

The Role of the Children's Champion on St Helena Island, South Atlantic

St Helena Island is seeking to improve the outcomes for all Children and Young People through the introduction and development of a Children's Champion. The role was established in 2013 with the introduction of a single champion to enhance the lives Children and Young People through promoting greater opportunities and removing barriers to achieving good outcomes.

Role and Remit of a Children's Champion

The role and remit of a Children's Champion is to champion the rights of all Children and Young People and ensure that they have a 'voice' in determining key decisions regarding their lives. There are several areas the Champion will focus on:

- Providing further leadership and standards that recognise improvement in service delivery.
- Promoting and safeguarding the rights of all Children and Young People, ensuring that the services they require to remove barriers which are obstacles to progress are in place.
- Identifying in association with recognised service providers at all levels the additional provisions required to ensure that the needs of children/young people are best met.
- Communicating with these Children/Young People by consulting with them and their service providers to ensure that the child/young person receives the support, security and stability they require to achieve their individual potential.
- Key player on the Safeguarding Children Board.
- Receiving and monitoring reports concerning restrictions on the communications of a child/young person accommodated at the Children's Residential Home.

In addition to the promotion of the rights of Children and Young People, the Government also has a responsibility as a Corporate Parent to ensure that every Child/Young person has the opportunity to meet their full potential.

Corporate Parenting and the role of the Children's Champion

Corporate Parenting relates to all Children/Young People who are looked after by the authority. It means that formal partnerships and actions are established by local authorities, departments and associated agencies that are responsible for working together to meet the needs of looked after children/young people. The notion of a local authority acting as a parent recognises the legal and social responsibilities of public bodies to Children/Young people who become looked after. It recognises that those children/young people for whom the local authority has a particular responsibility are significantly less likely to achieve good outcomes not only throughout their childhood but throughout their lives.

Corporate Parenting is essentially the same as being a good parent and wanting to achieve the same good outcomes for our looked after children/young people that we would want for our own children. To improve and make Corporate Parenting a reality depends upon drive, ownership and leadership at the highest level of the organisation. Children's Champions play an important role in promoting the rights of looked after Children. The Children's Champion has an important role in receiving reports and monitoring the treatment of children/young people who are accommodated at the Children's Residential Home.

CONCLUSION

This role of Children's Champion provides a unique opportunity to promote opportunities for Children and Young People in order to enable them to fulfil their full potential. The Champion will lead and drive future development of all Children and Young People within St Helena, through their understanding of children and young people's needs. The Children's Champion will enhance the work already in place through existing services in working towards the future wellbeing of each child and young person. They will be fully supported by the Government and be a key member of the Safeguarding Board and the Corporate Parenting Board.