

**The Wass Inquiry Report into Allegations surrounding Child
Safeguarding Issues on St Helena and Ascension Island:
Progress Report on Implementation of Recommendations**

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1. Introduction

1.1 Following serious allegations of a cover-up of child abuse on the UK Overseas Territory (OT) of St Helena and Ascension Island the Secretary of State commissioned an independent Inquiry, chaired by Sasha Wass QC, which reported in December 2015. The Inquiry found no evidence that child abuse was endemic or routine or that there had been any cover-up on the part of the St Helena Police Service, the St Helena and Ascension Island Governments, the FCO or DFID. Further, it recognised the UK Government had been providing child protection support to St Helena and other UK Overseas Territories for over 15 years. But the Wass Inquiry did make a number of recommendations for improvements in governance and services and noted that recommendations from earlier reviews remained largely unimplemented. The Government accepted the Inquiry's recommendations and appointed a senior UK official to oversee their implementation, as well as committing to report progress to Parliament within six months.

1.2 The UK Government representative found a good deal of work already underway - the St Helena and Ascension Island Governments had drawn up action plans and were working methodically through them. Though most of the recommendations were not aimed at Ascension Island its Government had taken the initiative to measure existing processes against them nonetheless. And DFID had agreed a £1.2m ring-fenced child safeguarding funding uplift which had facilitated recruitment of specialists on St Helena and raising of standards of care. This is a progress report on the implementation of recommendations to date and proposes measures to ensure the ongoing sustainability of improved child safeguarding procedures.

2. Governor/Government

2.1 The UK Government representative revisited previous reports about St Helena since 1998, codified the findings and, where these were still relevant and unresolved brought them to the attention of the appropriate Government Departments. Any outstanding recommendations were incorporated into existing action plans for monitoring by the Child Safeguarding Board and/or Head of Department as necessary. One notable example was the lack of recognised and documented sex offender treatment programmes, a point not highlighted in the Wass report but commented on by several experts. Additional resources in the community psychiatric and probation teams have now freed up personnel to develop the delivery of accredited offender programmes. Five of the current eleven prison inmates are convicted sex offenders; two are engaging with the Thames Valley Sex Offender Group Programme (SOGP) offered by the Probation Officer; three refuse to discuss their offending but are taking part in a general offender based group aimed at promoting a positive environment, behaviour and general social skills. This is a preliminary step aimed at working through their denial towards offence-based treatment.

2.2 The UK and St Helena Governments accept the recommendation that no further reports should be commissioned without first determining whether the area of concern has been dealt with by an earlier report. But field visit reports are routinely produced by DFID subject

advisers making familiarisation or targeted visits to the islands and these will continue. In addition, budgeting provision should be made for regular peer reviews of police, education, and other services to benchmark public service delivery in a similar way to e.g. Ofsted or HMIC inspections in the U.K. The UK Government plays a role in co-ordinating, monitoring and where necessary funding this external assurance to ensure that standards remain acceptable.

2.3 Members of staff have ready access to core manuals relevant to their areas of work, including Working Together 2015. But UK manuals often refer to UK-specific legislation and structures which have not always translated easily into local procedures and have therefore been seen as irrelevant. The St Helena Safeguarding Directorate and Police Service have now produced a locally-adapted version of Working Together 2015 based on the UK model. The Ascension Island Government has done likewise. The St Helena version forms the core material for multi-agency Level 3 child safeguarding training which has been rolled out to front-line staff across St Helena and Ascension Island. There is currently expertise on-island to provide this accredited training and the Child Safeguarding Board is considering how the training can be assured when relevant individuals move on in the next year or two. It will be important for the St Helena and Ascension Island Governments to continue to identify resource for child safeguarding training into the future, with the assistance of the UK Government where necessary.

2.4 The incoming Governor has undergone a comprehensive pre-posting briefing programme put together by the FCO and DFID with input from the St Helena and Ascension Island Governments and other stakeholders. Written briefing has been provided to highlight key issues and important reports including the Wass report and analysis of previous child safeguarding recommendations. Similar briefing was provided to the recently appointed Director of Safeguarding and will be provided to the new head of Governor's Office when he takes up Post in the next couple of months. On arrival the new Governor had a structured programme of meetings to discuss key issues with her senior management team, elected Councillors, community leaders and other interlocutors. She also addressed the Child Safeguarding Board on the importance she attaches to the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults.

2.5 The decision to relocate the prison from the centre of Jamestown to a site in a residential area which had previously been used for secure accommodation was made in 2013 but was revisited and reaffirmed in a meeting of elected Councillors (ExCo) on 31 March 2015. Local objections have been raised but St Helena Police have produced a community engagement and communication plan aimed at assuaging concerns; the plan sets out a range of information activities which will increase as the prison development progresses. A common misconception is that this will be an open prison where prisoners are allowed to roam outside unsupervised. That is not the case. The prison will be completely contained – no prison cells will overlook residences, the design includes at least 3 exercise yards and facility for the prison van to embark and disembark prisoners within the walls. Prisoners will only be allowed out on supervised work visits following individual risk assessments. Specific consideration has been given to and account taken in relation to the supervision of inmates convicted of sexual offences. Their risk assessments will take particular account of child safeguarding concerns.

2.6 St Helena's birth and marriage data does not support the perception that sexual relationships between older men and under-age girls are prevalent. Average age differences between marrying partners range from 2.9 years (over the past 5 years) to 5.5 years in the 1950's. It is not possible to capture data on every short term relationship on the island but, as the Inquiry noted, a widespread culture of sexual promiscuity and underage sex would usually be evidenced by disproportionate incidence of sexually transmitted diseases and underage pregnancies, neither of which is the case. There were two births to mothers under 16 in 2014, none in 2013 and two in each of the preceding years. But child safeguarding agencies remain vigilant to the risks, the St Helena Police Service operates high-visibility policing in locations where under-age girls and older men have been known to seek out each other's company and the Safeguarding Directorate makes use of a Child Sexual Exploitation Risk Assessment tool based on a UK model.

3. Recruitment

3.1 The St Helena and Ascension Island Governments have comprehensively reviewed their recruitment policies and practices; job specifications have been tailored and hiring managers are alert to the importance of careful recruitment. For St Helena recruitment, a robust process is in place which, for senior and other key roles, involves a full day's assessment including group discussion, psychometric testing, management exercises and interview. Qualifications, references and other background checks are carried out using a professional screening company and DBS/police checks are undertaken for all roles involving contact with children.

3.2 Interview panels are carefully chosen to combine knowledge of the subject area with impartiality and HR expertise. Interviewers are required to declare an interest if they know any of the interviewees. References must always be taken up from independent sources, including the current or most recent employer.

3.3 A shortage of qualified and experienced local staff has sometimes, in the past, resulted in local persons being appointed to roles they were ill-equipped to fulfil. This has been eased in St Helena with an injection of DFID funding to enable the recruitment of fully-qualified and experienced expatriate staff into key roles. In parallel, the St Helena Government has drawn up a detailed succession plan and established a new Organisation Development and Improvement Unit to identify local designates for key roles and devise development plans to nurture that local talent.

3.4 The St Helena and Ascension Island Governments have reviewed their induction and handover processes. For senior roles, Ascension Island provides a recce visit for the preferred candidate; this may become feasible for St Helena too when air access is available. More systematic succession planning will build in formal handover periods on-island wherever possible and otherwise briefings by telephone. St Helena's HR Department will run monthly induction courses including a Child Safeguarding awareness briefing for all staff. Ascension Island has proposed an "Exiting with Excellence" policy which requires employees to compile (and line managers to sign off on) a dossier of essential information for their successor. It has produced a tailored Safeguarding Children Induction booklet to

give new arrivals as part of the mandatory Safeguarding induction process. Employees are required to sign and record that they have read and understood the procedures.

4. Police

4.1 St Helena police have drafted an induction policy which sets the requirement for pre-arrival, on arrival and post-arrival briefing and support. Under this policy the police have designed an introductory package consisting of Strategic and Operations Plans, Risk Register, Code of Ethics, WASS Report, Local Ordinances and Who's Who. They have also designed a standard induction course which covers logistical issues, orientation, introductions, operating procedures, differences between UK and local legislation, key policies including child safeguarding etc. New arrivals will have an introductory meeting with the Chief of Police who will brief on expected standards of behaviour, community sensitivities and cultural differences. Thereafter, depending upon the role, officers will have a tailor-made programme of calls with key stakeholders or will be given the key contacts to drive that programme themselves. They will also undergo a skills audit for learning and development purposes and will complete the Level 2 on-line child safeguarding training.

4.2 The St Helena Government has identified a training provider to deliver Diversity Train the Trainer courses to personnel across the Directorates who will cascade that training to the entire workforce. It is hoped the trainers will travel by air once the airport opens but if that is delayed beyond September 2016 the St Helena Government will make alternative arrangements for trainers' travel or the delivery of the training.

4.3 UK Police training manuals cannot be transposed "as is" into the St Helena Police Service due to differences in local structures and legislation. Measurable progress has been made in adapting those manuals for local use, including Caution Policy, Custody Procedures, Police Service Standards of Professional Behaviour, Discipline and Complaints Procedure. The Child Protection and Domestic Abuse Policy has been finalised in respect of St Helena, police have received training on the policy and are implementing it. Work is being done to finalise the policy in respect of Ascension Island and Tristan da Cunha. The Chief of Police, Trevor Botting, is responsible for ensuring completion.

4.4 As at mid-April 2016 all St Helena police officers had received Level 3 Safeguarding training. New officers will complete Level 2 training during their induction period. Future arrangements for delivering Level 3 training and annual refresher training for police and other agencies will be determined by the training sub-committee of the Child Safeguarding Board.

4.5 The uniformed officers of the St Helena Police Service are relatively young and inexperienced and there is currently no obvious candidate with the skills and experience to benefit from specialist training in a UK Criminal Investigation Department. But a succession plan is in place to identify such a person, beginning with secondments of local uniformed officers into the St Helena Police Investigations Team over the next 12 months to talent spot an individual with the potential to take on the role long-term.

4.6 Police and Safeguarding Directorates are working on identifying more clearly those families which put the most demand on service delivery across the safeguarding agencies; this work will inform the Safeguarding Board's decisions about targeted activity and funding. Processes like case conference, weekly meetings, professional meetings, MAPPA and MARAC identify many of the families that are having an impact across the agencies and appropriate interventions are arranged. This provides a level of confidence that "troubled families" are being identified. But to improve its intelligence-gathering still further the St Helena Police Service has invested in the Overseas Territories Regional Crime Intelligence System (OTRCIS) which is already in use in many of the UK's Overseas Territories. One police officer and one immigration officer have received training on the software and will become super-users when the system is in place. There will also be a facility for Safeguarding, Health and Customs Departments to be allowed restricted access commensurate with their needs, making for a more joined-up approach to safeguarding and law enforcement. In practical terms this will assist with risk assessments and more effective interventions. The OTRCIS system went live in Ascension Island on 1 July 2016 and will go live in St Helena by end July. The Chief of Police, Trevor Botting, is responsible for implementation.

4.7 The Chief of Police continues to meet regularly with all branches of his diverse service, including Prisons, Fire and Sea Rescue, Immigration, Police Uniformed and Investigations teams and Emergency management. He runs quarterly all-staff meetings which cover topics like Strategic plans and staff survey results plus "Meet the Chief" sessions which allow anyone to book a one-on-one discussion about any topic within his purview. This level of formal and informal engagement ensures all members of the Service and the community have an opportunity to bring any management or operational concerns to the attention of the Chief of Police.

4.8 There is a dedicated Schools and Youth engagement officer whose responsibility it is to develop an annual programme of activities. Finalisation of this programme was delayed due to medical leave of the officer but is now well in hand.

5. Social Services

5.1 On St Helena, there are currently four UK-qualified children's social workers in place and an additional two qualified social workers for vulnerable adults. The current workforce includes three social work educators who provide training and mentoring to the local social care officers and work is underway with the Education Department to develop a programme of NVQ qualification to diploma level for children's and adults' social care officers. The children's social care officers promote parenting programmes and deliver Protective Parenting and Keep Safe work with families and children in need. The child safeguarding teams are working at capacity with 85 open child cases, on average 40 child referrals a month, ongoing support to families and reports for the Supreme Court, and have recruited an extra social worker.

5.2 The social workers engaged in Older Persons' Services work mainly from the Princess Royal Community Care Centre (PRCCC) making regular visits to Ebony View and other sheltered accommodation. Barn View has been refurbished; it is not currently in use, its

former residents having settled well in alternative accommodation (PRCCC and Cape Villa) but when safe staffing levels are achieved it will be used for day care and respite facilities for vulnerable adults . A process of medical assessments and developing individual care plans is well-advanced; doctors made 55 visits to the PRCCC in the first quarter of 2016. Staffing shortages are an ongoing challenge but the recruitment drive continues and priority is being given to training new staff and up-skilling existing staff.

6. Safeguarding

6.1 The Social Work manager, Sam Dunn, and Detective Sergeant Dave Honan have together designed a Level 3 Child Safeguarding training course, based on Working Together 2015 but adapted to the local context. They delivered this course to four multi-agency groups, totalling 108 child-facing personnel from St Helena's Education, Health, Social Services, Police and AG's Chambers in January and February 2016, bringing the total number of St Helena's Level 3 trained personnel to 220. This represents the vast majority of personnel in child-facing roles. The course has been accredited by the UK's Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Accreditation Service. A training manual is provided, drawing on the Child Safeguarding Board's Working Together to Safeguard Children on St Helena Child Protection Policy 2016. The policy is available in all workplaces. On Ascension Island Level 3 training was delivered to a multi-agency group of 24 persons in January 2015, refresher training was provided by Dunn and Honan to all school staff, child-minders and the voluntary sector in February 2016.

6.2 The St Helena Child Safeguarding Board has a training sub-committee, whose responsibility it is to keep safeguarding training needs under review, including those of new arrivals and refresher training. Ascension Island will remain in close touch with the St Helena Safeguarding and Education Directorates to take advantage of any training which may be extended to them too.

6.3 It is a disciplinary offence for Government employees to fail to comply with operational policies and procedures which they should reasonably be expected to be aware of; this includes child safeguarding procedures. The St Helena Government has records of disciplinary cases brought in such cases; none have related to child safeguarding though one involved care of a vulnerable adult.

7. Healthcare

7.1 A funding uplift has enabled the rebuilding of a dedicated community nursing team and the re-opening of three local health clinics (Half Tree Hollow, Longwood and Levelwood). When staffing levels permit a fourth will re-open at Sandy Bay, with the possibility of a fifth beyond that. The district clinics are currently nurse-led, acting as triage for referral to the Hospital GPs, but a doctor attends at least once a week; services provided include baby/child welfare checks, healthy lifestyle (including safe sex) promotion, diabetic clinic and a pharmacy bus once a week. The community nurses, all of whom have attended Level 3 Child Safeguarding training, also provide home care visits.

7.2 Jamestown Hospital is undergoing a £2.8M refurbishment of its medical wing, due for completion by the end of July 2016. The St Helena Government Health Directorate is responsible for this. The refurbishment consists of a diagnostics equipment upgrade (including the installation of a CT scanner), building works to improve access and provide for a new theatre, and the refurbishment of a number of wards. When the project is complete the refurbished medical wing is expected to be adequate to meet the secondary care needs of the population for the next 10 years or so.

7.3 The St Helena Government has identified a preferred and a reserve supplier for an Emergency Aero Medical Evacuation Service and Specialist secondary/tertiary healthcare provision in South Africa. The Assistant Director of Health and Senior Medical Officer travelled to South Africa in mid-April for site visits to the proposed facilities. The invitation to tender left open the question of whether medical evacuations/referrals should be based in Cape Town (the traditional referral centre) or Pretoria/Johannesburg (the arrival point for flights from St Helena) so as not to close down options for consideration. Overseas medical referral decisions will be taken on a case-by-case basis carefully weighing medical needs, patients' preferences, logistics and affordability to achieve the best results for St Helena's patients. So in some instances the treatment and any after-care will take place in Johannesburg, in others (where the patient is willing and able to fly on to Cape Town) the treatment and after-care can take place in Cape Town and in others it might be a mix of the two. The patient will also, for the first time, receive support from an independent case management provider, contracted by the St Helena Government, which will complement and eventually replace the informal arrangements used hitherto and ensure the patient's needs are professionally and comprehensively met both in and out of hospital. Bids for this contract are currently being assessed. Contracts for all new service providers are expected to be in place in advance of the RMS decommissioning. The St Helena Government Health Directorate is leading on this.

8. Ascension Island

8.1 A contract has been signed with Andrew Weir Shipping to provide a replacement cargo service for the RMS between Cape Town and St Helena and visiting Ascension Island every two months. A small number of passenger cabins will be available for those wishing to travel by sea to and from Ascension. In addition, the military ship the FIRS (Falkland Islands Resupply Ship) also calls at Ascension regularly, bringing supplies from the UK. Technical details of a monthly airlink between St Helena and Ascension are being worked through. However, arrangements for urgent/medical assistance will remain as they are, normally by military flight or air ambulance to the UK.

8.2 St Helena has now enacted legislation to correct the anomaly relating to mutual recognition of community orders on St Helena and Ascension Island (and Tristan da Cunha). The Attorney General took the opportunity to widen the scope to the mutual recognition of all Court Orders made by a properly constituted Court unless that Court stipulates otherwise.

9. Whistleblowers

9.1 The St Helena and Ascension Island Governments have a general Grievance Procedure and a Confidential Reporting (Whistleblowing) Procedure. The latter is designed for serious complaints such as abuse of clients, service users or colleagues, corruption or unethical/improper conduct or misuse of public funds. On St Helena the Chief Secretary has oversight and there are designated investigation officers including the Assistant Chief Secretary, Head of HR, and the Chief Auditor. These procedures form part of the St Helena Government Code of Management, staff are reminded of them periodically (most recently in February 2016) and line managers are encouraged to discuss them with their teams.

9.2 The findings of the Northumbria Police report as they apply to Michael Anderson have been conveyed to him and he has received a letter of apology from former Governor Mark Capes.

10. Other observations

10.1 Education: The Wass report contained some additional observations on which it may be useful to comment. It was noted that the recommendations of the Barnardo's Report of 2011 in respect of education had not been implemented. In April 2016 a root and branch review of child safeguarding policy and procedures was undertaken and statutory guidance entitled Keeping Children Safe in Education (based on the UK model) will be considered by the Government's Education Committee in good time to get the new child safeguarding policies and procedures in place for commencement of the 2016/17 school year. Thereafter, a series of workshops with Head Teachers will establish the best working practices for each school and produce written child safeguarding procedures. The St Helena Government Education Directorate aim to have a complete set of policies and procedures in place before the start of the 2016/17 academic year. All schools now have designated child safeguarding leads. Training programmes have been refreshed with Head Teachers and CS/pastoral leads all having completed the Level 3 Child Safeguarding training. Almost all secondary school staff and around half of primary school staff have undergone Level 2 child safeguarding awareness training. New arrivals will be required to do Level 2 online training as part of their 6 month probationary period. Two Boats School on Ascension Island has a recently-reviewed, clear, coherent child protection and safeguarding policy, including a flowchart of procedures to follow if a member of staff is concerned about the welfare or safety of a child.

10.2 Class sizes in St Helena's Prince Andrew secondary school compare favourably to the UK, with average class sizes (tutor groups) being 19.3 and subject classes no more than 20. Funding has been agreed for seven scholarships for overseas study in 2016. The Education Directorate has considered the Wass recommendation that young people compulsorily remain in training or education until the age of 18 in line with the UK. Since St Helena does not have an unemployment problem the drivers for such a move are not the same as the UK. But the Director of Education has ordered a review of apprenticeship policy with the aim of expanding the current training offer through the community college.

10.3 Healthcare: Induction programmes for medical staff have been reviewed. A programme of mandatory training is now in place including child-safeguarding training. All nursing staff work through a series of competency booklets – at Level 2 nurses and staff nurses are assessed (amongst other things) on whether they are aware of child safeguarding procedures and how to refer and at Level 3 senior staff nurses are assessed on whether they ensure child safeguarding procedures are followed. This is a relatively new process but early signs are that nursing staff are engaged and motivated to achieve and maintain the competences. A draft written protocol is currently being finalised for nurses and doctors who may be required to do medical examinations of victims of sexual assault in support of a police investigation. The draft written protocol is being road tested and will be finalised by August 2016. The St Helena Government Health Directorate are responsible for ensuring this is completed. Links with UK health professionals continue to grow – Derby hospital recently agreed to provide distance-learning for two staff nurses to study to degree level - and the Director of Health is seeking interest from UK research programmes to study primary healthcare development in St Helena.

10.4 Safeguarding: The regulation and inspection of crèches and child-minders has been revisited. The St Helena Child Safeguarding Board has brokered a partnership between Education and Safeguarding Directorates to ensure annual inspections are carried out and properly certified, and appropriate training is provided. But the issue proved more contentious on Ascension Island where child-minders had not hitherto been regulated. The Ascension Island Government worked hard with child-minders, Councillors, parents and employers to allay concerns; a registration process was introduced in May 2016.

10.5 The Wass report commented on the lack of a formal foster care system in St Helena. The Welfare of Children Ordinance does provide for private fostering arrangements which fill the need if parents are temporarily absent and leave their children in the care of a guardian. Such arrangements are assessed, approved and monitored by the Safeguarding Directorate. But there remains a gap where children may need to be taken away from their parents for their own safety and placed temporarily with foster parents. The AG's Chambers are working on draft legislation to enable this and, in parallel, the Safeguarding Directorate are seeking expressions of interest from prospective foster parents. To date there has been little interest. There is limited capacity in Safeguarding Directorate to absorb the extra work involved in screening, registering, training and monitoring foster carers so short-term project funding may be needed to get the scheme off the ground. It will be the responsibility of the Child Safeguarding Board to ensure this does not fall by the wayside and any required additional resource is provided.

10.6 Legislation: In addition to the anomaly around mutual recognition of community service orders, a number of gaps have been identified where St Helena legislation has not kept up with changes to, for example, England's Police and Criminal Evidence Act. These will be included in a comprehensive law revision which is currently underway and due for completion by October 2016. The Attorney General's Office is responsible for its completion. The Chief Justice has also suggested some improvements to jury selection procedures and the right to trial by judge alone which will be considered by the Legislative Council in the next few months.

10.7 Complaints mechanisms: The St Helena and Ascension Island Governments and the St Helena Police Service have complaints mechanisms with informal, formal and appeal procedures. But complaints are essentially managed in-house with no independent oversight. There is provision in the Constitution for the Governor to appoint a Complaints Commissioner, as is the case in some other Overseas Territories. Making and publicising such an appointment would demonstrate to the community the Government's commitment to fairness and transparency.

11. Future-proofing

11.1 The combined efforts of the St Helena, Ascension Island and UK Governments have brought child-safeguarding on St Helena almost onto a par with that of the UK. Some systemic attitudinal and structural issues remain, such as a legacy of tolerance towards domestic violence and pockets of social deprivation and inadequate housing. At this point in time child safeguarding systems are robust. But even the best systems in the world can be challenged by a determined sex offender and those systems must continuously adapt to changing threats. Mobile phones have recently become available on St Helena and Ascension Island, bringing increased risk of grooming, sexting and cyber-bullying. The key elements to ensuring effective child safeguarding into the future are **governance, people and funding**:-

11.2 Governance: Following the creation of a separate Safeguarding Directorate, St Helena's children's services are no longer the poor relation of the Health Directorate. They have a dedicated team of professional staff and ring-fenced funding. But they cannot operate in isolation. There is an important role for the Child Safeguarding Board, the Governor's Office and the St Helena Government Senior Management team in continuing to ensure a cross-Government approach to safeguarding. Preventative work is the responsibility of all agencies – Education, Health, Police and Social Services and if ever one agency does not play its part the child safeguarding net is compromised. The Child Safeguarding Board must continue its active oversight role under firm chairmanship to ensure effective working together of agencies, engaging the Chief Secretary and/or the Governor wherever necessary. The Ascension Island Child Safeguarding Board should continue to do likewise, notwithstanding its smaller scale.

11.3 People: The policies and procedures now in place on St Helena are based on Working Together 2015 and other UK protocols which will be familiar to contracted staff arriving from the UK. But policies and procedures are only effective if they are and continue to be properly implemented. The professionals in place at present are skilled, focussed and motivated; there has been an intensive period of reviewing policies and procedures, training and upskilling. The challenge will be to ensure this momentum is not lost. And much will depend on getting the right people in the right jobs - people with the necessary skills and motivation - giving them the best induction/handovers, on-island support and line-management. Air access to St Helena will help in that it will allow more flexibility for recce visits and handovers. St Helena's and Ascension Island's HR teams are on the right track but will need to continue their focus on careful recruitment. HR managers must also remain alert to the line-management challenges inherent in a small workforce within a small community, where personalities can have a disproportionate effect on harmonious working

relationships, group dynamics and performance management. They should be ready to provide appropriate training and support to managers, teams and individuals.

11.4 Funding: The UK Government has been providing external support to St Helena through the SCOT (Safeguarding Children in the Overseas Territories) programme and its predecessor CPP (Child Protection Programme in the Overseas Territories) since 2005. But it is only through meaningful targeted investment in the last two years that a step-change in service delivery has been achieved. The following quotes are from consultants almost a decade apart:-

- “Child protection should be identified as a sustained priority, supported by access to “ring-fenced” funding, professional support and linkage between key practitioners across all Overseas Territories. This will require resources and long-term support from DFID, FCO and local governments.” Paterson, April 2003; and
- “One of the main issues for the welfare of children on Saint Helena is quite simply one of resources.” Viv Neary Feb 2012

11.5 Parachuting experts into St Helena short-term to provide advice and expect the local workforce to drive through their recommendations does not work. It simply produces the “report graveyard”. Whilst the long-term ambition must be to train up local talent to provide critical government services themselves it is clear that this is not attainable in the short to medium-term. DFID Ministers have recognised this and agreed to provide a significant budgetary aid uplift for longer-term contracted expertise in 2015/16 and 2016/17. Commitment to continuing safe standards of child safeguarding on St Helena and Ascension will require continued adequate funding to make this achievable and sustainable.

12. Implications for other Overseas Territories

12.1 Some of the recommendations of the Wass Report have wider application than St Helena and Ascension Island. Their applicability was immediately considered in respect of Tristan da Cunha, the third part of the Territory for which St Helena’s Governor has responsibility. The new Governor made a visit to Tristan da Cunha (the UK’s most isolated Overseas Territory) en route to take up her post on St Helena. The St Helena Police Service and Safeguarding Directorate plan an official visit in September 2016 during which child safeguarding training will be delivered. This should coincide with the arrival of the newly-appointed social worker, four teachers and two nurses, followed shortly thereafter by the new Administrator who is St Helena’s current Head of Governor’s Office (and Chair of the Child Safeguarding Board); this will considerably strengthen the child safeguarding provision on Tristan da Cunha.

12.2. The FCO has also considered what lessons can be drawn from the Wass Inquiry by the other UK Overseas Territories. The Overseas Territories are a diverse group, ranging from Pitcairn Islands with a population of less than 50 people to the largely autonomous Bermuda with a population of around 60,000; their individual Constitutions reflect their different levels of economic independence and self-governance. But in almost all cases social welfare is a devolved area of governance and it is for elected Parliamentarians to decide upon policy. The role of the UK Government is to impress upon elected members the importance

of a social policy which safeguards the rights of children. In the 2015 Joint Ministerial Council communique the Overseas Territories' leaders committed to "delivering a zero tolerance approach to child abuse in all of its forms, and committed to doing all we can to prevent harm, support victims and bring offenders to justice." FCO officials are working with Territory officials to see that commitment converted into action, to strengthen capability across OTs' national safeguarding and protection systems.

12.3 The FCO's Child Safeguarding Unit hosted a conference of Directors of Children's Services in March 2016 during which relevant Wass Inquiry recommendations were discussed. The importance of robust recruitment, induction and handover processes and careful record-keeping were highlighted amongst other fundamentals necessary for robust safeguarding systems. Emphasis was also placed on ensuring that child-safeguarding training was undertaken by all child-facing personnel and refreshed on an annual basis. Officials are exploring other external assurance measures and areas of support as well as continuing to facilitate cross-Territory networking and peer support. Regional Law Enforcement Advisers continue to facilitate the sharing of experience across the Overseas Territories' Police Services and prison officer training on offender treatment is currently being offered to some Overseas Territories.

13. Conclusion

Although work has been underway to improve child safeguarding on St Helena for some time, the Wass Inquiry provided a useful focus and renewed impetus. Child safeguarding systems are in much better shape today than they were two years ago. Sustained effort is required to embed processes and truly win over "hearts and minds" but there is now a greater awareness in the community of the need to protect children's rights and ensure their safety. The report has also provided some valuable learning points for the UK's other Overseas Territories and indeed for small isolated communities everywhere.

Mrs Ginny Ferson

UK Government Special Representative: Wass Inquiry Implementation

7 July 2016