

St Helena Safeguarding Board 5 Year Strategic Plan 2023 - 2028



**St Helena
Government**

“Working together to promote the well-being and safety of vulnerable children and adults in the community of St Helena”

Foreword

As we look forward to developing our approach to the management of safeguarding here on St Helena, we should reflect on the huge strides that have been taken in recent years to ensure the safety and wellbeing of our children and vulnerable adults.

St Helena offers unique challenges, without doubt, but its small community and close working environments affords an opportunity to make meaningful and impactful changes to the way we care for and support the most vulnerable members of our society.

The focus of our strategic plan is to ensure that by working in partnership with all of our key stakeholders across the Island, we can provide a consistent approach to the way we apply the principles and practices of effective safeguarding for all.

We will look to standardise our approach so people can be assured that their loved ones are protected in whatever environment they may find themselves, be that engaged with statutory or care services, in education, or attending a sporting group.

We will build on the successful safeguarding education programme, and train more people in safeguarding and best practices, with a special focus on the impacts of the forthcoming fibre cable which will provide huge opportunities, but will also hold risks for those most vulnerable.

St Helena should reflect proudly on the significant steps it has taken over the recent years, and it is intended that this strategy will build on the positive work to align St Helena safeguarding practices with the very best international standards.

Introduction

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Safeguarding and early help is everybody's business. Making sure children, vulnerable adults and their families are given extra help and support at the earliest opportunity when they need it is vital.

Improvements are required to drive services forward towards better outcomes for children, vulnerable adults and families on St Helena; this is everyone's responsibility.

It is important to recognise that St Helena is in a unique situation and these policies and procedures are designed to reflect the context in which they are applied. The key features of St Helena in relation to safeguarding are:

- a. Being such a small and remote community, it is inevitable that the children, vulnerable adults and their families that professionals on the Island deal with as patients, pupils and members of the public are also frequently acquaintances/friends/family. This presents particular problems for professionals and makes it crucial that adult safeguarding issues and child protection concerns are managed with scrupulous professionalism and confidentiality.
- b. On St Helena, functions and services which in a larger community would be delivered by a department of government are frequently vested in an individual. Policies and procedures need to ensure that key decisions are made on the basis of discussion and joint working rather than the subjective views of one person.
- c. There is an established history of St Helenians migrating to Britain, the Falkland Islands and Ascension for employment purposes. Many of St Helena's children and young people are cared for by people other than their parents at times in their childhood.
- d. It is a time of great change for St Helena and this creates both opportunities and anxieties which need to be acknowledged and discussed.

It is widely recognised that children and vulnerable adults are best protected when professionals are clear about what is required of them individually, and how they need to work together. Feedback from agencies on this strategy is essential to help shape improvements to services across the island.

The welfare of the child is paramount and the Government has a statutory duty under the Welfare of Children Ordinance 2008 to promote and safeguard the welfare of Children in Need and their families. Children in Need are defined as children:

- Who are unlikely to achieve or maintain a reasonable standard of health or development; or
- Whose health or development is likely to be significantly impaired without the provision of services.

It is important to point out that not all families with Children in Need require or request statutory involvement through a Social Worker or Social Care Officer. Promoting the welfare of children and providing additional services within the community can be coordinated through other agencies and services including multi-agency meetings which can be brought together by other service practitioners such as CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health) or Education.

Safeguarding children is the action we take to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm. It is everyone's responsibility. Everyone who comes into contact with children and families has a role to play. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined for the purposes of this guidance as:

- protecting children from maltreatment;
- preventing impairment of children's health or development;
- ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes;
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

For the sake of clarity it is important to point out that the term child refers to any child or young person under the age of 18, irrespective of whether they live independently or are in the armed forces.

Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults is the action that we take to protect vulnerable adults: that being adults with impaired capacity, physical disability or impairment, sensory impairment and the elderly, from abuse and harm.

- Protecting vulnerable adults from abuse
- Promoting independence
- Promoting choice

- Ensuring those vulnerable adults in receipt of care packages or residing in care settings have their needs met to a good standard
- Ensuring that all vulnerable adults health needs are met in line with their needs
- Ensuring all vulnerable adults have opportunities to live a fulfilled lives

2.0 KEY PRINCIPLES

The key principles in safeguarding children and vulnerable adults are:

- safeguarding is everyone's responsibility;
- for services to be effective each professional and organisation should play their full part;
- a person-centred approach: for services to be effective they should be based on a clear understanding of the needs and views of children and vulnerable adults.

In line with all review recommendations in relation to the care and welfare of children and vulnerable adults on St Helena and within the previous working together 2016; all professionals should have a good understanding of their role and responsibilities to effectively safeguard.

St Helena has learnt lessons from all reviews and scrutiny of services and statutory functions on the island thus enabling improvements in responses and service delivery to the most vulnerable on island. Clear thresholds for intervention for both children and vulnerable adults have enabled the wider community and partner agencies to understand effective safeguarding. Better working together arrangements are visible and need to be maintained in order to maintain a safe response and greater protection for the most vulnerable people on St Helena.

The legal framework

- The Children Act 1989 (as amended by section 53 of the Children Act 2004) and in St Helena by the Welfare of Children Ordinance 2008. This Ordinance requires the Government to give due regard to a child's wishes when determining what services to provide, and before making decisions about action to be taken to protect individual children under section 57 of the Welfare of Children Ordinance. These duties complement requirements relating to the wishes and feelings of children who are, or may be, looked after (living away from home), including those who are provided with accommodation and children taken into police protection.



- Our Working Together 2016 (2019 update) document sets out the key principles in safeguarding children which are highlighted under Key Principles above. This document sets out the practical steps to be taken when there is a concern that a child is at risk and provides a structured framework for the effective multi agency management of suspected child abuse.
- The Equality Act 2010 (UK) which puts a responsibility on public authorities to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination and promote equality of opportunity (although this Act is not part of the laws of St Helena at the moment, its principles must still be borne in mind). This applies to the process of identification of need and risk faced by the individual child and the process of assessment. No child, group of children, or vulnerable adult should be treated any less favourably than others in being able to access effective services which meet their particular needs.
- The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). This is an international convention that protects the rights of children and provides a child-centred framework for the development of services to children. The UK Government ratified the UNCRC in 1991 and, in doing so, recognised children's rights to expression and receiving information.
- The Constitution of Saint Helena, Ascension Island and Tristan Da Cunha (2009) states "Every child shall have the right to such measures of protection as are required by his or her status as a minor, on the part of his or her family, society and the Government of St Helena, and which are appropriate and proportionate to the circumstances of St Helena". The Constitution also protects Human Rights including the right to family life and right to be protected from inhumane treatment. For children sometimes there is tension between their own rights and the rights of their parents. For example, if a child is at risk of significant harm from a/both parent/s, the child's right to protection and right to life may outweigh the rights of the parent.
- The Care Act 2014 (although not applicable in law in St Helena) provides a framework for core safeguarding duties and responsibilities relating to vulnerable adults. To stop abuse or neglect wherever possible. Prevent harm and reduce the risk of abuse or neglect to adults with care and support needs. Safeguard adults in a way that supports them in making choices and having control about how they want to live. Promote an approach that concentrates on improving life for the adults concerned. Raise public awareness so that communities as a whole, alongside professionals, play their part in preventing, identifying and responding to abuse and neglect. Provide information and support in accessible ways to help people understand the different types of abuse, how to stay safe and what to do to raise a

concern about the safety or wellbeing of an adult. Address what has caused the abuse or neglect.

ST HELENA GOVERNMENT VISION AND STRATEGY

'A SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT that creates OPPORTUNITY and inspires SOCIAL and ECONOMIC PROGRESS ensuring a better quality of life.'

Altogether Safer

We live our lives safe from crime, disorder and danger, and our older and vulnerable residents feel included, safe, and supported with choices to live independently. Areas of focus include:

- Ensuring that children, young people, and adults grow and thrive in a safe and secure environment;
- Protecting the wellbeing of all vulnerable members of society;

Outlined in the strategic objectives of:

SO.15. Ensure that children, young people, and adults grow and thrive in a safe, secure and inclusive environment

SO.16. Protect the wellbeing of all vulnerable members of society

Our Safeguarding Board Priorities

Our strategic priorities for are based on the **6 principles from the UK Care Act 2014**

The Care Act Principles and what these mean for the people of St Helena

Empowerment – “I am asked what I want as the outcomes from the safeguarding enquiry and these directly inform what happens”.

Prevention – “I receive clear and accessible information about what abuse is, how to recognise the signs of abuse and here I can report it and get help”.

Proportionality – “I am sure that the professionals will work for my best interests as I see them and will only get involved as much as needed”.

Partnership – “I know that those who care for and support me treat any personal and sensitive information confidentially, only sharing what is helpful and necessary. I am confident that people will work together to get the best for me.

Accountability – “I understand the role of everyone involved in my life”.

Protection – “I get help and support to report abuse. I get help to take part in the safeguarding process to the extent of which I want and to which I am able”.

Priority 1

Have safeguarding policies and procedures that are in line with best practice

Why?

To make sure we meet the needs of adults and children at risk of abuse, harm and neglect across St Helena now and in the future.

How?

- 1.1 We will ask all partners to tell us how they use the policies and procedures to keep adults and children at risk safe.
- 1.2 We will review partner's policies and procedures regularly to make sure they are effective and will recommend change and update when needed.
- 1.3 We will develop new policies and procedures to keep people safe and make sure these are in line with best practice.
- 1.4 We will share existing and new policies and procedures widely and openly publish them so they are available for all.
- 1.5 We will make sure the work we have done is working and is making a difference.

Priority 2

Work together effectively with partners and organisations

Why?

To have a strong joined up way of working to prevent abuse, harm and neglect.

To make sure people and organisations are doing the things they said they would to prevent abuse.

How?

- 2.1 We will strengthen the links between SHG portfolios, business, community groups, and our religious partners and focus on topics such as child sexual exploitation, financial abuse, substance misuse, and domestic violence.
- 2.2 We will carry out safeguarding adult and children reviews where appropriate.
- 2.3 We will identify and share learning with partners from our reviews.



2.4 We will ensure all partners and organisations have carried out their actions from reviews and can show the Board how they have done this.

2.5 We will collect and review better and qualitative safeguarding data and share information. This will help identify themes and trends and help to monitor, plan for and respond to any risks.

2.6 We will review substance misuse services to identify how effective these services are for adults at risk on St Helena.

Priority 3

Develop safer recruitment methods, induction and training to ensure a safe, skilled, professional workforce that can identify and respond to safeguarding concerns

Why?

We will safeguard and protect all children, young people and vulnerable adults by implementing robust safer recruitment practices across all partners.

How?

3.1 We will identify and reject applicants who are unsuitable to work with children, young people and vulnerable adults.

3.2 We will ensure all partners have process in place to respond to concerns about the suitability of applicants during the recruitment process.

3.3 We will ensure all partners process are in place to respond to concerns about the suitability of employees and volunteers once they have begun their role.

3.4 We will encourage all our partners to ensure that all new staff and volunteers participate in an induction which includes child protection and adults safeguarding training.

3.5 We will review, and look to deliver, awareness and training on safeguarding, child protection, CSE, cyber risk, and other related areas.

