



**St Helena
Government**

Independent Chair – St Helena Safeguarding Board

Terms of Reference

Responsible To

The Independent Chair is accountable to the St Helena Safeguarding Executive (the Governor, Chief Secretary and Chief Minister) and provides professional safeguarding leadership and advice to that Executive. Direct management will be from the Chief Secretary on behalf of the Executive.

Purpose of the Role

The Independent Chair of the St Helena Safeguarding Board (SHSB) provides strategic leadership and independent oversight to ensure the effective operation of the Board. The post holder will promote strong inter-agency collaboration to coordinate, develop and advance safeguarding practice across St Helena, ensuring high standards of protection for children and adults at risk.

Status and Independence

- Post holder will be independent of all St Helena safeguarding delivery agencies and services.
 - Role is non-executive providing independent challenge, leadership and assurance.
 - The Chair will have authority to seek information, assurance and action from partner agencies and to escalate concerns where necessary.
-

Key Responsibilities

Leadership and Governance

- Chair meetings of the St Helena Safeguarding Board, ensuring effective agenda planning, constructive challenge, and sound decision-making.

- Provide regular progress reports to the Safeguarding Executive including escalation of safeguarding concerns where required
- Lead and promote effective inter-agency cooperation in safeguarding activity.
- Ensure Board membership remains representative, effective and fit for purpose.
- Maintain strict confidentiality and data handling protocols of sensitive information.
- Promote equality of opportunity in safeguarding policy and practice.
- Declare and manage any actual or perceived conflicts of interest in accordance with agreed governance arrangements.

Oversight of Live Safeguarding Concerns

- All Board agendas include a standing item on live matters of concern relating to children and adults at risk to support timely scrutiny, decision-making and action
- Actions agreed by the Board are clearly recorded with:
 - named responsible leads
 - realistic timescales
 - follow-up mechanisms
- Urgent safeguarding matters arising between meetings can be brought to the Chair for consideration and escalation where appropriate

Strategic Development

- Ensure emerging risks, policy developments and key issues considered by the Board.
- Support the Board to focus on a small number of prioritised, deliverable safeguarding actions.
- Lead the development, publication and delivery monitoring of the Safeguarding Board's annual business plan.
- Discourage unnecessary duplication of reviews or recommendations.
- Create and oversee time-limited Task and Finish Groups with clear Terms of Reference, defined outputs, timescales and clear leadership.
- Limit standing sub-groups to statutory and policy obligations. Oversee sub-groups with clearly defined outputs, milestones and reporting requirements.

Consolidation of Previous Recommendations

- Sign off structured review of safeguarding recommendations from previous reviews
- Agree which recommendations remain pertinent and should form part of a consolidated action plan.
- Maintain oversight of progress through a clear, realistic, jointly owned action plan.

Resources, Budget and Partnership Commitment

- Promote shared accountability for safeguarding across all partners.
- Contribute to oversight of the Board's budget reporting to the Safeguarding Executive on budget pressures or additional requirements in a timely manner.

Learning and Compliance

- Promote continuous improvement and learning across the safeguarding system.
- Manage safeguarding learning reviews, including commissioning decisions and ensuring timely completion in line with agreed procedures.
- Investigate and seek to resolve disputes, complaints, or issues of non-compliance involving Board members in line with SHG protocols.
- Keep up to date with safeguarding legislation, research, guidance and best practice.

Representation and Communication

- Represent the Safeguarding Board at relevant meetings and forums.
- Liaise with statutory, voluntary and independent organisations.
- Agree responses to media enquiries in consultation with partners, as appropriate.
- Set up an initial Task and Finish Group to deliver a plan to improve and increase community awareness of safeguarding and referral pathways.
- Support transparency through the publication of an annual safeguarding report, suitable for public sharing.

General Duties

- Exercise any powers delegated to the Chair by the Safeguarding Board.
- Remain accessible to Board members between meetings as appropriate.

Experience, Qualifications and Personal Attributes

- **Substantial senior experience in leadership** of multi-agency work.
- **Strong understanding of governance, accountability and assurance**, ideally including experience of independent chairing or scrutiny roles
- **Proven ability to provide independent challenge** while building constructive, trusting relationships with senior leaders and partner agencies
- **Experience of operating in complex or resource-constrained environments**, with a pragmatic and proportionate approach to improvement
- **Excellent communication and influencing skills**, including the ability to chair meetings effectively and articulate issues clearly to a range of audiences
- **Sound professional judgement, integrity and discretion**, with a strong commitment to confidentiality and ethical practice
- **Commitment to equality, fairness and the protection of vulnerable people**, underpinned by a calm, resilient and authoritative personal style
- **Direct experience in safeguarding leadership is highly desirable.**

These Terms of Reference will be reviewed by the Safeguarding Executive periodically, at least every two years, to ensure they remain appropriate and effective.