INDEPENDENT SCRUTINEER - SUNDERLAND

ROLE DESCRIPTION

Role Title: Independent Scrutineer, Safeguarding Children and Families

Renumeration: £15,000 per annum for up to 30 days, out of borough expenses paid in addition (non-pensionable)

Appointment Terms:

Responsible to: The role is directly appointed by Sunderland City Council but accountable to all three statutory partners which are Sunderland City Council, Northumbria Police and Sunderland Clinical Commissioning Group. The partners will agree the oversight and support arrangements for the role whilst recognising the Council hold the employer accountability.

CONTEXT, AMBITION AND PURPOSE

The Children Act 2004 (as amended by Children and Social Work Act 2017) requires the three safeguarding partners to have a shared and equal duty 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 the Scrutineer will be independent of the Safeguarding Partnership and is envisaged as having an important part to play in facilitating deep analysis of safeguarding issues, bring practitioners from different agencies together, sometimes with families and stakeholders, to explore and build better practice.

The Independent Scrutineer is accountable to the three strategic leads nominated by the statutory partners, and will seek to challenge, enquire and investigate the quality and effectiveness of safeguarding responses. This includes the arrangements to identify and review serious safeguarding concerns and incidents, being mindful to hold partners to the statutory guidance at all times.

The Independent Scrutineer will seek to find the voice of children and families, and importantly practitioners, in order to provide a view of the effectiveness of arrangements and also on the strength and quality of leadership across services.

There is a clear ambition in Sunderland to move towards a more integrated partnership between the Children and Adult safeguarding partnership as the benefits of an aligned agenda are fully recognised. There is no blueprint for that integration and the Independent Scrutineer will play a very important part in exploring potential models, reviewing existing governance and ways of working at a strategic level and bring partners together to shape the future model.

The Independent Scrutineer is not a typical Chair role. In an effort to hold accountability for the agenda the statutory partners will rotate the Chair of the Partnership and Executive accordingly, freeing up the Scrutineer to play the role of critical friend and expert advisor. The post holder will be invited to an appraisal with City Council Chief Executive every 6 months of their tenure.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBLITIES

To provide independent challenge, enquiry and investigation to the Children’s Safeguarding Partnership, ensuring that it fulfils its statutory responsibilities as established in the Children and Social Work Act 2017 and other related guidance.

To critique, challenge and support deep analysis of safeguarding issues and trends, modelling throughout behaviours that reflect the partnerships dedication to working with families in a transparent and constructive way.

To provide reports and written summaries of activity that can be reported to a range of audiences, in a timely and concise way, and with a focus on continuous improvement.

To present and comment on assurance and performance information from the safeguarding partners in order to drive continuous improvement and strengthen accountability for impact and outcomes.

To facilitate and drive assurance processes that evidence the robustness and effectiveness of local multi-agency arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and families.

To support partners to explore the opportunity to integrate/align the children, families and vulnerable adults safeguarding partnerships/board paying particular attention to the benefits, risks, governance issues and engagement of practitioners in that development.

To routinely report to the Executive Board on key issues, escalating effectively and promptly where required.

To assist and provide independent advice to the statutory partners where required.

Explore and report on the independent perspective of frontline practice through direct conversations with practitioners, to explore and report on how effectively the arrangements are working for them.

Report any recommendations from assurance activities and detailed safeguarding exercises, as required.

To promote and profile anti-racist, anti-discriminatory practice across all of the partnerships activity.

Provide independent oversight and scrutiny on serious child safeguarding cases ensuring that reviews are undertaken rigorously and in line with statutory guidance, acting as the liaison between the Safeguarding Partners and the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel on cases relating to children. To challenge where necessary decisions on behalf of the partnership on the commissioning of reviews and publication arrangements.

To assess the findings of outcomes and findings of any safeguarding reviews and hold agencies to account for effective implementation of recommendations identified.

Facilitate the effective operation of multi-agency safeguarding partnership meetings including chairing of meetings and following up progress on decisions and recommendations identified.

Contribute to the content of the partnership’s annual reports on the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements for children and families.

To support inspection or regulatory activity in any reasonable way.

KEY QUALITIES

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| **1** | **Education and Knowledge** |
|  | * Academic and/or professional qualification in a related discipline such as social or health care, education or criminal justice. * Knowledge of recent developments in health care, social care, policing, and legislation and research underpinning child protection and/or safeguarding adult work. * Understanding of the importance of monitoring multi-agency safeguarding performance. * Understanding of the principles and challenges of partnership working * A sound understanding of the challenges for leaders in the public sector. |
| **2** | **Experience** |
|  | * Substantial experience of providing leadership of multi-agency groups in relation to safeguarding children and/or safeguarding adults at operational and strategic levels. * Of interpreting multi-agency performance information and frameworks * Of undertaking case reviews and audit activity, and liaising with central government bodies such as the CQC, Ofsted and/or the National Safeguarding Practice Review Panel. |
| **3** | * **Skills/Personal Attributes** |
|  | * Excellent communication and relationship skills. * Strong analytical skills, an ability to assimilate large volumes of information, draw clear conclusions and make appropriate recommendations. * Ability to work in a anti-racist/multi-cultural context, respecting and valuing diversity. * Ability to recognise discrimination in its many forms and promote equal opportunities. * Ability to ensure appropriate handling of sensitive information. * A high level of personal drive and commitment to excellent public service and the ability to model positive behaviours. * Strong interpersonal skills to gain the agreement and acceptance of others including colleagues, senior managers and incorporating services user’s views. * Ability to meet agreed objectives and delivery targets. * Ability to challenge skilfully. |
| **4** | **Special Requirements** |
|  | * Suitability to work with vulnerable children and adult |
|  | * Enhanced DBS check require and 3 yearly re-checking process will be undertaken. |