



Memorandum of Understanding
between Ascension Government and St Helena Government
and their Safeguarding Practitioners

This MOU recognises the need for safeguarding practitioners on Ascension (“Ascension”) and St Helena Island (“St Helena”) to work collaboratively on safeguarding issues across the two Territories. The procedures set out herein are established to enable cooperation between the Ascension Island Government (“AIG”) and the St Helena Government (“SHG”) (jointly “the parties”) in the conduct of safeguarding matters arising in the Territories.

WHEREAS the parties hereby agree to provide safeguarding support in four key areas:

1. Ascension social work supervision.
2. Social work cover as practicable.
3. Training and professional development through scheduled visits between Territories.
4. Referral polices supporting the movement of children and vulnerable adults between the territories.

1. Ascension Social Work Supervision

1.1 It is acknowledged that in 2012 AIG improved safeguarding practices on Ascension by establishing a new Government post: the Ascension Social Worker (“Ascension social worker”). This role looks to follow UK standards which includes the professional supervision of the social worker.

- 1.2 Social work supervision is an essential tool to give the practitioner an opportunity to share experiences and concerns and to obtain advice on case decisions and organisational issues. The parties agree that working in an unsupervised workspace does not accord with best practice and therefore supervision requirements need to be in place.
- 1.3 Due to funding constraints the social worker is the only professional social worker on Ascension. Accordingly SHG agree to provide professional social work supervision to the Ascension social worker. This social work supervision will be sourced from the St Helena Safeguarding Directorate. The most appropriate individual will be identified by the Director of Safeguarding.
- 1.4 Professional supervision will provide the opportunity for the social worker on Ascension Island to reflect and discuss practice. Within the supervisory relationship there is also a need for case management decision making, which needs to be part of any supervisory relationship and agreement.
- 1.5 Where a difference of professional opinion rises in relation to case management, a three way discussion should be held between the ASI SW, SMO and SHG (Team Manager) to agree a way forward collaboratively.
- 1.6 Where a difference of opinion occurs about the professional direction of case management then 3rd parties will be required to oversee a sign off any final decision. The 3rd party from St Helena Island should be the Director of Safeguarding and the 3rd party from Ascension Island should be the Senior Medical Officer. If the matter is in respect of undertaking any legal framework action the relevant legal advice should be requested and part of any final decision making.
- 1.7 For the avoidance of doubt, the Ascension social worker will continue to receive line management and pastoral supervision from the Ascension senior medical officer.
- 1.8 The parties agree that as a minimum provision of support, the Ascension social worker's case files will be reviewed annually by the supervisor. These reviews will take place when the supervisor transits through Ascension en route to and from St

Helena. Further, when possible, the social worker will receive supervision on a bi-monthly basis, delivered remotely.

1.9 Additional supervision outside the minimum reviews will be provided where specific casework demands an earlier peer review.

1.10 AIG agrees to make the Ascension social worker available for SHG social work peer review and supervision where SHG have identified that need.

1.11 All social work supervision conducted in accordance with this MOU shall follow the Supervision Policy attached hereto as Appendix A.

2. Social Work Cover Between The Territories

2.1 Whereas the parties recognise the need for the Territories to have social work cover during periods that the Territories' social worker teams are unable to handle a safeguarding concern whether by reason of leave, vacancy of post or professional conflict.

2.2 The parties agree that where their own on-island resources allow for it, they will provide to the requesting party social work cover for the period identified.

2.3 Where a request is made to cover a leave period or post vacancy the requesting party should give at least two months' notice of the need for cover, if possible.

2.4 Where the request is made for any other reason the parties recognise the need to give as much notice as possible.

2.5 The social work cover provided for by this MOU may be provided remotely if the safeguarding issues allow.

2.6 The agreed procedures are set out in Appendix B.

3. Upskilling/Training Through Working Visits

3.1 The parties recognise and agree that collaborative working between Ascension and St Helena is essential to good safeguarding practice. Collaborative working maintains face to face working relationships between safeguarding professionals between the Territories and introduces a valuable cultural grounding for the social

workers. It further provides the opportunity for face to face quality training and development.

3.2 It is therefore agreed that SHG will host an annual working visit to St Helena by the Ascension social worker.

3.3 Funding for the working visit will be the responsibility of AIG.

3.4 Where appropriate, any supervision arrangements agreed under this MOU may, whenever possible, be delivered during the annual working visit.

4. Transition And Referral Arrangements Of Children And Vulnerable Adults Moving Between St Helena And Ascension

4.1 The parties recognise the importance of ensuring that all children and vulnerable adults moving (on a permanent basis) between the Territories continue to have social work support if such support has been provided by the Territory they are leaving, if it is available on the receiving territory and if it is deemed by the receiving territory to continue to be necessary.

4.2 The parties agree to share information and provide the required level of safeguarding support as provided for in the Transition and Referral Policy attached hereto as Appendix C. This policy outlines the procedure to be followed to ensure that the required support is identified and, where possible, provided upon the person's arrival at their destination. Depending on the individual's needs, a referral to the Education Directorate and/or the Safeguarding Directorate will be made.

4.3 This policy provides the framework for when a referral will be made. The support provided by the Safeguarding Directorates is not exclusive to children with additional needs. It will also be offered to the parents of all children who are not already known to the Safeguarding Directorates. It is hoped that such support will enable the child to feel supported during the period of physical and emotional upheaval that can be associated with moving to another territory.

4.4 Mutual awareness of and information sharing about any child going to live on St Helena from Ascension and vice versa will assist in the transition for the individual.

5. General Provision of this MOU

5.1 Costs associated with the delivery of each parties' responsibilities under this agreement will be for the parties to agree at the time of delivery. For the avoidance of doubt this MOU does not require any party to reimburse the other party for any costs incurred pursuant to this MOU.

5.2 All personnel acting on behalf of either party under this MOU will, at the time of such action, be an employee of that party and be suitably trained and competent to undertake the role.

6. MOU Management

6.1 This agreement may be amended with the consent of both parties by giving 2 months' notice. Any party wishing for a review of and/or amendments to this MOU shall allow a 2 month period for this process to be completed and, where appropriate, shall provide a copy to the other party of any proposed amendments.

6.2 A party may terminate this agreement by giving at least 3 months' notice in writing to the other party.

7. Agreement Coming Into Effect

7.1 This agreement comes into effect on the date that the parties sign the agreement.

TOGETHER, the parties agree to enter into this agreement to collaborate for the duration of the agreement.

Signed by the Ascension Island Government
Administrator



.....

Date: 30 May 2017....

Signed by the St Helena Government Safeguarding Directorate
Director of Safeguarding



.....

Date: 30 May 2017....

Appendix A: Supervision Policy

Scope

This policy applies to the Ascension Island social worker.

Definitions

Supervision is any communication between two or more staff, one of whom is a manager or peer, where the primary purpose is to enhance staff performance and effectiveness in carrying out the requirements of their post and meeting the objectives of the organisation.

Planned/ formal supervision is a pre-arranged session with an agreed agenda.

Informal/ unplanned supervision is a response to a task or event when it is inappropriate to wait for the next planned supervision.

Underlying values, assumptions and principles

The quality of service provided by the social worker can be defined as the extent to which the needs of those who require the service are met. A social worker's skills, motivation and relationships with users are key elements in determining quality of service. These key elements can be enhanced by supervision, as described in the General Social Care Council's code of practice.

- Each organisation has responsibility for developing the skills of its staff effectively.
- The social worker must take responsibility for their own performance and learning, ensuring it is integrated into their everyday practice.
- The social worker has the right to regular and planned supervision.

To be effective, supervision should be:

- viewed as an opportunity for shared reflection on work;
- seen as part of a culture that promotes reflective practice/evidence based practice, self-directed learning and learning from experience;
- an integral part of the working routine;
- approached in a positive, constructive, honest, open and forward-looking manner.

Supervision provides an opportunity to:

- Reflect on the effectiveness of recent training and development activities contributing to workplace competence, and identify any outstanding needs.
- Provide feedback on performance.
- Provide support, direction, advice and guidance on individual cases, staff and management issues.
- Develop skills and understanding.
- Ensure policy and standards are met consistently in practice and follow AIG principles.

Annex B: Procedures to follow in the absence of the Ascension social worker

- Prior to departure from Ascension the social worker will contact the Director of Safeguarding on St Helena for a discussion about any current concerns or issues that might arise in the period of absence.
- Should a safeguarding concern be raised whilst the social worker is not on Ascension, the concerned professional should make a referral via a referral form to a member of the Case Management Working Group (Police, Senior Medical Officer, Head Teacher) which is a subcommittee of the Ascension Island Safeguarding Children's Board (AISCB). A decision can then be made as to what the most appropriate course of action is needed.
- The Director of Safeguarding on St Helena or a social worker of managerial level can be contacted by the AISCB for advice and assistance should this be deemed necessary.
- Where it appears a child is at risk of suffering significant harm, St Helena Police, Ascension Detachment should be called. If a police officer on Ascension has reasonable cause to believe that a child would suffer or be likely to suffer significant harm, the officer may take steps to remove the child to suitable accommodation or take steps to prevent the child's removal using their powers of police protection pursuant to the Child Welfare Ordinance (section 28(1)), following steps as detailed within the Ordinance and pursuant to section 26 of the Ascension Island Child Protection Procedures (AICPP).
- Should the AISCB be informed that a child is in police protection or have reasonable cause to believe that a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm and pursuant to section 27 AICPP, the AISCB has a duty to investigate such concerns.
- A strategy meeting should be convened as soon as practicably possible. This should (as a minimum) involve a strategy discussion via a conference call with the Police Inspector from Ascension and a police officer from the CID team based on St Helena. In addition a social worker of managerial level on St Helena will provide advice and will assist the AISCB in fulfilling its duties under the Ordinance. This shall include guiding the completion of a child protection investigation to determine

what enquiries should be made to decide what action, if any, needs to be taken to safeguard the child.

- A plan should be formulated until the Ascension social worker is available or Ascension is able to facilitate the attendance on island of another social worker to lead on any outstanding enquiries or investigations.
- Subject to resources on St Helena and access to Ascension, St Helena may be able to support such attendance for investigations or enquiries.
- Pursuant to section 9.2 of AICPP, upon receipt of the above referral, the receiving professional should convene a meeting of the Case Management Working Group and aim to have a social worker present in person or via telephone from St Helena. This meeting should assess the level of risk identified and formulate a plan to further assess and address the concerns raised.
- The Safeguarding Directorate on St Helena will ensure that files and information concerning Ascension safeguarding matters are stored in a secure location and are not retained with St Helena client files. All documents will be emailed securely (password protected to and from Ascension).
- Upon return to duty, the Ascension social worker should contact the St Helena safeguarding lead to advise that they are back on Island and to receive a handover of any relevant information.

Annex C: Transition Procedure

Ascension to St Helena

Upon notification by Government or the family of an intention to move, a social worker will, where the child or vulnerable adult is already receiving support in the community, arrange to meet with the family to discuss the scope and range of support available on St Helena. Additionally there will be an assessment of their needs to ensure the appropriate support is identified.

Upon completion of the assessment, the social worker will contact their counterpart in St Helena and make a referral, providing them with relevant information and indicating which government departments have been identified as of potential assistance to the family. A transition plan will be agreed with the St Helenian authorities as required. A copy of such plan will be provided to the family along with the contact details of the relevant supervising social worker on St Helena. For children with no additional needs, liaison with the prospective school in conjunction with their current school will be initiated six months prior to the proposed transition.

Where possible these referrals will be initiated at the earliest opportunity to ensure that any complex needs can be met and in any event no later than 6 months in advance of the proposed transition.

St Helena to Ascension

Upon notification by St Helenian authorities or the family of an intention to move, the Ascension social worker will request that a report is prepared assessing the needs of the child or vulnerable adult.

The report will identify what areas of support the individual is receiving on St Helena and the level of support required on Ascension.

Where no additional needs are identified the social worker will ensure that the Two Boats Head Teacher is aware of the arriving student in anticipation of enrolment.

'To support and safeguard'