by hearing - 45 Appt by Court – 7
1. Inverclyde Safeguarders - 8 Appt by hearing - 16 Appt by Court – 11			7. North Lanarkshire Safeguarders - 16 Appt by hearing - 61 Appt by Court – 13
2. Renfrewshire Safeguarders - 14 Appt by hearing - 18 Appt by Court – 14			8. Falkirk Safeguarders - 9 Appt by hearing - 12 Appt by Court – 17
6. East Renfrewshire Safeguarders - 13 Appt by hearing - 20 Appt by Court – 0	9. West Lothian Safeguarders - 12 Appt by hearing - 21 Appt by Court – 3		
5. Glasgow Safeguarders – 29 Appt by hearing - 56 Appt by Court – 46	10. Edinburgh Safeguarders - 21 Appt by hearing - 65 Appt by Court – 25		
4. East Dunbartonshire Safeguarders - 12 Appt by hearing - 8 Appt by Court – 7	3. West Dunbartonshire Safeguarders - 14 Appt by hearing - 43 Appt by Court – 33	11. Mid Lothian Safeguarders - 13 Appt by hearing - 14 Appt by Court – 1	12. East Lothian Safeguarders - 16 Appt by hearing - 28 Appt by Court – 0
N.B. safeguarders may choose to cover more than one local authority within reasonable travelling distance			



find us online

facebook.com/children1st

twitter.com/children1st

instagram.com/children1st

Email: safeguarderspanel@children1st.org.uk

Children 1st Registered Office, 83 Whitehouse Loan Edinburgh EH9 1AT
Registered Scottish Charity No. SC016092



Safeguarders
Panel Team



INVESTORS
IN PEOPLE