

GSCP INDEPENDENT SCRUTINY FUNCTION

2024

The Children and Social Work Act 2017 replaced Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs) with a new statutory framework requiring clinical commissioning groups, police and local authorities to determine local arrangements for the protection and safeguarding of children in their area. The legislation stipulates that arrangements must include scrutiny of effectiveness. The partnerships published arrangements should set out the plans for independent scrutiny; how the arrangements will be reviewed; and how any recommendations will be taken forward

Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children Partnership



Contents

Document Revision Table	2
IndependentScrutiny Function	3
Working Together to Safeguard Children Statutory Guidance	3
GSCP Executive Arrangements.....	3
Purpose	3
Provider.....	3
KeyFunction of the Independent Scrutineer	3
Functions of independent scrutiny role	3
Contract duration and time commitment:	5
Contract Value:	5
Qualifications and experience:	5
Review:.....	5
Role Description.....	6

Document Revision Table

Revision	Date	Comment
1.0	April 2021	Agreed by the GSCP Executive
1.1	December 2021	IS Commissioning Round 2022
1.1	February 2023	Review of Arrangements – No changes
1.2	March 2024	WT2023 Changes

Independent Scrutiny Function

The Children and Social Work Act 2017 replaced Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs) with a new statutory framework requiring clinical commissioning groups, police and local authorities to determine local arrangements for the protection and safeguarding of children in their area. The legislation stipulates that arrangements must include scrutiny of effectiveness.

Working Together to Safeguard Children Statutory Guidance

Safeguarding partners must ensure that there are arrangements for effective independent scrutiny in place for their local area. Independent scrutiny should drive continuous improvement and provide assurance that arrangements are working effectively for children, families, and practitioners.

GSCP Executive Arrangements

Purpose

To provide independent, objective scrutiny of the effectiveness of local multi-agency arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare and wellbeing of all children in a local area.

This will include arrangements to identify and review serious child safeguarding cases.

Provider

This function will be delivered by a suitably qualified and experienced individual commissioned, but not employed by the safeguarding partners. A detailed person specification and job description will be developed to support the function with a transparent and open recruitment process undertaken for the appointment.

Key Function of the Independent Scrutineer

Functions of independent scrutiny role

- Provide safeguarding partners and relevant agencies with independent, rigorous, and effective support and challenge at both a strategic and operational level.
- Provide assurance to the whole system in judging the effectiveness of the multi-agency safeguarding arrangements through a range of scrutiny methods.
- Ensure that statutory duties are being fulfilled, quality assurance mechanisms are in place, and that local child safeguarding practice reviews and national reviews are analysed, with key learning areas identified and effectively implemented across the safeguarding system.
- Ensure that the voice of children and families is considered as part of scrutiny and that this is at the heart of arrangements through direct feedback, informing policy and practice.
- Be regarded as a 'critical friend' and provide opportunities for two-way discussion and reflection between frontline practitioners and leaders. This will encourage and enable strong, clear, strategic leadership.
- Provide independent advice when there are disagreements between agencies and safeguarding partners and facilitate escalation procedures.
- Evaluate and contribute to multi-agency safeguarding published arrangements and the annual report, alongside feeding into the wider accountability systems such as inspections.

Independent scrutiny should drive continuous improvement and provide assurance that arrangements are working effectively for children, families, and practitioners. It should also consider learning from local child safeguarding practice reviews, national reviews and thematic reports. The

independent scrutineer should be able to demonstrate knowledge, skills and expertise in the area being scrutinised and consequently add value to the work of local agencies.

They should consider how effectively the arrangements are working for children and families as well as practitioners and how well the safeguarding partners are providing strong leadership.

This is a process of scrutiny of function starting with the S11 process as a foundation; followed up with an assessment against published arrangements and the partnerships QA Framework. The GSCP Executive will appoint an Independent Scrutineer to lead on the QA process which includes the following:

- Planning and defining the QA process with the GSCP Business Manager.
- Chair the annual S11 Panel.
- Assessment of activity against the published QA Framework.
- Desktop review of papers, minutes, meetings, safeguarding review and audit reports with full access to any papers from those meetings or activities. Seeking evidence of activity against recommendations and learning.
- Partnership data and exceptions reporting seeking evidence of performance information and evaluation to ensure the GSCP have an integrated data set that supports a unified approach across the complex landscape of safeguarding.
- KCSiE and EYFS schools and Early Years audit compliance checks
- The scrutineer will ensure that hearing and learning from the voice of the child is at the heart of GSCP activity utilising individual partnership evidence and the latest Online Pupil Wellbeing Survey
- Partners safeguarding plans and inspection reports.

This Quality Assurance process should give the scrutineer the opportunity to assess how well organisations come together to cooperate with one another to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and to hold each other to account for effective safeguarding and to allow the scrutineer sufficient evidence to judge:

- Are appropriate and effective systems and processes in place in all partner agencies to fulfil their statutory duties and ensure that children are protected and that appropriate safeguarding strategies are developed and embedded?
- How effective are the multi-agency safeguarding arrangements in getting a clear line of sight on single agency and multi-agency practice?
- Are the structures for the operation of the safeguarding partnership purposeful, efficient and effective?
- Are evidence, performance information and evaluation used to develop an integrated data set that supports a unified approach across the complex landscape of safeguarding?
- Do the arrangements enable space for reflection and learning from practice?
- Is the partnership able to evidence that they are having a positive impact on multi-agency working and/or front-line practice?
- What has gone well and what is the evidence to support this?
- What has potential but it is too early to assess impact?
- Are there concerns or issues that need addressing?

In the yearly report, the GSCP will review the impact and learning from scrutiny and how they are responding to the findings to improve the effectiveness of arrangements.

Contract duration and time commitment:

The provider will be commissioned for a period of three years with the option to extend for up to five years with a requirement for up to 20 days per year.

Contract Value:

Maximum of £13,000 per annum which equates to £650 a day.

Qualifications and experience:

The following qualifications and experience are required of the person(s) providing independent scrutiny:

- Requirement for the person to be suitably qualified and experienced. This can be broadly interpreted but will generally include knowledge of safeguarding practice and legislation and previous work in front line services safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.
- The person will have the skills and experience to be able to hold senior managers to account.
- Not be related to an elected member (or equivalent of any of the partners), nor to an officer who is employed by a partner agency in a role that is relevant to its safeguarding functions.

Review:

Arrangements will be subject to review in line with Working Together To Safeguard Children Statutory Guidance refresh periods.

Role Description

INDEPENDENT SCRINTEER OF GLOUCESTERSHIRE SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN PARTNERSHIP

SUPPORTED BY:	Business Manager (GSCP Business Unit)
REMUNERATION:	£650 per day (including expenses) depending on experience.
WORKING PATTERN:	20 guaranteed days per year. Additional days as determined by the GSCP Executive dependent on demand.
LOCATION:	Working from Home and Shire Hall Gloucester but may be required to move their base to any other location within the Gloucestershire area during the course of their contract

Purpose:

To provide independent, objective scrutiny of the effectiveness of local multi-agency arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in a local area. This will include arrangements to identify and review child safeguarding practice reviews.

Functions of independent scrutiny role

- Provide safeguarding partners and relevant agencies with independent, rigorous, and effective support and challenge at both a strategic and operational level.
- Provide assurance to the whole system in judging the effectiveness of the multi-agency safeguarding arrangements through a range of scrutiny methods.
- Ensure that statutory duties are being fulfilled, quality assurance mechanisms are in place, and that local child safeguarding practice reviews and national reviews are analysed, with key learning areas identified and effectively implemented across the safeguarding system.
- Ensure that the voice of children and families is considered as part of scrutiny and that this is at the heart of arrangements through direct feedback, informing policy and practice.
- Be regarded as a 'critical friend' and provide opportunities for two-way discussion and reflection between frontline practitioners and leaders. This will encourage and enable strong, clear, strategic leadership.
- Provide independent advice when there are disagreements between agencies and safeguarding partners and facilitate escalation procedures.
- Evaluate and contribute to multi-agency safeguarding published arrangements and the annual report, alongside feeding into the wider accountability systems such as inspections.

The independent scrutineer will be required to provide assurance in judging the effectiveness of multi-agency arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children, including arrangements to identify and review serious child safeguarding cases.

They will consider how effectively the arrangements are working for children and families as well as practitioners and how well the safeguarding partners are providing strong leadership.

In order to make these judgements, the scrutineer will lead on The GSCP Quality Assurance and Scrutiny process which has been developed to test, assess and report to the Executive on the partnerships 'effectiveness' contributing to the GSCP Annual Report through a QA report setting out their assessment of the GSCP's efficacy with findings and recommendations.

This is a process of scrutiny of function starting with the S11 process as a foundation; followed up with an assessment against published arrangements and the partnerships QA Framework (This Document). The GSCP Executive will appoint an Independent Scrutineer to lead on the QA process which includes the following:

- Planning and defining the QA process with the GSCP Business Manager.
- Chair the annual S11 Panel.
- Assessment of activity against the published QA Framework.
- Desktop review of papers, minutes, meetings, safeguarding review and audit reports with full access to any papers from those meetings or activities. Seeking evidence of activity against recommendations and learning.
- Partnership data and exceptions reporting seeking evidence of performance information and evaluation to ensure the GSCP have an integrated data set that supports a unified approach across the complex landscape of safeguarding.
- KCSiE and EYFS schools and Early Years audit compliance checks
- The scrutineer will ensure that hearing and learning from the voice of the child is at the heart of GSCP activity utilising individual partnership evidence and the latest Online Pupil Wellbeing Survey
- Partners safeguarding plans and inspection reports.

Responsibilities:

This Quality Assurance process should give the scrutineer the opportunity to assess how well organisations come together to cooperate with one another to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and to hold each other to account for effective safeguarding and to allow the scrutineer sufficient evidence to judge:

- Are appropriate and effective systems and processes in place in all partner agencies to fulfil their statutory duties and ensure that children are protected and that appropriate safeguarding strategies are developed and embedded?
- How effective are the multi-agency safeguarding arrangements in getting a clear line of sight on single agency and multi-agency practice?
- Are the structures for the operation of the safeguarding partnership purposeful, efficient and effective?
- Are evidence, performance information and evaluation used to develop an integrated data set that supports a unified approach across the complex landscape of safeguarding?
- Do the arrangements enable space for reflection and learning from practice?
- Is the partnership able to evidence that they are having a positive impact on multi-agency working and/or front-line practice?
- What has gone well and what is the evidence to support this?
- What has potential but it is too early to assess impact?
- Are there concerns or issues that need addressing?

The scrutineer will respect confidentiality of sensitive information provided by the partners at all times.

The scrutineer will supply their own ICT at their own expense and utilise the provided independent scrutiny Gloucestershire County Council email address.

Special Conditions:

- Much of the work undertaken will be of a highly confidential nature. The post holder must at all times maintain confidentiality and should be aware that, given the nature of the services provided

for children and young people across Gloucestershire, may on occasions be exposed to information that they may find distressing.

- The post holder will be contracted to and work for the Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children Partnership via the GSCP Business Unit.
- It is important that the postholder is aware that:-
 - There is a requirement for commitment to Equal Opportunities and Anti-Discriminatory Practice.
 - The Council operates a Smoke-Free Policy and the post-holder is prohibited from smoking in any of the Council's buildings (including Council owned and Council leased buildings, enclosed spaces within the curtilage of buildings, and Council vehicles).
- The above list is not exhaustive, whereby other duties relevant to the role may from time to time be required. Variation may also occur to the duties and responsibilities without changing the general character of the post.