



ST HELENA GOVERNMENT

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PERSON'S BOARD – ANNUAL REPORT 2015

SUMMARY

St Helena continues to make headway in the way it protects and safeguards its children and young people. A successful bid to the Department for International Development (DfID) for additional funding has made this possible. The split of social services from the health directorate has led to improvements. Wass Inquiry visited and found no endemic child abuse, no cover up or corruption. But systemic failings going back many years were found and the Action Plan to implement the recommendations from that report were published in December. To continue to improve more external assistance is required.

CREATION OF SAFEGUARDING DIRECTORATE

The Safeguarding Directorate was created in December 2014. The SCB welcomed this move and has noted that together with the much improved working relationships between agencies, this has led to significant improvements in this area. However it was recognised that much work needed to be done in order to address all forms of abuse including investigation and dealing with historic abuse as well as embedding training. This led to SHG successfully bidding for additional funding to tackle child abuse.

DFID ADDITIONAL FUNDING

The SCB oversaw the additional £1.2 million, which included recruiting for the following posts:

- 3 x Senior Social Workers
- 2x Detective Constables- Historic Case Reviews
- Detective Constable Sexual Offences Investigator
- Crown Counsel – Civil and Child Protection
- Public Solicitor – Civil and Public Childcare
- Probation Officer
- Visiting Psychologist
- Educator/Counsellor – Child Sexual Abuse
- Nurse – Safeguarding and Mental Health
- Additional Family Centre staff
- Local Social Care Officers

Providing the following support services;

- Overseas Territories Regional Crime Intelligence System and an electronic Visa system
- Legal costs
- NGO commissioned services
- Counselling service
- Victim support
- Media campaign
- Cross agency training, including Saints attending overseas training
- Overseas investigations following allegations made in the UK by Saints
- Free hearing aids and spectacles for under 18s
- Safe haven (emergency accommodation for victims of domestic violence (joint with UN)

- Second Family Centre
- Specialised Dental Equipment
- Restorative Justice Training
- Specialist Mobile Phone training to prevent abuse/bullying
- Child Car seat initiative

1. The additional funding is governed by the Safeguarding Children's Board and has three sub groups focussed on training, safe recruitment and governance/quality standards. The Board meets every six weeks and has up to now been concerned with delivering the SHG Action Plan adopted in March 2014.
2. As well as the key statutory services the Board oversaw a move to win hearts and minds on the island. Through NGOs, training, the media campaign and free hearing aids/spectacles the Board has sought to put Safeguarding into the public psyche, when it was previously a taboo subject and dealt with privately.
3. By supporting NGOs, SHG has been able to conditionally grant funding on the basis that organisations adopt safe practices. The lack of scope for NGOs to take forward safeguarding and to support statutory services is a concern, however, SHG has commissioned one provider to deliver services and provided 36 small grants.
4. St Helena is very much involved with SCOT and has benefited from shared learning and regular contact with the FCO and DfID.
5. The Independent LADA (Local Authority Designated Officer) continues to support various parts of SHG.

DIRECTORATE REPORTS

Police

6. The funding has seen the arrival of the two historic case review officers. There will be a clear strategy as to how this work will be taken forward and all investigations will be on a multi-agency basis thereby ensuring the best victim care. The basis / prioritisation of the reviews will be focussed according to repeat victimisation, repeat offending and then other factors. The second officer only arrived on island in mid-September. The work has already seen one investigation be prepared for future Court proceedings and another being investigated for the first time. The officers have also been able to support other matters of a historic nature (unexplained death – Operation Seeker) and there are a number of cases that are awaiting their attention.
7. The review process will enable victims to have a voice in the justice system as well as lesson learning so the same mistakes are not repeated in the future.
8. The extra Detective officer for the main CID office has not yet arrived, there addition to the office will enable proper tutorship and development of a locally trained Detective who will undergo a traineeship similar to that seen within the UK. The funding will also support a UK visit for the local officer to experience work within a Sexual Assault Referral Centre and work within a UK Police Force.
9. Sexual offence reporting has seen an increase this performance year; the 5 year average was 34 offences, 2015-2016 up to September is currently 34.
10. The new probation Officer arrived in November 2015 and will enable extra work with offenders particularly around the Domestic Abuse agenda.

Safeguarding Directorate

11. The Safeguarding Directorate has created a dedicated Children and Families team with four qualified social workers now working closely with local social care staff. Two local social care officers have undertaken development visits to the UK and a third is now studying full time in the UK to complete a formal university social work qualification.
12. A range of group and individual work has been conducted including protective parenting “St Helena Safer Family” workshops; ‘Incredible Years’ parenting intensive one on one courses; Therapeutic play sessions and Keep Safe sessions with vulnerable children. Collaboration with local non-government organisations has resulted in local support posts for domestic abuse and for vulnerable youth.
13. The Directorate has been focussed on building supports for victims, and a child sexual abuse counsellor/educator arrived in November to complement remote counselling options.

14. The Directorate is also developing a safe haven and centre for those impacted by domestic abuse with additional support from the UN. Building work is set to be completed by May 16th.
15. Multi-agency working is now the norm and a robust, effective relationship with the Police is in place. In November, the Social Care Institute for Excellence will provide advanced training to support some of our most complex work.
16. A lawyer, who specialises in children's safeguarding is now based in AG's Chambers and works closely with the team. The Directorate is also building supports for Adults and working with other Directorates to develop a focus on this.
17. Children's services have now moved to their own offices at Ebony View and now has a second Family Centre.

Education Directorate

18. In Education, there is a new emphasis in the 2015-16 school year on supporting vulnerable and at risk children through a new focus on Inclusion as a major area for strategic development. Inclusion is presented as a system-wide way of working rather than as a specific strategy for dealing with special needs; as lived out in St Helena, inclusion is a way of thinking and acting that allows every individual to feel accepted, valued, and safe.
19. In practical terms, Education has reprioritised existing funding to support the appointment of a Head of Inclusion who serves as the lead within the Directorate on safeguarding issues and on multi-agency liaison for support services. This role coordinates existing posts to provide cohesive service for students with a wide range of social, emotional, behavioural and learning needs, including victims of abuse.
20. There are still some gaps in provision for children, particularly around psychological and therapeutic services. It is hoped that the new Community Psychiatric Nurse, who comes with specialist experience in working with children and schools, will help fill that gap, and there are very encouraging signs that this is already underway. The temporary provision for a psychologist on island earlier this year also supported progress in working with a number of vulnerable children, and signalled the value of this service. Education is committed to multi-agency partnership to support children's needs and is working to increase capacity within schools and the directorate to do so.
21. Safeguarding policies and procedures are currently being reviewed. Training is currently being delivered to all teachers.

Health Directorate

22. The Health Directorate is working in close collaboration with other agencies. A trial of a proposed Safeguarding Auditing Tool was completed at the Hospital in September 2015 to review the overall effectiveness of safeguarding procedures. The audit identified a high level of

overall compliance. A continuing need exists for staff to receive appropriate training, guidance, support and supervision to undertake effective Safeguarding of children. Inter-agency information sharing protocols are being enhanced.

WASS INQUIRY - Recommendations

- 23.** The Sasha Wass Inquiry published their report in December 2015. The recommendations were accepted and the Action Plan to implement those recommendations can be found on the Safeguarding Board's web page. see:

<http://www.sainthelena.gov.sh/st-helena-safeguarding-childrens-and-young-peoples-board/>

MOVING FORWARD

- 24.** It is apparent that St Helena has made significant progress to establish systems and services to tackle the scourge of child abuse. However, this is against a very low baseline and much work across the community is still required to effectively address historic abuse, current abuse and to ensure the island is prepared for the future. This process has started but is also very much in its infancy.
- 25.** To continue the progress made will require dedicated and protected funding for at least the next 36 months. This should be reviewed on an annual basis and monitored on a monthly basis with the DfID Social Advisor.
- 26.** The SCB is pleased to note that SHG officials have drawn up a list of requirements for the next two years and are currently engaging with the colleagues in DfID to secure the necessary funding. The SCB stands ready to help oversee and ensure the additional support is used effectively.

Sean Burns

SCB Chair, St Helena

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