**DSCP Independent Chair/Scrutineer Job Description – May 2020**

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| **Job Description** |
| **Post title** | Durham Safeguarding Children Partnership Independent Chair/Scrutineer |
| **No of Days and Pay** | 30 – any further days are at the agreement of Safeguarding Partners£500 per day (ie 7.5 hours) |
| **Tenure** | 3 years |
| **Service Area** | Partnerships & Community Engagement |
| **Reporting to** | Head of Partnerships and Community Engagement |
| **Location** | Your normal place of work will be County Hall, Durham, but you may be required to work at any Council workplace within County Durham. |
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| **DBS** | This post is subject to a disclosure. |

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| **Description of role** |

The Independent Chair/Scrutineer is autonomous of the Durham Safeguarding Children Partnership (DSCP) and will hold Safeguarding Partners to account, challenge their decisions to ensure that improvements are made and outcomes are improved for children, young people and their families.

The Independent Chair/Scrutineer will seek assurances from partners on the effectiveness of arrangements to identify and review child safeguarding practice review cases.

The Independent Chair/Scrutineer will Chair the DSCP Executive Group and other meetings at the request of safeguarding partners.

The postholder will have previous experience of working in a safeguarding context at a senior level and have an understanding of the relevant safeguarding legislation, as well as regional and local policy.

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| **Duties and responsibilities** |

The Independent Chair/Scrutineer’s role is outlined below:

* Provide independent scrutiny of the Durham Safeguarding Children Partnership ensuring that it fulfils its statutory responsibilities including the Children and Social Work Act 2017, Children’s Act 2004 and the Education Act 2002 and Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 to work collaboratively to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in County Durham.
* Act as a constructive critical friend as well as promoting reflection to drive continuous improvement to both the partnership and safeguarding practice.
* To Chair the DSCP Executive formal meetings and Independent Scrutiny Panel (consisting of Lay Members, Young People’s Commissioner, representatives of the Police and Crime Panel and of the Clinical Commissioning Group as well as co-opted members which could include children and parents/carers).
* May be required to Chair other meetings within the partnership at the request of the Executive group.
* Attend a range of the Sector Groups, seeking assurance that decisions made at the partnership are communicated, acted upon and are embedded into front line practice.
* Provide independent oversight and scrutiny and challenge decisions made on the commissioning of Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews, seeking assurance about how lessons have been learnt by organisations and how they are embedded across front line practice.
* Challenge how the DSCP is advocating for change in relation to modifiable factors for child deaths and what impact this has on the health and care system, including the NHS Long Term Plan.
* Provide scrutiny of the DSCP’s annual report and other strategic documents and provide feedback on their evidence of effectiveness of the partnership’s multi-agency working arrangements.
* Consider how effectively the safeguarding arrangements are working for children and families as well as for practitioners, and how well the safeguarding partners are providing strong leadership and agree with the safeguarding partners how this will be reported.
* To triangulate all areas of scrutiny including the local scrutiny panel, third party assurance, independent peer review and recommend priority areas of focus for the partnership to improve.
* To further develop systems of scrutiny across the DSCP and to provide challenge to ensure the arrangements operate effectively in accordance with statutory regulation and guidance.
* To maintain an overview of relevant key issues and national developments in respect of safeguarding children.
* To benchmark and network with other local authority areas and bring forward best practice into the DSCP, including any learning from other areas.
* Provide an independent view on situations or circumstances where disagreement arises between the leaders responsible for protecting children.
* Encourage the development of innovation in the system to enable creativity to meet the needs of children and young people.
* To effectively manage communication and media demands as necessary, acting as the “public face” of the DSCP including independent inquiries, child safeguarding practice reviews and HM Coroner inquests.
* To support and contribute to any external inspection or review of safeguarding children in County Durham.
* To have a role in providing learning from child safeguarding practice reviews and following up on partner actions to ensure change is embedded.
* To decide in the light of available information, whether complaints that have reached the formal stage of the DSCP complaints procedure are upheld.
* To take part in an annual appraisal.

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| Person Specification – Durham Safeguarding Children Partnership Independent Chair/Scrutineer |
|  | Essential | Desirable |
| Qualifications | * Hold an academic and/or professional qualification or demonstration of equivalent senior level experience in a safeguarding children context.
 | * Have been a senior practitioner in the safeguarding children arena.
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| Experience | * Senior level experience in a safeguarding context.
* Experience of multi-agency working at a senior level.
* Experience of being able to challenge and influence constructively in a partnership setting.
* Experience of personally improving outcomes for children, young people and families.
* Experience of helping partners to identify and agree common goals and put in place shared improvement plans.
* Experience of effectively communicating with a variety of individuals – from senior officers, elected members and children, young people and families.
* Experience of negotiating with, influencing and advising senior officers and politicians in a safeguarding children partnership context.
* Experience of scrutinising activities and providing recommendations for improvement.
* Experience of chairing meetings at a senior level.
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| Skills & Knowledge | * Knowledge of the legal frameworks surrounding safeguarding children and young people.
* Knowledge of local and regional practice and frameworks relating to the safeguarding of children and young people.
* Knowledge and understanding of the core business of Safeguarding Partners (local authority children’s services, policing and health)
* Excellent IT skills particularly Word, PowerPoint and Excel.
* Good self-management, organisational skills and sound report writing skills.
* Excellent communication and interpersonal skills.
* Excellent presentation, written and verbal skills.
* Experience of chairing complex partnership meetings, demonstrating an ability to summarise discussions.
* The ability to challenge unsatisfactory practice and poor participation at a senior level.
* Understanding of and commitment to the requirements of safeguarding children and young people and promoting their welfare.
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| Personal Qualities | * Able to work on own initiative.
* Able to organise workload, prioritise competing demands and work to tight deadlines.
* Able to maintain confidentiality and security.
* Able to engage and motivate a wide range of colleagues including front line practitioners.
* Flexible approach to work.
* Committed to the principles of equality and diversity.
* Committed to and accountable for own personal development.
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