



St Helena, Adults & Children's Safeguarding Board

Annual Update Report, 2024

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Message from the outgoing Safeguarding Board Chair

The 2024 period marks a change in direction for the St Helena Adults and Children's Safeguarding Board (SGB).

I would like to take the opportunity to introduce and welcome our new Chair, Philippa Holmes, who took over in November after my 2 year tenure. Philippa brings a wealth of safeguarding experience as Assistant Director of Children and Families at Cumberland Council. We look forward to working with her.

Alongside this change there has been a significant number of personnel changes in various partner agencies that have affected some of the planned multi agency work for 2024.

It is pleasing to see engagement from new members, and it is exciting to bring representatives from other key stakeholders on board for 2025, including HM Prison and HM Immigration.

It is a testament to the commitment of members that 2024 saw the introduction of a new SHG safeguarding policy that mandates compulsory training, instil safer recruitment mechanisms, and tackles the complicated issue of employing offenders within the organisation.

As we move into 2025, there are planned restructures of the current sub groups, and there will be reforms of the board membership to ensure that the board meets its stated aims of being a strategic oversight body.

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.

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

Well done to all partners for supporting us through the year, thank you for helping in making St Helena a safer place to live and work.

Tim McDermott, Safeguarding Board Lead

The St Helena Adults and Children's Safeguarding Board (SGB) met 4 times in the year 2024. In February, May, August, and September 2024.

Partner Updates

Social Care

Children's Social Care (CSC)

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.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

KPI figures show:

Total number of referrals 24/25 (11 months)	44
Number of referrals actioned within one working day	44
KPI Compliance	100%
Total Number of contact Q2 24/5 (11 months)	164
Total number of contacts actioned within one day	164
KPI Compliance	100%

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 has 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.

In the last 12 months 88 children have attended the Baby & Toddler group at Jamestown Community Centre. This service will continue to run weekly for the remainder of 2025

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%

Staffing arrangements at CSC are stable. CSC will continue to work tirelessly to safeguard and support our children to meet their global development needs.

Paul Brown, Children's Services Manager

Adults Social Care

Adult Social Care has experienced a particularly busy year, with yet another increase in referrals. As of February 2025, we have received 172 referrals, an increase of four compared to 2023/2024 and 35 compared to 2022/2023, despite having one month of reporting left. There has been a noticeable rise in referrals related to hospital discharges and enquiries about Carers Allowance, reflecting the growing demand in our service. This trend aligns with the ageing population, which is expected to present further challenges in the coming years. In response, Adult Social Care has been strengthening core processes for assessment and review to promote early intervention and support for vulnerable adults.

We continue to maintain strong partnerships with other agencies, achieving meaningful outcomes through collaborative working. A key example is the introduction of a new process involving the emergency control room and response to community alarms, which is aimed at improving coordination and more timely response. Safeguarding interventions remain complex, often requiring a multi-agency approach. Joint visits with police colleagues have become a common feature of our safeguarding work, and we remain committed to working closely with health services and other board partners, reinforcing the ethos that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

Our in house safeguarding practice has been further developed with the implementation of a new safeguarding policy and procedure in April 2024. These documents provide consistency and clarity in safeguarding practice across St Helena. In addition, Adult Social Care has contributed to the development of a SHG-wide Safeguarding Policy, now in place, which defines roles and responsibilities for all SHG employees.

Separate to in-house training, monthly safeguarding awareness sessions are delivered free of charge. On request, we have also provided bespoke safeguarding training, primarily to charities, which has received positive feedback. This year, we have trained approximately 80 individuals, demonstrating our commitment to increasing awareness and improving safeguarding knowledge within the community. Our safeguarding training is co-delivered by a qualified Senior Social Worker and a Social Care Officer, supporting both succession planning and cultural relevance.

Safeguarding Data (as of 26.02.2025)

Adult Social Care has received 21 safeguarding referrals since April 2024, categorised as follows:

- Financial: 1
- Neglect: 10
- Self-neglect: 1
- Physical: 7
- Sexual: 1
- Undefined: 1

Of these, 38.1% required formal safeguarding processes, leading to at least a safeguarding strategy discussion. The cases progressed to full safeguarding enquiries as follows:

- Neglect: 3
- Self-neglect: 1
- Physical: 4

Comparison to 2023/2024:

Last year, 14 cases met the safeguarding threshold and progressed to full safeguarding investigation:

- Physical abuse: 4 (26.6%)
- Neglect: 7 (46.6%)
- Other: 3 (20%)

The data continues to highlight neglect as the most prevalent safeguarding concern, with most enquiries relating to neglect within a health or social care setting. Given that many individuals in these establishments have care and support needs, they are often reliant on staff for their well-being. In response, we have prioritised in-house training,

which may have contributed to the decline in reported neglect cases this year. However, it is important to remain vigilant, as underreporting could also be a factor.

Priorities for 2024/2025

- Expanding safeguarding training to the wider public, reinforcing that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.
- Strengthening partnerships with health and social care providers to enhance person-centred care and improved risk assessment skills, particularly in relation to pressure care.
- Supporting carers through the Care Certificate programme, ensuring they receive the necessary safeguarding awareness training.
- Addressing workforce challenges by improving staff capacity through both local and overseas recruitment.
- Enhancing community safety by expanding the provision of community alarms. This initiative builds on the current alarms generously donated by the Red Cross, which will be instrumental in ensuring emergency responses for falls and other critical situations.

Angela Bevan, Team Manager.

Probation Services

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.

Practice Standards

In 2023 the St Helena Island Probation Service drafted the St Helena Island Probation Service Practice Standards. These standards have been agreed and ratified by the Health and Social Care advisory board which will enable the service to develop 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.

David Brickland, Probation Officer.

Office of Public Guardian

At the Office of the Public Guardian (OPG), we have had another successful year with our commitment to helping as many people as possible to make decisions they need to, and to protect the interests and assets of those who cannot make decisions for themselves.

Our aim is for the general public to appreciate the benefits of Lasting Powers of Attorney (LPAs) and to make sure that they are empowered and given as much opportunity as possible to make these decisions. We will continue to promote the benefits of LPAs in the coming year.

This year our efficiency levels have been exceptional and this would not have been possible without the assistance of Anna Crowie, Assistant to the Public Guardian who has worked so diligently with me to maintain good governance throughout the year. Whilst it is important to recognise and celebrate what we have achieved this year, one area of improvement required is the timeliness of Deputy applications being progressed by Attorney General Chambers (AG Chambers). We will continue working with AG Chambers to reduce the waiting times for Deputy applications being submitted to the Supreme Court.

How we performed in 2024

In 2024, we placed great emphasis on the importance of prospective Deputies ensuring that vetting requirements were provided in a timely manner to avoid unnecessary delay.

In 2024, we achieved 100% Deputy supervisions. This was achieved by 31 December 2024. All Deputy supervisions were completed including some remote meetings where jointly registered Deputies are based overseas.

Performance indicators - 2024:

LPAs – number of clients on register: 81

Total number of LPAs on register: 119

Deputies – number of clients on register: 44

Total number of Deputies on register: 67

Number of LPAs discharged: 9

Number of Deputies discharged: 3

Number of referrals 'pending' for Deputyship but not registered: 1

Number of referrals 'pending' for LPA but not registered: 0
Average time for completing LPA applications: 5 working days
Average time for completing Deputy applications: 15 – 20 working days
Deputy supervisions: 100% completed
Number of complaints: 0
Safeguarding risk assessments: 0
Safeguarding referrals/ investigations: 0
New clients registered for LPAs 2024: 9
New clients registered for Deputies 2024: 2

Complaints and compliments

OPG did not receive any complaints in 2024 about the way it operates and functions. We have received compliments and appreciation when directing, signposting and helping individuals and families involved in various situations and circumstances.

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.

Our targets for 2025:

To maintain a high level of service and accessibility to our customers and stakeholders
To further promote the work of OPG including the potential to visit Ascension Island
To work with SHG and provide more up-to-date information and links on SHGs website
To develop and implement written policies and procedures
To continue working with AG Chambers regarding the timeliness of processing Deputy applications.
Consider options for the Public Guardian to visit OPG England (Nottingham & Birmingham) again for benchmarking purposes

Gavin Thomas, Public Guardian for St Helena & Ascension Island

Housing

Renovation works have started at the R.E. Yard and are due to be completed January 2025. 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 December 2024 there are 26 applicants on the housing register. These include 5 GLH transfer requests and 3 male adults and 1 female adult in temporary shared accommodation and 3 families.

Of these we have 15 high priority, and 11 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.

As of November 2024, the Housing Management Office now has Safe Guarding Housing Management Policy, this document sets out policy for safeguarding of all tenants who reside in Saint Helena Government Housing. This policy will support the Housing Management Office to achieve a high standard of professional safeguarding practices that will work in tangent with the Housing Strategy Policy, Tenancy Agreement, Tenant Handbook, SHG Children and Vulnerable Adults Safeguarding Policy and Working Together Document.

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 3rd 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

Health

Emergency Response

In the Emergency Response Team, we have introduced several enhanced working practices to strengthen safeguarding reporting lines:

- **Dedicated safeguarding champion** – A named safeguarding champion (ECA) works directly with the 0–19 team to share any safeguarding concerns identified during paediatric attendances, even if they don't meet the formal safeguarding threshold. This helps identify children who may need additional support (e.g., in school) at an early stage or repeated attendances. The champion also reviews all paediatric emergency department attendances and discusses any concerns with the responsible clinician or doctor to determine if a safeguarding referral is needed.
- **Pre-Hospital Attendances** – When attending emergency calls in the community, the team conducts a holistic assessment of the child's living environment. This provides additional safeguarding information, giving a more complete picture of the child's situation.
- **Improved training** – All members of the Emergency Response Team have completed safeguarding and exploitation training, strengthening their ability to recognise and escalate safeguarding issues.
- **Enhanced documentation** – We have updated our PatientSource system to improve recording of safeguarding assessments, including the ability to

document body maps more effectively. This ensures that safeguarding records are more detailed and consistent.

- **Support for referrals** – The team operates in the emergency department and supports doctors with completing referrals, improving the overall speed and accuracy of the safeguarding process.

These improvements have strengthened communication with other departments and improved the consistency and quality of safeguarding reporting.

Michael Gaga-Hale, Emergency Response Manager

0-19 Child Service

Services Review	Outcomes	Strategies	Activities/Screening 2024	Planning 2025
Antenatal visit	More children and young people achieve positive physical and emotional milestones . More babies are fed breast milk, through an increased breastfeeding initiation and prevalence . Oral health care	Ensure review and contacts are carried out at the mandated time. Promotion of breastfeeding. Oral health promotion – encouraging brushing gums/teeth and dental visits from at least two months old.	Antenatal screening clinics weekly	Continue Antenatal screening clinics weekly
New baby review				
6 week review & 2 month contact			Breast feeding awareness programme – Invite to workplaces – total of 6 attendees.	Promote breastfeeding in clinics pre and Postnatally.
One year developmental review				Continue to encourage positive oral hygiene and regular dental visits pre and postnatally.
2 ½ - 3year developmental review			Ages and stages Questionnaires – aged 1-3.5years: Apr 24 - Mar 25 period: Total ASQ completed 96 (5 were reviews). <u>MCHAT assessment</u> - total 73 12 needed follow up activities on particular skill areas <u>Referrals made:</u> 2 SALT 5 declined SALT referral 1 EdPsych 2 Inclusion	Continuous reviews throughout the year.
Health development review: 4-5years, 10-11years, 13-14years	Supporting children, young people, parents and carers in growth and developme	School entry review to identify needs in development those with additional or complex needs and referring where	Health Care Plans(HCP) PAS– Epilepsy/Anaphylaxis/Asthma Staff training/awareness programmes in all schools - Epilepsy/Anaphylaxis/Asthma	HCP reviewed annually (2025 completed February) and adjusted as necessary throughout the year.

	<p>nt as well as transitioning to reach their full potential.</p>	<p>appropriate in readiness for school.</p> <p>Health assessments for looked after children.</p> <p>Mid-teen health review to determine the need for improving resilience and emotional wellbeing as well as offering support for those young people moving onto adulthood to be able to manage their own health and care needs.</p>	<p>Annual BMI screening programme for– 2024 results</p> <p>98% participation in annual screen. A total of 98 pupils screened in YR ages 4-5years, 10-11 years and 14 years. 2 non- consenting.</p> <p>Ages and Stages Questionnaire to determine development in Communication, Gross motor, Fine motor, Problem solving and Personal -Social Skills– aged 4-5years – Total of 32 pupils participated - 7 needed follow-up on particular skills – no referral to other services.</p>	<p>Annual BMI for Reception/year 6 and year 9 2025 in progress.</p>
<p>Healthy weight</p>	<p>More children and young people are a healthy weight through a reduction in the number of children who are overweight and obese at 4-5year and 10-11years</p>	<p>Promotion and support of breastfeeding. Evidence-based brief intervention.</p> <p>Advice and support for appropriate breast milk substitutes, including prolonged bottle use.</p> <p>Appropriate and timely introduction to solid foods.</p> <p>Promotion of healthy eating and reduction of sugar consumption for both healthy weight management and tooth decay.</p> <p>Active referral to Healthy Habits</p>	<p>Healthy eating work shop X1 - 10-11years</p> <p>Challenges – lack of parental engagement Limited budget for interventions</p>	<p>Healthy eating workshops planned for June 2025</p> <p>Enhanced parental engagement(May 2025)</p> <p>Review of whole school approach(April 2025)</p> <p>Weaning/Constipation information stalls and sharing through media platforms. Commencing July 2025</p>

		<p>programme and or referral to Tier two services including SALT as and if necessary.</p> <p>Promotion of healthy eating and physical activity in early year's settings.</p> <p>Whole school approaches to healthy eating in all schools.</p> <p>Supporting and promotion of physical activity from birth in and out of education settings.</p>		
Emotional wellbeing and parenting responses	Triple P and positive interventions and support to parenting	<p>Parents supported through positive parenting intervention programs in developing routine, structure, appropriate boundaries to meet their children's needs.</p> <p>With particular attention vulnerable parents including teen parents, first time mums/parents and parents with disabilities/learning needs.</p>	<p>Solihull approach promotion commenced in September 2024 – promotion = 26 undertaking training out of 45 signed up for courses.</p> <p>Parenting lessons to year 10 students x3</p>	<p>Promotion continues through workplaces, schools, antenatal clinic, 0-19s.</p> <p>Continue supporting parents ante natal and postnatal Continue supporting parenting programme in schools</p>
Sexual health and contraception	Children and young people, parents and carers are supported to reduce teenage conceptions and	<p>Clearly defined care pathways within directorate for sexual health services.</p> <p>Brief interventions including related risk-taking</p>	<p>Sexual health consults/ STI screening = 14</p> <p>Contraceptive consults <i>which includes starting long term oral and other contraception, emergency contraception and pregnancy testing :</i></p>	<p>Continued 'Drop in' clinics weekly in PAS - for contraceptive counselling, STI screening offers, advice and prescriptions.</p> <p>Refer to Gynae clinic as necessary</p>

	improve sexual health	<p>behaviour, for example, alcohol and unprotected sex.</p> <p>Active participation in development and delivery of Sex and relationship education in PSHCE.</p> <p>Active referral to sexual health services and monitoring.</p> <p>Active promotion and where appropriate, prescribing of long-acting reversible contraceptives.</p> <p>Access to emergency hormonal contraception and pregnancy testing.</p>	<p>Regular contraception which include first time and repeats- 62</p> <p>Emergency contraception- 3</p> <p>Tests- 7</p> <p>Puberty and Hygiene lessons to year 5 pupils – x4</p> <p><i>Facilitation of CSE training</i> –Both Practitioners trained by Rosie – One session delivered to staff Jan 2024 further delivery taken on by Police.</p>	
Drug alcohol and tobacco	<p>Children and young people, parents and carers are supported to reduce substance misuse</p> <p>More pregnant women, parents, carers children and young people are smoke free,</p>	<p>Use age specific screening and assessment tools to identify vulnerable young people and refer into services.</p> <p>Establish referral pathways for referral to smoking cessation or other substance misuse services. Advice regarding smoke free homes and cars.</p> <p>Nicotine replacement treatment prescribing.</p> <p>Contribute the delivery of drug and alcohol</p>	<p>Smoking cessation consults – x19 with 4 Young people</p> <p>Drug & Alcohol Education lessons to year 5 pupils</p> <p>Vaping awareness – to all cohorts in PAS years 7-11</p>	<p>Continued promotion of smoking cessation and referral to services in schools</p> <p>Continued support for teachers in Drug education in schools as necessary.</p>

	reducing the prevalence of smoking locally	education within services and as part of the Personal, Social, Health and citizenship education programme for primary and secondary age groups as part of a whole school approach to alcohol and drug harm reduction, including parents., including smoke free policy in all schools.		
Emotional wellbeing	More pregnant women, parents, carers, children and young people have better mental health	<p>Care pathways for a mental health wellbeing service which includes perinatal mental health and infant mental health.</p> <p>Early identification and access for children and young people showing early signs of emotional distress or attachment difficulties for infants.</p> <p>Health visitors/Midwives to assess maternal mental health at all reviews.</p> <p>Promotion of positive parent-child interaction and parental atonement at all reviews and contacts.</p> <p>Active referral and monitoring to CAMHS.</p>	<p>Mental health and wellbeing awareness to Year 12/13 students</p> <p>Promoted at ante-natal and post-natal contacts</p> <p>Solihull approach promotion commenced in September 2024 – promotion = 26 undertaking training out of 45 signed up for courses. Promotion continues through workplaces, schools, antenatal clinic, 0-19s</p>	Promotion continues through workplaces, schools, antenatal clinic, 0-19s

		Whole school approaches to social and emotional wellbeing.		
Safeguarding	All children and young people are safe and protected, within their families wherever possible	<p>Completion of statutory health assessments for Looked After Children and anonymised reporting of issues or concerns.</p> <p>Contribution to care review, placement planning and support for foster or residential carers regarding health issues.</p> <p>Adequate liaison between agencies in order to capture health needs of children and young people.</p>	<p>Reports/request for info sent to CSC– Total= 79</p> <p>Meeting attendances with reports – Total= 76 ICPC – 4 RCPC – 9 Core group – 32 CIN – 11 LAC – 3 Strat - 17</p>	
Screening	To prevent deterioration and determine early treatment for poor vision and hearing	<p>Vision screening and audiometry at ages 4-5, 10-11 to ensure early identification of vision impairment or hearing deficits.</p> <p>Referral to other services.</p>	<p>School Vision screening 2024 Reception, Year 3, Year 6 and Year 9 – Total= 98 Referred= 15 children/YP 3 not seen because not enough appointments available this time referred to 2025 list. 10 out of 12 seen needed spectacles.</p> <p>School Audiometry – Total= Reception and year 6 - 56 Referred- 0 Review - 1</p>	
Immunisation	Increase or maintain population immunisation coverage for children and young people, to reduce	<p>Team to work together to achieve 90% coverage for vaccination programmes.</p> <p>Review immunisation and vaccine</p>	<p>100% uptake Pre-school boosters: TOTAL = 31 children administered in school</p> <p>TOTAL = 48 'individual' babies received their routine vaccinations between Apr 2024 Mar 2025</p>	

	prevalence of preventable ill health	status and provide according to the immunisation schedule Promotion of immunisations with parents, young people and families.	BCG= 26 Rotavirus= 31 Pneumococcal= 35 1 year MMR= 26 HibMenC= 20 DTaP/IPV/Hib/HepB= 55 Pre-school MMR= 31 Pre-school DTpolio= 30 HPV= 41 Tdp= 35 Men ACWY= 30	
Other health needs	To facilitate autonomy in parental care for children with health needs e.g. minor illnesses and in prevention of worsening or missed diagnosis	Information sharing and promotion of identification and monitoring child through minor illnesses and identifying when to get further support.	Research need for promotion and accurate information to support parents in caring for their child at home and knowing when to escalate.	Minor illness workshops, information stalls and sharing through media platforms. Commencing April 2025 Weaning/Constipation information stalls and sharing through media platforms. Commencing July 2025

Cheryl Bedwell, School Nurse

Mental Health

Mental Health Team and Safeguarding – Safeguarding is at the core of all our work

Meetings that a member of the team will attend relating to Safeguarding

Child Protection

Child in Need

MAPPA (Multi Agency Public Protections Arrangements)

MARAC (Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference)

Adult Services Multi-Disciplinary Team

Sentence Management Board – Prison

Specific services that are offered by the MHT to safeguard vulnerable persons

After hours crisis support

Police Custody assessments

Court support for vulnerable victims and defendant

Support probation in working with offenders with mental health challenges

Court diversion programmes for vulnerable offenders

Asylum seeker support

Facilitating access to overseas specialists for trauma related counselling

Supporting persons who disclose abuse both recent and historic to access the judicial process

Support residential social care clients who have learning disabilities and exhibit challenging behaviour

Mental health awareness

Delivered mental health awareness training to government, private sector and non-government organisations which incorporates trauma and safeguarding

Facilitated trauma informed care approach to prison officers

Presentation given to African Law Enforcement and Public Health Conference in Pretoria in December 2024 highlighting the support given to vulnerable detainees in police custody on St Helena

Presentation with Youth Parliament to highlight the effects of Adverse Childhood Experiences on mental health

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
website: www.sainthelena.edu.sh



Annual Update SHG Safeguarding Board Report 2024

Context

This year has been an important year in the Education, Skills and Employment Portfolio. The Education Review has been secured. The Review identified many challenges and opportunities for improvement. It also provided a clear road map. It will take at least five years of continuous improvement to secure COBIS standards and embed secure standards and daily practice. Safeguarding practice is threaded through this work.

During the 2023–2024 academic year, staffing challenges continued to affect the Primary, Secondary, and Inclusion services, though pressures in the Secondary School have eased slightly due to a revised and more targeted approach to recruitment. Despite these improvements, the Portfolio still faced ongoing difficulties in securing sufficient and consistent staffing across key areas.

These shortages had a significant impact on the delivery of core services. Within Inclusion, gaps in staffing hindered the ability to provide timely and targeted support to vulnerable pupils, including those with special educational needs. In PAS, the management of SEN provision was affected, resulting in limited capacity to plan, review, and deliver interventions effectively.

In the Primary sector, the shortage of class teachers and wider school staff led to instability in staffing and inconsistent learning experiences for pupils. Although Secondary subject specialist provision has improved somewhat, challenges remain in maintaining continuity and depth in teaching across the curriculum.

Further compounding the situation was restricted access to specialist professional services such as Speech and Language Therapy and Educational Psychology, which are essential for identifying and supporting pupils with more complex needs.

Collectively, these staffing pressures have had a direct impact on safeguarding and the ability to adequately support vulnerable learners. Reduced capacity within the Inclusion service and front-line teaching has made it more difficult to identify emerging

concerns early, provide targeted interventions, and ensure that all students receive the consistent, high-quality support they need to thrive both academically and emotionally.

Numbers of students on the SEND Register

- Primary 66 student out of a school population of 266 (24.8%)
- Secondary 42 students out of a school population of 220 (19%)

Number of students on Alternative Education Programme

- Primary 1
- Secondary 6

Number of suspensions

- Primary 4
- Secondary 33

Number of LADO referrals

- Primary 0
- Secondary 1

Developments in 2023-2024

Throughout the 2023–2024 academic year, the Education, Skills and Employment Portfolio undertook a series of strategic developments aimed at strengthening the quality of education, improving safeguarding, and addressing systemic challenges. The following progress was made:

1. A comprehensive Education Review was launched to evaluate the current structure, provision, and outcomes across the education system, with a view to long-term reform and improvement.
2. Work commenced on the reorganisation of primary education to improve resource allocation, staffing, and pupil outcomes. This included early planning for structural changes and stakeholder engagement.
3. A funding bid was developed through the Financial Aid Mechanism (FAM) to support the implementation of primary reorganisation, with a focus on infrastructure, staffing, and resource needs and to support the adoption the Council of British International Schools (COBIS) Standards in Education, with groundwork laid for implementation in the five years. Safeguarding is threaded through this education standards framework. SHG can expect to see ESE working with key SHG Portfolios to develop and implement policies and strategies to secure COBIS compliance.

4. Closer links were developed with Hampshire LEA to enhance the quality of teaching and learning. This partnership has provided valuable opportunities for staff mentoring, coaching, and ongoing professional development, contributing to the upskilling of education staff across all sectors. This is partially funded by FCDO.
5. Substantial investment was made in the National College for Teaching and Leadership, ensuring all education staff had access to high-quality professional development through online learning modules.
6. The CPOMS safeguarding software was successfully introduced at the Secondary School, enhancing the ability to securely record, track and monitor safeguarding, pastoral and child protection concerns across the school. This system has improved inter-staff communication and the management of ongoing cases, while enabling better analysis of trends and responses. Next steps are to introduce CPOMS to our Primary Schools.
7. All education staff completed the National College International Certificate in Safeguarding in Education, ensuring consistent understanding of safeguarding expectations across settings. In addition, all staff were trained on Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE), providing clarity on statutory responsibilities, recognising signs of abuse or neglect, and reporting procedures. This needs to become annual training for all school staff.
8. A new safeguarding policy was drafted to align with best practice, clearly outlining roles, responsibilities, and procedures to ensure a safe and secure environment for all learners.
9. A comprehensive SEND policy was drafted to establish clear processes for identifying, assessing and supporting pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, with a focus on inclusive provision, parental engagement, and multi-agency collaboration.
10. A revised school attendance policy was produced to improve monitoring and intervention for absenteeism, with a focus on early intervention, consistent procedures, and a whole-school commitment to improving attendance outcomes.
11. A bespoke induction programme was designed and rolled out for PAS staff, including targeted safeguarding training (both online and in-person), to ensure staff are well-informed and supported from the outset of their roles.
12. Vulnerabilities in our Post 16 cohort were identified. Strategies to support these young people were developed with key partners.

Challenges

During the 2023–2024 academic year, alongside key developments and improvements, the Education, Skills and Employment Portfolio continued to face a range of systemic challenges that impacted the quality, consistency, and equity of educational provision.

1. The ability to improve teaching quality and progress pupil learning has been significantly hindered by continued staffing shortages, skill drain, and limited access to ongoing CPD. The sector has struggled with teacher, teaching assistant (TA), and support staff retention, further compounded by a lack of specialist roles such as trained SENCOs and subject-specific leaders. Skill levels across the workforce remain low due to inadequate training pipelines and entry qualifications in the SHG scheme of service for educators..
2. Increasing numbers of students present with special educational needs and/or social, emotional, and mental health (SEMH) challenges. However, support has been restricted by limited access to trained professionals such as Speech and Language Therapists, Occupational Therapists, and Educational Psychologists. There is no training available for SEMH specialists, and the lack of these vital services significantly limits early intervention and meaningful inclusion. Students on alternative education pathways or with complex behavioural needs are particularly underserved.
3. Students with physical conditions such as Achondroplasia and Cerebral Palsy require adapted facilities, mobility aids (e.g. travel chairs), and safe transport. Current resources, including accessible infrastructure, specialist vehicles, and equipment, are insufficient due to budget constraints, making full participation in school life difficult for these students.
4. Current legislation, specifically the *Education Ordinance 2008*, does not offer legal protection or support for students with SEND/SEMH beyond the age of 16. Unlike in the UK, where support extends to 25 years, this gap in legal provision results in insecure future outcomes for young people with additional needs once they leave school. Shape is a highly valued community resource. The Head of Life Long Learning is a member of the SHAPE Board to build partnership work,
5. Much of the primary school premises are not fit-for-purpose when it comes to providing inclusive learning environments. There is limited ability to develop sensory rooms or adaptive classrooms that support the diverse needs of learners with sensory processing or behavioural challenges. However, access to up to £3m for capital improvements in our two new primary schools, offers a hopeful way forward.
6. Students with SEND and SEMH face a challenging transition post-school due to a lack of dedicated support, post-16 pathways, life skills training, or employment preparation. The absence of policy and legislative frameworks contributes to limited life chances and marginalisation.
7. Misuse of alcohol, cigarettes, vapes, drugs, and high-caffeine energy drinks remains a concern, particularly within the secondary school population. In addition, increased mobile phone and social media use has introduced new behavioural and safeguarding challenges, which schools are ill-equipped to address without updated guidance and digital literacy strategies.
8. There is currently no formal requirement or process to establish guardianship or parental responsibility for children whose parents are working offshore. This

gap affects safeguarding, decision-making, and communication between school and home.

9. There is minimal strategic use of education data to drive decision-making at the system and school level. A data informed culture has commenced, with the data set that underpins the Education Review. Going forward, a key priority is to develop and embed data informed leadership decisions. Currently, the Portfolio is developing the ability to track progress, respond to trends, and plan proactively. This will be a long term-priority.
10. A number of education-related policies, procedures, and legislative frameworks remain outdated and no longer align with current needs or international best practice. This includes the Education Ordinance, which requires urgent review and amendment to support inclusive education, post-16 provision, and modern safeguarding expectations.
11. Adopting a national standards framework for education is a pivotal strategic decision.. Over time , this should support accountability and consistency in the quality of provision across sectors.
12. Some parents struggle to manage behaviour and set boundaries at home, particularly around technology and mobile device use. This contributes to inconsistent messaging between school and home and undermines positive behaviour strategies.
13. The opportunities to develop even stronger partnership with key partners including health, social care and the Police at times have been complex due to capacity challenges.
14. The attendance data, secured for the Education Review is a cause of serious concern, that the Portfolio is actively working to mitigate.

Royal St Helena Police Service

Throughout 2024-2025 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 sub groups. Additionally, at the last full board meeting the police have adopted the position of chair of the Child Protection 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 (2024) RSHP have made a total of 162 contacts regarding safeguarding issues with just over 1/2 relating to juveniles. The remainder are predominantly domestic related with an additional 55 referrals relating to vulnerable adults.

There have been a number of significant safeguarding investigations during the time period, with amongst others, 7 of the offences having a significant sexual element as part of the offending behaviour. This figure covering both recent and historic. Since the 2023 – 2024 report it is apparent that there is an indication of increased public confidence in the capabilities of agencies when investigating such matters, but again 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.

Recent legislation has been sought by RSHP and the Crown Prosecutor and agreed by Legislative Council on Saint Helena with regards to protecting our vulnerable community by introducing the new vetting system for Public Service Vehicle drivers and Operators. This should be adopted and in place around June 2025.

As part of an ongoing program of legislative reform, RSHP have been continually working throughout the reporting period with the Crown Prosecutor to identify gaps in legislation, particularly in relation to matters related to safeguarding. 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.

This past year we have seen a significant drop in reported anti-social behaviour in and around Jamestown, particularly lower Jamestown, on some Friday and Saturday nights involving the youth.

The reason for this appears to be the great work being done by New Horizons in offering a safe environment for children and young people to meet and socialise, Police patrols in and around these areas. Parental responses to this reduction appears to be a lot of children are staying in and using the internet at home.

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. This is an ongoing area that needs to be tackled when the constraints and political will changes.

This past year has seen an increase in RSHP providing support to the Schools and the Education system on Saint Helena to educate the youth with regards to our new problems of internet related crimes via Social Media, which are becoming prevalent on the Island since the introduction of the Fibre Optic cable and cheaper internet access.

RSHP continues with its ongoing programme of training 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.

RSHP also contributes to Safeguarding of the vulnerable people with Mental health issues and reporting via the referral system to the Islands Mental Health Team. During 2024 some 72 were made.

RSHP also remains an active partner in Multi Agency meetings involving monthly MAPPA meetings and at the present time have to chair any MARAC meetings that are called by any of the relevant agencies.

RSHP continues to offer support to all our Victims of crime inclusive of our Vulnerable persons with partner agency Human Rights carrying out the Victim support for our most serious and vulnerable person cases.

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'

Andre Bak, CID Supervisor

His Majesties Prison Service

The Superintendent of Prisons has joined the board for the ensuing year and will be actively contributing to the safeguarding agenda in future.

Paul Duncan, Superintendent of Prisons

Older Person's & Children's Champion

Annual Safeguarding Report – Care Homes

TBC

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'G. Brooks'.

Gillian Brooks, MLC

Children's Champion and Older Persons Champion

St Helena Safeguarding Board Sub-Group Updates

Training Sub Group

Training Sub group

Training for the following 5 courses commenced in April 2023 and continued throughout 2024. There was a break in delivery due to staff shortages, but this has since been renewed.

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. The SHG new policy mandated training for all staff, so there was a surge in attendances, but this has now dropped off as more and more people have undertaken the training.

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 a task finish group that is responsible for coordinating the local framework for reviewing serious child and vulnerable adult safeguarding cases as set out in Working Together 2020.

Following the creation and establishment of the group in 2023, the ToRs were agreed.

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).

In 2024, no learning reviews were undertaken by the group.

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

- In 2024, by recommendation of the sub group, SHG adopted a new safeguarding policy which puts obligations on the Portfolios for increased vetting checks, offender risk assessments and the appointment of a designated safeguarding officer. Progress is slow, but moving forward with many Portfolios adopting their own safeguarding procedures.

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

This work continued throughout 2024, and support was given to many charities to adopt best practice.

Data Sharing Protocol

The group drafted a data sharing protocol, which gives a basis for greater information sharing. This was approved by the board and sent to AGs chambers for legal review. This has not progressed since then, but will be taken forward this year.

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

With the reform of the sub groups planned, work planning for the next year will be arranged once agreement is met

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.

Substance Misuse Sub-Group

During this year the group continued the work based on the WHO SAFER alcohol initiative

The reduction in the drink drive limit was still waiting on legislation being approved

Reducing sales times for alcohol from retail outlets was not supported by the Licensing Authority as the Magistrate stated that this would require legislation

The police introduced ID cards but take up has been limited as there is not the structure in place to enforce checks. This would require the post of licensing officer to be created which has not been approved

There is not a formal Drug and Alcohol Court in place but certain high risk individuals are, as part of a probation order, required to meet regularly with the Magistrate and Probation Officer to review their alcohol use in relation to offending

There was only limited health promotion activities in relation to alcohol due to the post of a substantive Health Promotion Coordinator being vacant

Corporate Parenting Board

Membership for the Corporate Parenting Board is established, but progress has been slow due to staff shortages

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

Priorities for 2025 will include confirmation of the terms and conditions , 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

Audit Sub-Group

The audit subgroup met three times in 2024. ToRs were established, and a draft audit plan created. A sample audit was taken, but due to the chair leaving post this work has stalled. The group is likely to evolve in the coming year as part of the sub group review.

Exploitation Sub-Group

The responsibility for chairing the exploitation sub group was assumed by the police representative but they left post. As such, the group failed to make much progress. The group will be reformed as part of the sub group restructure.

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:

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

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

St Helena Safeguarding Board & Sub-Group structure

