**Kingston & Richmond Safeguarding Children’s Partnership**

**Independent Scrutineer - Job Role and Person Specification**

**Introduction**

Kingston and Richmond partners believe that nothing is more important than protecting children from abuse, neglect and exploitation. Children who need help and protection deserve high quality and effective support as soon as a need is identified.

*We want a system that* responds *to the* needs *and interests of children and families. In such a system, practitioners will be clear about what is required of them individually, and* how *they need to work together in partnership with others.*

*Securing the best possible safeguarding outcomes for children is a priority for all partner organisations in Kingston and Richmond. New legislation offers an opportunity to develop already good multi-agency provision. The right structures need to be in place for strategic leaders to have a clear understanding of strengths and weaknesses of current safeguarding arrangements, to make the right, timely decisions and for operational activity to take place where it matters most to make a positive impact on young lives.*

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| The purpose of our local arrangements is to support and enable local organisations and agencies to work together in a system where: • children are safeguarded and their welfare promoted • partner organisations and agencies collaborate, share and co-own the vision for how to achieve improved outcomes for vulnerable children • organisations and agencies challenge appropriately and hold one another to account effectively• there is early identification and analysis of new safeguarding issues and emerging threats • learning is promoted and embedded in a way that local services for children and families can become more reflective and implement changes to practice • information is shared effectively to facilitate a more accurate and timely decision making for children and families |

**Independent Scrutiny**

Independent scrutiny is a statutory requirement to provide assurance in judging the effectiveness of multi-agency arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in a local area. It is proposed to initiate a new role of Independent Scrutineer to fulfil this function and provide the critical challenge and appraisal of the safeguarding arrangements agreed in Kingston and Richmond. The Strategic Leadership Group will have responsibility for determining local arrangements including involving other relevant agencies.

The role of independent scrutiny is required to cover the following:

* Consider the overall effectiveness of local safeguarding arrangements
* Consider how well the safeguarding partners are providing strong leadership
* Provide independent scrutiny of the annual report of the safeguarding partners

In addition to these functions, it is proposed that the independent scrutineer also has a role to deliver the following:

* To offer mediation to the three statutory safeguarding partners and any other local agencies in dealing with any key areas of disagreement
* To offer independent review of any escalated concern raised by relevant agencies or on behalf of children and families when requested by the statutory partners
* Support a culture and environment conducive to robust scrutiny and constructive challenge.

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| The following is a guide to the initial proposed way in which the Independent Scrutineer will operate, and how these arrangements will be reviewed.* Scrutiny in relation to the key priority theme of the learning hub, including engagement with and observation of frontline practice
* Annual scrutiny of the priorities set by the SLG to ensure the relevance of priorities in meeting local needs
* Annual scrutiny of the effectiveness of arrangements to identify and review serious child safeguarding cases
* At least annual review of the clarity of the information that the SLG receives to inform strategic leaders of the effectiveness of safeguarding
* The Independent Scrutineer will be expected to make formal recommendations to the Strategic Leadership Group
* The statutory partners will review the arrangements for independent scrutiny at least annually and report in the annual review on these arrangements.
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The other ways in which independent scrutiny will be delivered to these safeguarding arrangements include:

* Inspection - either single or joint inspections of the statutory partners and the services they are responsible for;
* Democratic local scrutiny - through the governance arrangements required of each Council;
* Peer Review - such as through the developing ALDCS (Association of London Directors of Children’s Services) sector led improvement programme, supported by the Department for Education, which includes an annual programme of peer challenge.

**Independent Scrutineer**

We are looking for an innovative and creative thinker, who is skilled in multi-agency facilitation, keeping the needs and perspective of our local children and young people at the heart of everything we do.

We are moving away from safeguarding assurance based on a review of annual reports and moving towards embedding a partnership learning culture and mature systems leadership, where all partners take active responsibility for support and challenge of each other. This will include making better use of audits which demonstrate impact upon outcomes, intelligent data analysis, embedding a practice learning culture with our multi-professional frontline staff and volunteers. Crucially it involves routinely talking directly to our children and young people about their lived experiences, understanding their observations about what we do well and what we need to change as a system.

We are looking for someone who can demonstrate our shared values and work with us, offering high challenge and high support, working with our partnership leaders to have mature systems conversations to improve outcomes for children.

If you have extensive multi-professional safeguarding operational experience and a successful record of work promoting outcomes for children and/or vulnerable adults, we want to hear from you.

**Independent Scrutineer - Person Specification**

**Education and Qualifications**

* Educated to degree level or equivalent
* Hold a recognised professional qualification in a discipline including social care, health, or Police or equivalent experience at a strategic manager level

**Experience & Knowledge**

* Substantial experience of and effective leadership at a senior level in the children’s safeguarding field.
* Substantial experience of working at a senior level within a multi-disciplinary context.
* Substantial experience, knowledge and understanding of statutory and voluntary organisations and how they work.
* Significant experience of chairing complex professional meetings at a senior and strategic level.
* Experience of having influenced and negotiated successfully at a senior level across agencies, disciplines, and sectors.
* Extensive knowledge of the safeguarding agenda and related guidance.
* Thorough knowledge and understanding of relevant legislation, research, inspection regimes and statutory guidance relating to the safeguarding of children.
* An understanding of the wider children's agenda.
* A strong awareness of issues of confidentiality, and demonstration of appropriate adherence to confidentiality.
* Experience of resolving disputes and complaints between professionals.
* Experience of involving children, young people and their families in planning and decision making at all levels – including contributing to strategic plans and developments.
* Experience of applying quality assurance frameworks in order to understand the impact and effectiveness of service provision in meeting needs.

**Skills, abilities and attributes**

* Strong moral and ethical character that demonstrates integrity, openness and trustworthiness.
* Excellent communication and presentation skills.
* Excellent time management skills and the ability to prioritise.
* The confidence, authority and objectivity to challenge practices and hold agencies accountable.
* The ability to empower multi-agency activity for change and improvement.
* The ability to digest and analyse complex information.
* The ability to communicate effectively with a wide range of stakeholders and organisations, both orally and in writing.
* Ability to lead and motivate others
* Ability to provide clear and unambiguous direction
* Is solution focussed in attitude and practice

**Work Conditions**

* Ability to undertake any necessary travel in connection with the duties of the post.
* Flexible in terms of time commitment to ensure that periods of increased activity are led consistently.
* Be available to attend other meetings as appropriate and requested by the statutory partners
* 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.

**Time Commitment & Remuneration**

30 days per annum for independent scrutiny - with potential for the safeguarding partners to commission further scrutiny up to an additional 6 days from either the scrutineer or others.

Expectation of two days each month of the year, excepting August, with the remaining days to be used flexibly.

Payment at a day rate to be negotiated, benchmarked with comparable roles elsewhere.

**Independent Scrutineer – Draft Specification and Workplan**

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| **Objective** | **Activity** | **Proposed no of Days** |
| Consider the overall effectiveness of local safeguarding arrangements | Full range of observations, field visits, interviews and analysis of papers. | See below |
| Consider how well the safeguarding partners are providing strong leadership | Observations of and feedback to the Strategic Leadership Group; observations of and feedback to Sub-Groups analysis of effectiveness of links to  | 3 days |
| Provide independent scrutiny of the annual report of the safeguarding partners | Advice upon structure of report; feedback upon draft report; commentary in section of that report. | 1 day |
| To offer mediation to the three statutory safeguarding partners and any other local agencies in dealing with any key areas of disagreement | Upon request - will need to be tailored to the issue at hand. | As needed |
| To offer independent review of any escalated concern raised by relevant agencies or on behalf of children and families when requested by the statutory partners | Upon request - will need to be tailored to the issue at hand. | As needed |
| Support a culture and environment conducive to robust scrutiny and constructive challenge. | Analysis and recommendations relating to partnership culture; specific analysis of impact of challenge, including escalations. | 3 days |
| Scrutiny in relation to the key priority theme of the learning hub, including engagement with and observation of frontline practice  | Fieldwork and analysis of quality assurance in relation to priority themes of each learning hub - initially two per year. | 6 days |
| Annual scrutiny of the priorities set by the Strategic Leadership Group to ensure the relevance of priorities in meeting local needs | Fieldwork and analysis of quality assurance in relation to the Partnership priorities set by the Strategic Leadership Group. | 6 days |
| Annual scrutiny of the effectiveness of arrangements to identify and review serious child safeguarding cases | Observations of and feedback to the Local Learning Review Sub-Group; analysis of notifications and decision making in relation to local learning. | 2 days |
| At least annual review of the clarity of the information that the Strategic Leadership Group receives to inform strategic leaders of the effectiveness of safeguarding  | Observations of and feedback to the Learning Hub Sub-Group; analysis of the Safeguarding Partnership dataset; analysis of the Safeguarding Partnership use of quality audits and reviews; analysis of the Safeguarding Partnership use of the views of children, young people and families. | 4 days |
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