

Job Description

Independent Scrutineer and Chair of Two Strategic Boards

This is a single appointment encompassing distinct responsibilities across two separate governance arrangements:

- 1. Chair and Independent Scrutineer of the North Yorkshire Safeguarding Children Partnership Executive; and**
- 2. Independent Chair of the SEND & Alternative Provision Partnership Board.**

Reporting to: Director of Children Services, North Yorkshire Council

Scale/Grade: £600 daily rate

Independence Requirement

The postholder must be demonstrably independent of the North Yorkshire Safeguarding Children Partnership, and the SEND and Alternative Provision Partnership, and their constituent partner organisations. At the point of appointment, they must not hold any current employment, commissioned, governance, advisory or representative role within these arrangements or organisations that could compromise, or reasonably be perceived to compromise, their independence, impartiality or ability to provide objective scrutiny and challenge.

Any previous employment, contractual relationship, governance role or other relevant connection with a constituent partner organisation must be declared as part of the appointment process and considered in determining whether the individual can undertake the role with sufficient independence and objectivity.

Job Purpose

To provide independent scrutiny, strategic leadership, challenge and assurance across the North Yorkshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (NYSCP) and the SEND & Alternative Provision (SEND/AP) Partnership. The postholder will fulfil the independent scrutiny function required under *Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026*, providing objective assessment of the effectiveness of multi-agency safeguarding arrangements and supporting continuous improvement in outcomes for children, young people and families. The postholder will independently chair two separate strategic boards: the North Yorkshire Safeguarding Children Partnership Executive and the SEND & Alternative Provision Partnership Board. Each board has its own statutory and strategic remit, membership, governance arrangements, priorities and programme of business. The postholder will provide effective chairing, governance, accountability and strategic oversight for each arrangement, while supporting appropriate alignment between them where this benefits children, young people and families.

Key Responsibilities

Independent Scrutiny

- Provide independent scrutiny of the effectiveness of multi-agency safeguarding arrangements across North Yorkshire.

- Assess whether safeguarding partners, relevant agencies and the SEND/AP partnership are fulfilling their statutory responsibilities and delivering improved outcomes for children, young people and families.
- Provide robust support, challenge and assurance to safeguarding partners, system leaders and partnership boards, acting as an independent critical friend.
- Review the effectiveness of governance, decision-making, performance management, accountability and partnership arrangements.
- Scrutinise the impact of partnership activity using performance information, audits, inspections, reviews, practitioner feedback and the experiences of children, young people and families.
- Ensure learning from reviews, inspections, audits and quality assurance activity is embedded and leads to demonstrable improvement.
- Produce independent scrutiny reports and contribute independent commentary to partnership annual reports.

Strategic Chairing

- Chair the North Yorkshire Safeguarding Children Partnership Executive and
- Chairing the SEND & Alternative Provision Partnership Board.
- Identify and support appropriate alignment between the two partnership arrangements where there are shared priorities, while maintaining the distinct remit, accountability, decision-making and governance of each board.
- Facilitate constructive challenge, transparency, collaboration and effective decision-making.
- Support partners to deliver strategic priorities, improvement plans and inspection recommendations.
- Monitor progress, identify risks and escalate concerns where necessary.
- Promote co-production with children, young people, families and parent-carers.
- Ensure strategic discussions remain focused on impact, inclusion, safeguarding and improved outcomes for children and young people.
- Promote alignment between safeguarding, SEND, inclusion and wider children's partnership priorities.

Learning and Improvement

- Promote a culture of continuous improvement, learning and innovation across partnership arrangements.
- Scrutinise the effectiveness of safeguarding practice reviews, rapid reviews, quality assurance activity and improvement programmes.
- Monitor the implementation and impact of recommendations arising from reviews, audits and inspections.
- Support partnerships to evidence outcomes and impact, rather than activity alone.

Person Specification

Essential Experience, Knowledge and Skills

The successful candidate will demonstrate substantial senior leadership experience within safeguarding, children's services, education, health, policing, inspection, regulation or a related public sector environment. They will have a proven track record of working within complex multi-agency systems to improve outcomes for children, young people and families.

The postholder will possess:

- Significant senior leadership experience within a child or young person-focused service area.
- Experience of chairing and leading strategic multi-agency partnerships involving senior leaders from statutory, voluntary and community sector organisations.
- Experience of providing independent scrutiny, challenge, assurance, inspection, peer review, regulatory oversight or system leadership.
- A successful track record of leading continuous improvement and service transformation within complex partnership environments.
- Experience of governance, strategic planning, performance management and accountability frameworks.
- Experience of analysing performance data, audit findings, inspection outcomes, review learning and quality assurance evidence to assess impact and effectiveness.
- Experience of building productive relationships and influencing senior leaders, elected members and partners across organisational boundaries.

Knowledge

The successful candidate will have:

- Excellent knowledge of the statutory safeguarding framework, including the Children Act 1989, Children Act 2004, Children and Social Work Act 2017, Keeping Children Safe in Education and Working Together to Safeguard Children (2026).
- A comprehensive understanding of independent scrutiny within safeguarding partnerships, including governance, accountability and assurance arrangements.
- A thorough understanding of child protection, contextual safeguarding, safeguarding practice reviews and quality assurance processes.
- Excellent knowledge of the statutory and regulatory framework relating to SEND and Alternative Provision, including the Children and Families Act 2014, SEND Code of Practice (0–25), Equality Act 2010, Education, Health and Care Plans, Alternative Provision guidance, Area SEND Inspection Framework and national SEND improvement reforms.
- Understanding of local area partnership responsibilities, co-production, inclusion, joint commissioning and improving outcomes for children and young people with SEND.
- A strong understanding of inspection, assurance and regulatory frameworks, including Ofsted and CQC.

- Knowledge of Children's Services, local government, health and wider partner agency governance arrangements.
- Knowledge of continuous improvement methodologies, equality, diversity and inclusion, and the use of performance information to drive improvement.

Skills and Abilities

The successful candidate will be able to:

- Provide strategic leadership, influence and independent judgement at the highest organisational levels.
- Build effective relationships across agencies whilst maintaining independence, objectivity and credibility.
- Provide constructive challenge and effective scrutiny to senior leaders and partner organisations.
- Demonstrate excellent chairing, facilitation, negotiation and communication skills.
- Analyse complex information and present evidence, findings and recommendations clearly to a range of audiences.
- Engage effectively with professionals, elected members, children, young people and families.
- Use performance, audit, inspection and review evidence to support improvement and accountability.
- Manage competing priorities, work independently and exercise sound judgement under pressure.
- Demonstrate political awareness, organisational sensitivity and a clear focus on improving outcomes for children, young people and families.

Personal Qualities and Independence

The successful candidate will demonstrate:

- Demonstrable independence from the North Yorkshire Safeguarding Children Partnership, the SEND and Alternative Provision Partnership, and their constituent partner organisations, with the integrity, credibility and impartiality required to provide objective scrutiny, assurance and constructive challenge.
- Freedom from any actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest that could compromise the effective discharge of the role. The postholder must declare any relevant interests, relationships or conflicts before appointment and throughout the period of engagement and take appropriate action to manage or remove them where required.
- Professional curiosity, resilience and the confidence to challenge constructively and escalate concerns where necessary.

- Strong interpersonal, influencing and communication skills, with the ability to build trust and work effectively across complex partnership systems.
- Emotional intelligence, diplomacy and political awareness.
- A commitment to safeguarding, inclusion, equality, diversity, co-production and anti-discriminatory practice.
- A passion for continuous improvement and improving outcomes for children, young people and families across North Yorkshire.

DRAFT