

# **Safeguarder Training**

**DESIGN, CONTENT AND EVALUATION**  
**FULL VERSION**

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# **1 Background**

## **1.1 Introduction**

This document sets out guidance on the design, content and evaluation of safeguarder training. It assumes the need to ensure that the training of safeguarders is of a high quality and is consistent throughout Scotland. This consistency should not only be in the content, but in outcomes, the amount of training offered, assessment and evaluation. It is hoped that such an approach will mean that children's hearings, courts, children, families and professionals in any part of Scotland will receive a comparable experience from safeguarders.

## **1.2 Safeguarders**

The Children (Scotland) Act 1995 directs that each local authority must maintain a panel of safeguarders and appointments to this panel are made after consultation with the sheriff principal and the chairman of the children's panel. Safeguarders come from a variety of backgrounds including law and social work and there is a wide diversity of life experience. The local authority is responsible for the ongoing administration of the panel of safeguarders.

The overall remit of the safeguarder is 'to safeguard the interests of the child in the proceedings' whether that be in a children's hearing or court (s.41(1)(a) of the Act).\*

## **1.3 The training of safeguarders**

The Regulation of Care (Scotland) Act 2001 makes provision for the training of safeguarders. The statutory duty rests with the local authority and Scottish Ministers exercise their discretionary power to assist safeguarder training by financing the provision of the children's hearings training officer structure throughout Scotland. Part of the responsibility of training officers is the organisation and delivery of training for safeguarders. This includes the preparation of training materials.

\* It should be noted that throughout this document, the term "child" refers to a child or young person aged from 0 up to 16 years of age (and in certain circumstances as laid down by legislation up to 18 years).

## 1.4 The competence model

A competence is a description of something which a person who works in a given occupational area should be able to do. It is a description of an action, behaviour or outcome which the person should be able to demonstrate.

The advantages of using a competence model in safeguarder training are that it gives:

- clear guidelines about the intended outcomes so that safeguarders know what is expected of them when they take up their appointment
- clear indications about the content of training to achieve the standards
- a greater likelihood of uniformity of national standards
- a framework for safeguarders to measure their own development
- a framework to identify weaker areas of an individual safeguarder's performance so that additional help may be provided as required.

The competences in this guidance describe what a safeguarder should be able to do on completion of the appropriate induction training. Safeguarders are required to satisfactorily complete this training before the local authority is able to confirm their appointment. The training does not allow for safeguarders to practise their skills and demonstrate their competence under supervision during the training period. Therefore satisfactory completion of training involves an assessment of a safeguarder's readiness to take up their appointment rather than a demonstration of actual competence.

## 1.5 The scope of the guidance

This guidance covers the induction training in detail. It also refers to training arranged by the CHTOs which includes specific in-service training and refresher courses. It is recognised that some local authorities may wish to arrange their own additional local training programmes, planned to meet local needs. As the CHTOs are not responsible for the organisation of these additional local training events, they are not included in this guidance.

This document describes in detail the **principles of teaching and learning** on which the design and content of safeguarder training is based. It also outlines the **training provision** and the **methods** used to deliver the training.

It describes the **competences** required of safeguarders on taking up appointment. It indicates the required underpinning knowledge and values. It recognises that training is cumulative, based on adult learning principles and that it should be delivered flexibly to meet local needs and contexts.

The guidance also includes an approach to the **evaluation** of the progress and performance of individual safeguarders during the induction training. Such an assessment of 'readiness to serve' provides a protection for the children and families who come to hearings and courts and for the system itself.

Any evaluation must also include a consideration of the effectiveness of the training undertaken. Some details about **quality assurance** are also included to highlight for the various parties involved in the training cycle the important part they play in ensuring that training is 'fit for the purpose'.

## **2 Design and Delivery**

### **2.1 Introduction**

This section deals with the principles of adult learning upon which safeguarder training programmes should be based. It sets out the various types of training programmes that should be provided for safeguarders and explains the training methods that should be used to deliver effective training.

### **2.2 Adult learning**

Learning is a part of everyday life and the learning process may be defined as a series of events which can lead to an observable change in behaviour. It is, however, an individual process whereby each person claims for him or herself something new and in the process changes his or her thought patterns, competences and behaviour to a greater or lesser extent.

Learning comes from direct interaction between the learner on the one hand and the environment on the other. The term training environment takes into account the subject matter, training materials and methods, the size of the training group, the general structure of a course including home study and the physical environment provided by the training venue.

Training provides safeguarders with the opportunity to develop and enhance their skills, knowledge and confidence. It also encourages them to practise their skills consistently. It is important to recognise that the diversity of experience, knowledge and expertise that exists within a group of safeguarders will make the learning process different for each one. It is intended that the influence of the learning experience should extend beyond the period of each training event and into their role as safeguarders. As well as facilitating their own personal development, the training should encourage them to remain committed to training throughout their term of appointment.

#### **2.2.1 Motivation to learn**

Adults have a different orientation to learning from that of children and adolescents due in the main to the multiple roles and responsibilities which they have developed over time. They are usually motivated to make good use of the time they have available for education and training, and they are usually more able to take responsibility for their own learning.

As a result of their life experiences, adults often have distinct preferences for learning styles and for learning environments. In contrast to the confident exterior that some adults seem to exhibit they are frequently anxious about their achievements and may

require encouragement. These factors generate certain conditions for learning and mean that adults learn best when they **feel they need to learn** and when they have a **sense of responsibility for what, when and how they learn**. They also respond better when they are motivated and challenged.

The motivation of adults in the learning process is assisted by:

- positive reinforcement and encouragement throughout the learning process
- learning by doing, using task-focused activities that are meaningful and easily followed
- being provided with opportunities to share in the learning process with other people
- being provided with materials that are presented in an organised fashion
- being provided with appropriate learning environments.

## **2.2.2 Opportunities for learning**

Effective practice in adult learning is characterised by mutual respect and by learners being given an opportunity to lead the learning rather than be subjected only to a teacher-directed process. This can add an exciting dimension to a session. Facilitators and learners should be engaged in a continual process of activity and the facilitator should not be seen as the expert but as a person with responsibility for directing the learning. Facilitation aims to foster in adults a spirit of critical reflection and should enable them to become more empowered and self-directed. Trial and error, or getting it wrong first time and learning from mistakes, can enhance learning and increase motivation in adults.

Learning experiences for safeguarders should provide opportunities for them to make meaningful associations with their own experiences of life and also to share and compare these experiences with those of their fellow safeguarders. As their experience develops it is important that safeguarders are given opportunities to reflect on their experiences.

## **2.3 Training provision**

Safeguarders should be provided with a range of training programmes designed to suit their needs at different stages of their appointment.

### **2.3.1 Induction training**

Safeguarders should be appointed subject to the satisfactory completion of induction training. The CHTOs and their support teams are responsible for the delivery of this training. Although the structure of the course may vary from area to area, the content will be similar being designed to comply with the guidance for induction training. The induction course provides the foundation of knowledge that safeguarders need to

enable them to fulfil their statutory duties. It also provides them with opportunities to develop and practise certain skills.

An induction programme will involve at least 14.5 contact hours of training divided into two single days and one local evening session plus a substantial amount of directed reading.

This national programme will be offered at two fixed points during the year (late May and early October) and at two venues. It is expected that one venue will cover the local authority areas covered by the CHTUs based at the Universities of Edinburgh and Glasgow (i.e. Edinburgh, East Lothian, Midlothian, West Lothian and Scottish Borders; Glasgow, Argyll and Bute, East Dumbarton, West Dumbarton, Renfrewshire, East Renfrewshire, North Ayrshire, East Ayrshire, South Ayrshire, Inverclyde, North Lanarkshire, South Lanarkshire, and Dumfries & Galloway) and the other venue by the CHTUs based at the Universities of Aberdeen and St Andrews (i.e. Highland, Moray, Aberdeen, Aberdeenshire, Western Isles, Shetland and Orkney; Fife, Angus, Dundee, Perth & Kinross, Clackmannanshire, Falkirk and Stirling). However, the final decision on venues will depend on the numbers of safeguarders recruited and their location.

### **2.3.2 Induction - follow-up training**

Induction training involves an intensive learning process. It is essential therefore that early in their appointment safeguarders be given the opportunity to review and revise aspects of the induction training and to build on their experience.

The timescale between the end of induction training and the beginning of follow-up training therefore will vary in response to local situations such as the number and nature of appointments. However, it is expected that the first session of follow-up training will normally take place after three appointments as a safeguarder and no longer than one year after the completion of induction training. The follow-up session will include three to five hours of training and will be offered in the same groupings as induction training.

### **2.3.3 In-service training**

Each year CHTOs will arrange in-service training sessions for safeguarders. It is expected that each safeguarder will attend one in-service session a year which will involve three to five hours of training.

The sessions will be arranged for groups of panels of safeguarders in the areas covered by each CHTU. The content of in-service training sessions will be arranged in response to local training needs, as agreed by training committees. Topics will be influenced by current social issues, changes in legislation and the need to review practice locally and nationally. Some of the ways in which the training needs of a panel of safeguarders could be identified are:

- issues raised by local authorities
- comments from evaluation/feedback forms completed by safeguarders at training events
- suggestions made by members of training committees
- suggestions made by panel members, via their authority chairman
- suggestions made by sheriffs via the sheriffs principal
- suggestions made by reporters, via the authority reporters
- suggestions made by the Scottish Safeguarders Association (SSA)
- training needs surveys conducted by the CHTOs.

A national school for safeguarders will be held every two years and organised by each CHTU on a rotational basis.

### **2.3.4 Refresher courses**

CHTOs will arrange refresher courses for safeguarders as required in response to local needs. The courses will involve a review and revision of practice and be very practical in nature.

### **2.3.5 Training for safeguarders who assist with training sessions**

Safeguarders may assist in the training of other safeguarders where this is required. They will be recruited and selected for this role by the CHTOs. Following selection, they will then undertake training and be assessed as to their competence by the CHTO on an ongoing basis.

There would be two levels of role and responsibilities as follows:

- safeguarders who receive basic training in adult education and group skills may facilitate group work at training sessions at in-service training, using briefing notes and materials provided by the CHTO
- safeguarders who undertake a more advanced course and have been assessed by the CHTO at the end of this course may facilitate exercises at induction training sessions using briefing notes and materials provided by the CHTO. These safeguarders will have been assessed by the CHTOs as having demonstrated a higher level of skill and will receive ongoing training. Although monitored by the CHTO, the safeguarders will be responsible for ensuring that the learning outcomes are achieved. They may also be involved in the assessment of safeguarders.

### **2.3.6 Local training**

Local authorities are encouraged to arrange their own local training programmes. Some sessions may be dedicated to meetings with safeguarders on their own, or with panel members, sheriffs, social workers, teachers and representatives of other

professional agencies to give safeguarders opportunities to discuss issues of common concern. The CHTOs will not normally be directly involved in the organisation of these sessions although they may be asked to contribute at the planning stage or to deliver some of the sessions.

## **2.4 Methods of training**

Training programmes should be designed to emphasise the importance of creating “learning situations” rather than “teaching situations”. If methods are to be effective they should both stimulate and evoke a response. More specifically, for safeguarder training, they should:

- harness a learner’s motivation
- recall earlier learning
- provide new learning stimuli
- activate the learner’s response
- give speedy feedback
- encourage appropriate practice
- incorporate self and peer assessment.

It is accepted that considerable personal learning is achieved when safeguarders are given opportunities to reflect on their values and perceptions and to discuss their experiences with other safeguarders. Courses should therefore provide a balance between informal group activities and more formal learning situations in order to ensure that participants, whilst acquiring new patterns of behaviour, assimilate as much information as possible.

The strategy for safeguarder training should be nationally consistent and should use all the best methods of adult learning.

### **2.4.1 Lectures**

The use of lectures for a group of diverse adult learners such as safeguarders must be carefully planned and used only as a part of a comprehensive programme of work using varied methods of delivery. Lectures incorporated into training programmes should introduce specialist areas of knowledge. They should usually be delivered by people who are experts in their own particular field, who have teaching skills and who are sensitive to the needs of adult learners.

If a lecture is pitched at a learner’s present knowledge level it will not encourage critical thinking. If it is pitched at too high a level the learners will not understand and will therefore not learn. The understanding and assimilation of the factual material presented in lecture sessions can usually be much more effectively investigated in small group situations. Group work will therefore help safeguarders to discuss and clarify difficulties arising from lectures or other teaching sessions.

## **2.4.2 Teaching and learning in small groups**

Small group teaching and task-based workshop sessions provide an effective learning experience for learners of varying levels of understanding and ability. It is for this reason that the use of small group work should be extensively used in safeguarder training. Group work will take a variety of forms from task-based workshops sessions using specially designed materials through role play and practice sessions to open group discussion of a previous talk, video or activity.

### **Educational objectives**

The educational objectives that can best be achieved through the use of small group teaching are:

- the continued development of intellectual skills such as reasoning and problem solving
- the development of attitudes
- the acquisition of interpersonal skills such as listening, speaking and debating.

### **Group process**

In managing a group two factors have to be considered - that of the task of the group and that of the group process. The following criteria are essential if an effective learning environment is to be created and if the group is to be successfully managed:

- tasks should be clearly defined
- there should be a warm, accepting, non-threatening group climate
- learning should be approached as a co-operative rather than as a competitive exercise
- learning should be accepted as the major reason for the existence of the group
- there should be active participation by all members
- group sessions and learning tasks should be enjoyable
- the content should be adequately and efficiently covered
- evaluation should be accepted as an integral part of the group's activities.

### **Group facilitation**

The role of the facilitator in encouraging all participants to contribute is very important and calls for skills and adaptability which may, for some, be difficult to achieve. They should be capable of acting as:

- a leader – to give strong direction to the discussion
- a group facilitator – to generate self-expression and interaction within the group
- a neutral chairman – to control the procedure while not contributing to the discussion
- a consultant – to provide information or assistance as and when needed
- an observer of the group activity and progress of individual members.

Group learning activities will range from being highly structured and pre-planned to being free or open discussions. In between these two extremes there will be a whole

range of techniques and approaches which involves the use of groups in a variety of ways.

### **2.4.3 Observations**

Safeguarders must be given opportunities to observe children's hearings and a proof hearing in court during the induction training period. Observations will enable them to experience the dynamics of children's hearings and courts, to observe aspects of procedure and practice and, as a result, to put their training into context.

### **2.4.4 Role play**

Role play should be used in different ways and for a variety of purposes in safeguarder training. In particular, opportunities should be given for safeguarders to practise interviewing techniques. In addition, simulated children's hearings and proof hearings in court should be an important part of induction training giving participants opportunities to practise being a safeguarder before they take part in the real thing.

They should also have opportunities to take the role of family members. This will help them to empathise with the situation of families at children's hearings and courts.

### **2.4.5 Directed reading**

Between sessions of induction training safeguarders will be expected to spend a substantial amount of time in private study. To assist with this, the course materials will include guided reading notes. Private study will include follow-up reading to help to consolidate the learning process and further reading to assist with the development of a wider knowledge base and a deeper understanding of the subject matter. Suggested reading lists could be included in the course materials. Distance learning materials covering parts of the induction training programme will be developed by CHTOs.

### **2.4.6 The children's hearings training resource manual**

The national manual is for children's panel members, CPAC members and safeguarders. There is a separate booklet which contains extracts of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995, the Children's Hearings (Scotland) Rules 1996 and the Children's Hearings (Legal Representation) (Scotland) Rules 2002. Another booklet, for safeguarders only, will cover court rules and process, interviewing techniques and report writing.

Each safeguarder will be issued with a copy of the manual and booklets before the first session of induction training. They will be a valuable tool not just for private

study and for use during training sessions but also act as a reference during their appointment. The guided reading notes will request safeguarders to read the relevant sections of the manual and booklets before and after training sessions.

## **2.5 The learning environment**

Consideration must be given to the learning environment in any safeguarder training programme. The use of an appropriate physical learning environment is a key feature in enhancing the learning experience for adults. Considerable time and effort must therefore be spent on ensuring that training occurs in comfortable surroundings within which safeguarders feel able to relax and yet be motivated to work hard.

Particular consideration should be given to providing training in a residential setting. Residential training sessions have a number of advantages. These are:

- continuity – the programme needs only one introduction, minimises the need for recapping on previous work and allows for longer sessions
- cohesion – the programme allows for one theme to be explored fully and provides opportunities to pick up any areas of concern for panel members over a longer timeframe
- convenience – safeguarders' travelling time will be minimised which will also lessen local authorities' travel expenses.

A residential setting also allows safeguarders to spend their free time together and to discuss informally and confidentially aspects of the course work.

Rooms used for the formal “plenary sessions” as well as for small group work must be comfortable, private, spacious and relaxing and be well equipped. The psychological environment is as important as the physical surroundings and safeguarders should feel at ease, accepted, respected and supported. There should be opportunities for freedom of expression without fear of censure or ridicule. It is therefore important that participants are comfortable within the training environment and that efforts are made to make training as pleasurable an experience as possible.

## **2.6 Conclusion**

This section has demonstrated that the training of safeguarders requires a great deal of planning. Training must be nationally consistent, interesting, stimulating and suited to the needs of safeguarders throughout their period of appointment. It must be based on sound principles of adult learning and be delivered using a variety of appropriate training methods in suitable learning environments.

# 3 Competences

## 3.1 Introduction

This section lays out the competences required of safeguarders.

### 3.1.1 Standards

The standards which follow are based on an analysis of the **key purpose** of the task and role of safeguarders as well as considerations of best practice, reference to recent government reports and research.

The role is broken down into **elements of competence** which describes the functions which help to achieve the key role. Competence is the product of knowledge, skills and values.

A **commentary** is given at the beginning of each competence which provides a brief overview.

The **performance criteria** are statements by which the safeguarders themselves and others can judge that they can perform the function or activity to an acceptable level.

The task of a safeguarder is to safeguard the interests of the child during the proceedings at children's hearings or court hearings.

In order to carry out their duties, safeguarders need to acquire a broad understanding of the key areas of **knowledge** outlined under each of the core competences.

### 3.1.2 Value requirements

Because of the responsibilities that safeguarders carry and the influence that they can have on the lives of vulnerable people, they must also meet particular **value requirements**. As well as being skilled and knowledgeable, they must treat people with respect and be honest, open and reliable. They must be self-aware and critically reflective.

Children and adults who come to hearings and courts reflect the diverse, multi-cultural nature of life in Scotland today. Safeguarders come into the lives of people whose life chances may have been adversely affected by factors such as poverty, ill health, loss, disadvantage, discrimination and disability.

Therefore, safeguarders must demonstrate that they:

- treat every child as an individual
- respect and value uniqueness and diversity

- consider the child in the context of his/her family, race, gender, sexuality, community, class, culture, religion, language, or any physical, emotional or learning disability
- acknowledge individuals' views, personal beliefs and preferences
- promote the rights of the child
- identify and question their own values and prejudices, and consider the implications of these in their practice as a safeguarder.

## **3.2 Competences**

The following standards apply to those safeguarders completing induction training. The order of the elements and performance criteria does not imply a ranking nor necessarily a chronological sequence of process. No one performance criterion is seen to be more significant than others.

On taking up their appointment, safeguarders must be able to:

- fulfil their statutory responsibilities and work within procedures
- work effectively as an individual
- communicate purposefully and effectively
- assimilate and analyse information in order to assess the needs of the child and make a reasoned recommendation
- consolidate experience, knowledge and understanding in order to develop own skills.

### **3.2.1 Fulfil statutory responsibilities and work within procedures**

This competence is concerned with the safeguarder using the legal procedures and knowing when to consult with others who have expertise and implementing best practice. It includes practice in hearings and courts including making recommendations and the preparation of reports.

#### **Performance criteria**

- 1 Focus on the welfare of the child.
- 2 Store hearing and court papers safely and confidentially, returning them to the reporter/sheriff clerk after the individual appointment is discharged.
- 3 Acknowledge any gaps in own legal knowledge and seek information or advice from relevant sources to rectify this.
- 4 Be clear about the purpose of appointment to an individual case.
- 5 Help the child to express his or her views.
- 6 Explain to the child and family the reason for appointment and own function.
- 7 Help to ensure the rights of the child are maintained throughout the process.
- 8 Be able to articulate the range of possible decisions and outcomes to the child and family.
- 9 Consider whether compulsory measures need to be taken to protect, guide, treat or control the child.
- 10 Consider, where necessary, arrangements for contact between children, their parents and significant others.
- 11 Articulate own recommendation confidently with clear reasons for it.
- 12 Prepare a clear and concise written report for a children's hearing (or court when required) within the set timescales.
- 13 Recognise when it is necessary to instruct a solicitor/counsel on own behalf.
- 14 Recognise when to cite witnesses, be able to examine them and be party to proceedings in court in a capable and responsible manner.
- 15 Keep any information acquired confidentially.

## **Underpinning knowledge**

In demonstrating competence, safeguarders should demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of:

- the structure and content of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995, the Children's Hearings (Scotland) Rules 1996, the Children's Hearings (Legal Representation) (Scotland) Rules 2002
- the content of the Act of Sederunt (Child Care and Maintenance Rules) 1997
- the Data Protection Act 1984
- how children can be referred to children's hearings and courts
- the procedures which must be followed in a hearing and courts
- different types of hearings and options for decisions
- the interface between children's hearings and the courts
- emergency procedures which aim to protect children
- how procedures in the hearing and court can protect and promote the rights of children
- the history, principles and philosophy of the children's hearings system
- the rights of children (UN Convention and the European Convention on Human Rights)
- the roles and responsibilities of the safeguarder
- the roles and responsibilities of social worker, reporter, child's legal representative, education staff, medical staff, police and others in relation to children in need
- the procedures in relation to permanency planning for children.

### **3.2.2 Work effectively as an individual**

This competence is concerned with the safeguarder being clear about the purpose of and limits of their role and being aware of the roles and responsibilities of others.

#### **Performance criteria**

- 1 Read thoroughly the reports received on appointment, being careful not to make pre-judgements.
- 2 Identify key issues arising from the reports, noting any gaps in the information provided.
- 3 Note areas for clarification.
- 4 Anticipate possible difficulties that may arise and devise ways of dealing with these.
- 5 Be clear about the purpose of appointment to the individual case.
- 6 Plan who to see and speak to in order to obtain the necessary information.
- 7 Arrange visits with regard to timing and place in a manner which reflects the circumstances of the case.
- 8 Negotiate access to relevant documents and reports.
- 9 Be sensitive to others' viewpoints, challenging those views when necessary.
- 10 Conduct oneself in an effective and constructive manner in courts and hearings.
- 11 Have an awareness of own style of working and its effectiveness.

## **Underpinning knowledge**

In demonstrating competence, safeguarders should demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of:

- effective communication with children, young people, adults, and organisations
- methods of interviewing individuals and families who are reluctant to engage with professionals within the system
- roles and responsibilities of all professionals involved in the children's hearings system including own
- power and authority in relationships between children, young people and adults
- principles of collaborative working
- strategies to cope with own personal feelings and emotions
- strategies to manage personal safety.

### **3.2.3 Communicate purposefully and effectively**

This competence is concerned with the safeguarder being able to communicate in a child-centred way with the child and family members as well as with professionals and at hearings and in court.

#### **Performance criteria**

- 1 Communicate in a non-threatening way with children and families in order to engender a degree of confidence and trust.
- 2 Explain to the child and family what is happening during the hearing/court process and their rights within it.
- 3 Gauge the level of understanding of the child and family taking into account ethnic and cultural issues to ensure that own language and style of questioning is appropriate.
- 4 Pace communication with the child, taking into account the child's stage of development, understanding, level of distress and attention span, avoiding overlong sessions.
- 5 Be aware of own and others' non-verbal behaviour and its impact on the child and others.
- 6 Use open-ended questions wherever possible, avoiding leading or shaping what is said by participants.
- 7 Encourage and enable the child to express a view if he or she wishes to do so explaining what will happen to the views and information given
- 8 Listen to others, using appropriate non-verbal signals and by reflecting back own interpretation of what is being communicated both verbally and non-verbally.
- 9 Raise and confront issues which may be delicate to others where it appears relevant to do so.
- 10 Demonstrate sensitivity in situations where there is a high level of emotion such as stress, distress, anger or conflict.
- 11 Make contact with members of agencies which support children's hearings and courts in a way which gains confidence whilst not compromising own independence and credibility.
- 12 Give clear verbal and written presentations to children's hearings, and sheriffs.

## **Underpinning knowledge**

In demonstrating competence, safeguarders should demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of:

- stages of child development including needs of children
- impact of race, culture, gender, disability on communication
- how communication may be affected by life experiences
- effective communication with children and adults with sensory impairment, and with physical difficulties or learning difficulties
- effective communication with children and adults for whom English is not their first language
- assertiveness
- impact of anger, anxiety and stress on the communication process
- questioning and listening skills, including the use of open-ended questions.

### **3.2.4 Assimilate and analyse information in order to assess the needs of the child and make a reasoned recommendation**

This competence is concerned with the safeguarder making an assessment of the child's needs and the risk factors involved in his or her situation, considering the relevant resources, and making and giving a reasoned recommendation about the future care of the child.

#### **Performance criteria**

- 1 Read reports in order to extract key issues which will help own assessment of the needs of the child.
- 2 Check understanding and interpretation of key issues in reports by asking questions of report writers, child and family members and listening to responses.
- 3 Consider information gained from all parties during own investigations.
- 4 Assess whether there is sufficient information to make a recommendation, and if not, identify what extra is required and from whom.
- 5 Identify and assess the risk factors involved in the child's situation.
- 6 Make an assessment of the child's needs taking account of the child's views, race, language, religion and culture.
- 7 Consider on the basis of the assessment whether compulsory measures of supervision are required.
- 8 Check that assessment fulfils the brief given by the hearing/court.
- 9 Construct a comprehensive written report using terminology which is comprehensible to the family, panel members and court (where applicable) and which separates fact from opinion.
- 10 Make a recommendation from the range of options available, including any conditions e.g. contact.
- 11 Articulate own recommendation to child, family, hearings and court confidently, giving clear reasons for it.
- 12 Take into account information gained during the hearing/court process to reassess own recommendation.

## **Underpinning knowledge**

In demonstrating competence, safeguarders should demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of:

- the normal development of a child
- the needs of children at different stages of development and the possible effects of those needs not being met
- the range and diversity of social, family and community structures and lifestyles in Scotland, taking account of race, language, religion and culture
- social and economic factors which influence the lives of children, particularly those in the community in which the safeguarder is serving
- the range of the emotional and psychological reactions to loss, transition and change
- the range and impact of physical, social, sexual and emotional neglect and abuse
- the child protection systems in place and the role of those involved in them
- the concept of risk, risk indicators, their limitations and their application in assessment
- definitions of offending behaviour, consideration of their causes and possible remedies
- patterns of alcohol consumption, drugs and substance abuse and their consequential effect on behaviour
- mental health issues
- resources available to the children's hearing, including what is meant by supervision
- the possible impact on children and families of decisions made by children's hearings.

### **3.2.5 Consolidate experience, knowledge and understanding in order to develop own skills**

This competence is concerned with the safeguarder evaluating his or her own practice and taking responsibility for the development of that practice.

#### **Performance criteria**

- 1 Identify gaps in own knowledge and understanding and seek information or advice from relevant sources to rectify this.
- 2 Reflect on own performance identifying strengths and areas for improvement.
- 3 Develop strategies for coping with stressful situations.
- 4 Take responsibility for own development as a safeguarder including attending training.

#### **Underpinning knowledge**

In demonstrating competence, safeguarders should demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of:

- critical analysis, reflective practice and how to transfer learning from one situation to another
- learning styles, analysis of training and development needs and continuance of own development
- coping with stressful situations
- how to manage change
- who to contact within the hearings or court systems for information and advice.

# **4 Assessment, Evaluation and Feedback**

## **4.1 Introduction**

This section on assessment, evaluation and feedback sets out the rationale for assessing safeguarders' performance in training and explains the process involved. It also highlights the need for evaluation of the training of safeguarders and mechanisms for assuring quality.

Local authorities are responsible for the recruitment and selection of safeguarders in consultation with the appropriate sheriff principal and chairman of the children's panel. Successful applicants receive a letter of appointment which states that their appointment is conditional upon "satisfactory completion of training".

On conclusion of the induction course local authorities must, therefore, decide whether safeguarders have reached the required standard and can be deemed to have "satisfactorily" completed the training. This section sets out the process whereby local authorities can be given the information they require to make well-informed decisions about a safeguarder's readiness to serve. It also describes methods of assessment, evaluation and feedback which are an integral part of all training courses for safeguarders and which are ongoing throughout their appointment. These methods are used not only to assess safeguarders' individual learning but also to evaluate the effectiveness of the training courses.

## **4.2 The rationale for assessing safeguarders**

Assessment of individual learning constitutes an integral part of any programme of education or training. Safeguarders will be encouraged to assess their performance throughout their training. This can be done in a variety of ways. Firstly, safeguarders will be asked to assess their performance individually. They will be given opportunities during their training to give and receive feedback from fellow participants. This will allow safeguarders to consider their impact on others and to practise ways of communicating with children, families and others.

Self-assessment is a necessary component not only of independent and autonomous thinking but also of professional practice and will be an integral part of safeguarder training. The induction training course will be designed to develop and enhance the skills for which safeguarders were selected. Safeguarders are required to take a professional approach towards their statutory responsibilities. It is therefore crucial that they are encouraged to perform self-assessment which will in turn lead to them being able to analyse and evaluate their performance in children's hearings and courts.

If learning involves change or growth in an individual and in his or her behaviour, change should continue beyond the conclusion of the formal course work. A safeguarder may be an excellent learner, participate fully in training sessions and appear to be confident in role play. However, he or she may not, after all, be

competent and effective as a safeguarder. On the other hand someone who appears to be quiet and reserved throughout the training course - and who does not perform well when assessed - may have excellent empathy with children and families. He or she may be able to demonstrate competent and effective skills.

Training seeks to develop further the skills and qualities for which safeguarders were selected. Because of the solitary nature of their task it seems reasonable that, in a national system of justice, there should be a clear mechanism for assessment which might identify gaps in safeguarders' knowledge and competence before they commence service.

### **4.3 The assessment process**

The information gained during the assessment process during training will form the basis for ongoing feedback to local authorities on the training needs of safeguarders, to the safeguarders involved and to CHTOs on the effectiveness of training.

Safeguarders will be expected to undertake a process of self-assessment at all stages of their training. This allows them to take responsibility for their own learning and sets the basis for a continuing process for their future development in fulfilling their task. This follows best practice in adult education.

Training organisers will provide feedback to both the individual safeguarder and to the training group as a whole, as and when appropriate.

#### **4.3.1 Induction training**

- Safeguarders should know from the outset how they are to be assessed and should find the process helpful rather than challenging. They should also understand the elements of the assessment process, who will be involved in it, and what steps will be taken if there are any concerns about progress measured against the competences.
- The process of assessment should be open and fair and to be operated consistently.
- The areas to be covered in the assessment process during the induction course are: **preparation, knowledge, understanding, skills, attitude and participation**. There will be informal feedback after each training session and the CHTO unit will hold a written note of progress.
- Safeguarders will be informed that, at the end of the induction training, there will be a discussion of their self-assessment and the assessment of progress by the CHTO and that this information will be fed back to the local authority.

- At the end of the induction course the CHTO will provide the relevant local authority with a brief formal written report on each safeguarder based on progress linked to the competences and with an assessment of readiness to serve. A copy will also be sent to the safeguarder.
- The local authority will take the final decision to confirm the appointment of the safeguarder. The local authority would be expected to liaise with the sheriff principal and the chairman of the children's panel if considering not to confirm a safeguarder's appointment.
- Any appeal against the decision not to appoint should be made to the local authority.
- There will be an early warning system if a CHTO has concerns about a safeguarder during the training course. The CHTO will discuss these concerns with the safeguarder. If these are not resolved, the CHTO will inform the local authority. A record of these discussions will be made and retained by the CHTO unit.

### **4.3.2 Subsequent training**

General feedback of an informal nature may be given to safeguarders after any training session. Any concerns about a specific safeguarder will be raised with the safeguarder by the CHTO who will report to the local authority any issues that may need to be addressed.

Refresher training will allow for safeguarders' knowledge, understanding, skills, attitude and participation to be reassessed. Courses will be developed in order to build on their experience and to review their practice. Informal feedback will be provided by the CHTO to each participant after the course and any concerns will be dealt with as above.

## **4.4 Evaluation of training**

Evaluation should be an integral part of training delivery. It allows for the consideration of the effectiveness of the training. For evaluation to be effective it is essential that the learning objectives be identified at the planning stage of any programme. Participants will be provided with an evaluation form to complete after every training course. This will allow them the opportunity to comment on such things as the achievement of objectives, the content and delivery. These forms will provide the CHTOs with initial information to begin the evaluation process. This process requires a climate of openness, a willingness to learn and a commitment to use evaluation as a positive method of improvement. Any complaints about the training should be raised through local authority procedures in the first instance.

#### **4.4.1 The advantages of evaluation**

Evaluation has many advantages - for safeguarders, those involved in the delivery of training and the CHTO.

Evaluation enables safeguarders to:

- determine whether the training prepared them to take up their appointment
- compare their assessment of the training with others
- identify individual future training needs.

Evaluation also enables those involved in the delivery of training to:

- find out if the learning objectives were achieved
- receive feedback in order that they may develop their knowledge and skills
- make informed decisions about their delivery of future training
- give feedback to those who devised the programme.

Evaluation enables the training organiser to:

- decide whether time and resources were well spent
- identify problems with the programme and refine future programmes
- devise follow-up training programmes
- give feedback to the appropriate training forums.

#### **4.4.2 Process of evaluation**

##### **Feedback**

Successful completion of the induction training course is only the first step in becoming a safeguarder - carrying out individual appointments is the real test.

There should be clear mechanisms for informing training officers of training needs - either for the individual member or for all members of the training group. The general comments about safeguarders combined with self-assessment by individual safeguarders should influence in-service and refresher training programmes.

##### **Clarity**

There needs to be clarity about what is to be evaluated during training. Evaluation should include such factors as information on what needs to be covered at each stage of training, the time available for training, its cost and how to get best value. Training organisers will need to review individual programmes to consider whether any amendments are required and whether the best methods of delivery are being used.

Evaluation of training is only useful if the information is fed back and discussed by all those who have a responsibility for the training of safeguarders. Those involved will include the local authorities who have statutory responsibility for safeguarder training; training committees who may allocate resources and oversee provision; training organisers who plan and deliver the programmes.

## **4.5 Quality assurance**

Ensuring that evaluation is an integral part of training allows for a process of quality assurance to be carried out.

Quality assurance helps to protect the children and families who come to hearings and courts, preserves the credibility of the system and ensures national standards and consistency. It also aids the professional development of CHTOs as well as ensuring their accountability.

### **4.5.1 Evaluation reports**

An evaluation report on the training should be provided after each training session or course by the CHTO. It will include a review of the learning objectives, the content, the materials used and the methods of delivery. It should also include an evaluation of the learning environment. Copies will be distributed at local level to the local authority and the training committee.

### **4.5.2 Annual reports**

Each CHTO will produce an annual report to a standardised format that will contain an account of the work undertaken by the unit for the year. The report will include information about the individual training sessions offered, the numbers of those who attended and whether the training achieved its objectives.

At local level, copies of the report will be distributed to the chairman of the CPAC, the panel chair, the clerk to the CPAC, the training committee, the chief executive of the local authority and the university head of department or dean. Nationally, copies of the report will be distributed to the Scottish Executive Education Department, other CHTOs, the Scottish Safeguarders' Association (SSA), Sheriffs Principal, the Children's Hearings Representative Group (CHRG) and the Scottish Children's Reporter Administration (SCRA).

## **4.6 Conclusion**

Assessment of satisfactory completion of training should constitute a part of all training undertaken by safeguarders. It may include self-assessment, feedback from peers and assessment and feedback from trainers. Assessment should be part of an ongoing evaluation process. The aim of safeguarder training should be that it is fit for its purpose of preparing safeguarders to make recommendations about the welfare of children and to perform their court duties effectively. The use of the competence model means that there will be consistency and comparability of standards across Scotland. Ensuring that the training of safeguarders is delivered to national standards that are regularly evaluated can only be of benefit to the welfare of Scotland's children.

