



# **St Helena, Adults & Children's Safeguarding Board**

Annual Update Report, 2023 - 2024

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## Message from the Safeguarding Board Chair

A truly positive year for the St Helena Adults and Children's Safeguarding Board (SGB), with big advancements made at board level, by the various sub groups, and the partner members.

The full achievements of the board, the sub-groups, and its partners, are laid out in the report sections that follows, but I think it is important to highlight and celebrate some of the key pieces of work that have been achieved.

- Update to the Working Together Document to reflect changes in the operational environment, and approved by the SGB in August 2023;
- A new Child Exploitation Protocol adopted and training delivered to a large number of SHG employees. Alongside the establishment of Multi Agency Child Exploitation (MACE) Panel ToRs;
- A new Missing From Home Protocol adopted;
- Successful delivery of children and adults safeguarding training to hundreds of people across St Helena;
- A successful partnership with the Charity Commission to champion a new standardised approach to safeguarding policies and safer recruitment practices across the 3<sup>rd</sup> sector;
- The creation of 4 new sub-groups that will support the functional operation of the board, individually chaired by various partners

And much more...

The successes and achievements demonstrate a commitment by all key stakeholders to partnership working and promoting the importance safeguarding our most vulnerable children and adults across St Helena.

To demonstrate the good work, and our commitment to ensuring everyone understands the role of the SGB, this year has seen a number of informative radio sessions from board partners highlighting the needs to support children and vulnerable adults.

The SGB has also taken the hugely progressive steps of publishing all policies, protocols, strategy documents, and most significantly our meeting minutes (subject to requirement for confidentiality) on our webpage. This marks an openness above many UK boards and demonstrates a commitment to putting safeguarding front and centre.

Visit: <https://www.sainthelena.gov.sh/public-services/st-helena-childrens-and-adults-safeguarding-board/>

Well done to all partners for a great year, thank you for your support and help in making St Helena a safer place to live and work.

**Tim McDermott, Safeguarding Board Chair**

*The St Helena Adults and Children's Safeguarding Board (SGB) met 3 times in the year 2023/24. In May, August 2023, and February 2024.*

## Partner Updates

### Social Care

#### Children's Services (CSC) 2023/24 update

The majority of referrals originate from professionals working within services such as the Police, Education and Health. All referrals are screened by the team manager and allocated with 24 hours depending on the identified need.

CSC maintains a positive partnership working with SGB partners, with most operational interactions being with the Police and Education, demonstrating our commitment to supporting Priority 2 of the SGB 5 year Annual Plan.

There remains a longstanding issue relating to the attendance of other key professionals attending statutory meetings which CSC have brought to the attention of the SGB, but CSC remains positive that many of these issues were due to recruitment and personnel changes in other Portfolios, and that concerns are being addressed to ensure a continuation of the strong bonds between partners.

Monthly MAPPA meetings are held between multi agency services in addition to MARAC. CSC also take the lead in multi-agency Strategy Discussions and Section 57 safeguarding assessments.

CSC remain engaged in supporting our Education partners with students with challenging behaviours and disabilities. A key change to the support has been the allocation of a Social Care Officer allocated to each of the 3 primary schools, with registered Social Workers leading the key support given to PAS.

In support of the Early Help and Health 0-19 service, in 2023 CSC led a program of baby and toddler sessions. Engagement rates have varied, but it is intended continue the provision as the impact for the attendees has proven positive.

A significant change in 2023 was the move from CSC acting as the LADO when concerns are raised, with the appointment of an Independent LADO. Engagements in this process by CSC have been positive, and we hope to build on this success in the coming year.

In 2023 CSC added a contacts section to the referrals process. This allows for a platform wherein contact is recorded in cases where we don't progress a referral to an assessment or when receive information on an already open case. This allows for a more holistic and accurate recording of cases.

#### **Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)**

KPI figures show:

Total number of referrals 23/24	110
Number of referrals actioned within one working day	110
KPI Compliance	100%

Total Number of contact Q2 23/24 <sup>1</sup>	37
Total number of contacts actioned within one day	37
KPI Compliance	100%

In 23/24 CSC managed a monthly open caseload average of 25.6 cases. Breaking these cases down into categorisations may make them identifiable and subsequently impact the children, their families, and the support CSC can offer.

**The types of statutory cases undertaken by CSC are as follows:**

Single/Core assessment under Section 17 – statutory timescales for assessments to be completed is 45 working days.

Child in Need – again under Section 17 – statutory timescales are a minimum of 6 weekly review and statutory visits. Child in need cases can only remain open with parental consent.

Child Protection Planning – following the completion of a strategy meeting and section 57 – minimum statutory core group meetings and statutory visits are four weekly.

Looked After Children – this is where the Family Court had endorsed an Order for the LA/SHG to share PR with parents and make best interests decisions for the children. The interim order granted by the court is called an Interim Care Order and will be followed by care proceedings. Care proceedings will generally take a period of between 6 and 12 months to be completed.

The department also manages Private Law Proceedings relating to custody and residency disputes between parents.

**The next 12 months:**

Members of the CSC team will continue to support the SGB by delivering Child Safeguarding, Corporate Parenting and CSE training (this is booked in for the next 12 months)

CSC Team manager is an active member of a number of the SGB Sub-Groups, and chairs the Early Help and Training Sub-Group. Plans for the development of these are laid out in the sub-group sections.

Maintain the successful KPI returns and ensure statutory time scales are maintained at 100%

There have been a number of changes in the staffing arrangements at CSC. The two senior social workers have made the difficult decision to leave St Helena, and recruitment is underway for replacements.

CSC will continue to work tirelessly to safeguard and support our children to meet their global development needs.

**Paul Brown, Children's Services Manager**

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<sup>1</sup> NB: Contacts became operational in Q2 23/24. Data collection for rest of year pending completion

## Adults Social Care, 2022 update

Adult Social Care have the primary responsibility of safeguarding vulnerable adults within the community of St Helena. This is largely achieved by working in partnership with key stakeholders across the island and working effectively together to safeguard and protect. Directed by the strategic principles determined within the Safeguarding Board's priorities, and the vision and strategy of SHG, Adult Social Care are pleased to provide this update.

To ensure practice is standardised, consistent and fit for future use, a reformed safeguarding Policy and Procedure has been devised and is currently awaiting approval at the H&SC Advisory Board.

To educate and prevent, Adult Social Care have provided standardised and bespoke training to care providers, members of the community, non-profit organisations and government employees.

To ensure that SHG employees are aware of their roles and responsibilities, Adult Social Care, HR and Health have developed a SHG wide safeguarding policy which is due for approval at SHG SLT in May. Safeguarding and early help is everybody's business!

Adult Social Care have responded to 168 referrals this year. This is an increase of 26% compared to the previous year. This increased demand has been challenging, especially when changes in staff and delays in recruitment have been factored in.

Adult Social Care have significantly reduced the time delay for those awaiting an annual review. Ensuring that annual reviews are completed to timescale is essential to early intervention and reducing the risk to neglect. It also supports adequate distribution of resources, ensuring that those at greater risk are prioritised.

Adult Social Care have introduced an unmet need process to monitor the ongoing issues with sourcing care staff. This ensures that the risk is known and contributes to Governmental accountability.

Adult Social Care have continued to financially support Carers by the provision of Carers Allowance. Currently, 166 members of the community are registered as Carers and paid a Carers Allowance.

Adult Social Care continue to assess and provide Better Living Allowance to Adults whom have a disability and increased disability related expenditure. Currently 172 members of the community benefit from this allowance which reduces the risk of financial hardship. The BLA policy has recently been updated and now provides greater transparency.

Adult Social Care continues to support adults at risk with packages of Care, including 47 adults assisted by the Community Care Team and 42 adults supported by Home Support Carers.

The provision of care and support is provided to Adults who have been assessed as being eligible. Eligibility is determined on outcomes the individual requires support to achieve and the associated impact on their overall wellbeing. Care should promote independence and choice whilst ensuring that an individual's needs are maintained.

These services therefore act to protect adults from abuse and harm though unmet care needs and unintentional neglect.

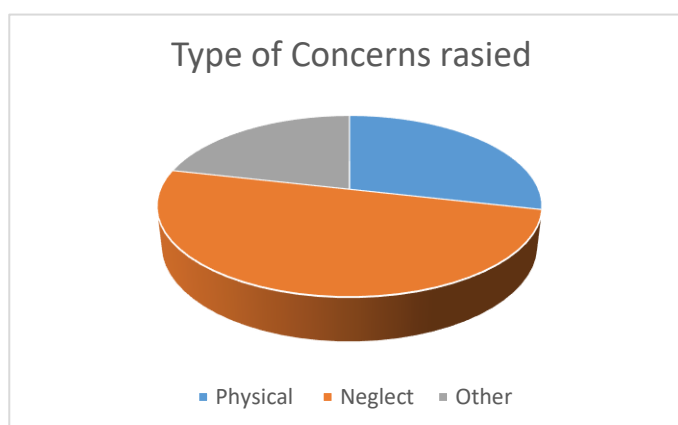
On occasions, it has been necessary to conduct formal investigations where an individual has been harmed, or is at risk of being harmed and due to their impairment, they have been unable to protect themselves. This year, a small number of cases have met the safeguarding threshold.

Of these, the categories of alleged abuse have been:

- Physical abuse: 26.6 %
- Neglect: 46.6%
- Other: 20%.

This demonstrates a trend in neglect, with almost half of all safeguarding enquires being categorised as neglect.

It should be recognised that neglect can come in two forms:



**Neglect:** Neglect is defined as an act of omission in the care leading to potential or actual harm. Neglect may include inadequate health care, education, supervision, protection from hazards in the environment, and unmet basic needs such as clothing and food.

**Self-neglect:** Self neglect is when a person being unable, or unwilling, to care for their own essential needs. It can cover a wide range of behaviour including neglecting personal hygiene, health or surroundings, refusal of necessary support and obsessive hoarding.

These cases highlight the importance of ensuring that paid and unpaid Carers are educated and supported in maintaining their role. It further evidences the need for adequate staffing levels within establishments that provide care and support to vulnerable people.

### **Priorities for 2024/2025**

- Supporting informal Carers to sustain and maintain their caring role by increased respite provision, access to support groups and increased recognition.
- Providing further training for care providers on promoting choice and independence, risk assessment, and safeguarding awareness.
- Continue to improve standards and quality assurance measures.
- Ensuring that Safeguarding policy and procedures are implemented.
- Working with Care providers on improving incident reporting and safeguarding concerns.

### **Angela Bevan – Team Manager, Adults Social Care**

#### **Probation Services**

The St Helena Island Probation Service continues to undertake a wide range of activities in working with those serving both community and custodial sentences. The management of those serving court sentences contributes to community safety by ensuring those who have committed offences work to reduce the likelihood of further offending. It also ensures that these people are effectively monitored and that action is taken to prevent further offending and protect the public.

#### **Court Work**

During the last twelve months, 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024, the Probation Service has maintained a regular presence at both the St Helena Magistrate's Court and the Supreme Court. Pre-Sentence Reports (PSRs) have been prepared for both courts, for a variety of offences, a significant number of which involve sexual offending. These reports include assessments of the factors contributing to offending behaviour, the work needed to address this behaviour to reduce likelihood of further offending. They also include risk assessments and recommendations to the court for the most appropriate sentence for each individual. The total number of PSRs prepared for the court this year was 17, in addition to a number of 'stand down' reports – reports given to the court at the time of sentencing. This is lower than previous years, but is expected to increase by around 50% this year.

During this period the Probation Service has also prepared Progress Reports for individuals serving community sentences, where these are requested by the courts. These reports detail the progress an individual is making and highlight any ongoing concerns with behaviour. This serves to support the individual's engagement with their sentence and enables the court to monitor the appropriateness of the sentence.

On occasions where individuals have not complied with sentences the Probation Service has returned these cases to the court in order that additional sanctions or alternative sentences can be imposed.

#### **Sentence Management**



The Probation Service continues to deliver rehabilitation work to those serving custodial and community sentences. The current caseload, of 30 offenders, comprises primarily of custodial cases, both in custody and on post-release licences. In each of these cases the Probation Service has completed assessments to determine the work required by each individual and has delivered this work on a one-to-one basis. The majority of people serving custodial sentences have committed sexual offences, against both adult and child victims, including historic and current offences. The majority of cases involve contact offences.

In addition to undertaking the rehabilitative work the Probation Service continues to actively contribute to the preparation of post release licences, making recommendations for additional licence conditions, including non-contact conditions and exclusion zones. These licences, along with an individual risk management plan, are shared with the Royal St Helena Police Service prior to release. In the case of high risk individuals briefings are held to discuss cases to ensure information is shared between agencies and contribute to effective risk management.

The Probation Service has been involved in a number of applications for early release from custody during the past twelve months. In each of these cases a thorough assessment of the individual and risk management has been completed and a report submitted to the Prison Visits Committee making recommendations as to the suitability of release.

During this period the Probation Service has instigated recall procedures against individuals who are considered to be in breach of their licence conditions, resulting in a return to custody and improved community safety. In these cases recommendations have been made to the Prison Visits Committee as to what work is required before the individual can safely return to the community. Re-releases have been managed with liaison with appropriate agencies, through the Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements.

Community sentences currently make up approximately one third of the workload of the Probation Service. The majority of these sentences also include a rehabilitative element requiring the individual to engage with offence-focused work to address problem behaviour and reduce the likelihood of further offending. The number of cases involving community service has dropped during this period. Those completing community service continue to work on projects that provide benefit to the community.

### **Victim Contact**

In addition to working with the perpetrators of crime the Probation Service has continued to keep regular contact with the victims of these offences. The Victim Contact Scheme continues to be developed to ensure that victims are provided with appropriate information regarding sentences, including information about release dates and conditions of Release on Temporary Licence (ROTL), wherein prisoners get day release for work purposes ahead of scheduled release. The Probation Service provides support to the majority of cases in which a custodial sentence is imposed. Victims are offered the opportunity to opt in or out of the scheme at any time. Those involved in the scheme are given information to explain how sentencing works and are

given the opportunity to contribute to the planning of additional licence conditions. Victims have also been sign-posted to additional support services as and when required, such as the victim support scheme with the Equalities & Human Rights Commission.

### **Youth Diversion Scheme**

The Youth Diversion Scheme (YDS) continues to provide support to young people between the ages of eight and seventeen. In the last 12 months the scheme has accepted 11 youths on to the scheme, with a total of 9 completing the scheme. The majority of referrals for this service continue to come from the police with others being received from education and concerned individuals. The majority of cases referred to the scheme have been accepted and young people have been worked with on a one-to-one basis. Interventions have included sessions reflecting on the problem behaviour and developing skills to avoid these issues in the future. Some young people have also completed community service type work, making direct reparation to the community for their actions.

The YDS continues to make a significant contribution to improving outcomes for young people on St Helena. In many cases the young person would have faced court proceedings if they had not been involved in the scheme, likely resulting in a disposal that would result in be listed on their criminal record.

### **Multi-Agency Work**

Multi-agency and partnership work continues to be a key component of the work of the probation service. This takes place on both a day-to-day basis and through formal, scheduled meetings such as attendance at child protection conferences. The Probation Service continues to chair the Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA), providing a structured forum in which violent and sexual offenders are reviewed by a panel comprising the police, prison, mental health services, adult services children's services and housing. MAPPA meetings are held on a monthly basis and include cases being heard either planned or requested reviews. At present, the current MAPPA caseload consists of approximately 60 cases.

During this period the Probation Service has been relocated from Coleman House Police Station to Adult Services at Ladder Hill. This has had a significant impact on the work of the Probation Service, with a notable effect on the effectiveness of communication with one of the service's main partnership agencies, that being the police service. Efforts are being made to maintain the previous strength of the communication between the two services.

### **Practice Standards**

In 2023 the St Helena Island Probation Service drafted the St Helena Island Probation Service Practice Standards. It is hoped that these standards can be finalised and put forward for ratification to the H&SC advisory board this year, and will enable the service to create a set of standards to support both those serving the sentences and the community.

### **Future Aims:**

During the next year the Probation Service will continue to develop the Youth Diversion Scheme to ensure this continues to be used by the police and other agencies to help address the needs of young people whose behaviour is potentially harmful to themselves and others.

In previous years the Probation Service has delivered briefings and training to partner agencies, to further develop the work of the service and highlight the ways in which other agencies can both utilise and contribute to this work. A deeper understanding of the work of other agencies contributes to effective communication within partnerships and will thus contribute to the aims and objectives of both the Probation Service and the Safeguarding Board.

### **Laura Aston & David Brickland, Probation Officers**

#### **Office of Public Guardian**

The Office of the Public Guardian (OPG) was established in 2016 as part of the Mental Health and Mental Capacity Ordinance 2015. The Ordinance sets out the legal framework for the protection of people who may lack mental capacity due to age, disability or illness. We support and enable people to plan ahead for both their health and finances to be looked after should they lose the mental capacity to do so for themselves. We also safeguard the interests of people who may lack the mental capacity to make certain decisions about their property, finance, health and welfare.

Our principal responsibilities as set out under section 125 (1) of the Mental Health and Mental Capacity Ordinance 2015 are:

- Processing applications for Deputyship in conjunction with AG Chambers and the Supreme Court
- Processing and registering Lasting Powers of Attorney (LPA)
- Maintaining a register of LPAs approved by OPG
- Maintaining a register of Deputies approved by the Supreme Court
- Supervising Deputies (including the scrutiny of Deputy reports)
- Receiving security which the court requires a person to give for the discharge of the person's function
- Reporting to the court on any matters relating to proceedings as the court requires
- Dealing with representations or complaints about the way in which LPAs or Deputies are exercising their powers

The Public Guardian has engaged with two other British Overseas Territories: Monserrat (2021) and The Falkland Islands (2023 & 2024) regarding the OPG – its functions and how it operates on St Helena. The Public Guardian welcomes these networking opportunities with other Overseas Territories.

One of our key performance indicators is to always achieve 100% Deputy supervisions. This has been achieved since the last reporting period. All Deputy

supervisions were undertaken including some remote meetings where Deputies are based overseas.

In 2023, we issued a feedback survey to all LPAs and Deputies. All responses received showed that our customers are satisfied with the service provided. There were no comments or suggestions for improvements.

We have not received any complaints about the way in which OPG operates and functions.

We have received compliments about our timelines in responding to referrals; our approach to explaining the registration process for both LPAs and Deputyship; our conduct; punctuality; signposting; and empathy for individuals and families facing challenges and are emotional by the time OPG gets involved.

The Public Guardian is authorised to investigate allegations of abuse by attorneys or court-appointed Deputies where there is a registered LPA or a court order in place. We also carry out an investigation if there are grounds to suggest that the best interests of the donor or 'P' are not being met.

Since the last reporting period, the OPG supported Adult Services – Social Care with one joint investigation. This was a fact-finding exercise which did not lead to a full investigation by either party. No further action was required.

The OPG continues to work closely with Adult Services – Social Care, Mental Health Team, The Royal St Helena Police Service, The Supreme Court, AG Chambers, and Public Solicitor Office and other stakeholders to ensure that the necessary safeguards are accelerated if someone is at risk of harm or exploitation.

In 2022, a Social Care Officer - Adults was seconded on a part-time basis to take up position as Assistant to the Public Guardian (APG). The APG supports case work, responds to initial enquiries, assists in the preparation of the 'bundle' for applications to the court, prepares and conducts Deputy supervisions, maintains statutory registers and deputises in the absence of the Public Guardian. This person is an asset to ensuring that the OPG meets its statutory obligations.

One of the challenges the OPG faces is working consistently across St Helena and Ascension Island. The Public Guardian undertook an official visit to Ascension Island in December 2018. A further visit would be advantageous to the local community working on Ascension, and an opportunity to further promote awareness of registering LPAs, switching from General Power of Attorney to LPAs, meeting with Deputies and promoting the work of the OPG to help build a pool of Deputies when needed.

The Public Guardian wrote to both the Administrator of Ascension Island and his private secretary about the possibility of a further visit in 2023 and to request assistance with funding flights to and from Ascension Island. A response has not been

received regarding this proposal. This presents a risk of OPG not serving both St Helena and Ascension Island as required under the Mental Health and Mental Capacity Ordinance 2015. This matter has been raised in His Excellency The Governor's annual report.

The OPG does not have a designated budget. All costs are met within the budget for social care including: salaries, administration, phone calls and transport. In the event of changes to the current staffing structure and an increase in applications for Deputyship, a review of financial outgoings in comparison to fees collected for LPA and Deputy applications will need to be reviewed.

Our targets for 2024:

- To maintain a high level of service and accessibility to our customers and stakeholders
- To further promote the work of OPG through social media, face-to-face (myth busting) discussions and a visit to Ascension Island if Ascension Island Government is prepared to fund this.
- To work with SHG and provide more up-to-date information and links on SHGs website
- To develop and implement written policies and procedures

#### **Statistics for the reporting period April 2023 – April 2024**

Number of clients registered with LPA's	80
Number of LPA's registered	123
Increase of clients registered with LPA's since April 2023	25
Deceased LPA clients since April 2023	4
Number of clients with Deputies	45
Number of Deputies registered	67
Increase of clients registered with Deputies since April 2023	4
Deceased Deputy clients since April 2023	2

#### **Gavin Thomas, Public Guardian for St Helena & Ascension Island**

##### **Update from Housing**

Renovation works have started at the R.E. Yard and are due to be completed December 2024. The renovation of these properties will improve the lifestyles and wellbeing of these tenants immensely also creating two additional two bedroom homes to accommodate those listed on the register.

The availability and demand for GLH continues to be a challenge. At the end of March 2024 there are 37 applicants on the housing register. These include 7 GLH transfer requests and 5 male adults in temporary shared accommodation and 4 families.

Of these we have 17 high priority, 1 medium and 19 with a low housing needs. The Housing Management Office have three adapted properties for tenants who have declining health and have successfully occupied two of the properties with another suitable allocation to be made in the near future. We have also recently adapted another property to include ramp and sit out area to accommodate the tenants housing need due to declining health issues.

Cross portfolio working relations is established with various multiagency groups such as Safeguarding, Child Services, Adult Social Care, Probation and Police Services. These cross coordinating supports our efforts and are key within the housing industry and instrumental in decision making.

Currently we are addressing the concern with respect to homelessness as it is it has been identified that homelessness is SHG responsibility in its entirety. A separate budget must be agreed for homelessness provision and the identification of available/suitable properties.

The Housing Management Office are now at full capacity with a Chief Housing Officer, Housing and Property Officer. Overall this will provide a better management and smooth operations for delivery of the Housing Services.

Currently we are reviewing the St Helena Housing Strategy Manual, St Helena Housing Strategy and the Rent and Fees policy.

### **Risks**

- Currently SHG does not have provision in place to accommodate homelessness on the Island therefore the placement of homeless households in temporary accommodation is often difficult, e.g. offenders being released from prison not being housed in the locations of their victims. As a result ordinary Social Housing are used as shared accommodation which is far from ideal for the individuals and the management of these properties. The current economic climate on the Island is challenging and the market rent is out of reach for those who are on low incomes which puts pressure on Saint Helena Government limited social housing stock and placement of homeless household is often difficult.
- The annual audit checked conducted for 2023 has revealed that Government Landlord Properties requires significant renovation works. If works continued to be applied as reactive and not considered in a rolling maintenance plan these properties will continue to deteriorate and in some respect will not be fit for purpose. It is acknowledged that the Building Maintenance Team is under resourced and that Housing falls on their priority listing as a 3<sup>rd</sup> priority. Recommendation/ Audit report to be shared with the Building Maintenance Team to establish a way forward.

### **Emerging Risks**

- In practice the Housing trading account only appears to have traded successfully through under investment in the housing stock and not reconciling the rent debt. The inclusion of the Chief Secretary Houses, contributing a higher rent to the trading account is intended to offset the lower GLH rents. However, this is no longer the case, with neither producing sufficient income to maintain the housing stock in the long term. It should also be noted the Homelessness is covered under the trading account which is no longer financially viable or sustainable and a separate provision/budget should be identified as this is the remit of SHG in its entirety.

**Melissa Fowler**

**Chief Housing Officer**

Update from Health

The following summarises work done within health to strengthen its safeguarding processes and procedures:

- a) Implemented a procedure for ensuring that all children 0-18 who attend the A&E department are flagged up to social care.
- b) Develop a disease, disability, vulnerable person and cancer registry (in progress)
- c) Development of an enhanced children's and young people's nursing service and enhance the paediatric provision of services.
- d) Continued work with multi-agency teams in relation to discharges of vulnerable service users.
- e) Participation by health staff with ongoing Safeguarding training currently offered under the direction of the safeguarding board.
- f) Active participation by health senior management in relation to a range of safeguarding subgroups, inclusive of the safeguarding board.
- g) Development of the current management framework following the departure of the Director of Health, to ensure that continued service provision and support remains at the forefront of the Portfolio's work.
- h) Enhanced working practices within our emergency response team, leading to improved reporting lines for safeguarding concerns.

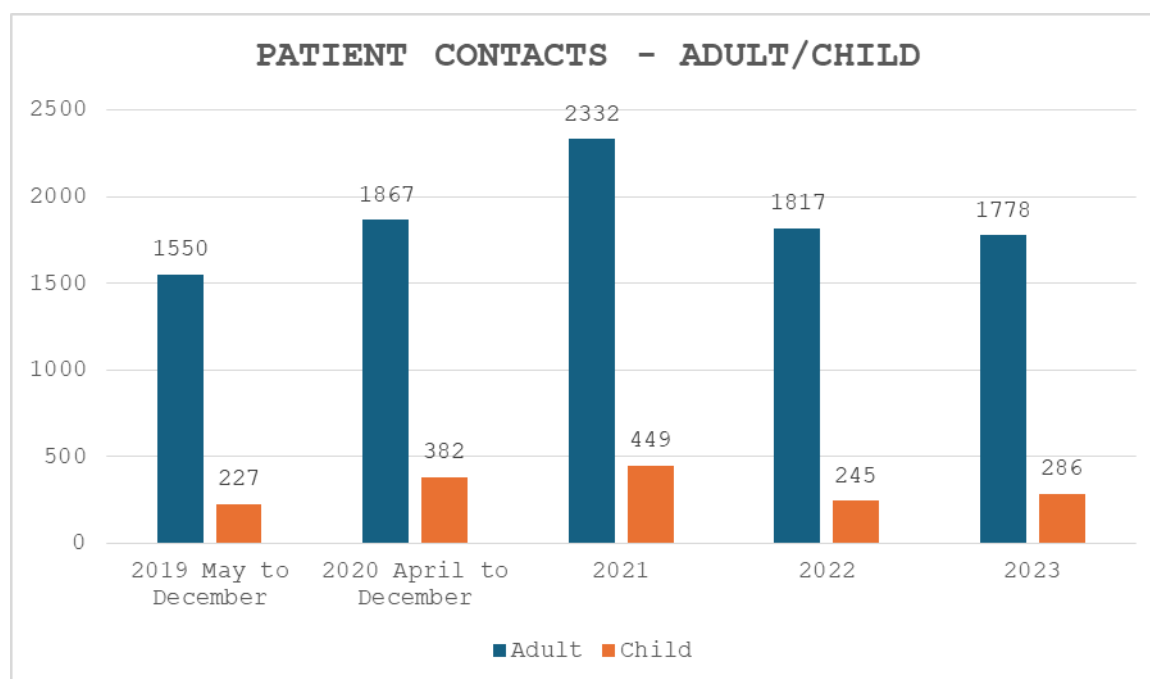
**James Douglas, Head of Service – Clinical Operations**

Mental Health

Much of our routine work is safeguarding vulnerable children and adults with mental health problems

- Ensuring access to healthcare both physical and psychiatric, including 24/7 on call service;

- Working with other agencies particularly social care, education, housing and police to ensure holistic care;
- Supporting vulnerable children and adults in the justice system particularly police custody and courts;
- Identifying and treating prisoners with mental health problems;
- Screening new patients for history of trauma/abuse. Providing specialist psychological treatment when required (remotely) and supporting individuals to disclose allegations to police if they choose to.



### ***Sexual abuse***

There have been a number of disclosures relating to historic sexual abuse to staff in the mental health team this year. Where the patients have wanted to report this to the police, we have supported them. Some of these have resulted in convictions. This is a hugely positive outcome for these individuals and reflects the good work being done by the Mental Health team. The Mental Health team work closely in these cases with the police, and the wider health directorate, to get the best outcomes for victims.

All these patients have been offered specialist counselling through a UK sexual assault survivor service and some have chosen to take this up.

### ***Prison***

The Community Psychiatric Nurse (CPN) is a regular visitor to the prison and will often see prisoners for mental and physical health related issues. Many of the prisoners engage in programmes supported by the Mental Health Team, one of which is the Good Lives model (GLM).



*The GLM is a strengths-based approach to offender rehabilitation, and is therefore premised on the idea that we need to build capabilities and strengths in people, in order to reduce their risk of reoffending*

This extends to prisoners on release and if required, support is given to assist with reintegration into the community a process that can take several years

### ***Mental health patients and criminal justice***

There were 36 police custody assessments when a CPN was called to police custody to assess a detainee that was deemed vulnerable. Not all detainees had mental health problems as some were vulnerable due to physical health or learning disability issues.

To support this programme of activity, the Mental Health Lead, in partnership with the police, updated the Healthcare of Detainees in Police Custody Policy to offer further clarity to the process and to ensure uniformity of assessment and outcome.

Three mental health patients were supported during court proceedings and all were diverted from criminal justice to mental health disposal – a positive outcome for the patient and the resources of the legal system.

The Mental Health team have facilitated forensic psychiatric assessments remotely where required.

### ***Child care proceedings***

The mental health team attend meetings with Children's Services for both informal and statutory meetings. The CAMHs (Child and Adolescent Mental Health) nurse takes the lead role for young people with mental health issues in these meetings and is frequently involved in treatment plans

### ***Learning disability***

In the absence of a dedicated learning disability service the mental health team support Adult Social Care to work with persons with learning disabilities, particularly those who live in residential care and display challenging behaviour

**Ian Rummary, Mental Health Team Lead**

## EDUCATION SKILLS & EMPLOYMENT



St Helena  
Government

Education & Learning Centre, Jamestown  
St. Helena Island, STHL 1ZZ  
South Atlantic Ocean  
Tel. No. +290 22607  
email: [info@sainthelena.edu.sh](mailto:info@sainthelena.edu.sh)  
website: [www.sainthelena.edu.sh](http://www.sainthelena.edu.sh)



### St Helena, Adults & Children's Safeguarding Board Annual Update Report, 2023

#### Context

For the year 2023 the Portfolio experienced major staffing shortages which impacted on some of the prioritized work streams. These shortages affected the operation of the Inclusion Service, management of and SEN support in PAS, subject specialist and class teaching in the secondary and primary schools respectively and access to professional support in Speech and Language and Educational Psychology services.

#### Numbers of students on the SEND Register:

##### 2022-23

Secondary 31 students out of a school population of 220 = 14%

Primary 58 students out of a school population of 330 = 17.5%

##### 2023 – 24 to date

Secondary 45 students out of a school population of 219 = 20.5%

Primary 55 students out of a school population of 297 = 18.5%

#### Number of students on Alternative Education Programme:

Primary- 0,

Secondary- 6 (NB this includes 1 student who is excluded due to his behavioural challenges)

**Number of suspensions in primary for Academic Year 2022-23: 9**

**Number of suspensions in secondary for Academic Year 2022-23: 32**

**Number of formal investigations of alleged safeguarding concerns involving staff - 1  
in progress**

Despite the challenges, work progressed as follows:

#### Updating of Policies –

*SEND Policy* - Work continued on the development of the SEND Policy. The first draft for staff consultation was completed in December of 2023 with the intention for consultation to commence in January 2024.

*Alternative Education Policy* - As a result of the increase in numbers of students needing an alternative curriculum and programme, work has commenced on developing an Alternative Education Policy. It is envisaged that this will initially work alongside the Pupil Referral Unit Policy with a view to merging these in the future.

*Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)* – The final draft of this plan has been completed. It will be shared with staff for implementation in 2024 and reviewed and amended pending feedback.

*Child Protection Policy* - This policy is being worked on by the Policy Sub Group of the Safeguarding Board. It is anticipated that this work will be available for consultation in 2024.

*Guidelines for Safeguarding Staff* - Whilst the intention was for this guidance to be progressed in 2023, due to other prioritized work streams this could not happen. This work will be actioned in 2024.

*Home Education Policy* – The current Education Ordinance 2008 does not provide legal guidance on home education. As a result, a Home Education Policy will be developed to support families who are home schooling.

*Education Ordinance 2008* – Work has been undertaken to review the current ordinance and to identify areas where it is lacking in legal guidance. Due to competing work streams this piece of work has not been progressed. It is anticipated that all changes will be collated in 2024 with a view to then seeking legal guidance from the Attorney Generals Chambers to amend this Ordinance.

*Education Regulations 2015* - Review of the Regulations will be undertaken in conjunction with the review of the Education Ordinance.

*School Behaviour Policies* - These are due for review. Work on this will commence in 2024 when the substantive Head is in post in secondary education.

## **Staff Training**

Over the year staff have been involved in Cyber-Security Training delivered by the SHG IT Section.

Training for teachers and TAs on supporting children with specific SEND is planned for January 2024. This will be delivered through the Hampshire Link.

Safeguarding Awareness continues with staff becoming more confident in reporting concerns to the relevant officers/agency.

## **CHALLENGES/THREATS**

- Improving on the quality of teaching and progressing learning due to staffing shortages and limited opportunities for on-going CPD
- Catering for the numbers of students with SEND and SEMH due to limited access to trained professionals for support and training. Especially for those students who are on alternative education programmes and who present with challenging behaviours. Students with conditions such as Achondroplasia and Cerebral Palsy require additional physical resources such as additional railings to provide support for moving about the school, dedicated travel chairs and a dedicated vehicle to enable travel to and from school and on school outings/activities as due to safety reasons cannot travel on the school buses. Providing this support is a challenge due to budget constraints
- Current legislation does not advocate for students and young people with SEND/SEMH. In the UK legal support is up to the age of 25 years whereas on St. Helena this stops at 16 years at the end of compulsory schooling as per Education Ordinance 2008
- Current school premises in primary restrict the ability to provide adequate sensory rooms and classroom environments to cater for the needs of our students
- Lack of provision for our gifted and talented students
- Bleak future aspirations, job opportunities and life outcomes for students with SEND/SEMH once they leave school due to lack of current legislation and policy on support for persons with SEND and SEMH post schooling
- Societal issues around the misuse of alcohol, drugs, cigarettes and monster energy drinks continues to present in school (mostly in secondary). In addition, with the growing age of technology the portfolio has to also contend with issues resulting from misuse of mobile phones and social media
- Lack of requirement for identifying guardianship/parental responsibility for students whose parents are off shore
- Decreased budget to be able to improve and develop our service offerings and support to teaching and learning
- For some parents, limited understanding of how to administer discipline at home and how to monitor use of technology
- Review and updating of policies, procedures and legal guidance to support current operations

## **OPPORTUNITIES**

- Links with Hampshire County Council to provide support to the newly appointed Inclusion Manager, deliver training and provide support to school managers
- Foraging links with UK Educational Authorities ( E.g. Department for Education, University of Hull) to support teachers CPD and educational opportunities
- Close links with most parents and all schools operating a proactive PTA
- Safeguarding Board and supporting sub-groups
- Recruitment of the Head of PAS
- Link with LADO
- Education Reform Programme
- Play Therapy on offer in primary schools
- Increased bandwidth in schools offers more opportunities for accessing online support
- Chromebook Project in PAS to support teaching and learning. Expected to start in January 2024

**Wendy C Benjamin M.Ed.**  
**Portfolio Director**  
**Education, Skills and Employment Portfolio**

## Update from Police

Throughout 2023-2024 Royal St. Helena Police (RSHP) have continued to play a key role as a member of the safeguarding board, being represented at main board meetings as well as playing an active role in a number of sub groups. Additionally, at the last full board meeting the police have adopted the position of chair of the exploitation sub group with terms of reference and membership currently under discussion.

Safeguarding and protecting vulnerable members of our community continues to be a priority area of focus for the police service as outlined in our Police and Crime plan published in 2022.



The plan sets out six strategic priorities, one of which is to protect vulnerable people. This then identifies four areas for specific focus, as identified above, to help achieve this goal. It is this area of strategic focus which synergises with the police responsibilities and contribution to the safeguarding board.

During the reporting period, Royal St Helena Police have continued to evolve the safeguarding agenda, both as an individual agency and in partnership with other stakeholders. Fundamental to this has been the review and implementation of a more robust process for the recording and monitoring of referrals to other agencies. During this period RSHP have made a total of 144 contacts regarding safeguarding issues with just over 2/3<sup>rd</sup> relating to juveniles. The remainder are predominantly domestic related with an additional 36 referrals relating to vulnerable adults.

There have been a number of significant safeguarding investigations during the time period, with amongst others, 23 of the offences having a significant sexual element as part of the offending behaviour. Of those reported, 9 were non recent. This may be an indication of increased public confidence in the capabilities of agencies when investigating such matters, but it would be premature to make a definitive link at this time. Many of these investigations have been conducted with partners such as social care and have resulted in significant convictions and custodial sentences.

RSHP have also utilised the courts to support safeguarding, with the use of civil orders such as domestic violence prevention orders (DVPO's) and child abduction warning notices (CAWN's) where appropriate, in addition to requesting and supporting post-conviction orders to enhance public protection.

As part of an ongoing program of legislative reform, RSHP have been working throughout the reporting period with the Crown Prosecutor to identify gaps in legislation, particularly in relation to matters related to safeguarding. This has had some success with the offence of 'Sexual Communication with a child' being approved by legislative council. This remains a significant and ongoing piece of work that RSHP remain fully engaged in, as well as working with other safeguarding board members to introduce reforms to alcohol licensing and an ID scheme for young people to seek to address any issues of alcohol consumption by, and supply of alcohol to, minors.

Throughout the year there have been a small number of reports and concerns raised over anti-social behaviour in and around Jamestown, particularly lower Jamestown, on some Friday and Saturday nights. This has led to some low level criminality and also highlighted some additional safeguarding concerns including the exposure of young people to premises that retail alcohol, and the potential risks associated.

The police continue to try to engage all key stakeholders to find a sustainable solution, and wish to highlight the great work being done by New Horizons in offering a safe environment for children and young people to meet and socialise.

Amongst potential additional measures to reduce concerns are the use of Anti-Social Behaviour Orders following related convictions, and deterrent proposals such as increased lighting and perhaps more significantly CCTV, but these have not been possible to progress due to regulatory restrictions, financial constraints and a lack of political will.

There has been an ongoing programme of training throughout the year with safeguarding training being delivered to all new recruits as well as additional training being delivered to the wider police cohort in areas such as child and adult safeguarding and cyber/internet investigations. Additionally, officers from RSHP have virtually accessed training from overseas to ensure we remain current with international best practice, and looking at ways in which this can best be utilised to enhance the safeguarding capacity and capability on St Helena.

Looking ahead, RSHP remain fully committed to the safeguarding agenda and being a key component of the safeguarding board. There will be a continued focus on trying to progress the legislative reform agenda relating to safeguarding matters and work remains ongoing with the Crown Prosecutor to develop this. Emphasis will also be placed on further developing partnerships with other safeguarding board stakeholders, particularly education, to better achieve the overall strategic objective of 'Making St Helena Safer'

## Older Person's Champion

### Report on visits to the Care Centres on Wednesday, 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2024

#### **Community Care Centre**

I arrived mid-morning, was met by Michelle Clingham, Acting Manager and walked through all of the areas to speak with as many residents as possible. Some of the residents were attending the weekly service.

All of the residents had received their personal care and were dressed and made comfortable.

There were no negative comments from residents about the foods provided or meal times.

A few residents spoke of their wish to be in their own homes, but understood their need to be in care and expressed appreciation.

There were no complaints about the Carers, even those service users whose level of conversation is somewhat limited, made me understand that the Carers do the best for them. I saw staff interacting with residents and in the secure unit, a member of staff was actively encouraging a resident with her artwork.

A comment made by a very senior resident was, ***“we may not have lots of money up here, but we have a lot of laughs”***.

What was very noticeable was the overall cleanliness. The personal and communal rooms and the shower/toilet facilities were clean with no unpleasant smells or dirty areas.

#### **Capevilla**

I met all of the clients, several were gathered in the communal lounge and others in their individual flats. Flats, warden area and court yard were clean and tidy. Residents were clean and seemed comfortable and well cared for and there were no complaints about the food.

Residents were very social and willing to engage in conversation.

It was raised by a client that the health issue of another client is sometimes disturbing and concerning; it had been explained to them by staff that this behaviour is a result of the client's medical condition.



I spoke with a relatively new client, who stated that her transition into care had gone well, she had no issues with been at Capevilla.

Clients spoke positively of the care they received from staff. It was mentioned, that when there are only two members of staff on duty, it can sometimes make it difficult to get their attention when you need it however, it is understood that this is not the fault of the staff members, but due to insufficient staffing.

### **Deacons Centre**

With the exception of one client, who was away for the day, I personally spoke with all of the other clients. Clients were clean and seemed comfortable. In conversations, there were no negative responses about the food or the level of care provided to them. Clients said they have a good relationship with staff.

Flats, communal area and external areas were clean and tidy. It would be good to have the exterior walls repainted; it is, however, well known how the weather in this area affects the exterior of Deacons.

### **Conclusion**

I was privileged as Older Persons Champion to be given the opportunity to make these visits with Health.

All three care homes were clean and residents and clients appeared well cared for. Limited finances restricts maintenance to these complexes, but with the funds available to them , they manage to keep the centres clean, light, and fresh.

Staff shortage is a major concern and it is a credit to the staff for how they manage to uphold the level of care provided, but this is not sustainable. without additional support to the Social Care sector

### **Cllr Gillian Brooks – Older Person's Champion**

## St Helena Safeguarding Board Sub-Group Updates

### Training Sub Group

#### **Training Sub group**

Training for the following 5 courses commenced in April 2023.

#### **Individual Training Courses:**

Internet/cyber security – Delivered by G. Drabble

Children's Safeguarding – Delivered by Children's Safeguarding Service

Corporate Parenting – Delivered by Children's Safeguarding Service

Adult Safeguarding – Delivered by Adult's Safeguarding Service

Child Sexual Exploitation *(in order to attend this training session you must have already completed the Children's Safeguarding Training)*

Sessions were/are arranged on a monthly basis.

Bespoke training has been provided to the following by CSC at the request of the following organisations.

- Human rights
- Police
- Education

Progress update: following a slow start, applications and attendance at training was positive. This was arguably assisted through leadership encouragement to attend training.

A training plan along the same line is in place until the end of 2024.

Of note there is currently a decreased numbers of qualified staff to deliver training (this will hopefully increase in the coming 3 months). Furthermore since the start of this year applications to attend training have decreased.

#### **Venue/Application:**

All training sessions will be held at the Saint Helena Community College. Participants are to arrive at 9am, with a view to each training session starting at 9:30am. Applications for the individual courses need to be made to Saint Helena Community College using the relevant application form which will be provided by the Community College.

#### **Feedback and certification:**

Following the completion of each course, participants will be required to complete an evaluation form in addition to receiving a certificate confirming they have attended the individual training session.

## SCR Sub-Group

The Case Review sub group is responsible for coordinating the local framework for reviewing serious child and vulnerable adult safeguarding cases as set out in Working Together 2020.

In 23/24 the group met a number of times, as a task finish group, to create the ToRs for the group.

Key activities outlined in the ToRs (approved at SGB in August 2023) were:

- To update and review the learning review pathway and policy for serious child and vulnerable adult safeguarding cases, which raise issues of importance in relation to St Helena, every two years or as and when required.
- To oversee the implementation of actions arising from case reviews and to hold safeguarding partners and relevant agencies to account for their performance in this regard.
- To contribute to the St Helena Safeguarding Board (SHSB) annual report through the summary of events within each calendar year.

In August 2023 the group presented a learning pathway to the SGB, which was subsequently approved. This set the standards for a learning review as:

### **Threshold for Learning Review**

A child or vulnerable adult has died or been seriously harmed and abuse or neglect of the child or vulnerable adult is known or suspected.

Death would include suicide and referrals from the Coroner, whereby the child or vulnerable adult was in the care of Social Care, HM Prison, Mental Health Team and Hospital.

Death, following on from police contact within a 24 hour period would also meet the threshold. This may include cases where a child or vulnerable adult has caused serious harm to someone else.

Serious harm includes, but is not limited to, serious and/or long-term impairment of a child or vulnerable adult's mental or physical health or intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development. This should include cases where impairment is likely to be long-term, even if this is not immediately certain.

Local safeguarding partners (Social Care, Police, Education, Health and Voluntary/Third Sector Organisations) must carry out a safeguarding review into all incidents notified to the Safeguarding Board.

The local safeguarding partners may decide not to undertake a learning review because they have already carried out several reviews concerning the same issue, so new learning is unlikely.

In St Helena, the key guidance for safeguarding practice reviews is Working Together to Safeguard Children and Vulnerable Adults: a guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and vulnerable adults (2020).

Policy & Procedure Sub-Group

### **St Helena Children's and Adults Safeguarding Board, Policy & Procedure Sub-Group**

The PPSG have met multiple times throughout the year. Meeting attendance was steady, and the group progressed a number of key areas of work

#### **Current work streams updates:**

##### ***Internal – SHG Policy Development***

- Draft Policy created and submitted to SHG for approval through the SLT sign off process
- Individual portfolios have been supported to review their own procedures that lay beneath the SHG Policy. These are in varying stages of development, but at time of writing 3 Portfolios have procedures that are awaiting sign off at their advisory boards.

##### ***External – Charity Commission Partnership***

During 23/24, the PPSG worked to develop a suite of safeguarding policies & procedures for adoption by the Charities wishing to register or maintain their annual registration.

This was done to support the Charity Commission to meet the legal requirements as laid out in the Charity Ordinance, 2005

Subject to subsection (5), an organisation must not be registered as a charitable organisation unless it has submitted to the Registrar—

(a) its governing document which—

- (i) sets out the name and the purposes of the organisation and any other matters that are prescribed; and
- (ii) provides for the appointment of a management committee in terms consistent with subsection (2); and 7 (b) in the case of an organisation which has as its primary purpose the advancement, relief or assistance of vulnerable beneficiaries, a copy of its safeguarding policy with respect to its beneficiaries.

(1A) The safeguarding policy referred to in subsection (1)(b) must include, but not be limited to—

- (a) provision for making the necessary enquiries into the background of individuals engaged (whether as employee, volunteer or otherwise) to work with vulnerable beneficiaries;
- (b) provision for mitigating identified risks to safeguard the beneficiaries of the organisation;
- (c) reporting and investigating procedures.

The suite includes provision for charities in the following categories:

- Charities that do not have regular or unsupervised contact with children or vulnerable adults
- Charities that have regular or unsupervised contact with children or vulnerable adults
- Charities that are Church or Religious Groups

Multiple meetings were held with charities across St Helena including

- 1 to 1 sessions with the Anglican Church, Baptist Church, 7 day Adventists & Ladies Corona Society, St Helena National Trust & more
- An open evening at Rosie's on 20<sup>th</sup> July 2023 with approx. 15 charities in attendance

Key themes and concerns from charities:

- The requirement to have a policy is new for many (despite being in the ordinance it appears for most this has just simply never been requested)
- Time demands for training all staff as suggested
- Cost of vetting check for staff and volunteers who have regular or unsupervised contact with children and vulnerable adults
- Big demands on charities that may affect willingness of people to volunteer

As part of the PPSG commitment to ensuring compliance with the policies, an audit programme will be drafted (along with training) to support the Charity Commission.

## **Working Together**

The full Working Together Document was reviewed by all key partner agencies, key updates were made in section 9, with the document formatted. The document was submitted in August SGB and approved.

*The PPSG is committed to supporting Priorities 1 & 3 of the SGB 5 year plan, standardising processes and developing safer recruitment both internally and externally of SHG.*

## **Next 12 months**

Working Together has recently been in consultation in UK, with new guidance expected later in the year/early next year. A full, in depth, update and review of the document for St Helena to follow after this is completed.

In the absence of Data Protection/Information sharing legislation the PPSG has been tasked at creating a data sharing protocol to support information sharing across partners.

#### Early Help Sub-Group

The early help sub group was set up in October 2023 and launched in November 2023, with some support from Hampshire County Council.

Procedures and processes were shared with all professionals prior to launch and Social Care Officers from Children's Social Care were allocated to each school to signpost and provide support where necessary.

In addition a baby and toddler group has been set up in Jamestown and Longwood on a monthly basis. Attendance in Jamestown is noted to be better than in Longwood, thus an additional session has just been implemented in Jamestown each month.

Progress update: To date no referrals or requests for support have been received or actioned re early help.

#### SEND Sub-Group

*The SEND Sub-Group is chaired by a representative from the Education Portfolio. Due to staffing pressures on the portfolio, no update has been received at the time of publication. The SGB annual report 23/24 will be updated once this has been received.*

#### Substance Misuse Sub-Group

The Substance Misuse Strategy Group was tasked with creating a strategy to reduce alcohol related harm

The group adopted the WHO SAFER Alcohol Initiative

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| S | – | Strengthen restrictions on alcohol availability                   |
| A | – | Advance and enforce drink driving counter measures                |
| F | – | Facilitate access to screening, brief interventions and treatment |
| E | – | Enforce bans on alcohol advertising and promotion                 |
| R | – | Raise prices on alcohol   |

While the strategy has yet to be finalised there have been some positive outcomes from the group:

- **Increase in excise duty for locally made alcohol**

Alcohol taxation and pricing policies are among the most effective and cost-effective alcohol control measures. An increase in excise taxes on alcoholic beverages is a proven measure to reduce harmful use of alcohol and it provides governments revenue to offset the economic costs of harmful use of alcohol.

*Where alcohol is legal, governments can try to influence the final price of alcohol by:*

- establishing a system for specific domestic taxation on alcohol, accompanied by an effective enforcement system which may take into account, as appropriate, the alcoholic content of the beverage;
- increasing excise taxes on alcoholic beverages and regularly reviewing prices in relation to the level of inflation and income;
- banning or restricting the use of direct and indirect price promotions, discount sales, sales below cost, and flat rates for unlimited alcohol consumption or other types of volume sales;
- establishing minimum prices for alcohol, where applicable; providing price incentives for non-alcoholic beverages; and reducing or stopping subsidies to economic operators in the area of alcohol.

- **Introduction of ID card scheme**

The initial promotion of the ID scheme, led by the Royal St Helena Police Service, generated a small uptake in applications to the ID scheme. However, an issue with the printing technology delayed uptake significantly. To be revisited in the next year, with a view to increasing the publicity and uptake, as well as raising awareness amongst the licensed premises.

- **Commitment at Ministerial level to reduce the drink driving level**

Road users who are impaired by alcohol have a significantly higher risk of being involved in a crash. Enacting and enforcing strong drink-driving laws and low blood alcohol concentration limits via sobriety checkpoints and random breath testing will help to turn the tide.

Several measures are available for governments who want to take concrete actions to counter drink-driving. For instance:

- blood-alcohol concentration (BAC) limits can be established and restricted (with lower limits for novice and professional drivers);

- sobriety checkpoints, random breath-testing, administrative suspension of licences, graduated driving licences for novice drivers and ignition interlocks are effective in reducing alcohol-impaired driving; and
- other complementary measures include mandatory driver education, provision of alternative transportation, counselling and, as appropriate, treatment programmes for repeat offenders and carefully planned, high-intensity and well-executed mass media campaigns.

### **Work that is planned for 2024/25:**

- ✓ Reducing times that alcohol can be sold from retail outlets
- ✓ Introduce a challenge scheme for licensed premises to ask people for ID if their age is in question
- ✓ Embed screening of alcohol use in appointments with health professionals

### **Corporate Parenting Board**

Membership for the Corporate Parenting Board is now established.

Representation includes: Health & Social Care – Children & Adults services, Education Employment and Skills, Governor's Office, The Minister for Health & Social Care, and the Children's Champion.

The CPB will hold its first meeting in May 2024, followed by a further meeting before the end of the calendar year.

Priorities for the first meeting will include confirmation of the terms and conditions (TORs), and tasks for the remainder of the year such as a review of the St Helena Corporate Parenting Guidance, the St Helena Corporate Parenting Policy, continuation of the Corporate Training Programme, and agreement

Updated TORs will be submitted to the Safeguarding Board in August 2024 for ratification.

### **Audit Sub-Group**

The audit subgroup met once, to establish the membership, in 2023. Draft ToRs have been circulated to sub-group members, however, the remit of the group is likely to evolve in the coming year to encompass the oversight function of the Quality Assurance Framework that is due for ratification at the May SGB meeting.

### **Exploitation Sub-Group**

The responsibility for chairing the exploitation sub group was assumed by the police representative, Deputy Chief of Police Peter Found, at the last full meeting of the safeguarding board. Work is ongoing to establish the appropriate membership of the sub group, agree terms of reference and from there set out some key objectives for



the coming year. This is recognised as a priority area of business and the sub group will look to better capture, inform and direct activity already being undertaken by the board as a whole.

# St Helena Safeguarding Board 5 Year Strategic Plan 2023 - 2028



*“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 co-ordinated 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.

**St Helena Safeguarding Board**  
**Terms of Reference**

**Context**

The guidance below has been informed by existing legislation.

The Governor shall establish a Safeguarding Board (“the SGB”) for St Helena, to be known as the “St. Helena Safeguarding Board”.

The SGB shall include such persons or their representatives, and the representatives of such bodies, that exercise functions or are engaged in activities relating to children and vulnerable adults as the Governor in Council may by regulations prescribe.

The objective of the SGB is:

*To co-ordinate what is done by each person or body presented on it for the purposes of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and vulnerable adults on St Helena; and to ensure the effectiveness of what is done by each person or body for those purposes.*

The SGB is to have such functions in relation to its objective as the Governor in Council may by regulations prescribe (which may in particular include functions of review or investigation).

The Governor in Council may by regulations make provision as to the procedures to be followed by the SGB.

The funding of SGB shall be wholly funded by the St Helena Government.

The Government shall be responsible for providing, staff, goods, services, accommodation and other resources for the proper functioning of the SGB.

The Governor in Council may by regulations make provision as to the functions of the Portfolio’s in relation to the SGB.

The Government department or public officer shall, in exercising its or his functions relating to SGB, have regard to any guidance given to them for the purpose by the Governor in Council.

**Overall Purpose**

“The Children and Adult Safeguarding Board” (SGB) is a multi-agency strategic partnership made up of senior officers from Children’s Social Care, Adults Social Care, Education, Criminal Justice, Health, Police, voluntary organisations and service user representative groups. It coordinates the strategic development of the children and adults safeguarding system across St Helena and ensures the effectiveness of the work undertaken by partner agencies in the area”.

**Statutory Functions of the SGB**

The SGB's statutory functions as described in SECTION 38, 39, 40 & 41 of The Welfare of Children Ordinance as outlined above are broadly summarised as:

- to co-ordinate what is done by each person or body represented on the Board for the purpose of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and adults; and
- to ensure the effectiveness of what is done by each such person or body for those purposes.

The Board must be able to form a view of the quality of local activity, challenge organisations as necessary and speak with an independent voice.

### **Aims**

The overarching aims of the Board are to:

1. Hold to account those organisations with safeguarding responsibilities.
2. Ensure partner agencies have preventative measures in place to lessen the likelihood of neglect and abuse occurring.
3. Ensure mechanisms are in place to raise awareness of safeguarding issues amongst the general public, parents, families, carers, service users, and voluntary and paid workers.
4. Assure itself that frameworks are in place so that, whenever abuse or neglect is suspected or reported, there is an effective and coordinated multi-agency response which is of consistent quality across St Helena.
5. Ensure that there are coherent, single, strategic multi-agency safeguarding policy and procedures in place which are adhered to by organisations working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults.
6. Provide a framework for inter-agency development of safeguarding policy, including lessons learned from practice across St Helena.
7. Ensure that the partnership develops effective links with other local and strategic partnerships and that work to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people links with other partnership initiatives, in particular those aimed at enabling children and young people to live healthy, active and fulfilling lives.
8. The SGB will develop and publish a Strategic Plan for each financial year detailing how it will meet its main objectives and the actions to achieve these.
9. There will be an Annual Report published which sets out clearly the progress against these actions.
10. The Annual Report will also produce a summary report on the number of Serious Case Reviews and Learning Reviews undertaken by the SCR sub-group completed during the year.

## **Membership**

SGB members must have sufficient seniority and leadership within their own directorate/organisation to speak on its behalf, to commit resources and agree actions and to represent their directorate/organisation should the SGB need to hold it to account.

Members ideally should have attended safeguarding awareness training and have:

- an understanding of abuse and neglect and their impact;
- knowledge of local safeguarding services;
- personal commitment to the safeguarding principles; and
- a clear understanding of their role and that of their organisation within the SGB.

Each member of the Board is responsible for ensuring that effective safeguarding arrangements are in place within directorate/organisation.

Members agree:

- to play a strategic role;
- to promote safeguarding and people's independence, well-being and safety;
- to refer back to their directorate/organisation so that policy and practice can be developed;
- to disseminate within their own organisation; and
- to contribute to sub-groups as required.

The Board will be chaired by the Chief Secretary and will include:

- The Directors (or their nominated representative) of
  - Children and Adults Social Care;
  - Health;
  - Education & Employment;
  - Police; and
  - Infrastructure and Transport.
- Other officers from the above named Directorates as required.
- Probation Service.
- The Chair of the Social and Community Development Committee.
- The Children's Champion.
- A representative of a youth organisation.

- A representative of a voluntary organisation.
- A representative from the office of the Governor
- A representative from the Human Rights Commission

Substitution of members and attendance by non-members may be permitted at the discretion of the Chair.

### **Functions of the Board**

The SGB will work to:

1. Assess the effectiveness of the help being provided to children and families, including Early Help services;
2. Assess whether SGB partners are fulfilling their statutory obligations in relation to organisational responsibilities of Working Together
3. Quality assure practice, including through joint audits of case files involving practitioners and identifying lessons to be learned; and
4. Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of training, including multiagency training, to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and vulnerable adults.
5. Commission the development of policies and procedures for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and vulnerable adults in the area community, including policies and procedures in relation to the action to be taken where there are concerns about safety or welfare, including thresholds for intervention.
6. Ensure that single agency and inter-agency training on safeguarding and promoting welfare is provided in order to meet local needs.
7. Ensure the co-ordination and effective implementation of measures designed to strengthen local private fostering notification arrangements.
8. Ensure legislation for children & vulnerable adults on St Helena is up-to-date & relevant taking into account local context

### **Sub-Groups**

The SGB will constitute the following sub-groups who will fulfil the operational functions of the SGB and provide measurable KPIs for the effective monitoring and reporting of the SGB functions:

<b>Corporate Parenting Board</b>	<b>Substance Misuse Sub-Group</b>
<b>Training Sub-Group</b>	<b>Multi Agency Child Exploitation Panel</b>
<b>Learning Review Sub-Group</b>	<b>Child Sexual Exploitation Sub-Group</b>
<b>Policy &amp; Procedure Sub Group</b>	<b>Early Help Sub-Group</b>
<b>SEND Sub-Group</b>	<b>Audit Sub-Group</b>

The ToRs for all these sub-groups are published on the webpage, as and when completed and approved.

Appendix C – Safeguarding Board & Sub-Group Structure

St Helena Safeguarding Board & Sub-Group structure

