



**Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland**

**Annual Report**

**1<sup>st</sup> April 2015 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016**

# THE SAFEGUARDING BOARD FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

## ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE PERIOD ENDING 31 MARCH 2016

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## **The SBNI Interim Independent Chair Foreword**

*Welcome to the third Annual Report of the Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland (SBNI).*

*The SBNI was established by the then Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety in 2012, in recognition of the fact that children are better protected when agencies work in a co-ordinated and consistent way. To lead and support the co-ordination of safeguarding across Northern Ireland, the SBNI members are senior representatives of a wide range of statutory and voluntary agencies and have the authority to make decisions on their behalf.*

*The SBNI is the over-arching arrangement for agreeing how children's agencies will co-operate to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in Northern Ireland and for ensuring the effectiveness of those agencies.*

*This Annual Report sets out the work the SBNI completed in 2015-2016 to safeguard and protect children in Northern Ireland and sets out how the SBNI's work will be developed and strengthened in the coming year. It is drawn from a wide range of sources and demonstrates a high degree of multi-agency co-operation and collaboration.*

***During 2015-2016 The SBNI:***

- ***Completed a Thematic Review of Child Sexual Exploitation and addressed the recommendations of this review and the Marshal Review.***
- ***Raised the awareness of Child Sexual Abuse across N Ireland, by delivering a highly successful play on the subject.***
- ***Introduced a new policy for the management of bruising to pre-mobile babies, to protect infants.***
- ***Supported an extensive review of the SBNI by Professor Alexis Jay- to be published in 2016.***
- ***Began the revision of multi-agency safeguarding procedures to ensure that all agencies working to safeguard and protect children in N Ireland will work consistently to the same procedures, to the benefit of all children, no matter where they live or attend school. This work which supports the delivery of Co-operating to Safeguard, will continue in 2016 and be published in April 2017.***

***Safeguarding and protecting children is dependent on the public being aware of how to report concerns and by all agencies, whether statutory or in the voluntary sector, work effectively together.***

***I would like to thank the many professionals who support the SBNI and deliver the Business Plan so effectively, their commitment and contribution is most appreciated.***



***Glenys Johnston OBE  
Interim Independent Chair SBNI***

## **1. Context and Introduction**

### **1.1 The Northern Ireland Context**

Northern Ireland (NI) is made up of six counties and forms part of the Province of Ulster. It covers 13,600 square kilometres (sq. km) which is 6% of the total area of the UK. The Belfast metropolitan area dominates in population terms, with over a third of the inhabitants of NI living in its area. As of 1 July 2014, NI's population density was 135 people per square km, the second lowest density, when compared to other UK countries.

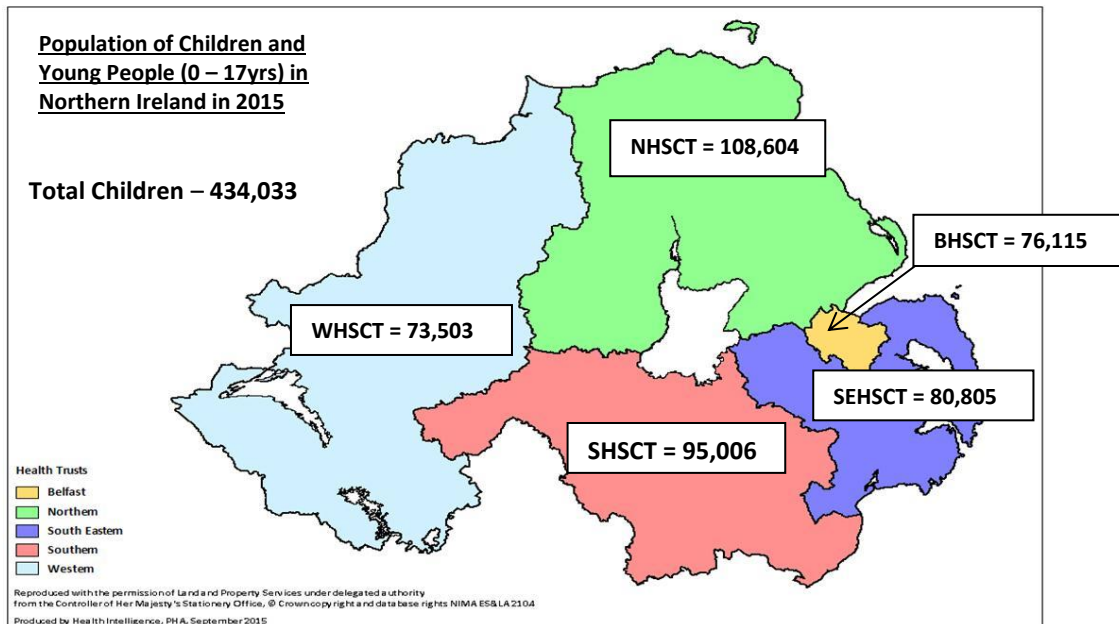
In the 2011 census, the population of NI was reported to be 1,810,863. Of these figures, there were 430,763 children and young people aged 0 – 17, equating to 24% of the total resident population. Of this population 6% were less than 1 year of age; 23% were aged 1-4; 36% were aged 5-11; 23% were aged 12-15 and 12% were aged 16-17. The most recent estimates for mid-2015 state that the population of NI increased by 11,100 (up 0.6%) to 1,851,600 and accounts for 3% of the United Kingdom's population. According to the Children's Social Care Statistics for NI 2014/15 there were 433,161 children living in NI at mid-year review point 2014.

The overall long term trend of poverty in NI has remained fairly stable since 2002/2003, with approximately one fifth of the population living in relative poverty. In 2014/2015, 22% of individuals were in poverty, approximately 395,100 people. This compares to 21% the previous year. In the same period, there were 109,500 children, 25%, in poverty. This compares to 23% the previous year. These relative poverty figures are before housing costs.

In 2014/2015 26% of children were in absolute poverty after housing costs, representing 116,300 children. This is two percentage points lower than the previous year.

In 2014 Northern Ireland's Gross Value Added (GVA) increased by 2.5 per cent (to £34.4 billion), which was below the overall UK rate of growth in 2014 of 4.6 percent. Of the 12 UK regions, Northern Ireland had the second smallest GVA growth between 2013 and 2014 behind Wales. Northern Ireland had the lowest growth in GVA per head of population amongst the regions in 2014 at 1.9 per cent. In

addition, NI GVA per head was also third lowest of the UK regions at 75.9 per cent of the UK figure. This was down from 77.2 per cent in 2013. In 2014, workplace based GVA per head was £18, 682 in Northern Ireland compared with the UK average of £24,958.



## 1.2 Introduction

This report of the work of the SBNI meets the requirements under Section 6 of the Safeguarding Board (Northern Ireland) Act 2011 (the Act) to produce an Annual Report which will be laid in the Northern Ireland Assembly by its sponsor Department, the then Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS). It sets out the work of the SBNI and its delivery against its strategic and annual Business Plans for the financial year April 2015 to March 2016.

The SBNI is a multi-agency partnership with the shared responsibility to co-ordinate and ensure the effectiveness of what is done by each person or body represented on the SBNI, for the purpose of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people.



The term 'safeguarding' is used in its widest sense, that is, to encompass both prevention and protection activity. Safeguarding children is the process of preventing the impairment of children's health and development, ensuring they grow up safely and securely and are provided with effective services, care and support, all of which collectively enables them to reach their potential in adulthood.

Safeguarding also includes protecting children from abuse or neglect, when it occurs, including the promotion and protection of children's rights.

### **1.3 The Functions of the Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland**

Section 3 of the Act states the key functions of the SBNI are to:

- develop policies and procedures for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people;
- promote an awareness of the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children;
- keep under review the effectiveness of what is done by each person or body represented on the SBNI, to safeguarding and promote the welfare of children and young people;
- undertake Case Management Reviews, to learn lessons in cases where children or young people have died or have been significantly harmed and there has been multi-agency involvement;
- review information in relation to the sudden and unexpected deaths of children and young people; and
- promote communication between the SBNI, children and young people.

#### ***The SBNI's Vision***

'Leading and working together to make children in Northern Ireland safer.'

#### ***Our Values***

- being child centered/focused (taking children's views into account);
- promoting a culture of shared learning and continuous improvement;

- operating with mutual trust and respect for all;
- recognising expertise/empowering professionals;
- taking collective responsibility;
- being mutually accountable;
- making decisions and delivering them collaboratively;
- using evidence informed practice;
- demonstrating our commitment to quality and achieving effectiveness (striving for professional excellence);
- creating a supportive environment; and
- recognising that safeguarding is the business of all, by working with families, professionals and communities, to safeguard children.

### **1.3.1 Key Roles**

The Interim Independent Safeguarding Board Chair is Mrs Glenys Johnston OBE, she is charged with ensuring the SBNI fulfils its statutory objective and functions. Key to this is the facilitation of a working culture of transparency, challenge and improvement across all partners, with regards to their safeguarding arrangements.

On a day to day basis, the work of the SBNI is supported by the SBNI staff.

At 1 April 2015, the SBNI staffing complement was; one Director of Operations, two Professional Officers, one part-time Child Death Overview Panel Manager, one Office Manager and three Administrative staff.

At 31 March 2016, the provisional SBNI staffing complement was; one Lead Professional Officer, one Professional Officer, one part-time, Child Death Overview Panel Manager, one Office Manager, and three Administrative staff.

### **1.3.2 Board Membership**

The membership of the SBNI is made up of representatives from the Health and Social Care Trusts (HSCT); the Health and Social Care Board (HSCB); the Public Health Agency (PHA); Probation Board for Northern Ireland (PBNI); the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI); the Education Authority; District Councils; Youth

Justice Agency (YJA); lay members and independent, voluntary representation from the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC); Barnardo's NI; Action for Children; Include Youth; The Children's Law Centre and Children in Northern Ireland (CiNI).

Member agencies were cited in the Act, because of their duty and capacity to safeguard and promote children's welfare, in the context of the services they provide.

Attendance at the SBNI meetings has been good, averaging 77% (Appendix 4) with agencies ensuring their nominated representative, or a substitute, attends.

All members of the SBNI have signed a member's agreement that outlines how they will provide good leadership and governance by:

- understanding the SBNI's role;
- ensuring delivery of organisational purpose;
- working effectively both as individuals and teams;
- exercising effective control;
- behaving with integrity;
- agreeing protocols for the handling of confidential material; and
- being open and accountable.

Delivering the SBNI's Business Plan is heavily reliant on the contributions of staff from all member agencies, other partnerships and agencies involved in the safeguarding of children and young people in NI. This work is largely undertaken through a number of statutory and non-statutory committees and task groups. The commitment shown by agencies and their staff is testament to the priority the work of the SBNI is given and the shared intention, across the partnership, to improve multi-agency working, services and outcomes for children and young people. All committees and task groups have met on a regular basis throughout the year to monitor and progress their responsibilities within the Business Plan. Summaries of the work undertaken and the decisions made by the committees are provided to the SBNI to ensure an effective oversight of progress.

The statutory committees of the SBNI are:

- Five Safeguarding Panels.
- A Case Management Review Panel. (CMR) Panel
- A Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP) (to be established).

Other non-statutory committees of the SBNI include:

- The Policy and Procedures Committee.
- The Education and Training Committee.
- The E-Safety Forum.
- The Inter-Faith subgroup.

### **1.3.3 Safeguarding Panels**

The Safeguarding Panels (Panels) covering the geographical area of the five HSCTs, are multi-agency and multi-disciplinary and deliver the strategic aims of the SBNI at a local level. The Panels are chaired by two Independent Panel Chairs who report directly to the SBNI Independent Chair. The work of the Panels is outlined in Section 2.3.6.

### **1.4 The SBNI's Strategic Plan 2013 - 2017**

When it was established, the SBNI was required to produce a three-year Strategic Plan and undertook this in consultation with children, young people and the public. From this, a Business Plan for April 2015 to March 2016 was developed.

During the development of the strategic and business plans, the SBNI recognised it could not immediately address all the issues affecting the safety and wellbeing of children and agreed that priorities had to be identified.

These priorities were made based on information derived from:

- consultation with young people;
- practitioners;
- member agencies;
- the SBNI's strategic responsibilities;
- lessons from research;

- lessons from CMRs; and
- the SBNI's determination to avoid duplication, by not undertaking tasks on which others were leading.

To avoid the latter, the SBNI undertook a joint exercise with the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership (CYPSP) to consider the thematic priorities for the CYPSP and the SBNI. Using this exercise as a filter was the first step in the identification of the SBNI's priorities.

The key strategic priorities for the SBNI from 2013 to 2017 are to:

- work in partnership to ensure children and young people are living in safety and with stability;
- protect and safeguard children by responding to new and emerging concerns;
- provide leadership and set direction;
- drive improvements in the child protection system; and
- build the capacity of the SBNI in the medium term.

Given the SBNI's core objective of 'ensuring and co-ordinating the effectiveness of what is done by member agencies to safeguard and promote the wellbeing of children in Northern Ireland', the SBNI undertakes a number of roles including monitoring, evaluating, challenging, driving change and leading, in relation to its core functions. This means that even if some issues are not those that the SBNI would seek to directly address, it still ensures, through the work of others, that progress is being made in protecting children.

The key strategic priorities of the SBNI are set out in the Business Plan and state how the Board will deliver the statutory duties placed on the SBNI and lead to improved outcomes for children and young people. The Board also considers what actions need to be taken across the continuum of service provision in respect of safeguarding; including prevention, early intervention and child protection procedures.

## 1.5 The SBNI's Business Plan 2015-2016

The SBNI Business Plan, included at Appendix 1, is divided into five sections, in line with the Board's strategic objectives, outlined in the Strategic Plan for the years 2013 – 2017. These are outlined above in section 1.4.

The Business Plan sets out how each of the above would be and were addressed during the period 2015-16.

## 2 Progress against Business Plan Priorities – Summary

Strategic Priority 1	Work in Partnership to ensure children and young people are living in safety and with stability	RAG
1.1	Work with organisations / partnerships e.g. Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership (CYPSP) and Domestic Violence Partnerships to ensure effective safeguarding arrangements are in place for children and young people who are living in circumstances where there is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Domestic Violence</li> <li>• Parental mental health problems</li> <li>• Parental alcohol and drugs problems</li> </ul>	
1.2	Work with member agencies to ensure that effective safeguarding arrangements are in place for children and young people with a disability	
1.3	Work with member agencies to ensure that effective safeguarding arrangements are in place for those young people who are at risk of sexual and violent offending	
1.4	To uphold the principles of the UNCRC and support Member Agencies in their work to remove the defence of reasonable chastisement and the total prohibition of physical punishment.	

Strategic Priority 2	Protect and safeguard children by responding to new and emerging concerns	RAG
2.1	Work with member agencies to develop a coordinated strategy and working model to protect and safeguard children who go missing from their home or care and / or at risk of sexual exploitation	
2.2	Work with member agencies to develop a coordinated strategy and working model to help children at risk of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Becoming criminalised through on-line activity</li> <li>• Bullying through cyber activity</li> <li>• Sexual abuse (through 'sexting' and on-line exploitation)</li> </ul>	

Strategic Priority 3	Providing leadership and setting direction	RAG
3.1	Seek to develop consistent practice across the region by reviewing the existing multi-agency policies and procedures to protect and safeguard children to ensure greater consistency and standardisation of practice	
3.2	Improve multi-agency working by developing a multi-agency education and training strategy to ensure that child protection / safeguarding training is delivered effectively and consistently within member agencies	
3.3	Raise awareness of child protection/safeguarding issues by developing a communication strategy to ensure that children, young people, families and communities are more aware of child safeguarding issues and how to get help if concerned	
3.4	Develop a process within each Safeguarding Panel area to engage with frontline practitioners to hear their views on the current strengths and weaknesses of the child protection / safeguarding system to improve practice.	

Strategic Priority 4	Driving improvements in the current child protection system	RAG
4.1	Influence practice positively and enhance the learning from Case Management Reviews, by improving the CMR process.	
4.2	Initiate a Child Death Overview Panel to understand trends in child deaths and where possible take preventative action to reduce occurrences in the future.	

Strategic Priority 5	Building the capacity of the Safeguarding Board in the medium term	RAG
5.1	<p>Work to keep children safer by improving our understanding of the information currently held by member agencies and promoting effective sharing of this information on a multi-agency basis between professionals/agencies by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identifying the information organisations currently hold.</li> <li>• Evaluating the strengths, weaknesses and gaps.</li> <li>• The development of an Information Sharing Agreement Protocol.</li> <li>• Evaluating alternative models of sharing information to better protect children.</li> </ul>	<p>Upon progression of this work in greater depth it became apparent that the SBNI did not have the capacity during this reporting period or the functional need to progress this area of work.</p> <p>The ISA is actioned as per learning from CMRs and as part of the Policy and Procedure Committee Work plan. All this work will be taken forward in the 2017/2018 Business Plan</p>
5.2	<p>To review the effectiveness of the Board in terms of meeting its Board's core functions. Functions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creation of standards and performance</li> </ul>	



	<p>indicators against which the Board can be measured;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Judgement of how safely and effectively the child protection system is operating across the region;</li> <li>• Improve the safety and wellbeing of children by disseminating and ensuring the implementation of recommendations of Case Management Reviews.</li> </ul>	
5.3	<p>Develop, pilot and implement a child protection governance model to improve the capacity of member agencies individually and collectively to protect children by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The use of the section 12 legal duty to understand the current child protection / safeguarding governance arrangements each organisation has in place;</li> <li>• The review of governance / escalation models which are informed by the views of children and young people, families, frontline staff and reports of inspectorial/regulatory bodies;</li> <li>• Working with HSCB and HSCTs to better understand their thresholds.</li> </ul>	

## 2.1 Strategic Priority 1

**Work in partnership to ensure children and young people are living in safety and with stability**

### 2.1.1 Introduction

The CYPSP is a multi-agency partnership charged with improving the wellbeing and life chances of children and young people. One element of this is the need to safeguard and protect children however, it was agreed with the CYPSP that where there are concerns about:

- parental alcohol and/or drug problems;
- parental mental health;
- domestic abuse; and
- young people whose behaviour poses a risk to others;

These would be taken forward by the HSCB, under the auspices of the CYPSP.

### **2.1.2 Parental alcohol and/or drug problems**

This work has been progressed by the CYPSP.

### **2.1.3 Parental mental health - Think Family Northern Ireland (TFNI)**

TFNI continues to outline areas of work from the regional action plan that will have a positive impact on the safeguarding and protection of children and families. Key work areas include information sharing, getting in early and quickly and ensuring that family are included in the assessment, care and review planning when there are parental mental health issues (PMHI).

- The specific leaflets developed for children and young people will help them to become more aware of the parental mental health issues within their family.
- Development of the Champions' model across all five Trust areas in adult mental health and children's services which will support collaborative a partnership working.
- Undertook a two-year Pilot Project in South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust (SET) to develop greater identification /signposting/referral for supports and engage families in the conversation.
- Development of the Think Family Practitioner in the Pilot Project (SET) - for two years, and expansion of an additional post in Belfast Health and Social Care Trust for one year, to assist mental health and children's staff to focus on the impact of PMHI on the family.
- Development of a Think Family Social Work Assessment in adult mental health services for families with complex issues. This will highlight the importance of including adverse life events associated with mental health issues, in the formulation, care, and treatment planning.
- Think Family two-year research study (QUB&UU) in conjunction with international academics. This will give a bench mark of Think Family focused practice with NI.

#### **2.1.4 Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse**

The Domestic and Sexual Violence Abuse Sub-Group is mandated by the Regional Strategic Group and previously through the CYPSP processes. Membership of the group consists of representatives from the statutory and voluntary community sectors.

The Sub-Group produced an action plan for integrated commissioning support and services for children and young people who experience, or are at risk of, domestic and sexual violence and abuse. The action plan demonstrated a strategic approach to improving outcomes for these children and young people and highlights the importance of collective partnership working to establish and deliver clear actions. The draft action plan is based on the overarching draft “Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse Northern Ireland 2013/2020” produced in draft form by the DHSSPS and the Department of Justice. This strategy has been issued for implementation across Northern Ireland and defines domestic violence and abuse as:

“Domestic and violence abuse is threatening control and coercive behaviour, violence or abuse (physiological, physical, verbal, sexual, financial and emotion) inflicted on anyone (irrespective of age, ethnicity, religion, genders, sexual orientation) by a current or former intimate partner or family member.”

And sexual violence and abuse is defined as: -

“Any behaviour (physical, verbal, virtual, digital) perceived to be of a sexual nature which controlling and coercive, exploitive, harmful or unwanted is inflicted on anyone (irrespective of age, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation) without their informed consent or understanding.”

There are five reporting strands in the regional strategy, which includes: -

- Strand 1 – Drive and Change
- Strand 2 – Prevents and Early Intervention
- Strand 3 – Delivering Change
- Strand 4 – Support
- Strand 5 – Protection and Justice

The issue of Domestic and Sexual Violence and its impact on children is a key theme and the group will consider how best to move forward.

### **2.1.5 Children who display harmful sexual behaviour**

This group continues involves members from each of the Health and Social Care Trusts, Youth Justice Agency, PSNI and representatives from the Forensic CAMHS Service, previously known as FACTs and representatives from the Health and Social Care Board.

An important development throughout the process has been the engagement of the Forensic CAMHS Service which provides complimentary service provision to the Harmful Sexual Behaviour (HSB) services. A number of key issues have taken place, including the development of a specialist service within the East of the province, located in the South Eastern HSCT but which also provides a service to Belfast HSCT.

As part of the on-going development of the HSB group, a professional network was implemented to enable managers to engage in and discuss issues relevant to the provision of HSB services which includes:

- Complex cases;
- Practice Development;
- Consistency of referrals;
- Development of practice guidance;
- Review how data is collected and analysed.

As part of the remit of this group, it was agreed that it would develop a practice handbook for staff within HSCTs, which is currently being addressed. The group also reviewed the data in relation to the numbers accessing the service and increasing awareness on how the service is delivered across Northern Ireland. The sub-group also contributed to the development of the policy and procedures in relation to HSB, currently being revised by the SBNI.

### **2.1.6 Children and young people with a disability**

Due to the vulnerability of disabled children to abuse, the SBNI commissioned a study by Queen's University into the safeguarding needs of disabled children which was completed in June 2015. This study produced findings that are now being taken forward by the Children's Services Improvement Board and are reported back to the SBNI via the HSCB Director of Social Care and Children. At an operational level this group links in with the SBNI Education and Training Committee.

### **2.1.7 To uphold the principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and work to remove the defence of reasonable punishment**

The Children (Northern Ireland) Order (1995) is the law governing the care and protection of children in Northern Ireland. Underpinning the Order is the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD).

The UNCRC is an international agreement on the rights of children. It sets out the basic rights to which all children are entitled, in all areas of their lives. In 1991 the UK Government ratified the Convention, thereby committing itself to promoting children's rights, through the provision of services, as well as other means.

There are four guiding principles of the UNCRC:

- Non-discrimination. (Article 2).
- The best interests of the child. (Article 3)
- Respect for the child's view and their right to participate and for their view to be given due weight. (Article 12)
- The child's right to life, survival and development. (Article 6)

Taken together, these principles form the corner-stones of the Convention, which provides a set of minimum standards for children's civil, political, economic, and cultural rights.

The SBNI members support Article 37 of the UNCRC, which requires states to ensure that ‘no child shall be subjected to torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment’, which is complemented by Article 19 of the Convention which requires states to take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), or anyone else who looks after them. The SBNI support the general comment of the UNCRC that corporal punishment and other cruel or degrading forms of punishment are forms of violence and have agreed to work towards the removal of the defence of “reasonable punishment”. The aim is to give children, in their homes and in all other settings, equal protection under the law on assault. Over the last reporting period the SBNI worked with Children in Northern Ireland (CiNI) and the Children are Unbeatable (CAU) Alliance – an alliance of children, healthcare and human rights organisations which are committed to CAU’s two aims, which are: to seek legal reform to protect children and young people from all forms of physical punishment and to promote positive parenting methods, as an alternative to physical punishment.

## **2.2 Strategic Priority 2**

**Protect and safeguard children by responding to new and emerging concerns.**

**2.2.1 Work with member agencies to develop a coordinated strategy and working model to protect and safeguard children who ‘go missing’ from their home or care and/or are at risk of sexual exploitation.**

In December 2013, the Health Minister directed the SBNI to commission a Thematic Review into the cases of 22 young people, who had been identified by the PSNI as being at significant risk of child sexual exploitation (CSE) and who also had repeatedly gone missing from home. The young people’s circumstances were also subject of a separate police investigation known as ‘Operation Owl’.

The report, [Getting Focused and Staying Focused](#) ‘, authored by Professor John Pinkerton of Queen’s University, Belfast, was published on 10<sup>th</sup> December 2015 by the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety.

To facilitate the review of case papers pertaining to the young people’s care pathway, the SBNI engaged external case file reviewers and a project manager.

The terms of reference for the Thematic Review posed four questions with a view to drawing out key learning points and opportunities for improvement, in relation to both statutory and voluntary organisations that had provided services to the young people. The four questions in respect of the welfare and safeguarding of this group of ‘Looked After Children’ were:

- Had action been taken in accordance with policy, procedures, and guidance?
- Had action taken been effective?
- Had communication and co-operation been effective?
- Had relationships with the young people been of a quality that had been effective?

Underlying those questions, the terms of reference identified a number of key issues to be considered: assessment; care planning, risk management, provision of care, reported absences, response to criminal offences against the young people, reporting and information sharing, the involvement and support of senior managers.

Operation Owl had identified the cases of twenty-two young people for investigation. Six of these cases were not available for consideration by the Thematic Review following the decision of the PSNI, in consultation with the Public Prosecution Service (PPS) because of concerns that their involvement would jeopardise potential prosecutions. A further six were not included in the review because of concerns by the H&SCTs responsible for them as ‘Looked After Children’. Five of these young people were not prepared to give permission for access to their files and the H&SCTs judged it not to be in the best interests of the young people’s welfare to release their files against their wishes. In the sixth case, an H&SCT judged that inclusion in the review would significantly affect the welfare of that young person.

Accordingly, ten cases comprised the group whose experiences were considered to identify key learning points and opportunities for improvement.

The report was broken down into five thematic areas:

1. Recognising the complexity of the young people's lives
  - a. Pre-'Looked After'.
  - b. 'Looked After'.
  - c. 'Looked After'.
2. Assessing need and identifying risk of CSE.
3. Using a combined approach to tackle CSE.
4. Enhancing Relationship Based Practice with Young People.
5. Continuously learning about and developing a response to CSE.

The report concluded the following, in relation to the four questions posed:

- a) Had action been taken in accordance with policy, procedures and guidance?

Action relating to the group of young people, in general, had been taken in accordance with policy, procedures and guidance. There was however, some variance across and within cases and at different phases of the cases.

- b) Had action taken been effective?

For significant periods and with significant consequences for the young people, action taken to ensure their protection and promote their wellbeing was not effective.

- c) Had communication and co-operation been effective?



Information was shared appropriately and whilst there were some tensions and some limited engagement at particular points, individuals and agencies generally worked well together. However, it would be wrong to term their working together as effective, given that all the young people experienced CSE for significant periods of time.

d) Had relationships with the young people been of a quality that had been effective?

An overwhelming impression from these cases was just how difficult it was to provide them with the physical safety, emotional security and relational belonging they needed. For periods of their lives, neither their parents nor their 'Corporate Parent' were able to provide this. It was also clear how vulnerable that made these young people to those perpetrators who would use their insecurities and circumstances to sexually exploit them.

Focussing on the needs of vulnerable children and young people, the report identified 'Areas for Improvement' under four of the five themes as set out in the report: assessing need and identifying risk of CSE; strategic mobilising of services; enhancing relationship based practice with young people; and continuous learning and development.

Professor Pinkerton also recommended and the Minister for Health accepted, one overarching recommendation that an audit should be undertaken within twelve months from December 2015, to determine the effectiveness of responses to children in care at risk of CSE and to report on the findings of the audit to the Department of Health. The Minister also tasked the Interim Independent Chair of the SBNI with having oversight of the process of the audit to ensure among other things that it is undertaken consistently across health social care and justice agencies. Where individual audits produce inter-agency learning or require resolution on an inter-agency basis, the SBNI will be the vehicle for member organisations to agree what requires to be done.

The findings of the audit will be reported in the 2016/ 2017 Annual Report.

The SBNI CSE awareness raising campaign, 'The More You Know the More You See', which commenced in June 2014 continued into 2015, building on the extensive outdoor, press and digital advertising that had taken place with a target audience of; the general public, taxi drivers, hotel staff, B&B operators and off licence staff.

In addition to this aspect of the campaign, the SBNI, in conjunction with the Knowledge Transfer Partnership (NI) and Barnardo's NI Safe Choices, supported the production of 'False Freedom', a CSE awareness raising DVD produced by young people for young people. In April 2015, this DVD was provided to all post primary schools in NI and is currently hosted on the C2K website. It is also included in nursing, education and social work training at Queen's University Belfast.

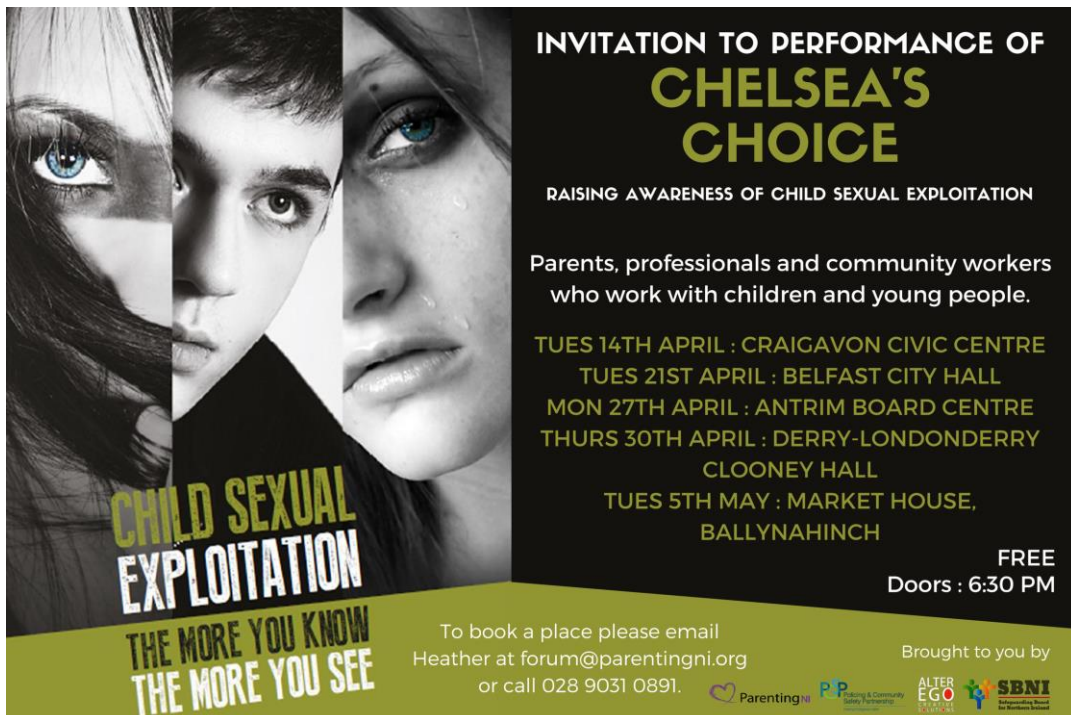


The Marshall Inquiry revealed concerning findings relating to the awareness and knowledge of the issue of CSE amongst parents/ carers and children and young people. The report found:

- That 78% of parents who responded to a questionnaire issued by the Education and Training Inspectorate had no prior knowledge of CSE.
- That a number of young people who engaged in consultations with the inquiry, were aware of the risk of online grooming, but were unaware that grooming could happen 'outside the internet'.

The Inquiry further identified the need:

- For young people to hear about CSE from sources that are meaningful to them.
- For CSE to be considered in relation to other issues, such as DV and substance misuse.
- For both parents/carers and young people to be provided with information of how to report concerns about CSE and what services are available to help.

The poster features a black and white photograph of three young women's faces, partially obscured by vertical lines. The text on the poster includes: 'INVITATION TO PERFORMANCE OF CHELSEA'S CHOICE', 'RAISING AWARENESS OF CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION', 'Parents, professionals and community workers who work with children and young people.', a list of dates and venues: 'TUES 14TH APRIL : CRAIGAVON CIVIC CENTRE', 'TUES 21ST APRIL : BELFAST CITY HALL', 'MON 27TH APRIL : ANTRIM BOARD CENTRE', 'THURS 30TH APRIL : DERRY-LONDONDERRY CLOONEY HALL', 'TUES 5TH MAY : MARKET HOUSE, BALLYNAHINCH', 'FREE Doors : 6:30 PM', 'To book a place please email Heather at forum@parentingni.org or call 028 9031 0891.', and 'Brought to you by' followed by logos for Parenting NI, P.P. Policing & Community Safety Partnership, ALTER EGO Creative Solutions, and SBNI. At the bottom left, it says 'CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION THE MORE YOU KNOW THE MORE YOU SEE'.

In order to address these issues, in March 2015, the SBNI commissioned the Alter Ego Creative Solutions play, “Chelsea’s Choice”, which had toured extensively throughout the UK and had proven to be highly successful in raising awareness amongst young people, and the other key target groups, of the issues surrounding CSE.

The play toured Northern Ireland throughout April and May 2015. As well as proving to be an effect medium by which to engage children and young people, the play also addressed the issue of CSE in a holistic way; the play’s producers did not present CSE as an isolated issue, but instead presented a scenario of CSE in relation to substance misuse and domestic violence. Furthermore, the play explored the issue

of CSE in relation to wider keeping safe messages such as e-safety, healthy relationships, and the grooming process. To make the information presented in the play meaningful to young people it was:

- Delivered by actors from Northern Ireland.
- Slight modifications were made to the script to reflect the NI profile of CSE.
- An interactive post-performance session with audiences was undertaken to;
  - Explore any issues raised by the play,
  - Raise awareness of Healthy Relationships,
  - Promote safe internet use,
  - Identify risky situations,
  - Raise awareness of differing forms of the process of grooming,
  - Raise awareness of the differing forms of Child Sexual Exploitation, and
  - To sign-post relevant services and sources of help.



A variety of schools hosted the play both rural and urban, with representation from all school management types, including five special schools. 6,892 pupils saw the play during the tour. Furthermore, 167 parents and 144 professionals saw the play across the five Education Authority areas. Preventative education was an important aspect of the project. Taking this into consideration, alongside findings from research into CSE in Northern Ireland which identifies 12- 15 year olds to be the age category

most at risk of CSE1, the SBNI decided to target children and young people in years 9 and 10.

During the campaign and to ensure consistent messages across all member agencies, at the end of 2014 and throughout 2015 the SBNI worked with amongst others the, 'Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment', in the content revision of their Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE) curriculum and with the South-Eastern Health and Social Care Trusts, 'C Card Condom Scheme', from a safeguarding perspective, in general and CSE specifically.

One of the most important events in 2016 was the CSE Awareness day when the SBNI pledged to continue to work together to raise awareness of CSE to prevent it happening, to protect children and young people from becoming victims and to disrupt and detect perpetrators.



### 2.2.2 Work with member agencies to develop a coordinated strategy and working model to help children at risk of;

- becoming criminalised through on-line activity;
- bullying through cyber activity; and
- sexual abuse (through 'sexting' and on-line exploitation).

The overarching aim of the e-Safety Forum is, 'to work towards keeping children and young people and their families' safe when they are in the 'digital world' and during 2015 into 2016 there has been a host of activity working towards that end.

The Forum continued to work with partner agencies to share information with children and young people, parents and carers and professionals. A leaflet entitled 'Sexting and the law' was produced to provide a basic guide to help professionals and members of the public deal with incidents of sexting. It was distributed regionally and is available for download from the Safeguarding Board website [Sexting and the Law](#).

June 2015, saw the start of the co-design process for the NI Executive's e- Safety Strategy, the overarching aims of which are to improve e- safety by:

- Drawing on existing research and current best practice, both locally and globally, to develop an effective e-Safety Strategy and Action Plan.
- Educating and supporting children and young people and those responsible for their care to develop skills and knowledge to stay safe online.
- Facilitating access to age-appropriate support services including recovery services and information on how to handle online abuse if it occurs.

To inform the development of the strategy, the National Children's Bureau (NCB), on behalf of the SBNI, carried out a range of participatory activities to ensure that all key stakeholders had an opportunity to have their say, including one-to-one interviews with 42 key policy makers and lead practitioners across a range of disciplines, as well as focus groups with 36 teachers, 57 young people and 49 parents. Phase 1 of the strategy development and stakeholder engagement was completed by the end of March 2016. Progress on the strategy will be reported in the Annual Report for 2016/17.

In October 2015, the SBNI contributed to the Justice Committee's conference on 'Justice in the Digital Age' at W5 that explored the challenges and opportunities that modern technology presents to the criminal justice system. The audience comprised

young people from post primary schools, professional and community groups across NI. In the same month, the SBNI also presented to e-safety messaging to community groups at Tyrone GAA.

On Safer Internet Day 2016 the SBNI participated in the SID TV competition with the Chair of the Forum being part of the judging panel. The event was a hugely positive experience, with the efforts of the pupils reflected in their highly innovative and enthusiastic responses to the challenge put before them. It also highlighted the value of young people's engagement with online safety issues and the importance of sharing knowledge and experiences.

The SBNI also attended events hosted by member agencies across Northern Ireland, such as the launch of Strangford Integrated College's School App, in conjunction with the South-Eastern Health and Social Care Trust and Ineqe Ltd. The App reflected the excellent contributions children and young people can make to raising awareness amongst their peer group, to empower others and cascade e-Safety message.



## **2.3 Strategic Priority 3**

### **Providing leadership and setting direction**

#### **2.3.1 Policy and Procedures Committee**

The purpose of the Policy and Procedures Committee is to undertake one of the functions of the SBNI under section 3(1) of the Safeguarding Board Act, to develop and review policy and procedures to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in Northern Ireland. The Committee includes a comprehensive, multi-agency membership and is chaired by the Director of the Belfast Trust.

The Policy and Procedures Committee made significant progress on several of the objectives identified in the SBNI Business Plan and Committee Work Plan. It began to revise the extant Area Child Protection Committee (ACPC) Regional Child Protection Policy and Procedures 2005, to ensure that practitioners have up-to-date policy and procedures to direct and guide their practice. These will be available on an E-based platform for ease of access for practitioners and so they can be regularly updated they will take account of the revised statutory guidance, 'Cooperating to Safeguard Children and Young People'.

The new procedures will be approved by the SBNI and published Mid 2017.

Of note, are the new policies and procedures in relation to new and emerging concerns, for example CSE, e-Safety and bruising/marks on pre-mobile babies. Work is also well advanced in relation to the development of a multi-agency Information Sharing Agreement, which will ensure that information between professionals and agencies is shared appropriately to protect children.



### 2.3.2 Education and Training Committee

The Education and Training Committee in 2015/ 2016 has improved the effectiveness of safeguarding training in Northern Ireland and enhanced child protection practice.

The Committee met on six occasions in 2015/16 and focused on the development of a new SBNI 'Safeguarding Learning and Development Strategy and Framework' and the dissemination and official launch of this important regional guidance. It has also addressed any regional safeguarding training gaps arising from new research, CMRs, policies and legislation and the management and quality assurance of new SBNI sponsored safeguarding training products (Applications and web-based learning) The Committee has been involved in the development of the safeguarding of children with a disability training and learning across all key agencies.



As part of the Committee's responsibility to identify and progress opportunities for developing and enhancing multi-disciplinary/inter-agency safeguarding training across all agencies in Northern Ireland, a workshop on 'Child to Parent Violence, was held in January 2016. Declan Coogan (NUI, Galway) spoke to a multi-disciplinary audience about 'A Family and Community Response to Violence within the Family? – The Non-Violent Resistance Programme. The content of the workshop was thought provoking and provided practitioners and managers with the opportunity to consider utilising the approaches discussed within their practice.

### **2.3.3 Inter-Faith sub-group**

In May 2015, the SBNI endorsed the establishment of the Inter-Faith sub-group in recognition of the role which the faith community play in the safeguarding of children in Northern Ireland. For the faith community, this is a significant and welcome development, providing a formal mechanism to build on existing safeguarding practices.

The faith community provide a wide range of activities for children and young people throughout Northern Ireland on a regular basis from uniform activities, to sport and leisure and have an extensive range of volunteers who support these services. Given the volume of children who participate in these services the potential to communicate safe messages, develop safe practice, and have a positive impact on the lives of children and young people, is significant.

The SBNI Inter-Faith sub-group works collaboratively across the faith community to develop best practice safeguarding arrangements for children and young people, by sharing experiences, initiatives, and resources across this community. It works alongside the other key partner agencies of the SBNI to standardise the work of the faith community in safeguarding children in Northern Ireland

During 2015-2016 the sub-group has focussed on raising awareness of the existence and intended work of the sub-group with Church Leaders and shared existing safeguarding practices and protocols. It has provided feedback to the faith

community on the SBNI strategic and operational development and has disseminated among the faith community, best practice guidance on Sexting.

The current church representatives on the Inter-Faith sub-group include the Church of Ireland, Methodist, Presbyterian, Catholic and the Evangelical Alliance and have extended a welcome to other faith groups and religions.



### **2.3.4 Communication**

Section 3(2) of the Act states the SBNI must promote an awareness of the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Delivering this function during 2015-2016 involved media relations, online channels, and public awareness campaigning. This was most evident in the promotion of the CSE Awareness raising activity surrounding Chelsea's Choice and the launch of the 'False Freedom' DVD. Twitter was used extensively to support the key messages of the SBNI particularly in relation to CSE and e- Safety

### 2.3.5 Engagement/Participation

In accordance with section 3(7) of the Act, the SBNI must promote communication between the Board and children and young persons. In addition, Regulation 19 of the SBNI Regulations states that in exercising its function under section 3(7) of the Act, the SBNI must establish a range of methods to promote communication with children and young persons, which must include direct methods of communication.

The increased participation of children and young people in assisting the Board to raise public awareness of the CSE was most evident through the production of the 'False Freedom' DVD. The decision to use a DVD to share awareness and raise information with other young people was taken by the young people involved with Safe Choices. The young people were 'experts by experience' and they not only wrote the script but also acted in the drama.

The participation of children and young people in the Board's work is also evident in their input in the co – design of the e- Safety Strategy for Northern Ireland. To ensure as many children and young people as possible could participate, Twitter and Facebook were used widely to advertise the focus groups.



### **2.3.6 Work of the Safeguarding Panels**

Section 7 (a) of the Act states the SBNI shall establish ...., a prescribed number of committees to be called 'Safeguarding Panels'. The membership and functions of the Safeguarding Panels are prescribed in the SBNI Regulations.

The five Safeguarding Panels deliver the strategic aims of the SBNI at a local level and advise the SBNI of local issues and developments to ensure the SBNI reflects the diversity of need across the whole of Northern Ireland. Under the chairmanship of the two independent chairs and the active involvement of agency members on the Panels, all of them have focussed on local learning and practice in individual ways.

#### **Northern Safeguarding Panel**

The Northern Panel has worked positively to achieve better outcomes for children. This is demonstrated in relation to:

- Its proactive approach to formal activities in relation to case management reviews in addressing action plans and disseminating learning
- In maintaining a focus on local child protection activity and the impact of demand and capacity
- In its approach to develop initiatives leading to improvements in safeguarding at a local level

In reviewing child protection activity across member agencies, the Panel identified an area of high demand in relation to safeguarding services and sought to engage with the local community and to showcase services in the area. A Panel task and finish group developed an interactive approach which was taken forward in partnership with a new Secondary College in the area. The objective was to engage with hard to reach families and to establish a supportive network of services based around the school community. An open day/showcasing event took place in the College in February 2016 where most Panel agencies and disciplines were represented. It is anticipated that this project could be usefully rolled out in other schools.

The Northern Panel has improved outcomes for children who are on the Child Protection Register and has addressed multiagency and multidisciplinary attendance at Child Protection Conferences and the provision and shared information. The

Panel commissioned an audit of Case Conference activity in June 2015. The Panel has considered the findings of this audit and specific actions have and will be taken forward by individual agencies/disciplines

An important outcome for the Panel has been to improve communication between the Panel and frontline staff. A recommendation by frontline staff, arising out of an engagement workshop held with staff drawn from member agencies, was that the Panel would produce a newsletter which would include regular updates on developments in safeguarding and would also provide opportunities for engagement with frontline practitioners. The Panel has taken this recommendation forward and has issued the first edition of the panel Newsletter. It is intended to highlight and raise awareness regarding the SBNI theme of neglect in the next edition.

In relation to the SBNI's two-year overarching theme of neglect and linked to a CMR recommendation, going forward in 2016 the Panel will focus on improving the assessment and management of the health and development of children suffering from chronic neglect and ongoing emotional abuse.

### **Southern Safeguarding Panel**

The Panel has brought about improvements in safeguarding at a local level and has examined a number of processes and practice issues. In seeking to examine how working together and effective partnership working could be further improved, particularly between statutory and voluntary organisations, attention focused on the making and accepting of referrals by social services and the development of a Children's Service's Escalation Policy and Procedure (which will be incorporated within the revised SBNI regional child protection policy and procedures). This will hopefully avoid and address professional disputes and ensure that practitioners maintain their focus on the child. In a similar way and with a similar outcome in mind, the Panel has also worked with the Southern Domestic Violence Partnership to examine the management of domestic violence notifications received by the Gateway Service which do not meet the threshold for allocation as an active case.

The Domestic Violence Partnership is taking this work forward and it will be reported on and considered by the Panel when completed.

General practitioners (GPs) have an important contribution to make in relation to the safeguarding of children and the Panel has adopted this as one of its areas for improvement. A pilot project, planned in one area to involve a General Practice, the local Family Intervention Team and Primary Care had to be postponed and moved to another practice and will be incorporated into next year's work plan.

A key outcome for the Panel is the improvements in practice and knowledge for those working in safeguarding. While maintaining an overview of child protection activity in the Southern area and on specific issues including CSE, the Panel has worked with the NSPCC in relation to its Sexual Abuse Hub which is in the Southern area and Panel member agencies are currently completing a survey which will examine the Hub's impact for practitioners in terms of improved practice and knowledge.

Multi-agency and multi-disciplinary involvement in Child Protection Case Conferences is essential to ensure that information is shared effectively and that the decisions are made in the best interests of the child. The Southern Panel has undertaken two separate audits of Case Conference attendance and has already examined the findings of the first audit. It has taken forward actions in relation to the management of invitations and highlighted the under representation and attendance by some agencies and professionals.

One of the functions of the local Safeguarding Panels is to facilitate communication with children and young people; to do so the Panel identified resources and individuals within member agencies who could take forward participation/engagement projects on an 'as and when basis' either identified regionally or by the local Panel. This work is not yet completed and will be taken forward into next year's work plan.

In looking forward to 2016/17 the Panel will continue to focus on improvements which will lead to better outcomes for children. Emphasis will be placed on the Panel's role in relation to the implementation of the new SBNI regional policies and

procedures and the importance of safeguarding training alongside the dissemination of learning arising from CMRs. In addition, the Panel work plan will also reflect the SBNI overarching theme of neglect in the context of its oversight of child protection activity, training needs and local practice.

### **Western Safeguarding Panel**

The Western Panel has placed particular emphasis on making improvements in relation to how safeguarding services are delivered and on working alongside other partnerships. In addition to monitoring child protection activity through the quarterly child protection activity reports, the Panel has received audit reports in relation to the operation of local child protection processes with an emphasis on outcomes and the user-experience audit activity undertaken by the Western Trust and reported at Panel has included

- User feedback Audit of the Gateway Service (May 2015).
- Feedback from Parents/Carers after Case Conferences, Looked After Children reviews and case planning meetings (May 2015).
- An audit of the profile of the last 100 children to become 'Looked After' (July 2015).

In addition, the Panel commissioned an audit in relation to Case Conference attendance by all agencies, which was completed in September 2015. This enabled the Panel review local protocols in relation to case conference activity and highlighted the issues of representation and attendance by some agencies and professional groups.

The Panel has also maintained a focus on CSE by establishing a task and finish group to address multi-agency involvement in relation to CSE with the objective of achieving better outcomes and support for young people. Again, with the objective of influencing better outcomes for families in receipt of family support services, the Panel has received regular reports in relation to the implementation of the step up/step down protocol for Family Support Hubs in the Western area.

The Panel has also sought to place safeguarding training to the fore in its work plan and this year has established a Training Sub Group to co-ordinate multi-agency



training initiatives required by the Panel or as identified in the SBNI Business Plan. In 2016/17 the Sub Group will also address the inter-agency learning outcomes identified in the SBNI Child Safeguarding Learning and Development Strategy and Framework 2015/18.

In February 2016, the Panel participated in a partnership workshop with the Western Outcomes Group, the Western Domestic Violence Partnership and the Adult Safeguarding Group which focused on building networks, better co-ordination, avoiding duplication, information sharing and ultimately with the objective of improving outcomes and opportunities. The Panel will take forward the actions arising from this workshop and will integrate these into its work plan for 2016/17.

Other priority areas that the Panel will address in the year ahead will include the oversight of the implementation of the SBNI regional child protection policies and procedures and the embedding of the SBNI Learning and Development Framework. The Panel plans to integrate the SBNI's overarching theme of neglect into several aspects of its work, including awareness raising with practitioners and in its work with other partnerships.

### **South Eastern Panel**

During the past year, the Panel maintained a focus on the progress of CMRS and the learning arising from Individual Agency Reviews (IARs). A Multi-Agency CMR Panel Sub Group has been formed with representatives from the statutory and voluntary sector. Member agencies have developed mechanisms to assist effective dissemination of learning from CMRs and IARs and the South-Eastern Trust has developed a multi-agency learning forum to share findings from reviews.

The Panel continues to analyse local Child Protection statistics and findings from audit to improve local safeguarding practice. The Panel has completed an audit of multi-agency attendance at Case Conference to ensure effective multi-agency involvement in the child protection process.

The Panel undertook a scoping exercise of domestic violence initiatives and preventative measures adopted by member agencies, to establish a baseline evidence of good practice. The expected outcome is how to improve knowledge, the standardisation of robust practices and the identification of gaps in terms of how vulnerable children are identified and supported. Training needs will be linked into the South-Eastern Domestic Violence Partnership training plan.

The Panel organised a multi-agency workshop for practitioners to disseminate information on the use of drugs/alcohol and psycho-active substances amongst children and young people in South-Eastern Panel area and to highlight the role of perspective agencies in effective interventions. The aim was to increase professionals' understanding of the issues, including substance misuse on children and young people to improve the recognition of concerns and the help provided to address them.

The Panel has raised the awareness of GPs of the guidance to General Medical Practitioners on 'Responding to the Needs of Children whose parents have Mental Health Problems or Substance Abuse Issues'. The guidance is the first part of an e-process to engage and raise awareness of the 'Think Family' principles with GPs. The Panel has continued to focus on CSE, to ensure clarity of reporting if there are concerns; and member agencies have ensured that effective response mechanisms are in place.

Member agencies continue to report new safeguarding initiatives to the Panel, which has included the NSPCC NI Helpline, to raise Panel awareness of local safeguarding trends and emerging issues.

The Panel has achieved full representation from all agencies as prescribed in Regulation 23<sup>2</sup>, including voluntary sector representation from Women's Aid, Barnardo's, VOYPIC and representation from Army Welfare, to reflect local issues. The Panel's business has operated at a high level of compliance with the SBNI Standing Orders. The Panel has met on six occasions between April 2015 and

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<sup>2</sup> Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland (Membership, Procedure, Functions and Committee) Regulations (NI) 2012 (the SBNI Regulations)

March 2016 with consistent and regular attendance being achieved by most agencies<sup>3</sup>.

### **Belfast Panel**

During the past year, the Panel has focused on the progress of local CMRs and member agencies continued to develop mechanisms to assist effective dissemination of learning from CMRs and IARs. The CMR subgroup of the Panel is progressing actions against CMR Action plan and reports progress to each panel meeting.

The Trust has sought to improve multi-agency attendance at Child Protection Case Conferences by conducting a series of audits in October 2014, May 2015 and January 2016. The findings from the October 2014 and May 2015 audits were shared with the Safeguarding Panel, the Trust Safeguarding Committee and relevant others. The findings from the May 2015 audit indicated a slight up-ward improvement in professional attendance at Case Conferences, when compared with the findings from the October 2014 audit, however, the provision of Case Conference Reports remained consistently low. Findings from the January 2016 are in the process of being analysed to determine if this repeat audit evidences an improvement in multi-agency attendance and the provision of reports. The findings will form part of a composite report which will be delivered to the SBNI to address regional issues regarding multi-agency attendance at Child Protection Case Conferences.

The Belfast Trust has placed emphasis on improving the understanding and experience of parents and professionals involved in the child protection process and devised a feedback tool. The feedback from professionals will be gathered between April-September 2016 and parental feedback in May-July 2016. The expected outcome is to improve engagement with parents and professionals in the child protection process.

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<sup>3</sup> South Eastern Panel attendance

Member agencies continue to report new local safeguarding initiatives to the Panel. A 'Celebrate Children in Care' day, organised by VOYPIC, which involved forty- five events across Northern Ireland, took place on 19 February 2016 to promote a positive message about developing resilience in children in care. Working across Scotland, England, Wales and Ireland, the positive messages of this initiative were disseminated on social media with over a reach of one million, the annual event is now integrated into the Panel's calendar.

The Panel has ensured that all member agencies understand the impact of multiple adversities that place children and young people at greater risk. The Panel delivered a multi-agency awareness raising seminar on multiple adversities hosted by the Belfast Trust and attended by member agencies. The outcome for staff was increased knowledge of the current evidence base regarding families living with multiple adversities and information regarding effective strategies to engage families affected in services. Furthermore, the Panel has established links with partner agencies and support organisations, such as African and Caribbean Community Support Organisation in Northern Ireland and The Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities and plan to have a workshop for Panel Members in May 2016, hosted by NSPCC, to increase awareness of female genital mutilation (FGM).

The Panel ensures that member agencies understand their safeguarding responsibilities and can demonstrate that all staff/volunteers can recognise risk and respond appropriately to safeguarding issues. The Panel plan to develop a framework to collate evidence from all agencies to demonstrate that all staff and volunteers receive regular mandatory and accredited safeguarding/ child protection training, in line with agency policy and the SBNI Learning and Development Strategy 2015-2018.

The Panel continues to focus on CSE to ensure clarity of reporting, if there are concerns, the subject remains a standing item on the confidential section of the Panel meeting.

The Panel has established a multi-agency strategy group to address emerging concerns about young people at risk of paramilitary violence and improve multi-agency collaboration and understanding of respective agency roles.

The Panel has achieved full representation from all agencies as prescribed in Regulation 23<sup>4</sup>, including voluntary sector representation from Women's Aid, Barnardo's, VOYPIC and a representative from Hydebank, to reflect local issues. Panel business has operated at a high level of compliance with the SBNI Standing Orders. The Panel has met on six occasions between April 2015 and March 2016 with consistent and regular attendance being achieved by most agencies<sup>5</sup>.

## **2.4 Strategic Priority 4**

### **Drive improvements in the current child protection system**

The SBNI has progressed significant preparatory work in preparation for the implementation of a Child Death Overview Panel. Guidance is being progressed by the Department of Health and once this is completed it is anticipated that the introduction of the Panel will follow expeditiously.

Learning from Case Management reviews and the influence on practice is detailed in section 2.4.1

#### **2.4.1 Undertake Case Management Reviews**

Regulation 17 of the Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland 2011 Regulations requires the Board to undertake Case Management Reviews (CMRs). The aim of a review is to strengthen the systems and processes for protecting children from abuse and neglect. This is done through:

- establishing the facts of the case;
- identifying what has worked well so that member agencies of the Board can build upon it;

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<sup>4</sup> Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland (Membership, Procedure, Functions and Committee) Regulations (NI) 2012 (the SBNI Regulations)

<sup>5</sup> Belfast Panel attendance

- asserting if there are lessons to be learned from the case about the way in which professionals and statutory and/or voluntary agencies work together to safeguard children; and,
- identifying clearly what those lessons are, how they will be acted upon and what is expected to change as a consequence.

This function of the SBNI is primarily discharged through a standing committee, the Case Management Review Panel that meets monthly. Chaired by one of the independent members of the Board, the Panel has senior manager representatives from a broad range of member agencies. The criterion for a CMR is set down in legislation.

This can be viewed at:

<https://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/dhssps/sbni-guidance-may2014.PDF>.

Since it was established in 2012, the SBNI has completed five CMRs, with an additional six cases currently reviewed. Within the reporting period the SBNI completed one CMR which took thirty months to complete. The Board has agreed to publish an executive summary of each completed review, subject to the need to allow any other legal processes to conclude and the best interests of children and families. In January 2016, the SBNI published the first two Executive Summary Reports on its website which can be accessed at [www.safeguardingni.org](http://www.safeguardingni.org). The learning from CMRs placed on the website so far include:

- Co-sleeping is recognised as a risk factor in cases of SUDI. Research has been recently undertaken in Northern Ireland on behalf of the SBNI into the risks of co-sleeping. It is clear that professionals and parents need to be provided with clearer and more consistent messages about the risks of co-sleeping. This learning is being taken forward in conjunction with the PHA.
- There are challenges for GPs to contribute to the child protection process due to their capacity and demands on their time. There are opportunities for medical information held by GPs to be made more accessible to other

professionals involved with children at risk and work is on-going to provide further opportunities to do so

- Clear guidance is needed for staff in relation to sharing information regarding safeguarding concerns. The SBNI has undertaken work in relation to an Information Sharing Agreement. This work is at an advanced stage and it is anticipated that this will be issued for implementation early 2016
- It is important to raise awareness of toxicology screening procedures and provide guidance for professional staff in the event of a sudden child death as to when parents can be compelled to undertake toxicology screening. This is a complex issue and has to be considered within the law. However, work by the SBNI is being undertaken as part of the revised multi-agency safeguarding procedures
- Improved guidance on 'Safeguarding Babies at Birth when there is a Risk of Significant Harm' which has been produced and being implemented
- The adoption of a SBNI Regional Protocol regarding bruising in babies who are not independently mobile. Work on this has been completed and being implemented.

In 2015-2016 the SBNI received four CMR notifications and decided one would proceed to a CMR.

There are five independent chairs of case management review teams. These teams undertake the individual reviews, producing a detailed report, an executive summary and contributing to the action plan to take forward the learning from a review. The independent chairs are responsible for managing the process and ensuring that the final report provides a high level of analysis of the circumstances that led to the review.

Two CMR training events were held during the year, the first focused on the completion of Individual Agency Review Reports and the second focused on the completion of the Case Management Review Reports. The aim of the training was to support those writing and quality assuring reports to ensure they are well-written,

easily understood and provide a sound analysis of what happened, why it happened and what needs to happen to prevent a recurrence of the circumstances that led to the CMR. CMR Team Chairs also attended peer support events.

Work has been undertaken to establish a process to consider those cases where there has been outstanding positive learning gained which will lead to improved practice in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children across Northern Ireland. It is planned to pilot this process during 16/17.

Draft CMR Guidance was issued for consultation during 15/16. During 2016/17 the Board intends to explore alternative ways of undertaking CMRs to maximise the opportunity for learning from reviews to be more quickly identified and acted upon.

#### **2.4.2 Initiate a Child Death Overview Panel to understand trends in child deaths and where possible, take preventative action to reduce occurrences in the future.**

A key objective for SBNI and partner organisations is to establish a Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP) which will promote and facilitate multi-disciplinary working to achieve consistency of approach in reporting, investigating and reviewing child deaths. This will assist in regional learning and reduce the risk of future preventable deaths of children in Northern Ireland.

The proposed CDOP aims to gather comprehensive information on potentially avoidable factors associated with child deaths of all children to make recommendations on changes in practice. In England and Wales CDOPs have shown that in 2013, 21% of deaths in children and young people (birth to 18 years) had modifiable factors.

The CDOP will work with existing systems in relation to notification and examining circumstances around death, such as Regional Mortality and Morbidity Review System and Case Management Review (CMR). It will provide a multi-agency analysis and identify any wider public health or safety concerns to inform regional



learning, training, service provision and support development of policy aimed at a reduction in childhood mortality in Northern Ireland.

Further development of CDOP has been put on hold at present until the External Review of the SBNI has been published.

## **2.5 Strategic Priority 5**

### **2.5.1 Building the capacity of the SBNI in the medium term.**

This work has been a key focus of the independent review of the SBNI undertaken by Professor Alexis Jay.

### **2.5.2 'Section 12' Legal duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children**

Section 12 of the Safeguarding Board Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 states:

12(2) that each person and body to whom this section applies must make arrangements for ensuring that:

- (a) their functions are exercised having due regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children; and
- (b) any services provided by another person pursuant to arrangements made by the person or body in the exercise of their functions are provided having due regard to that need.

12(3) Each person and body to whom this section applies must, in exercising their duty under this section, have due regard to any guidance given to them for the purpose by the Department.

The SBNI Guidance which underpins the Safeguarding Board Act 2011 requires the SBNI to establish arrangements for ensuring that agencies are meeting the duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children under Section 12 of the Safeguarding Act 2011. In 2015 the SBNI fulfilled this duty by undertaking an audit to ensure two things:

- that agencies carry out their existing functions in a way that takes into account the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children; and

that the services they contract out to others are provided having regard to that need.

The audit took place between June and July 2015 to ensure that each represented body at an organisational or strategic level had the following in place:

- a) Senior management commitment to the importance of safeguarding and promoting children's welfare;
- b) A clear statement of the body's responsibilities to children which is available for all staff to access;
- c) A clear line of accountability within the organisation for work on safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children;
- d) Service development takes account of the need to safeguard and promote welfare and is informed, where appropriate, by the views of children and families;
- e) Staff training on safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children for all staff working with or, depending on the body's primary functions, in contact with children and families;
- f) Safer recruitment policies;
- g) Effective inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children; and
- h) Effective Information sharing arrangements.

The audit was carried out using the Virtual College electronic platform and in total 27 responses were returned with exemptions being given to the Children's Law Centre and Children in Northern Ireland (CiNI)

The following Standards were all well evidenced in the audit:

- 1. 'Safer Recruitment' policies and procedures.
- 2. The importance of having a 'clear line of accountability' within the Agency for work on safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.
- 3. Senior Management Commitment to the importance of safeguarding and promoting children's welfare; and

4. A clear statement of the body's responsibilities to children which is available for all staff to access.

However, areas of improvement were identified in relation to:

1. Inter or multidisciplinary training,
  - Limited evidence of multi-agency training taking place or that the training which does take place is effective in improving practice.
2. Effective interagency and working arrangements.
  - Attendance at meetings does not equal effectiveness.
  - Service development informed by the views of children and young people.
  - Either very good or very poor no middle ground.

It was clear from the audit that there is a need for the SBNI to understand what constitutes evidence in demonstrating, 'improved outcomes for children and young people and their families'. This was poorly evidenced in most audits. As part of the audit process agencies identified areas for improvement and in addition to the areas for improvement noted above and presented to the members in October 2015 these will be addressed as part of each agencies service delivery programme.

The SBNI will conduct the Section 12 audit bi-annually and will report on the findings and improvements, in the 2017 – 2018 Annual Report. There will also be three Themed Audit Days per year undertaken by a multi-agency review team.

### 3. Finance and Governance

#### 3.1 Budget and remuneration

The SBNI financial accounts for the period 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2016 are set out below:

<b>INCOME</b>	
Allocation from DHSSPSNI	£757,150.00
Budget from HSCB	£62,047.00
E safety Strategy	£60,000.00
Thematic Review	£29,880.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>£909,111.00</b>

<b>EXPENDITURE</b>	
Core Staff	£344,350.00
Lay members, Chairs, Chair	£145,686.00
Goods & Services	£146,979.00
Thematic Review	£29,880.00
CMRs	£62,047.00
Safeguarding Committees	£169.00
E -safety Strategy	£60,000.00
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>£789,111.00</b>
<b>Underspend</b>	<b>£120,000.00</b>

## **Equality and Human Rights**

The SBNI is supported on equality matters by the Equality Unit at the Business Services Organisation (BSO).

As required under Section 75, the SBNI developed its Equality Scheme, undertook an audit of inequalities and, based on its outcomes, developed an Equality and Disability Action Plan for the period from 2013 to 2016. Its time span aligned to that of the SBNI Strategic Plan.

The SBNI also recognised its obligations to promote equality of opportunity between:

- persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, nationality, age, marital status or sexual orientation;
- men and women generally;
- persons with a disability and persons without; and
- persons with dependents and persons without.

In developing our policies and strategic plan, we were required to examine or screen them for equality purposes to identify any that were likely to have a significant impact on equality of opportunity and/or good relations. Screening also covered issues in relation to the Human Rights Act 1998 and the Disability Discrimination Order 2006. However, in reporting period the SBNI did not undertake an equality screenings.

### **3.2 Data Protection**

The objective of the SBNI is to co-ordinate and ensure the effectiveness of what is done by each person or body represented on the SBNI, for the purposes of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. Information sharing underpins the work of the SBNI.

Information sharing is at the heart of effective inter-agency working and the promotion of positive outcomes for children. It is crucial if disparate services are to be able to provide an integrated service which supports families and protects the

public and safeguards those at risk of significant harm. The SBNI recognises that achieving this aim depends upon efficient and timely exchange of relevant information between and across provider services.

The SBNI regards the lawful and correct handling of personal and sensitive data as an integral part of its functions and vital for maintaining confidence between the individuals and groups about whom we process information. As such, the SBNI has developed its Data Protection Policy, appointed a lead member of staff with specific responsibility for Data Protection in the organisation and ensured all staff have undertaken training in Data Protection.

### **Complaints**

The SBNI received no complaints in 2015/2016. If you wish to make a formal comment or complaint, please write to:

The Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland  
The Beeches  
12 Hampton Manor Drive  
Belfast  
BT7 3EN

### **3.3 Freedom of Information**

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 encourages the pro-active release of information by organisations through the implementation and upkeep of a publication scheme. The SBNI have put in place a Freedom of Information (FOI) procedure to ensure requests for information to the SBNI are substantively answered within the timescale and are managed in compliance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Data Protection Act 1998 respectively. The procedure identifies:

- The contact person with responsibility for FOI/Data Protection within the SBNI;
- The steps involved in processing requests;
- Criteria for making an informed decision as to whether or not to disclose the information requested;

- A reporting structure to ensure the Independent Chair and the SBNI are regularly updated; and
- The steps taken when a complaint is made.

No requests have been received under the Freedom of Information Act.



## APPENDIX 2

# Business Plan April 2015 – March 2016



## Introduction

Welcome to the Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland (SBNI) Business Plan for 2015-16. The SBNI is the key statutory mechanism for agreeing how relevant organisations will co-operate and work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people in Northern Ireland, and for ensuring the effectiveness of what they do. The key functions of the SBNI are to:

- To co-ordinate and ensure the effectiveness of what is done by each person or body represented on the Board for the purpose of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children;
- To develop policies and procedures for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children;
- Promote an awareness of the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children;
- Keep under review the effectiveness of what is done by each person or body represented on the Board to safeguard and promote the welfare of children;
- To undertake Case Management Reviews, in order to learn lessons in cases where children have died or have been significantly harmed;
- To review information in relation to the sudden and unexpected deaths of children
- To promote communication between the SBNI and children and young people;
- Advise the Regional Health and Social Care Board and local commissioning groups in relation to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

## Our Key Priorities

SBNI's key priorities are contained in the Strategic Plan 2013 – 2017 which sets out the functions, purpose, vision, values, objectives and priorities of the SBNI, taking into account the duties placed on the SBNI as stipulated in the Safeguarding Board Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 (the Act). The priorities are closely aligned with the core functions of the SBNI, as defined by legislation. The annual Business Plan will provide a process by which the Strategic Plan will be delivered. The objectives set within the Business Plan derive from the Board's strategy.

The Business Plan is divided into 5 parts in accordance with the corporate objectives outlined in the SBNI Strategic Plan for the years 2013 – 2017.

1. Working in partnership to ensure children and young people are living in safety and with stability;
2. Protecting and safeguarding children by responding to new and emerging concerns;
3. Providing leadership and setting direction;
4. Driving improvements in the current child protection system and;
5. Building the capacity of the Safeguarding Board in the medium term.

This Plan should be read alongside the SBNI's Strategic Plan for 2013 – 2017. For more information please email [helen.mckenzie@hscni.net](mailto:helen.mckenzie@hscni.net)

<b>Strategic Priority 1: Work in partnership to ensure children and young people are living in safety and with stability</b>				
1.1 Work with member agencies to ensure that effective safeguarding arrangements are in place for children and young people with a disability				
<b>Actions</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Completion Date</b>	<b>RAG status</b>	<b>Update to SBNI (state month)</b>
a. Develop multi-agency safeguarding policies and procedures in relation to safeguarding children and young people with disability (work arising out QUB research). b. Take forward SBNI actions arising out of Safeguarding Disabled Children scoping paper.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Policy &amp; Procedure sub-group</li> </ul>	March 2016		

<b>Strategic Priority 1: Work in partnership to ensure children and young people are living in safety and with stability</b>				
1.2 To uphold the principles of the UNCRC and support Member Agencies in their work to remove the defence of reasonable chastisement and the total prohibition of physical punishment.				
<b>Actions</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Completion Date</b>	<b>RAG status</b>	<b>Update to SBNI (state month)</b>
a. Use of Section 12 Audit to monitor & analyse SBNI member agencies policy in relation to the ending of physical punishment. b. Development of generic policy and guidance in relation to the ending of physical punishment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SBNI Board – Voluntary Reference Group</li> </ul>	a. September 2015 b. March 2016		

**Strategic Priority 2: Protect and safeguard children by responding to new and emerging concerns**

2.1 Work with member agencies to develop a coordinated strategy and working model to protect and safeguard children who go missing from their home or care and/or are at risk of sexual exploitation.

Actions	Responsibility	Completion Date:	RAG Rating	Update to SBNI (state month)
a. Complete Thematic Review into CSE in accordance with the Direction issued by the Health Minister for Northern Ireland. b. Implement Professor Marshall CSE Recommendations allocated to SBNI. c. Co-ordinate the delivery of 'Chelsea's Choice' CSE Play. d. Develop and implement Child Safeguarding App (focus on CSE & e-safety). e. Develop CSE False Freedom learning resource.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chair's Business Group</li> </ul>	a. June 2015 b. March 2016 c. April 2015 d. June 2015 e. May 2015		

**Strategic Priority 2: Protect and safeguard children by responding to new and emerging concerns**

2.2 Work with member agencies to develop a coordinated strategy and working model to help children at risk of:

- Becoming criminalised through on-line activity;
- Bullying through cyber activity;
- Sexual abuse (through 'sexting' and on-line exploitation).

Actions:	Responsibility	Completion Date	RAG Rating	Update to SBNI (state month)
a. Manage e-safety sub-group and provide a resource to assist in the delivery of products from the Forum. b. Develop draft e-safety strategy for NI.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>E-safety sub-group</li> </ul>	a. On-going March 2016 b. March 2016		

<b>Strategic Priority 3: Providing leadership and setting direction</b>				
3.1 Seek to develop consistent practice across the region by reviewing the existing multi-agency policies and procedures to protect and safeguard children to ensure greater consistency and standardisation of practice				
<b>Actions</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Completion Date</b>	<b>RAG Rating</b>	<b>Update to SBNI (month)</b>
a. To review, update and develop the regional child protection multi-agency Regional Policies and Procedures. b. Develop an e-based platform to host regional child protection multi-agency policy and procedures. c. Review and update all multi-agency policies and procedures following the release by the DHSSPSNI of its revision of Cooperating to Safeguard Children 2003. d. Develop and publish Multi-Agency Regional Guidance on Missing Children. e. Develop and publish Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) Policy. f. Develop and publish Information Sharing Agreement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Policy &amp; Procedures sub-group</li> </ul>	a. March 2016 b. March 2016 c. On-going March 2016 d. March 2016 e. September 2015 f. September 2015		

<b>Strategic Priority 3: Providing Leadership and setting direction</b>				
3.2 Raise awareness of child protection/safeguarding issues by developing a communication strategy to ensure that children, young people, families and communities are more aware of child safeguarding issues and how to get help if concerned.				
<b>Actions</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Completion Date</b>	<b>RAG Rating</b>	<b>Update to SBNI (state month)</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Develop Communication Strategy.</li> <li>b. Establish an ad-hoc Communication sub-group.</li> <li>c. Develop the Communication Plan for the Thematic Review</li> <li>d. Develop Communications Plans for CMRs as required.</li> <li>e. Review the website and face book pages quarterly.</li> <li>f. Design and publish an SBNI bulletin.</li> <li>g. Tweet up to twice a week.</li> <li>h. Facebook post once a week if required.</li> <li>i. Produce basic safeguarding leaflets and posters.</li> <li>j. Develop alternative language versions as appropriate.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication sub-group</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. September 2015</li> <li>b. September 2015</li> <li>c. May 2015</li> <li>d. On-going March 2016</li> <li>e. On-going March 2016</li> <li>f. On-going March 2016</li> <li>g. On-going March 2016</li> <li>h. On-going March 2016</li> <li>i. On-going March 2016</li> </ul>		

<b>Strategic Priority 3: Providing Leadership and setting direction</b>				
3.4 To ensure that the SBNI Board and associated governance framework is fit for purpose.				
<b>Actions:</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Timescales</b>	<b>RAG Rating</b>	<b>Update to Board (state month)</b>
a. To work with Professor Jay to facilitate the review of the SBNI. b. Annual review of membership and TOR of Sub-Groups. c. Publication and launch of Annual Report. d. Development of Chair's Business Group. e. Oversee the Business Plan and its progress in the year by receiving reports at the Chair's Business Group. f. Scrutinise the 2015-16 budget by receiving reports at each Chair's Business Group meeting. g. Review and submit annual equality and disability plan to equality commission.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chair's Business Group</li> </ul>	a. December 2015 b. September 2015 c. July 2015 d. May 2015 e. On-going March 2016 f. On-going March 2016 g. August 2015		

<b>Strategic Priority 3: Providing Leadership and setting direction</b>				
3.3 Fulfil the statutory duty to promote communication between the SBNI and children and young people, and to ensure that the principle and practice of effective, rights based engagement is embedded throughout the SBNI.				
<b>Actions</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Completion Date</b>	<b>RAG Rating</b>	<b>Update to SBNI (state month)</b>
a. Approve and publish the SBNI Engagement Strategy. b. Develop 12-month engagement action plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chair's Business Group</li> </ul>	a. September 2015 b. March 2016		

<b>Strategic Priority 4 Driving improvements in the current child protection system</b>				
4.1 Influence practice positively and enhance the learning from Case Management Reviews, by improving the CMR process.				
<b>Actions:</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Timescales</b>	<b>RAG Rating</b>	<b>Update to SBNI (state month)</b>
a. To review CMR process at Board and Panel level and produce procedural guidance for the commissioning of CMRs. b. Consider CMR Notifications against criteria for CMRs. c. Aim to complete each CMR within nine months of being commissioned. d. Develop training programme for CMR Chair Leads and others including IAR Authors, CMR sub-group members of Panels and CMR Team members. e. Develop a process for Safeguarding Panels to capture learning from cases where professionals and agencies have worked well together. f. Develop a system to monitor CMR action plans. g. Oversee the monitoring of CMR action plans and provide an update to Board. h. Ensure messages / learning from CMRs are widely disseminated within all agencies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CMR Panel</li> <li>• Safeguarding Panels</li> </ul>	a. August 2015 b. On-going March 2016 c. On-going March 2016 d. On-going March 2016 e. December 2015 f. July 2015 g. On-going 2016 h. On-going 2016		



**Strategic Priority 4: Driving improvements in the current child protection system**

4.2 Initiate a child death overview panel to understand trends in child deaths and where possible take preventative action to reduce occurrences in the future.

Actions:	Responsibility	Timescales	RAG Rating	Update to SBNI (state month)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. To assist the DHSSPS in their deliberations in relation to the legislative and policy issues needed to bring this panel into existence.</li> <li>b. Scope and address the gaps in multi-agency information required for the establishment of a CDOP.</li> <li>c. Understand the number of young people who die by suicide.</li> <li>d. Complete and publish infant death research in conjunction with PHA and Queen's University.</li> <li>e. Disseminate the learning from SBNI/PHA/QUB research into infant death.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CDOP Panel</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. December 2015</li> <li>b. August 2015</li> <li>c. March 2016</li> <li>d. September 2015</li> <li>e. December 2016</li> </ul>		

**Strategic Priority 4: Driving improvements in the current child protection system**

4.3 To keep under review the effectiveness of the safeguarding panels' in terms of meeting the SBNI core functions.

Actions:	Responsibilities	Timescales	RAG Rating	Update to Board (state month)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Support good multi-agency governance around the CMR process at panel level and ensure there is a clear and common understanding from referral to dissemination of learning, and accountability of action plans.</li> <li>b. Panels to work with local Outcomes Group to develop the local performance requirements for 'living in safety and with stability.'</li> <li>c. Work with partners to ensure effective learning from CMRs is disseminated at panel level.</li> <li>d. Review of panel membership and TOR.</li> <li>e. Develop local safeguarding panel work plan based on local needs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safeguarding Panels</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. On-going March 2016</li> <li>b. December 2015</li> <li>c. On-going 2015</li> <li>d. December 2015</li> <li>e. September 2015</li> </ul>		



## **APPENDIX 2 – Living in Safety and with Stability Statistics**

### **Child Health & Mortality**

The Infant Mortality Rate is an important measure in relation to the well-being of infants and children as it is associated with a number of factors such as quality and access to medical care, socioeconomic conditions and public health practices.<sup>6</sup> In 2015 there were 124 registered infant death (deaths in the first year of life) which presents a slight increase on the previous year. This equates to 5.1 deaths per 1,000 live births. Three quarters of all infant deaths occurred in the first week of life. This rate remains one of the highest rates in Europe<sup>7</sup>. According to the Registrar General's report four deaths were the result of sudden infant death syndrome (cot death).

After infancy, late adolescence is the second riskiest time for death under the age of 19 years; in 2015, there were 36 deaths between the ages of 15 to 19. Deaths of both male and female children appear to increase from the age of 15 years.

### **The Child Protection System**

This section provides an overview of the child protection system in NI. For this purpose, the main source of information has been 'Children's Social Care Statistics for 2015/2016 (DoH).<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> [http://www.cypsp.hscni.net/wpcontent/uploads/2016/04/cypsp\\_northern\\_ireland\\_monitoring-2015.pdf](http://www.cypsp.hscni.net/wpcontent/uploads/2016/04/cypsp_northern_ireland_monitoring-2015.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> [http://www.nisra.gov.uk/archive/demography/publications/annual\\_reports/2015/RG2015.pdf](http://www.nisra.gov.uk/archive/demography/publications/annual_reports/2015/RG2015.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/health/child-social-care-15-16.pdf>

## **Children in Need**

When a child who is referred to Social Services and whose circumstances meet the threshold, an initial assessment is undertaken to determine if the child is a 'child in need' as defined by Article 17 of the Children Order (NI) 1995 'the Children Order'. If the child is considered to be 'in need', services should be offered to assist the child's parents/carers to meet the identified needs. If there are concerns that a child may be suffering, or is at risk of suffering 'significant harm', Social Services investigate under Article 66 of the Children Order to determine whether the child is in need of protection.

The number of children 'in need' has risen in NI. On the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016, 24,698 children in NI, were identified as 'children in need' compared with 23,834 in March 2015 which is an 4% decrease. Of these, 4,312 were disabled children representing 17%, almost half of whom had a learning disability. During the same period, 34,124 children were referred to Trust Gateway Services, compared to 34,418 in the previous 12-month period. Overall, referrals have decreased by 11% on the previous year.

## **Child Protection**

### **The Child Protection Register**

Social Services are required to keep a Child Protection Register (CPR) of every child in their Trust area who is considered to be suffering from, or likely to suffer, significant harm and for whom there is a child protection plan. The register is a list of children who have child protection issues who are currently the subject of an inter-agency child protection plan.

If the child is deemed to be suffering or at risk of suffering significant harm, a multi-agency Child Protection Case Conference will be convened, the child's name included on the CPR and a child protection plan drawn up. If there are significant concerns that require further intervention, Social Services may make an application to the court for a legal order to safeguard the child.

A total of 4,279 child protection referrals were received by HSC Trusts, which is a 6% increase on the previous year.

At 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016, there were 2,146 children on the CPR, which is a 9% rise on the previous year.

Physical abuse and neglect were the main reasons for a child being on the CPR. Physical abuse only was the largest single cause of a child being placed on the Register representing 32%. The categories of Neglect Only, Physical Abuse Only and Neglect and Physical Abuse Only accounted for 81% of all cases on the Child Protection Register at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016. The Belfast, South Eastern and Western HSC Trusts had Neglect Only as the most common category of abuse whereas Physical Abuse Only was the highest category of abuse in the Northern and Southern HSC Trusts.

At the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016, there were 2,317 Initial Case Conferences held which is a 7% increase on the previous year.

### **'Looked After Children'- Population**

On the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016, there were 2,890 children 'Looked After' (in the care of Health and Social Services) in NI, an increase of 1% on the previous year, which is the highest number recorded since the introduction of the Children (NI) Order 1995. The Belfast and Northern HSC Trusts had the highest numbers of 'Looked After Children' in 2015/16, however, based on population size, Belfast and Western HSC Trusts still had higher rates of 'Looked After Children' than other Trusts, similar to the previous year.

During 2015/16 there were 836 admissions to care which is a 1% decrease, and 809 discharges.

The majority of 'Looked After Children' are subject to Care Orders (64%) with an additional 11% of children being the subject of Interim Care Orders. 24% were Accommodated, that is cared for with the agreement of the parent(s).

'Looked After Children' had an older age profile compared with the general population in NI, 42% were aged 12 years in the 'Looked After' population whereas 32% of the general population are in this age group. There was a slightly higher proportion of males than females 'Looked After' by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016.

#### **'Looked After Children' – Placement**

The majority of 'Looked after Children' are still placed in foster care (77%) with 13% placed with parents, 6% in residential care and 4% in other placements. There has been a small increase in kinship placements where children are placed with family members. The age of Looked After Children can influence the type of placement with post-primary school aged children more likely to be placed in residential care.

Regionally, 122 (4%) of 'Looked after Children' were also on the CPR. This is a decrease on the previous year. 13% of Looked After Children were recorded as having a disability with over half having a learning disability and was a particular evident in males.

### **‘Looked After Children’ - Education**

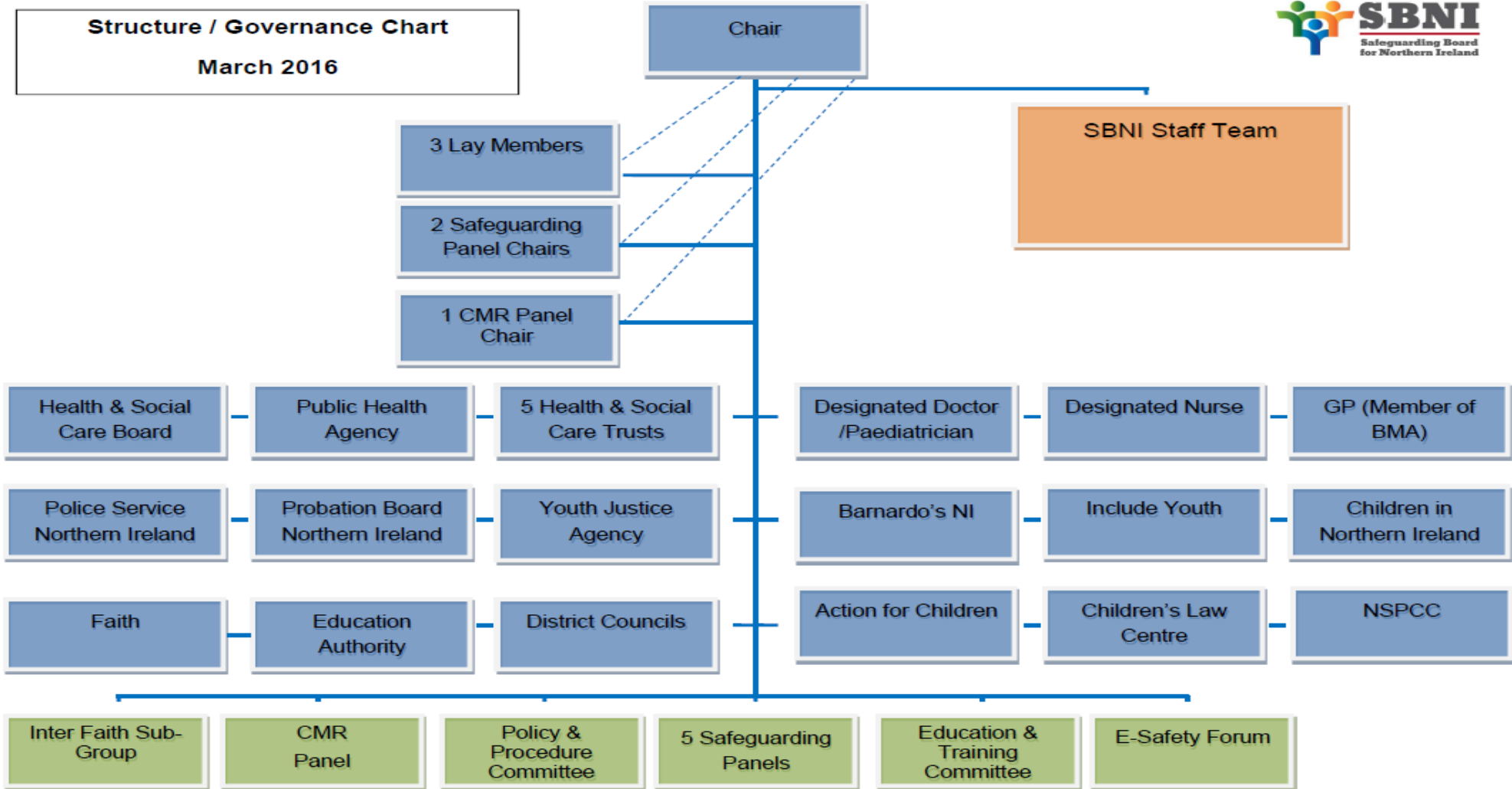
According to the Chief Inspector’s Report 2014 – 2016<sup>9</sup> (Education and Training Inspectorate), concern has been expressed about how Looked After Children perform in regards to Education with only 25.8% achieving five GCSE’s. It is recognised that this needs to be improved. A high level of Looked After Children who attend Education Other Than At School Centres (EOTAS).

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<sup>9</sup> <https://www.etini.gov.uk/sites/etini.gov.uk/files/publications/CIR%20Report%20November%202016.pdf>

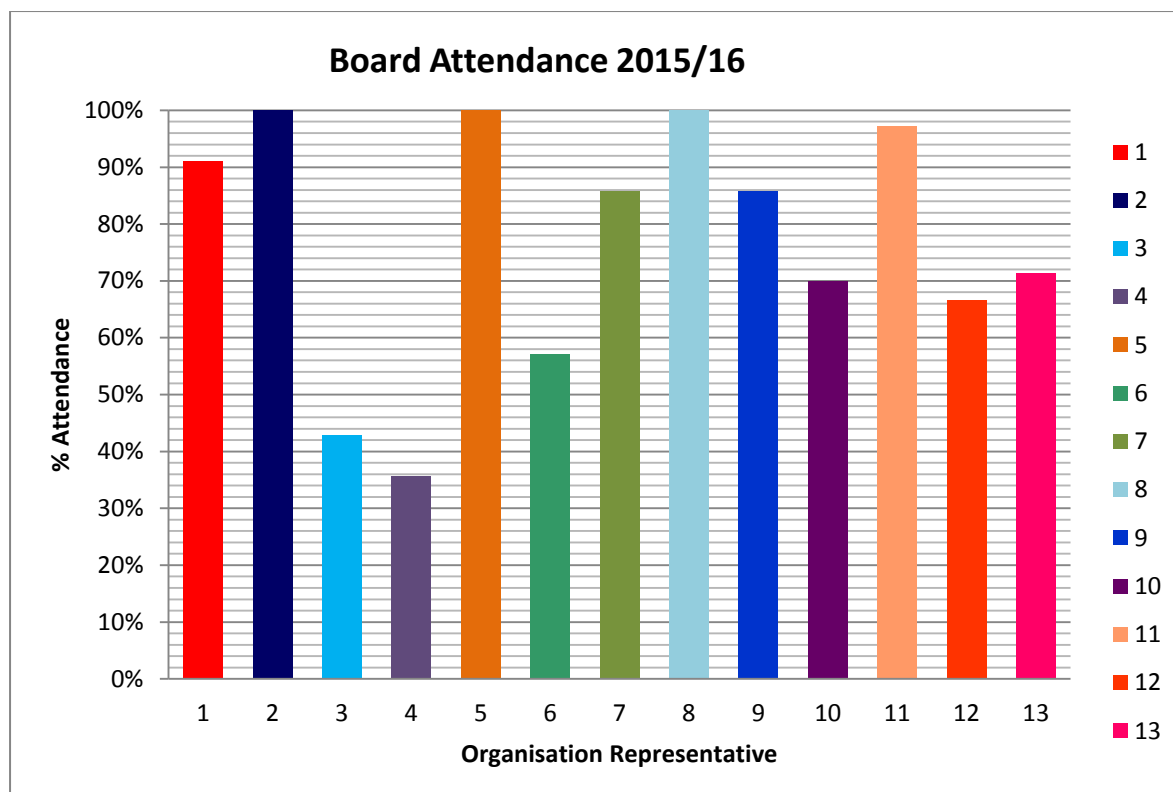


**Appendix 3: Structure and Governance Chart**



## Appendix 4

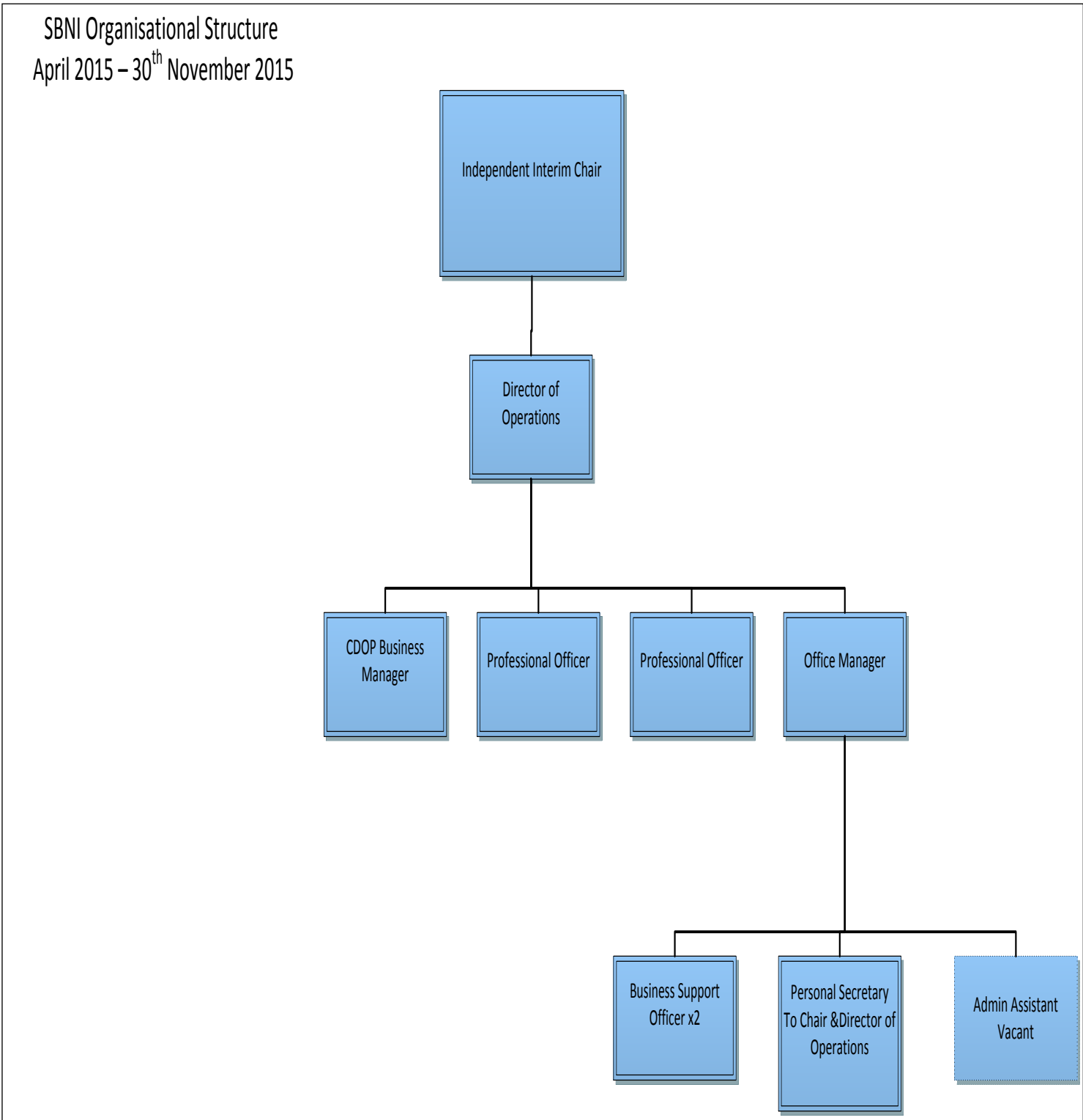
### Board Membership and Attendance



Board membership & attendance 2015/16			
Number	Organisation	Representatives	% attendance
1	SBNI	Chair, Lay members (3) CMR Chair	91%
2	NSPCC		100%
3	GP Rep		43%
4	Councils	Newry, Mourne & Downe District Council & Lisburn & Castlereagh Council	36%
5	YJA		100%
6	Education Authority		57%
7	HSCB		86%
8	PBNI		100%
9	PSNI		86%
10	Interfaith		70%
11	HSC Trusts	South Eastern, Southern, Northern, Western, Belfast Health and Social Care Trust	97%
12	PHA	Director of Public Health, Director of Nursing and AHP's and Safeguarding Nurse Consultant PHA	67%
13	Voluntary Organisations	CiNI, Children's Law Centre, Include Youth, Action for children, Barnardo's	71%

**Appendix 5A:**

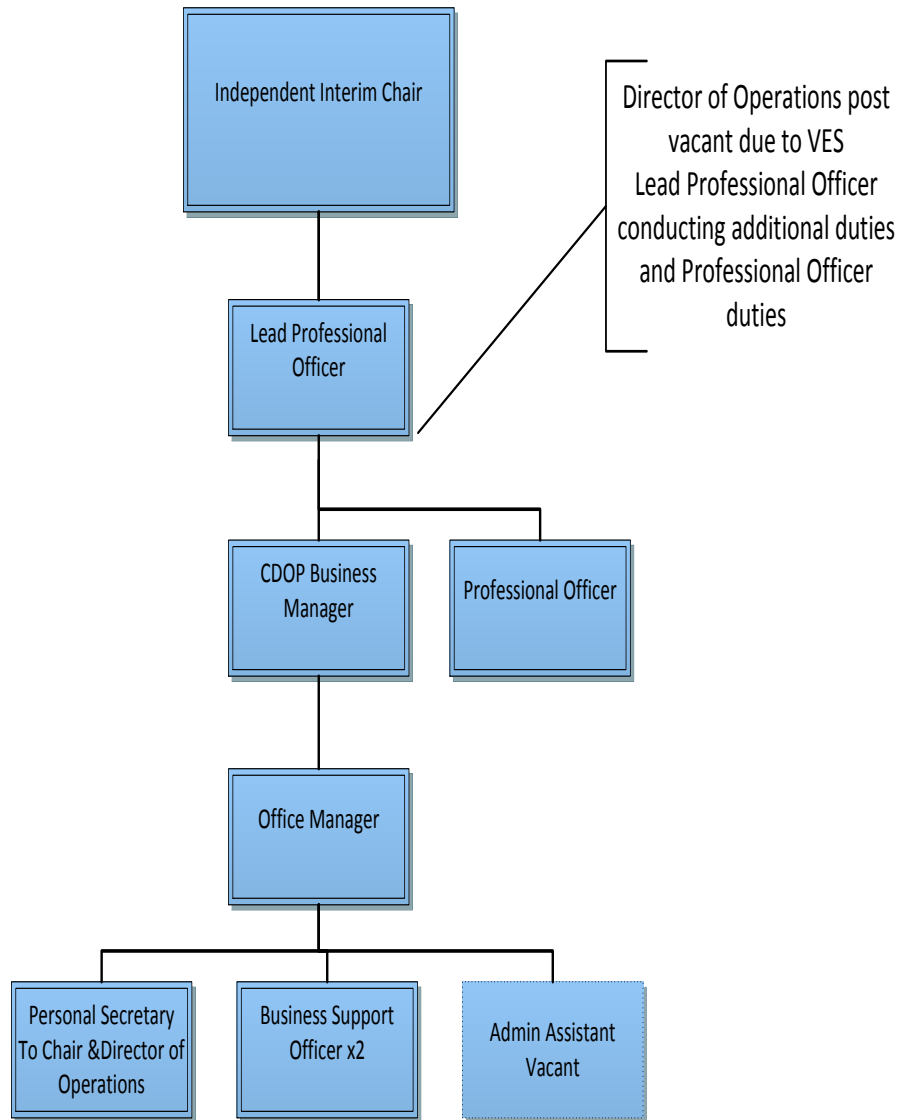
**Staffing Structure 1 April 2015 to 30 November 2015**



**Appendix 5B:**

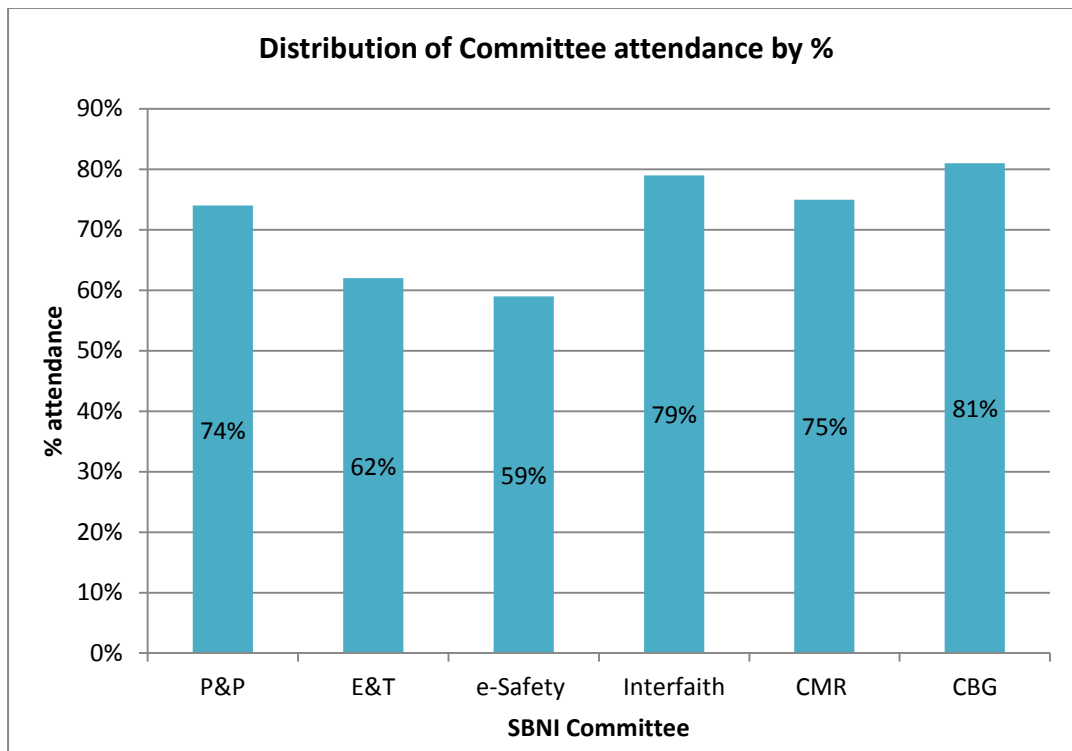
**Staffing Structure 1 December 2015 to 31 March 2016**

SBNI Organisational Structure  
1<sup>st</sup> December 2015 – April 2016



**Appendix 6:**

**SBNI Committees -membership/attendance**



**Key:**

**P&P-** Policy & Procedures Committee

**E&T-** Education & Training Committee

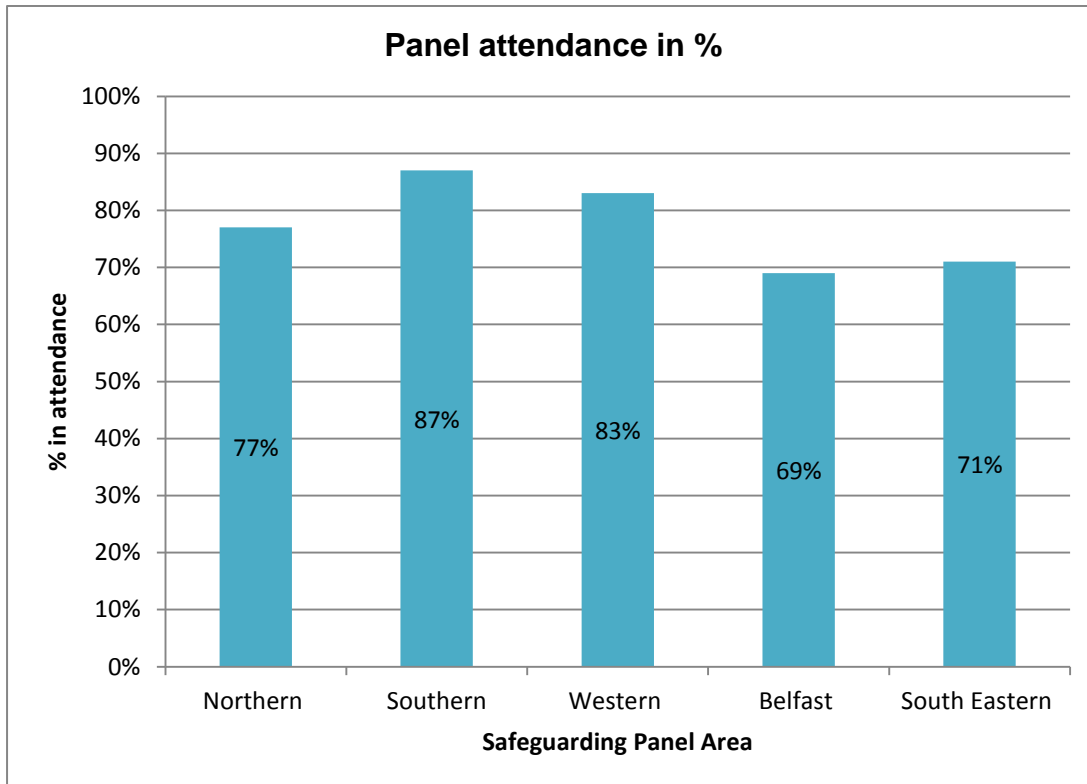
**Interfaith-** Interfaith Sub-group

**CMR-** Case Management Review Panel

**CBG-** Chairs' Business Group

## Appendix 7:

### Safeguarding Panels – membership and attendance



#### Key:

Northern Safeguarding Panel

Southern Safeguarding Panel

Western Safeguarding Panel

Belfast Safeguarding Panel

South Eastern Safeguarding Panel