

## **JOB DESCRIPTION**

- Post Title: Independent Scrutineer/Chair
- Grade: £500 per day, subject to negotiation for right candidate (inclusive of expenses) for up to 30 days per year.
- Appointment: Three year term (subject to review on an annual basis).
- Reports to: Strategic Lead appointed within three Safeguarding Partners: Darlington Borough Council; Durham Constabulary and Darlington Clinical Commissioning Group (if it remains with the 3 lead agencies)

## **CONTEXT**

The Children Act 2004 and as amended by Children and Social Work Act 2017 requires the three safeguarding partners to have a shared and equal duty to make arrangements to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in a local area. Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 has set out the arrangements for an independent scrutiny function, which should provide the critical challenge and appraisal of the multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. The role of Scrutineer/Chair will be independent of the Safeguarding Partnership. In Darlington this will also include the Safeguarding adult arrangements as previously undertaken by the Safeguarding Adult Partnership Board as highlighted by the Care Act 2014.

## **PURPOSE**

The Independent Scrutineer/Chair is accountable to the strategic leads appointed by the three safeguarding partners and will provide scrutiny, challenge and seek assurance from partners on the effectiveness of the children and adult safeguarding arrangements across Darlington, including arrangements to identify and review serious child safeguarding cases and safeguarding adult reviews.

Consider and as necessary, report upon how effectively the arrangements are working for children, families and adults at risk and practitioners and how well the safeguarding partners are providing strong and effective leadership.

## **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

1. Provide independent scrutiny to the Safeguarding Partnership ensuring that it fulfils its statutory responsibilities set out in the Children and Social Work Act 2017 and Care Act 2014 and other related guidance to work collaboratively to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and adults in Darlington.

2. To provide effective and objective scrutiny and challenge and act as constructive critical friend as well as promoting reflection to drive continuous improvement to both the partnership and safeguarding practice.
3. To consider how well the safeguarding partners are providing strong and effective leadership and agree with the safeguarding partners how this will be reported.
4. To provide assurance to the Safeguarding Partners that organisations have strategies in place for addressing priorities, gaps and risks and how effective they are.
5. To seek assurance regarding the robustness and effectiveness of local multi-agency arrangements in Darlington to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and adults and to report areas of weakness and highlight areas of strength to the safeguarding partners.
6. To scrutinise on how organisations hold each other to account to take corrective action and to improve services where issues of poor performance and practice are identified.
7. To report to the Executive Board as required.
8. To assist and provide independent advice when there are any conflicts of interest between the key statutory leads.
9. Listen to the experiences of children, young people, adults with care and support needs and their families to ascertain how effectively local arrangements are working for them.
10. Provide opportunities for an independent perspective of frontline practice through direct conversations with practitioners and how effectively the arrangements are working for them.
11. Report to the safeguarding partners any recommendations from their scrutiny and/or assurance activities
12. Provide independent oversight and scrutiny on serious child safeguarding cases and safeguarding adult reviews ensuring that reviews are undertaken rigorously in line with statutory guidance and acting as liaison between the Safeguarding Partners and the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel on cases relating to children. To challenge decisions on behalf of the partnership on the commissioning of reviews and publication arrangements.
13. To scrutinise the findings and outcomes of any safeguarding reviews and hold agencies to account for the effective implementation of recommendations identified.

14. Facilitate the effective operation of multi-agency safeguarding partnership meetings including chairing of meetings and following up progress on decisions and recommendations identified.
15. Contribute to the content of the partnership's annual reports on the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements for both children and adults, their performance and the effectiveness of local services.
16. To engage in inspection related activity across the partnership.

**Darlington Safeguarding Partnership  
Independent Role/Chair  
Person Specification**

| Criteria | Attribute   | Essential<br>(E) | Desirable<br>(D) |
|----------|---|------------------|------------------|
|          | <b>Qualifications &amp; Education</b>   |                  |                  |
| 1        | Educated to degree level in a relevant field (e.g. health, education, criminal justice, social care) or equivalent work experience.   | E                |                  |
| 2        | Management Qualification  |                  | D                |
|          | <b>Experience &amp; Knowledge</b>   |                  |                  |
| 3        | A minimum of 2 years' experience and/or background of effective involvement at an operational and strategic level in a relevant field in either the private, public or voluntary sector.  | E                |                  |
| 4        | Experience of working at a strategic level within a multi-disciplinary context.   | E                |                  |
| 5        | Experience of independent scrutiny and quality assurance functions.   | E                |                  |
| 6        | Experience of promoting the welfare of children and/or adults, through previous or current professional or voluntary activities.  | E                |                  |
| 7        | Experience, knowledge and an understanding of statutory and voluntary organisations and how they work.  | E                |                  |
| 8        | Significant and demonstrable evidence of chairing skills within complex multi-agency arenas.  | E                |                  |
| 9        | A proven track record of having influenced and negotiated successfully at a strategic level across agencies, disciplines, and sectors.  | E                |                  |
| 10       | Experience of developing and maintaining strong strategic relationships to ensure effective governance of and between partnerships.   | E                |                  |
| 11       | Extensive knowledge of the safeguarding children and adult agendas including the Children Act 2004, Children and Social Work Act 2017, the Care Act 2014 and statutory guidance.  | E                |                  |
| 12       | A good understanding of relevant regulations and operational context of safeguarding work to enable well rounded contributions to considering case issues, e.g. professional challenges or Child /Safeguarding Practice Reviews/Safeguarding Adult Reviews. | E                |                  |
| 13       | Knowledge and understanding of relevant legislation, research, Inspection regimes and sector led improvement activity.  | E                |                  |
| 14       | A good understanding of the Data Protection Act and information sharing   | E                |                  |

|                                     |   |   |   |
|-------------------------------------|---|---|---|
| 15                                  | Experience of dealing with the media and the ability to promote the work of Safeguarding Partnership.   |   | D |
| 16                                  | Experience of supporting and advising a multi-agency partnership of how to resolve professional disagreements   | E |   |
| 17                                  | Experience of involving the wider community in consultation and decision making at all levels including contributing to strategic plans and developments. | E |   |
| <b>Skills / Personal attributes</b> |   |   |   |
| 15                                  | Ability to form effective working relationships with partners / lay members / public differing backgrounds  | E |   |
| 19                                  | Ability to communicate both orally and in writing to a wide range of audiences (including ability to write clear and concise reports & presentations)     | E |   |
| 20                                  | Ability to demonstrate sound organisational skills, work under pressure and determine priorities to meet strict deadlines                                 | E |   |
| 21                                  | Ability to maintain independence and objectivity.   | E |   |
| <b>Special Requirements</b>         |   |   |   |
| 22                                  | Suitability to work with children / vulnerable adults.  | E |   |
| 23                                  | Registered with the HCPC (depending on professional background  |   | D |
| 24                                  | Enhanced DBS check required and 3 yearly re-checking process will be undertaken.  | E |   |
| 25                                  | Undertaking Office Holder duties on behalf of the Authority.  | E |   |