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**Safeguarders  
Panel**

# **Safeguarder Practice Standards Guidance**

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## Safeguarder Practice Standards Guidance

### Considerations for the Role of the Safeguarder

This guidance should be used alongside the Performance Support and Monitoring Framework to support you to meet the Safeguarder Practice Standards (the Standards), and to safeguard the best interests of the child.

The guidance does not aim to be an exhaustive list of requirements but provides considerations for you to think about in your role as a Safeguarder.

Throughout the document, the word 'families' is used. Please assume that this means the child's family, carers, and other important people that may have a role in their upbringing.

### Standard 1 - THE CHILD'S VIEW

In all actions concerning the child, the Safeguarder must, in the best interests of the child, enable the child to exercise their right to be heard and express a view through the Safeguarder's practice and child's participation in the process.

Practice Standard	Considerations for Safeguarders
Safeguarders must treat children with dignity, in accordance with their rights, and ensure they are supported to play an active part in the decision-making processes, including ensuring that they have the information they need to participate.	I explain to the child the process in which they are involved.
	I have a conversation with the child to find out how they might choose to participate in this process in a way that is best for them.
	I treat the child with courtesy and kindness and respect their rights.
	I value the child as an individual and I am sensitive to their needs.

	I respect the views of the child, even if I do not agree that their views align with their best interests.
The views of the child must be listened to and considered. Their participation is encouraged and supported to help Safeguarders identify their needs and best interests and inform Safeguarders' conclusions and recommendations.	I listen to the child and take into consideration what they say to me.
	I identify what the child needs and reflect these needs in my report.
	I explain to the child that my own views might not be the same as theirs, and that my recommendations will reflect what I consider to be in their best interests.
	I am clear in my report how, and by what means I obtained the child's views.
Safeguarders must respect a child's choices where they choose not to express their view.	I make sure that the child is given choices when I am meeting with and speaking to them.
	I will explain to the child what I do with the information they tell me before they decide if they want to express their views.
	If the child chooses not to speak to or communicate with me, I explain that they can change their mind, at any time before I make my final recommendations.
	I will actively consider the needs and wishes of non-verbal children and make every effort to communicate with them, respecting their best interests.
Safeguarders must decide how to engage with each child most effectively.  This will take into account the following:	I communicate to the child that they have the right to express their views in all matters affecting them, and that I will take their views into account.
	I discuss and agree with the child how often and where we should meet.
	I ask the child if they would like someone that they know and trust to be there when we meet.

<p>Each individual child's culture, ethnicity, background, and language</p>	<p>I make efforts to ensure the place and time the child and I chose to meet, feels safe and comfortable to them.</p>
<p>The child's age and stage of development</p>	<p>I consider communication tools that I might use to assist me in gathering the child's views.</p>
<p>Any disability or other individual need and circumstance affecting the child</p>	<p>I use language that is child friendly and appropriate when I communicate with the child e.g. BSL or language translation</p>
<p>The child's preferred way of communicating</p>	
<p>Where and when to meet a child, and whether someone like a support person could be present</p>	
<p>Involvement the child may already have with other adults whose role it is find out their views, such as an advocacy worker</p>	

## Standard 2 – RELATIONSHIPS

Every child is supported through the Safeguarder’s development of effective relationships with all relevant parties.

Practice Standard	Considerations for Safeguarders
Safeguarders must work towards building positive relationships with the child, parents, carers, and people involved in the children’s hearing and court proceedings.	I seek guidance from those who know the child and family well when deciding how to engage with them.
	I explain my reasons for not meeting with people who the child identifies as important to them. These reasons are in the best interest of the child.
	I am prompt and proactive in engaging with others.
	I meet with the child and their family in person. If I do not, I justify my reasons why.
	I understand that children and families might have had difficult experiences that may impact on how they communicate and work with me, and I am sensitive to this.
Safeguarders must work in a way that promotes diversity, and respects different cultures and values.	I treat the people I meet with integrity, openness, respect, and fairness, and without discrimination.
	I respect other people’s views and opinions even when these are different from my own.
	I understand the impact of racism, sexism and other examples of oppression and take this into account when engaging with people.
Safeguarders must find the most appropriate way to communicate with, listen to and wherever possible, meet with all the significant people in the child’s life.	I prepare fully for meetings with children, families, and other people significant in the child’s life, to allow me to seek their full and clear views.
	I take into account any possible barriers to meeting or communicating with the child and try to find ways to overcome these e.g., requirement for translation.

	I respect a person's choice not to meet me in their home and consider alternative locations.
	I consider how my presentation, behaviour, and language might be perceived by others.
Safeguarders must show sensitivity to the impact of trauma.	I adjust my practice accordingly to avoid further upset to a child and family.
Safeguarders must work within the current national policies and frameworks and in support of collaborative approaches, with particular reference to Getting It Right for Every Child and the Early Years Framework.	I keep up to date with national policies and frameworks and how they relate to my practice.
	I am aware of the Getting It Right for Every Child and the Early Years Framework.
	I am respectful to professionals and other people involved in the child's life, and work towards developing relationships with them to ensure the best outcomes for the child.
Safeguarders must ensure that the ending of the appointment is clearly and sensitively communicated with children, parents, carers, and all the significant people in the child's life.	I explain at the start of my appointment that my role will be time limited. I consider individual needs when planning how to discuss this.
	I prepare the child and family for the ending of the working relationship, and I say goodbye when it is the right time to do so.
	I do not continue to meet with children and families after my appointment has concluded.

### Standard 3 – INDEPENDENCE

A Safeguarder will act with independence within the parameters of the role, ensuring that the best interests of the child are their primary consideration.

Practice Standard	Considerations for Safeguarders
<p>Safeguarders must introduce themselves and explain the independent nature of the role and its boundaries to children, parents, carers, and other people involved in the proceedings.</p>	<p>I explain my role in a way that others will understand.</p>
	<p>I give the child and family information about how my role is different to the other professionals they are involved with.</p>
	<p>I share Safeguarder leaflets with people where I consider it to be appropriate and explain where they can find more information on the role.</p>
	<p>I ensure that the child and others that I speak to know that I am not employed by any organisation or agency.</p>
	<p>I explain to the child and their family that I am not a decision maker, and it is the children's hearing or court that will decide what happens next.</p>
	<p>I explain to the child and family who they should contact if they wish to provide feedback about my practice as a Safeguarder.</p>
<p>Safeguarders must consider and check for any potential conflict of interest which may affect objectivity. They must also consider any circumstances which may be perceived as a conflict of interest particularly to a child, their parents, carers, and people involved in the children's hearing and court proceedings</p>	<p>I consider the potential impact of continuing with appointments where there is a perceived or actual conflict of interest.</p>
	<p>I will discuss conflicts of interest, including perceived or potential conflicts of interest, with my Support Manager in order to reflect and consider the actions I should take.</p>

and, if so, take appropriate action in the circumstances.	
Safeguarders must understand and address issues of role boundaries and separate their role as a Safeguarder and any other professional role that they may have.	I draw on my own skills and expertise but use these only within the parameters of the Safeguarder role.
Safeguarders must not undertake the role or responsibilities of other professionals or decision-makers.	I signpost others to the relevant service or agency where I consider this to be appropriate.
Safeguarders must ensure that conclusions and recommendations are not influenced by undue pressure or persuasion from any other source	I express my views and opinions in written and verbal reports.
	I include the reasons for my views being similar or different to the views of others.
	I consider all the information I am given, to come to my own independent view on what is in the child's best interests.



## Standard 4 – REPORTING

The child’s views and best interests are reflected in the Safeguarder’s verbal and written contribution into proceedings

Practice Standard	Considerations for Safeguarders
<p>A Safeguarder’s conclusions and recommendations must be informed by:</p> <p>A purposeful and proportionate review of relevant background information</p> <p>Active listening and careful consideration of the views of those individuals and services involved</p> <p>Critical and objective analysis and evaluation</p>	I make sure the child’s best interests are at the centre of my planning, meetings, analysis, and final recommendations.
	I read all paperwork thoroughly, to give me an understanding of the background to the child’s life, and the reasons for them being allocated a Safeguarder.
	I critically review the information available to guide my enquiries.
	I reflect the child’s views in my report, as well as the views of the family, professionals, and others that I have spoken to.
	I demonstrate clear links between the information available, my analysis of that information, and my recommendations.
	I explain why my final recommendations are in the best interests of the child.
<p>The Safeguarder’s report will provide a holistic sense of the child’s world and their needs, to help the children’s hearing and court to make decisions that are in the best interests of the child.</p>	I consider the child’s human rights in my written and verbal reports.
	I write about the child as a unique individual and report what matters to them.
	I write my report ensuring it can be understood in isolation from other reports.
	I obtain the views of the child about their relationship with their siblings and include these in my report.
<p>Reports must only contain information that is necessary and relevant. Appropriate</p>	I only include information that is relevant and necessary in my report.

consideration must be given to information that might distress a child.	I consider the language and tone I use when sharing my recommendations to avoid causing additional distress.
	I am mindful that the child may read my report now or in the future and take this into account when writing this.
	I include sensitive information in my report in a way that minimises distress to the child and family.
Recommendations made by the Safeguarder must be shared appropriately with the child and the people involved in the children's hearing and court proceedings, in advance of hearings.	I share my recommendations with the child, family and other people involved, in advance of the children's hearing or court date.
The Safeguarder should explain how, and in what circumstances, the views of the child were obtained and how these informed their recommendations.	I make it clear in my report how and when I spoke to the child, and what influence this had on my final recommendations

## Standard 5 – CONFIDENTIALITY

The Safeguarder must respect the child’s, parents’, and carers’ right to confidentiality and privacy.

Practice Standard	Considerations for Safeguarders
	I consider who it is appropriate for me to share information with, and the reasons for this.
Safeguarders must explain to the child, their parents, carers, and other significant people in the child’s life what personal information the Safeguarder holds about them, what the Safeguarder will do with that information, who they will share it with and how their privacy will be respected.	I explain to the child, family, and other significant people in the child’s life that the Safeguarder role may involve sharing confidential or sensitive information with others who have a right to know.
	I explain what information I might have to share and what the reasons are for this.
	I use a Privacy Notice with the child and their family, where appropriate to do so.
	I consider the way in which I share and communicate confidential or sensitive information with others.
	I understand the process to follow for seeking a non-disclosure request
	I submit a non-disclosure request if I think it is in the best interests of the child.
	I have reasons and justification for requesting access to additional personal information that is not available to the other agencies involved.
	I follow relevant procedures if there is a child or adult protection risk, or a crime being disclosed or observed. I know how and when to explain this to a child or family member.
	I take steps to ensure that conversations I have with people in person, by phone or online are private.
I ensure that information is not disclosed to others who do not have a legal right to it.	

<p>Safeguarders must comply with the data protection legislative framework, including the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018. All personal information, whether held digitally or in paper format, relating to the appointment held by the Safeguarder must be destroyed securely following the end of the appointment.</p>	<p>I comply with my responsibilities as a data controller.</p>
	<p>I am registered with the Information Commissioner's office (ICO) and my registration is maintained throughout my term of appointment.</p>
	<p>I comply with the Data Management Policy for Safeguarders.</p>
	<p>I confirm people's identities before sharing confidential information.</p>
	<p>I ensure all personal and private information communicated by me is done so securely.</p>
	<p>I use a locked storage box to store information. I ensure that those who I share a home or office with do not have access to this.</p>
	<p>I store and process electronic data securely.</p>
	<p>I securely destroy all data at the end of an appointment.</p>
<p>I respond appropriately to data breaches, caused by my own actions or that of another.</p>	

## Standard 6 – VALUE-BASED PRACTICE

A Safeguarder must treat the child, their parents, carers, and people involved in the children’s hearing and court proceedings with integrity, fairness, openness, respect and without discrimination.

Practice Standard	Considerations for Safeguarders
Safeguarders must appreciate how their behaviour, language and presentation can impact on a child, their parents, carers, and people involved in the children’s hearing and court proceedings and adapt them to suit circumstances and settings.	I communicate with the child and their family to suit their needs.
	I actively listen to what the child and family tell me.
	I am open, honest and transparent.
	I am aware of the impact that body language and non-verbal communication has on others.
	I am objective and take steps to mitigate any biases that I might bring to the role.
	I acknowledge the strengths in families, and others that I speak to in the course of my enquires and reflect these in my report.
	I write about all individuals in a respectful and non-judgemental way.
	I am mindful of my personal values and beliefs that might influence my practice and recommendations.
	I am open to feedback from others about my practice and can have reflective conversations with them about this.
Safeguarder’s actions must not contribute to delays in the decision-making process for a child. For example, Safeguarders are expected	I begin my enquiries as soon as I am appointed. I engage promptly with the child, family, carers and other professionals.
	I am prepared for court and children’s hearings, so I do not contribute to delay.

to attend the hearings and court in accordance with Practice Notes.	I challenge unnecessary delay caused by others.
	I submit my reports on time and keep to statutory timeframes.

## Standard 7 – LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Every child’s Safeguarder takes responsibility for their continuing professional learning and development.

Practice Standard	Considerations for Safeguarders
Safeguarders must demonstrate how they continue to update and improve their own knowledge and reflect on and improve their practice.	I seek out new information, skills, and opportunities to continually develop my practice.
	I embed new learning in my practice
	I keep a record of my own learning and development.
Safeguarders must complete mandatory training	I complete all mandatory training within the required timescales.
Safeguarders must familiarise themselves with the relevant legislation and guidance and keep up to date with legislative changes.	I keep up to date with new legislation and guidance that affect children and young people.