

# ANNUAL REPORT

## 2017-18



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# **Foreword by the Independent Chair**

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The Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland has 27 member agencies whose common purpose is to help safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people in Northern Ireland and protect them from all forms of neglect and abuse.

Each agency is represented by a senior member of staff on the partnership which collectively provides leadership and direction to the child protection safeguarding system across Northern Ireland.

The year 2017-2018 has marked a number of changes in the SBNI including the substantive appointment of myself as Independent Chair for a four year period and the recent appointment of two lay members to the SBNI, Gerry Guckian and Simon Rogers.

The reporting period has been very active and positive for the SBNI with lots of exciting developments, involving all our member agencies.

Following the publication of Professor Jay's report into the effectiveness of the SBNI during the last reporting period, much work has been undertaken to implement Professor Jay's findings and refocus the partnership on its collective responsibility to safeguard and protect children.

This fifth annual SBNI report contains information on the many successes and improvements which have been achieved over the last 12 months – both individually and collectively. It specifically reports on engagement with children and young people, providing a platform for their voices to be heard amid the formality of case management reviews, data collection, new policies and procedures and key statutory functions.

Because of a gap in the business planning cycle during the period of the Jay Review the SBNI's business objectives 2016-2017 were carried over to the 2017-2018 Business Plan and are reported on within this annual report.

These are:

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
5. Building the capacity of the SBNI in the medium term.

These objectives have been delivered and informed through engagement with and participation of children and young people.

Within each of the business areas we have provided an update in how we have met Strategic Priority 3 and Business Objective 3.2 in relation to children/young people, families and communities to make them more aware of child safeguarding issues and how to get help if concerned.

We have supplemented this external communication with social media updates and recognise the need to review how we undertake engagement and participation.

The SBNI also continued to support other partnerships, such as the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership (CYPSP) and those working with children affected by domestic and sexual violence.

Following my appointment as permanent SBNI Chair in July 2017 efforts were made to develop a new four year strategic plan for the SBNI to cover the period 2018-2022. Member agencies participated in a number of planning days to agree the priorities and direction of travel for the Board over the next four years.

The SBNI Strategic Plan 2018-2022 went out to consultation in January 2018 and closed in March 2018 with a report on the consultation responses presented at the SBNI meeting on the 21 March 2018.

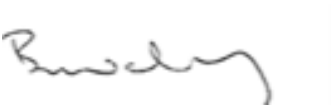
The key feature of the strategic plan is for the SBNI to adopt a trauma informed approach to safeguarding, in the search for better outcomes for children using the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) model.

This model has its antecedents in the relationship between ACEs and the development of health harming behaviours and chronic disease in adulthood. There is a robust body of research indicating that severe and/or chronic adversity in childhood has a significant negative impact on a child’s development, well-being, health, life chances and future outcomes and that four or more adverse experiences correlates with a higher probability of poor outcomes for children throughout their lives.

The SBNI in its Strategic Plan 2018-2022 will promote and support programmes of work that will focus on early intervention strategies and operational practices supported by dedicated and specific training, to improve outcomes, aiding prevention and recovery. In particular, the SBNI has identified three of the Adverse Childhood Experiences for children in Northern Ireland which it has agreed to focus its collaborative efforts on over the next four years. These are: domestic violence, mental health and neglect.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone involved in the SBNI – particularly the office staff, the members, the independent panel chairs and other key stakeholders.

I look forward to your continued support and co-operation in the year ahead.



**Bernie McNally OBE**  
**Independent Chair**



# Safeguarding Snapshot



**1,862,137**

people in Northern Ireland<sup>1</sup>  
(increase of 10,537 [0.6%] since mid-2015)

**435,567**

children under 18<sup>2</sup>  
(slight increase of 2,406 since 2016-2017)

**23.3%**

of total population<sup>2</sup>

**37,618**

children were referred to social services  
for assessment<sup>2</sup>  
(increase of 3,494 from 2016-2017)

**8.6%**

of all children

**22,737**

children known to social services as a Child in Need<sup>2</sup>  
(a decrease of 1952 from 2016 -2017)

**5.2%**

of all children

**4,646**

Children in Need with a disability<sup>2</sup>  
(increase of 334 children from 2016-2017)

**20.4%**

of all children In Need

**2,132**

children on the child protection register<sup>2</sup>  
(slight decrease of 14 children since 2016-2017)

**9.4%**

of all children in Need

**34%**

physical abuse category

**28%**

neglect category

**9%**

emotional abuse category

**7%**

sexual abuse category

**9,233**

family support referrals<sup>2</sup>  
(a slight increase of 37 on the previous year)

**7,232**

family support assessments completed at Gateway<sup>2</sup>

**4,731 (65%)**

number of the above assessments closed at Gateway<sup>2</sup>

**2,481 (34%)**

number of completed family support assessments  
transferred to FIT<sup>2</sup>

**4,021**

child protection referrals<sup>2</sup>  
(a decrease of 6% [258] on the previous year)

**3,382**

child protection investigations carried out<sup>2</sup>  
(a decrease of 3% [88] on the previous year)

**2,057**

number of child protection assessments received  
and requiring a UNOCINI assessment<sup>2</sup>

**1,970**

child protection assessments completed at Gateway<sup>2</sup>  
(a decrease of 343 on the previous year)

**815 (41%)**

child protection assessments closed by Gateway<sup>2</sup>

**979 (50%)**

number of these completed initial assessments  
transferred to FIT<sup>2</sup>

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<https://www.nisra.gov.uk/statistics/population/mid-year-population-estimates> 22 June 2017 release for mid-2016

<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/childrens-social-care-statistics-northern-ireland-201617>  
HSCB Directorate of Social care and Children - Delegated Statutory Functions (Annual Corporate Parenting Report): Statistical Report 1 April 2016 – 31 March 2017<sup>2</sup>

<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/school-enrolments-201718-statistical-bulletins> published 27 February 2018<sup>3</sup>



**2,983**

children in care of HSC Trusts (LAC)  
(increase of 93 on previous year)

**859**

children admitted to care during the year

**78%**

in foster care placements

**44%**

of these foster care placements are with  
kinship foster carers<sup>2</sup>

**12%**

children placed at home with parents<sup>2</sup>

**5%**

children in residential care<sup>2</sup>

**4%**

other placements

**716**

children discharged from care during the year

**34**

admissions to secure care (2017-2018)  
(a decrease of 9 on the previous year)

**13**

of these were repeat submissions<sup>2</sup>

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**337,789**

pupils in schools in Northern Ireland

**173,744**

pupils in primary schools<sup>3</sup>  
(increase of 2,000 pupils since 2016-2017)

**51.4%**

of all pupils

**140,545**

pupils in post primary school<sup>3</sup>  
(slight increase since 2016-2017)

**41.6%**

of all pupils

**23,500**

pupils in funded pre-school education<sup>3</sup>  
(small drop of 325 pupils since 2016-2017)

**6.9%**

of all pupils

**Over 100,000**

are entitled to free school meals<sup>3</sup>  
(small drop of 0.8% since 2016-2017)

**31.8%**

of all pupils  
(slight increase of 0.9% since 2016-2017)

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<https://www.nisra.gov.uk/statistics/population/mid-year-population-estimates> 22 June 2017 release for mid-2016

<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/childrens-social-care-statistics-northern-ireland-201617>  
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# **The role of the Safeguarding Board**

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**SBNI Strategic Priority 3 -  
'providing leadership and setting direction'**

**SBNI Business Plan 2017-2018 to  
'Ensure that the SBNI Board and associated governance  
framework is fit for purpose' 3.4**

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The member organisations that make up the multi-agency partnership that is the Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland come from both the statutory and voluntary sector.

They are led by an Independent Chair appointed on the basis of experience, expertise and knowledge of the child protection system as well as extensive experience of corporate governance and executive level decision making.

The Safeguarding Board members collectively agree the strategic priorities for safeguarding and child protection in Northern Ireland and commit to work collaboratively to achieve progress against each of these priorities.

The Business Plan 2017-2018 noted at Annex 1 lists these priorities and their progress is detailed within this Annual Report.

In order to fulfil the SBNI's duties and obligations for equality and disability, actions plans were submitted to the Equality Commission NI in August 2017. We continue to work with the Business Services Organisation Equality Unit to support our adherence and compliance with equality and disability legislation.

The SBNI decided that a review of all Memorandums of Understanding will take place on a biennial basis.

### **Working across sectors**

While working collaboratively across organisations and sectors is not a new concept in child protection work and happens regularly on a day to day basis, the formation of the SBNI in 2012 brought a formality and structure to that collaboration in the form of a number of statutory committees and short-term working groups.

Whilst it was the intention of the Board to review the membership and terms of reference of these committees during this reporting period, this task has been moved into the 2018-2019 reporting period.

### **Safeguarding Panels**

The key statutory committees which effectively drive forward child protection collaboration at local level are the five local Safeguarding Panels. These local panels are coterminous with each of the five Health and Social Care Trusts and are independently chaired by people from outside the member organisations. Each Independent Chair has been appointed on the basis of their previous operational management experience within the child protection and safeguarding system. The role of the Safeguarding Panels is to take forward collaborative work locally around the key strategic priorities set by the SBNI. The panels have also a key role to play in identifying new and emerging issues from the ground ensuring that the SBNI are fully informed of any concerns emerging from local communities, parents, children and other key stakeholders.

### **Case Management Review Panel**

The next important statutory committee which is crucial to the effective functioning of the SBNI is the Case Management Review (CMR) Panel. The CMR Panel is also independently chaired and has the specific remit of reviewing cases where the SBNI has agreed that there may be significant learning to be gained across the region. These are cases where it is considered that there have been exceptional outcomes for the children and young people concerned or are cases where things have not gone well and lessons need to be learned.

The chair of this committee is a member of the Board and reports directly to the SBNI. The learning from each Case Management Review is disseminated throughout the system via the local Safeguarding Panels.

Significant SBNI collaborative working also goes on within a number of short-term inter-agency working groups set up to examine a particular issue or emerging concern.

### **Child Sexual Exploitation**

The Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) Sub-Group was set up to take forward some of the child protection agenda recommended in child law specialist Professor Kathleen Marshall's independent report into CSE in Northern Ireland and Professor John Pinkerton of Queen's University Belfast's thematic review relating to CSE and missing children (Getting Focused and Staying Focused).

### **Internet Guidance**

A further working group example is the e-Safety Forum which was set up to help keep children and young people and their families safe in the online world.

This forum aims to provide parents, children and families with advice and guidance on how to deal with the threats posed by an ever-changing technical/internet world. It also aims to provide professionals from the various agencies with a range of tools and knowledge which they can use while working with young people, trying to help keep them safe.

### **Female Genital Mutilation**

The Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) Sub-Group was established to address the emerging issue of FGM in Northern Ireland.

The aim of the Sub-Group is to safeguard those at risk or affected by FGM and promote their welfare through effective multi-agency practice. Membership includes a number of multi-agency partners, the Department of Health (DoH), voluntary and community groups, UK Border Force and members from affected communities who have experienced FGM. Links have been established with the FGM National Centre. The work involves raising awareness about the risks of FGM and the need to protect children, developing practice guidance and pathways, training and resources to assist staff, and data collection and analysis to record incidents of FGM within Northern Ireland.

### **Reporting on Progress**

Each of these short-term groups meet regularly under the chairmanship of a Board member and report directly to the SBNI on progress against agreed terms of reference. The work of each of these is outlined in the pages that follow in this annual report.

### **Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP)**

Work is on-going in connection with child death review. This is being led by the Department of Health.

# Meet the Board Members

## Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland Annual Report 2017-18

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**Yvonne Adair**  
Safeguarding Panel  
Chair, Southern and  
South Eastern areas



**Paddy Kelly**  
Director, Children's  
Law Centre



**Marie Roulston**  
Director Women, Children and  
Families Division, Executive  
Director of Social Work, Northern  
Health and Social Care Trust



**Neil Anderson**  
National Head of Service  
for N. Ireland, NSPCC



**Cheryl Lamont**  
Chief Executive and  
Accounting Officer,  
Probation Board NI



**Dawn Shaw**  
National Director,  
Northern Ireland  
Action for Children



**Dr Martin Cunningham**  
GP Representative



**Pauline Leeson**  
Chief Executive, CiNI



**Andrew Thomson**  
Independent CMR  
Panel Chair



**George Clarke**  
Detective Chief  
Superintendent, PSNI



**Dr Clare Mangan**  
Director, Children  
and Young People's  
Services, EANI



**Una Turbitt**  
Assistant Director, Public  
Health Nursing for Children  
and Young People PHA



**Kieran Downey**  
Director of Women  
& Children's Services,  
Western Health &  
Social Care Trust



**Paddy Mooney**  
Director, Include Youth



**Brendan Whittle**  
Director, Children's Services  
& Executive Director of  
Social Work, South Eastern  
Health and Social Care Trust



**Brian Hanna**  
Safeguarding Panel  
Chair-Northern, Belfast  
and Western areas



**Paul Morgan**  
Director, Children and  
Young Peoples Services,  
Southern Health and  
Social Care Trust



**Lynda Wilson**  
Director,  
Barnardos NI



**Liam Hannaway**  
Chief Executive of  
Newry, Mourne and  
Down District Council



**Fionnuala McAndrew**  
Director, Social Care &  
Children, HSCB



**Cecil Worthington**  
Director, Social Work/  
Children's Community  
Services Belfast Health &  
Social Care Trust



**Dr Carolyn Harper**  
Medical Director/Director,  
Public Health Agency  
(PHA)



**Barbara McDermott**  
Director, Safeguarding,  
Down and Connor Diocese



**Mary Hinds**  
Executive Director of  
Nursing, Midwifery  
and Allied Health  
Professionals (PHA)



**Declan McGeown**  
Chief Executive, Youth  
Justice Agency

# **Focus on Finance**

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**SBNI Strategic Priority 3 -  
'providing leadership and setting direction'  
SBNI Business Plan 2017-2018 to**

**'Ensure that the SBNI Board and associated governance framework  
is fit for purpose' 3.4**

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The Department of Health is the sponsor department of the SBNI and allocates the annual budget.

For April 2017 to March 2018 this was £694,200 a reduction of 5% on its 2016-2017 annual budget allocation.

Additional to this, the Public Health Agency (PHA) supplemented this amount with an extra £63,288 to fund the SBNI for Case Management Reviews (CMR).

Finally, the Health and Social Care Board added a non-pay inflation increase amount of £2,919.

The total budget for the SBNI for April 2017-March 2018 was: £760,407.

This was to cover spend on both salaries and goods and services.

**Major Significant Goods and Services Spend:** In the Net: e-safety and cyber-bullying play seen by over 11,000 primary school pupils - £19,410

**Policies and Procedures:** Launch and implementation of revised regional policies and procedures to safeguard children and young people - £5,841  
Case Management Reviews – learning from practice: £48,891

**Safeguarding Panels – the SBNI at work locally: £25,000**

- Belfast – Neglect Conference: £3,500
- Northern – Dissemination of Learning from CMRs and CSE Workshops in Schools: £6,500
- South Eastern – Respect: £5,000
- Southern - Dissemination of Learning from CMRs: £5,000
- Western - Working with young people to develop a participation and engagement framework: £5,000

Out of the budget allocation of £760,407, a total of £668,077 was spent across salaries and goods and services. This resulted in an underspend of £92,330.

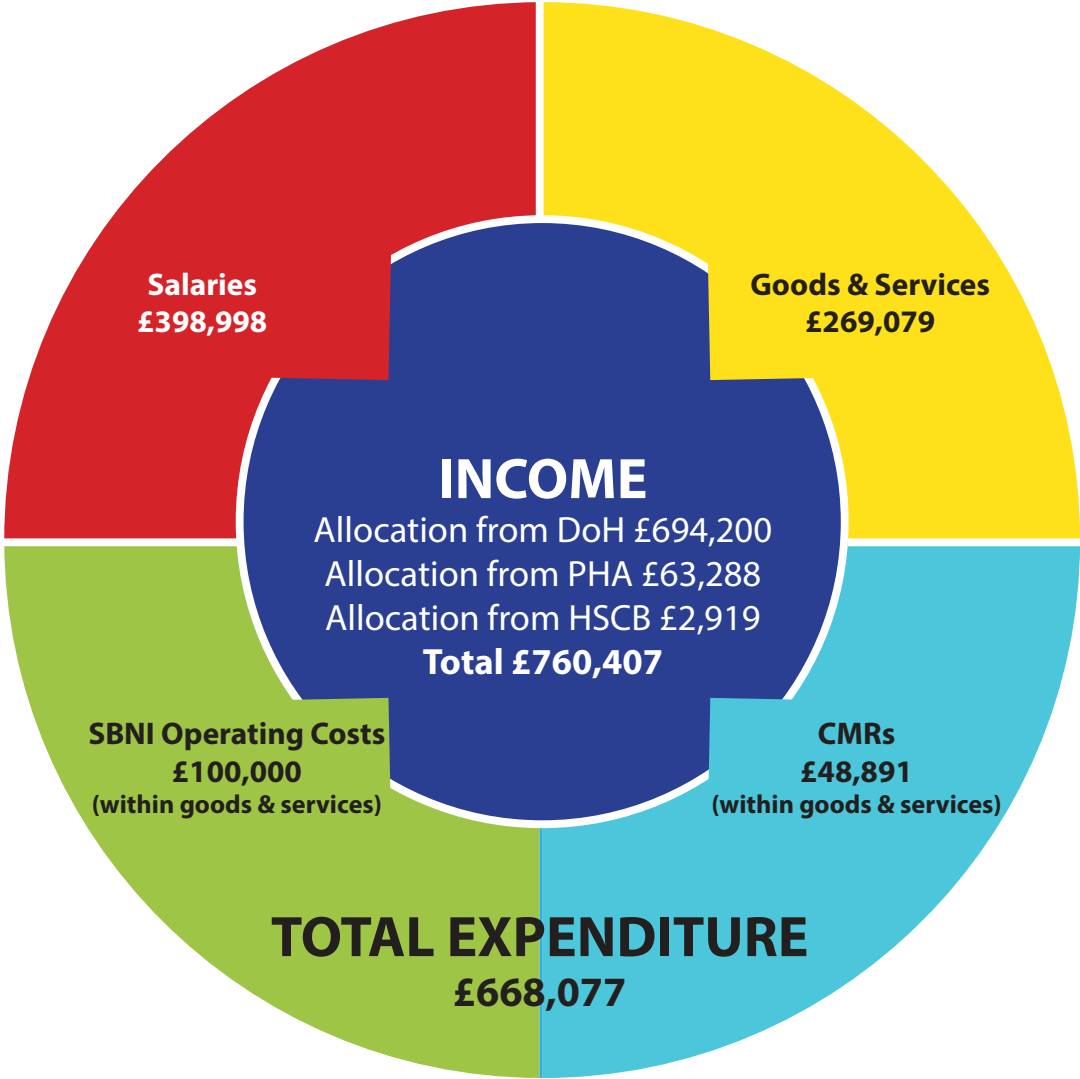
The salaries underspend was composed of budget relating to posts that were not filled either for all of the year, or for a proportion of the year.

**These related to:**

- 1 Admin post (2 months)
- 2 Lay member appointments (11 months)
- 2 Safeguarding Panel Chairs (5 months).

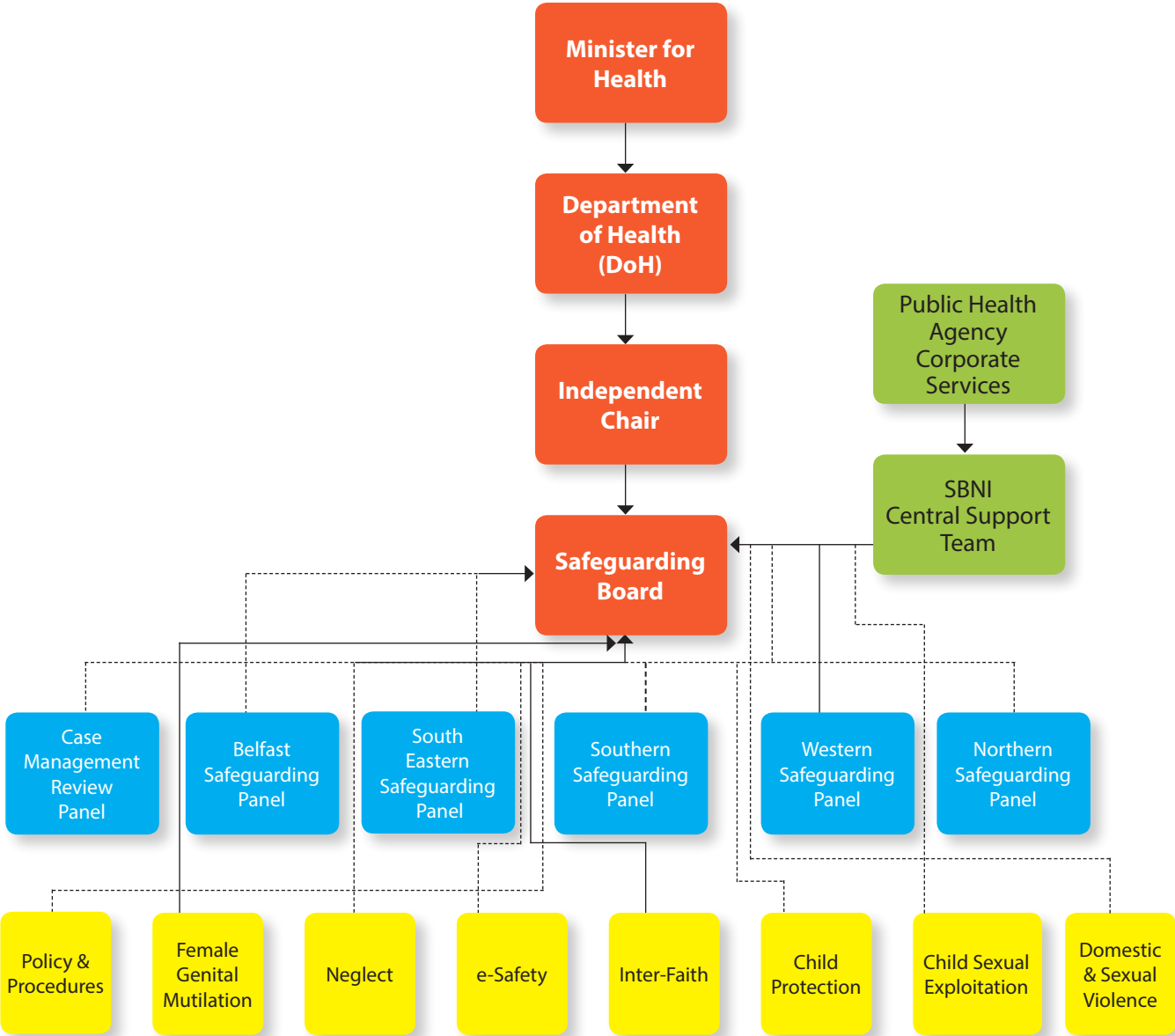
**The goods and services underspend was composed of budget relating to particular operational areas:**

- Revision to case management reviews resulting in savings because the full process not always being required
- SBNI Board decision not to procure an external agency for the Policies and Procedures launch
- Domestic and Sexual Violence Sub-Group only established in the last quarter of 2017 – 2018
- The 'Nightwatch' aspect of the Night-Time Economy Programme was not progressed in 2017- 2018 due to the service provider no longer being able to commit to the project. The allocated funding was therefore not able to be spent.



# How the SBNI is structured

# Organisational Structure



# Learning from practice

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

**SBNI Business Plan 2017-2018 to "Influence practice positively and enhance the learning from Case Management Reviews, by improving the CMR process" 4.1**

**Business Plan Objectives:**

- **Develop and implement a multi-agency CMR Practice Guidance.**
  - **Consider CMR Notifications against criteria for CMRs.**
  - **Aim to complete each CMR within agreed months of being commissioned.**
  - **On-going training programme for CMR Chair Leads and others including IAR Authors, CMR Sub-Group members of Panels and CMR Team members.**
  - **Oversee the monitoring of CMR action plans and provide an update to the Board.**
  - **Ensure messages/learning from CMRs is widely disseminated within all agencies.**
-

The SBNI has a statutory function to carry out Case Management Reviews (CMRs) on notified cases where there have been exceptional outcomes for children and young people or where things have not gone well and significant learning for the system is involved. The main purpose of such reviews is to help strengthen systems and processes for protecting children and young people from abuse and neglect by learning from practice experience.

The task of conducting CMRs is primarily carried out through the CMR Panel. An independent reviewer is appointed to examine the case. The CMR Panel meets monthly and is chaired by an independent member of the Board and includes senior manager representatives from a broad range of member agencies. The criteria for conducting a CMR are set down in legislation. Each review establishes the facts of the case – what worked well, whether there are any lessons to be learned about the way statutory and voluntary bodies worked together and whether any changes are needed.

#### **Multi-agency CMR Practice Guidance**

Multi-agency CMR Practice Guidance was developed and implemented during 2017 - 2018. This new process has the aim of addressing identified issues around timeliness, methodology and quality assurance. The new process was circulated and is available on the SBNI website.

To support awareness and implementation of the new Multi-agency CMR Practice Guidance, a series of events were undertaken within each Safeguarding Panel area. The out-workings of the new process will be monitored and subject to review and evaluation over a two year period.

#### **Consideration of CMR Notifications**

During the year 2017-2018 twenty-three CMR notifications were received by the SBNI and from these, three CMRs were commissioned.

A total of five CMR reports were presented to and approved by the SBNI during the reporting period. From these reports twenty-two recommendations were identified. In addition to these, recommendations were made by a number of agencies in their Individual Agency Review Reports as part of the CMR process.

**Improved timescales for completing CMRs**

Since the introduction of the Multi-agency CMR Practice Guidance, three CMRs have been completed with an average timeframe of seven months. This indicates that the new process is improving the timeliness of CMRs which ensures that the learning is identified and available for dissemination much earlier.

**On-going Training Programme**

A number of training events were held for those with distinct roles within the CMR process. These events included specific training for Independent CMR Team Chairs, Individual Agency Reviews Authors, CMR Team members and Independent Safeguarding Panel Chairs.

Some comments made by CMR Team Chairs attending training included:

“Useful opportunity to reflect and consider ways of strengthening practice”

“Good day, well organised.”



**SBNI Chair, CMR Panel Chair and CMR Team Chairs at a CMR Training event**



Some comments made by participants attending CMR training included:

- “Very informative session”
- “I have a greater understanding of importance of process and tips on best practice”
- “Useful focused workshop with relevant presentations.”

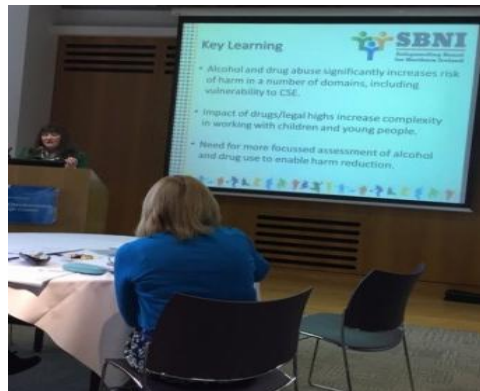


**CMR Action Plans**

In line with the new Multi-agency CMR Practice Guidance, Actions Plans are now developed and implemented by those agencies responsible for taking forward specific recommendations. This area of the process is monitored by the Safeguarding Panels and overseen by the Board.

### **Dissemination of key messages/learning from CMRs**

A regional event and seven local events in Safeguarding Panel areas were held to disseminate, examine and highlight the learning arising from 10 CMRs undertaken by the SBNI. These events were well attended by all agencies involved in safeguarding children in Northern Ireland. The learning from the CMRs was collated and disseminated via the SBNI website.



Examples of learning arising from CMRs that are making a positive difference to the child protection system in Northern Ireland are listed below:

- Increased awareness for staff regarding parental mental health and its impact on children and young people. The regional framework for intervening with families has now been reviewed and audited. An action plan is currently being developed to take forward the findings.
- A Regional Multi-Agency Protocol for Sudden Unexplained Death in Infancy for Northern Ireland is being developed. This will improve how this area of exceptionally difficult work with families is undertaken to strengthen protection for children.

- Increased awareness for staff regarding the devastating impact of neglect on children and how work on this particular area of concern can be improved to help address its impact on children's lives. SBNI has adopted the issue of addressing neglect as one of its strategic priorities for 2018-2022 and have developed a Neglect Strategy for Northern Ireland.
- The SBNI Neglect Strategy will improve outcomes for children and young people by ensuring that prevention, early recognition and agency responses to children, young people and families affected or potentially affected by neglect are appropriate and effective.
- Ensuring information sharing and decision making in child protection is more effective by recommending amendments to policies and procedures to improve professional attendance at Child Protection Case Conferences. These have now been implemented.

### **Recruitment**

During the reporting period a successful selection and recruitment process was undertaken for new Independent CMR Team Chairs to enhance the spectrum of expertise and provide greater depth and resilience to the existing Panel of Chairs.

# Child sexual exploitation - the work of the CSE Sub-Group

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

**SBNI Business Plan 2017- 2018: to “work with member agencies to develop a coordinated and working model to safeguard children who go missing from their home or care and/or are at risk of sexual exploitation” 2.1**

**Business Plan Objectives:**

- **To develop an understanding of CSE in Northern Ireland as experienced by young people**
  - **Raise awareness of CSE for boys and young men through engagement and resource development**
  - **Raise awareness of CSE utilising social media**
  - **Assist Policy and Procedure Committee by identifying good practice**
  - **Report to the SBNI Board on the delivery of the Marshall and Pinkerton**
  - **Recommendations by SBNI member agencies**
  - **Deliver the Night Time Economy Programme, and**
  - **Develop CSE inputs for the Safeguarding App.**
- 
-

Child sexual exploitation (CSE) is a major threat to children in Northern Ireland and the SBNI has a key role to play in managing the issue. This is done through the Child Sexual Exploitation Sub-Group. The aim of this group is to work collaboratively to ensure the safeguarding and welfare of children and young people who are being sexually exploited, or who are at risk of being sexually exploited.

Throughout the 2017- 2018 reporting period the SBNI has continued to work together to strengthen its strategic leadership on the issue of CSE by ensuring consistency of messaging, raising general and professional awareness and media engagement. It has done this through the CSE Sub Group and the delivery of the Business Plan Objectives.

### **CSE in Northern Ireland**

The SBNI has previously promoted 'The More You Know the More You See', CSE general awareness raising campaign which focused primarily on girls and young women; however, at the end of the 2016-2017 reporting period it committed to raising awareness of CSE of boys and young men with professional and community workshops.

### **Raising awareness of CSE amongst boys and young men.**

In order to further develop an understanding of how boys and young men are affected by CSE the Sub-Group maintained an emphasis on this aspect of CSE throughout the year, starting with a 'Café Conversation' at the Northern Ireland NHS Confederation Conference, raising awareness among senior leaders in the health and social care sector. The event showcased the awareness raising materials designed and developed by boys and young men (BYM) from Keady and East Belfast supported by Youth Action and Barnardo's NI Safe Choices. The BYM involved in developing the awareness raising resources designed a 'call to action' in order that we can all 'Shout Out, Speak Out' on the issue of CSE, to help keep young people safe from harm and abuse.





**Communicating the message**

Following on from the NHS Conference the SBNI was invited to attend a presentation at Youth Action, for all of the boys and young men who had participated in the development of the awareness raising resources and promotional materials, as well as discussion groups on masculinity. It provided the Sub-Group with the opportunity to feedback to the young men that over 22,000 awareness raising leaflets and schools promotion material boxes had been distributed across Northern Ireland, to youth organisations and schools and that those involved in the project had been active participants in influencing social policy.



The need to continue to challenge cultural norms on machoism and ensure professional curiosity was further enhanced through the delivery of bespoke 'Boys and Young Men' workshops held by the Belfast and Southern Safeguarding Panels. Barnardo's NI and Youth Action also provided general CSE and specific BYM inputs for the Safeguarding App. All of the engagements and awareness raising initiatives surrounding this issue were promoted via social media platforms across the member agencies.



### **Ensuring Good Practice**

To ensure consistency of CSE data collation the Sub-Group worked with the Department of Health in supporting the adoption of the Home Office definition of CSE. This revised definition for use in Northern Ireland was published in *Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young people – August 2017*. The Sub-Group has also been working with the Policy and Procedures Committee in the development of the 'Child Protection/Safeguarding in Specific Circumstances - Child Sexual Exploitation' procedure.

### **Delivering on the Marshall and Pinkerton Recommendations**

The CSE Sub-Group has also overseen the completion of all SBNI allocated Marshall recommendations and the CSE audit by the HSCB and the PSNI detailed in 'Getting Focused and Staying Focused' authored by Professor Pinkerton, Queens University, Belfast. The audit was finalised and presented to the Department of Health in August 2017. The audit identified areas of good practice within and across member agencies such as the introduction of CSE Leads in the Trust areas which was helping to inform practice: in particular, assessment and planning, the delivery of multi-agency training and a greater understanding of and priority placed on, building relationships between young people and their key worker(s).

To ensure that the SBNI is contributing to improved outcomes for children at risk of or experiencing CSE, the Sub-Group has approved another piece of work to examine how each of the SBNI member agencies responds to CSE in terms of: assessment, care planning, risk management, provision of care, reported absences, response to criminal offences against the young people, reporting and information sharing and the involvement and support of senior managers. This work will be undertaken in the next reporting period.

### **The Night Time Economy**

In an effort to ensure that key and consistent messaging associated with CSE awareness raising is embedded within the taxi driving profession, as part of the Night Time Economy Programme, the Sub-Group worked with the Department of Health (DoH), the Department for Infrastructure and the Driver and Vehicle Agency to produce a CSE training specification. This will ensure a sustainable approach to raising awareness within this very important sector. Training providers will work with the Joint Approvals Unit for Periodic Training (JAUPT) to deliver the course as part of the taxi driver training syllabus. In addition the DoH has worked with the Procurement and Logistics Service to have CSE awareness training as a mandatory requirement in the forthcoming Health and Social Care (HSC) tender for Transport Services.



# Local Safeguarding Panel Activities

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**The statutory functions of the SBNI Safeguarding Panels are to:**

- **Coordinate the implementation of the SBNI Strategic Plan for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people**
- **Monitor the implementation of the SBNI's policies and procedures**
- **Promote an awareness of the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people**
- **Implement arrangements for sharing the findings of case management reviews**
- **Promote communication between the Safeguarding Panels and children and young people**

**Strategic Priority 3 and Business Objective 3.3**

- **'Fulfil the statutory duty to promote the 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'**
  - **Strategic Priority 4 - 'Driving Improvements in the current child protection system'**
  - **Business Plan 2017-2018 to 'keep under review the effectiveness of the Safeguarding Panels in terms of meeting the SBNI core functions'**
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## The main focus of the five Safeguarding Panels is to deliver locally the SBNI's strategic priority areas.

### **Each of the Safeguarding Panels has an independent chair and is interagency and multi-disciplinary in nature.**

Each panel has representatives from local voluntary and community groups, education, youth justice, police, probation, councils and health and social care representatives including nurses, doctors, social workers and professionals with special responsibility for children's mental health services.

The five panels met regularly throughout 2017 – 2018 and increased and enhanced their alignment and engagement with the Board, the central support team and the Sub-Groups. This has resulted in strengthening the focus and content of the panels' work, at a local level, to the priorities and aims of the SBNI.

### **Co-ordinate the implementation of SBNI's strategic plan**

- Delivery of the findings of the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust (SEHSCT)/ Queen's University pilot on ACEs (Adverse Childhood Experiences) by SEHSCT to the South Eastern Panel. This successfully brought the subject of ACEs to the fore and allowed those not as familiar with the concept to gain more knowledge and information.
- Presentation and facilitated discussion by the SEHSCT Domestic and Sexual Violence Partnership to the SE Panel. This was welcomed by members and promoted the support to the RESPECT training programme, to be delivered 2018 - 2019.

### **Monitor the implementation of SBNI's Policies and Procedures**

- Three separate Policies and Procedures awareness raising sessions – in Carrickfergus, Antrim and Coleraine - were held across the Northern Panel area, reaching two hundred multi-agency professionals.
- The Western Panel incorporated the implementation of the revised policies and procedures within its CMR event. Held in March, this was attended by a large number of professionals across a range of agencies. Feedback was very positive and reinforced the need for an annual event.

**Promote an awareness of the need to safeguard children**

- The Belfast Panel's Neglect Conference attracted an audience of two hundred delegates. The key speaker was Jenny Molloy, author of the 'Hackney Child', who shared her personal account of living with neglect. Bronagh Muldoon, NSPCC Belfast Service Manager said "The conference offered an ideal opportunity to hear from leading contributors in the field of neglect, but we were also able to ask those attending to share their views and experiences of how to best respond to this problem. It meant we could share valuable insights as those of us who support families deal with this every day".



- Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) workshops were delivered across the Northern Panel area to one school per month throughout the year. Each workshop reached approximately one hundred pupils.
- A presentation to the South Eastern Panel by a local expert, on the issue of neglect, using a specific Case Management Review as an example, reinforced to members that neglect is everyone's business and the importance of interdisciplinary and interagency communication and coordination.
- A refresher course on Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) under the SBNI FGM Sub-Group was delivered to the South Eastern Panel. This brought important information and reminded members that this issue, whilst not prolific, is one of which all who work in the field of child protection need to be aware.

- Following the successful Neglect Conference held March 2017, a second phase of work by the Western Panel began this year. This involved a multi -agency awareness raising workshop which has developed the framework for a programme of five seminars to be delivered across the Western Trust area April – June 2018. The target audience will be those who support families but for whom safeguarding is not their key role.
- Funded by the Public Health Agency’s Sexual Health Strategy, the PANTS campaign in the Western Trust area was supported by the panel member agencies, with a launch event held in September. This was followed by a number of workshops delivered across the Western Trust area.

### **Implement arrangements for sharing the findings of CMRs**

- Following the regional event, each of the five panels held their own bespoke events, all of which attracted a large number of attendees, with excellent levels of engagement and positive feedback. Comments received, amongst many, included “need to focus more on the child’s experience/voice”, “increase awareness of mental health”, “more awareness of the vulnerability of LD families”, “better engagement with fathers and new partners”. These events were successful in reinforcing the importance of assessment, communication and coordination.



### **Promote communication between the Panels and Children and Young People**

- The Belfast Panel facilitated a youth engagement 'Elephant in the Room' Mental Health campaign, delivered by the Belfast Youth Forum.
- A presentation to the South Eastern Panel by a young adult ex-service user who has survived serious and chronic neglect, both gave the young person the opportunity to convey his experience and members to hear clearly what did and did not work.
- A powerful, personal account of a young woman, ex-service user, who has survived serious neglect, was given to the Southern Panel. This illustrated very graphically the impact of neglect, how it can be survived, and reminded members that it is something that cannot be ignored or overlooked.
- An evening engagement with young people (aged 16 to 18) from Armagh and Craigavon Youth Councils, to gain feedback on the draft strategic plan, proved very useful. The young people engaged with enthusiasm and were eager to share their opinions on what was needed, with mental health support being to the fore with the... "need to develop the curriculum in both primary and secondary schools to include mental health", "introduce a system in schools of mental health checks as it is as important as physical health."
- To continue engagement with young people, the Western Panel embarked on a project to promote and articulate the views of those involved with social services' child care provision. The panel built upon previous work completed, and with funding from WHSCT, has completed one of three planned videos of young people voicing their experiences. These will be used for training and professional development purposes.

# Safer in the digital world

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**SBNI Strategic Priority 2 ‘Protect and safeguard children by responding to new and emerging concerns’.**

**SBNI Business Plan 2017-2018, “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)” 2.2**

**Business Plan Objectives:**

- **Plan and implement a coordinated approach to e-safety in Northern Ireland.**
  - **Promote the voices of children and young people as valued participants in the e-Safety Forum work.**
  - **Pull together key educational e-safety messages for children, parents and practitioners from existing resources into one location and providing a quality assurance function.**
  - **Ensure that the views of children and young people are integral to the work of the e-Safety Forum.**
  - **Inform and influence policy and practice development on e-safety in Northern Ireland.**
  - **Raise awareness of new and emerging threats in the ‘on-line’ world.**
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The 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”.

**Key e-Safety Messages**

Significant work was undertaken throughout 2017-2018 by members of the Forum to provide: information, training, awareness raising events and programmes which helped achieve this aim. The SBNI had made a commitment in 2016-2017 to bring together key educational e-safety messages for children, parents and practitioners from existing resources into one resource package. The SBNI was supported by partners such as the Policing and Community Safety Partnerships (PCSPs), and subsequently developed the VIRTUAL REALity programme which was launched in March 2017. Since then, over 3000 people have received training on VIRTUAL REALity by staff from the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI), who are the lead member agency delivering the programme. This exceeded the original commitment by the PSNI which was to deliver the programme to 1000 participants. Awareness raising events, using the VIRTUAL REALity content, were held for church leaders, the Security Industry Association, Locality Planning Groups, youth groups, schools and sporting groups. In addition the programme was promoted as part of the Public Protection Arrangements for Northern Ireland (PPANI) special interest seminar on safeguarding.

As part of the Young Minds Matter Conference in October the programme was delivered to 200 post primary school boys in Newry. An adapted version has also been designed for the Police College to deliver to probationary officers to inform them of trends and patterns of online abuse. The programme has been instrumental in informing and influencing policy and practice development on e-safety in Northern Ireland.



To ensure sustainability of the programme the PSNI also worked with St Mary’s University College, Belfast, to deliver training to 600 student teachers and has plans in place to deliver the programme to Stranmillis University College in Autumn 2018. Member agencies such as Children in Northern Ireland (CiNI) have also worked with the PSNI to deliver the VIRTUAL REALity programme and have incorporated it into their portfolio of safeguarding training.



**Listening and responding to children and young people**

To ensure the voice of young people is valued and informs the work of the Forum, the National Children’s Bureau (NCB) continued to facilitate participation with children and young people (CYP). In particular they hosted a participation event for children and young people during which they were able to share with the SBNI the safeguarding information they wanted access to on the Safeguarding App. The event was very successful because it ensured that the views of CYP were integrated into the work of the Forum. It also guided how the Forum decided to progress the development of the Safeguarding App during 2017-2018.





The Forum continued its partnership with the NI Anti-Bullying Forum (NIABF) and its support of Anti-Bullying Week 2018 (ABW18) which continues to provide the SBNI with an unrivalled opportunity to raise awareness of all aspects of bullying but in particular cyber bullying. The standard of competition entries for the 'all equal all different all together', themed DVD entries was exceptionally high and the Forum Chair was pleased to be able to attend the awards ceremony and meet the category winners.



### **Keeping safe in the online world**

Following on from Anti-Bullying Week 2018 the Forum supported the delivery of the internet safety educational play, 'In the Net' for primary school pupils in Northern Ireland, from February to March 2018. Its aim was to raise awareness about e-safety and cyber-bullying and give clear safeguarding and protection messages about staying safe online. The play originally toured to primary schools in 2017 and due to the positive feedback from children and schools the Forum decided to support a second tour. The 5-week tour provided 50 performances across all five Education Authority geographical areas. Approximately, 11,000 primary school children viewed a performance of In the Net with a cost of a performance, per pupil, of £1.77. Evaluation responses received from the hosting schools reflected a 100% success of meeting the intentions and objectives of the play with a recurring comment that the play should be brought back to Northern Ireland and that all Primary 3 to Primary 7 pupils should have the opportunity to see the production.



“The play totally reinforced the messages we are teaching the children in school, so was very positive. Because the children hear the same message from lots of different people and in different forms it hopefully reinforces it. It was very age appropriate and all the classes benefitted. The teachers gave very positive feedback. “Provided a good talking point for pupils afterwards. Well organised from initial contact.”

“The messages were very clearly communicated to the pupils in a fun way. The pupils were totally enthralled and really retained the very serious issues conveyed”

“A really engaging and informative production pitched at the children’s level and brought the adults up to date with relevant cyber-bullying knowledge.”

### **A Northern Ireland approach to keeping safe online**

The Forum has continued to work together to provide a coordinated approach to e-safety in Northern Ireland and will resume its work on the draft e-Safety Strategy and accompanying Action Plan for Northern Ireland once approval to consult is received.

The membership of the Forum affords a unique opportunity to be aware of all the good work on-going across Northern Ireland to help keep children and young people and their families safe in the digital world and to be advised of the new and emerging threats in the ‘on-line world’ from which to inform that work.

# **Safeguarding in faith communities**

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**The aim of the Inter Faith Sub-Group is to enhance the safety and welfare of children and young people within the range of faith group provisions across NI.**

**2017 - 2018 Business Objectives are to:**

- Develop partnership working with others concerned in safeguarding children and young people in Northern Ireland**
  - Develop and sharing good practice arrangements and safeguarding resources within the faith sector.**
  - Contribute to the review of SBNI child protection policies and procedures**
  - Ensure the adoption and dissemination of the revised child protection policies and procedures across the faith sector**
  - Identify key localised issues and developing key safeguarding initiatives within faith groups**
  - Support the promotion within faith groups of appropriate safeguarding messages at an operational level**
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The Inter Faith Sub-Group is currently made up of representatives from the main Christian denominations in Northern Ireland: Church of Ireland, Evangelical Alliance, Methodist Church in Ireland, Presbyterian Church in Ireland and the Roman Catholic Diocese of Down and Connor. Lay membership, to provide professional advice and support, comes from the NSPCC and the PSNI.

Throughout 2017–2018 the Sub-Group has worked to enhance the safety and welfare of children and young people within the range of faith group provisions across Northern Ireland. This is achieved by encouraging and supporting cooperation across and between this faith sector and others working in the field of child safeguarding.

It is acknowledged that at least 68% of youth groups in Northern Ireland are faith based and as such, accessing volunteers and young people in these settings is a very important resource for anyone wishing to communicate key safeguarding messages to young people.

The Sub-Group worked across the sector to deliver two lunchtime seminars, in conjunction with Public Protection Arrangements NI and PSNI, on 'Offenders returning to Faith'. These events were very well attended and will be carried on into 2018-2019.

Members of the faith sector also attended the regional events held to launch the SBNI revised child protection policies and procedures to ensure the dissemination and adoption of the policies and procedures within the faith sector. In addition to this work the Sub-Group has collaborated with the Policy and Procedures Committee and is currently reviewing guidance in relation to the, 'Management of Allegations of Abuse arising in the Faith Sector'.

The Sub-Group supported the roll out of the VIRTUAL REALity programme and the Church of Ireland and the Roman Catholic Diocese of Down and Connor hosted specific local events to promote the use of the programme in and by local communities. It also produced a newsletter that was disseminated across all of the churches to highlight the role of the Inter Faith Sub-Group and the safeguarding events and initiatives being undertaken across the sector in individual churches and in collaboration with others.

# **Tackling neglect**

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## **SBNI Strategic Priority 1**

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

**SBNI Business Plan 2017-2018 to “Ensure safeguarding practice in relation to particularly vulnerable children is effective.”<sup>1.2</sup>**

**Business Plan Objective:  
Develop a Neglect Strategy for NI**

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In the UK neglect is consistently cited as one of the most common reasons for a child or young person to be placed on a child protection register and need a child protection plan.

Neglect is the failure to provide for a child's basic needs – adequate food, clothing, hygiene, supervision or shelter – and is likely to result in the serious impairment of a child's health or development. Children and young people who are neglected often also suffer from other types of abuse and they become more vulnerable to predators who wish to do them harm. Neglect may also include unresponsiveness to a child's basic emotional, social and educational needs.

In Northern Ireland families with children are the highest group to live in poverty. In February 2018 nearly 110,000 children in Northern Ireland were reported to be living in poverty<sup>1</sup>.

Between January and March 2018, 530 children were placed on the child protection register in Northern Ireland because of neglect which is the second highest category after physical abuse, which numbered 678 children. A total of 457 children suffered a combination of neglect and physical abuse<sup>2</sup>.

The SBNI identified neglect as a cross-cutting theme in its Business Plan 2016 - 2017 and established the SBNI Neglect Sub-Group to tackle the issue on a multi-agency basis. During the reporting year 2017 – 2018 the Sub-Group has continued to address the issue.

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<sup>1</sup> 'Poverty in Northern Ireland 2018' Joseph Rowntree Fund <https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/poverty-northern-ireland-2018>

<sup>2</sup> Quarterly child protection statistics for Northern Ireland January 2018 – March 2018  
<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/quarterly-child-protection-statistics-northern-ireland-january-march-2018>

### **Development of a Neglect Strategy for Northern Ireland**

This Business Plan Objective was achieved in March 2018 when the Neglect Strategy for Northern Ireland was approved by the Board. The purpose of the Neglect Strategy is to:

- Secure collective commitment for addressing neglect across all SBNI Member Agencies.
- Demonstrate effective leadership in driving any required systems and process changes forward.
- Improve awareness and understanding of neglect across all SBNI member agencies. This includes a common understanding of neglect, the impact of neglect and the thresholds for intervention.
- Improve the recognition, assessment, use of assessment tools and responses to children, young people and families experiencing neglect.
- Agree common outcomes, measures and metrics on the effectiveness of single agency and multi-agency service provision.
- Ensure that the views of children/young people, parents/carers and staff inform practice and interventions.
- Improve awareness, understanding and action on neglect for organisations that work with children and young people, families and others.

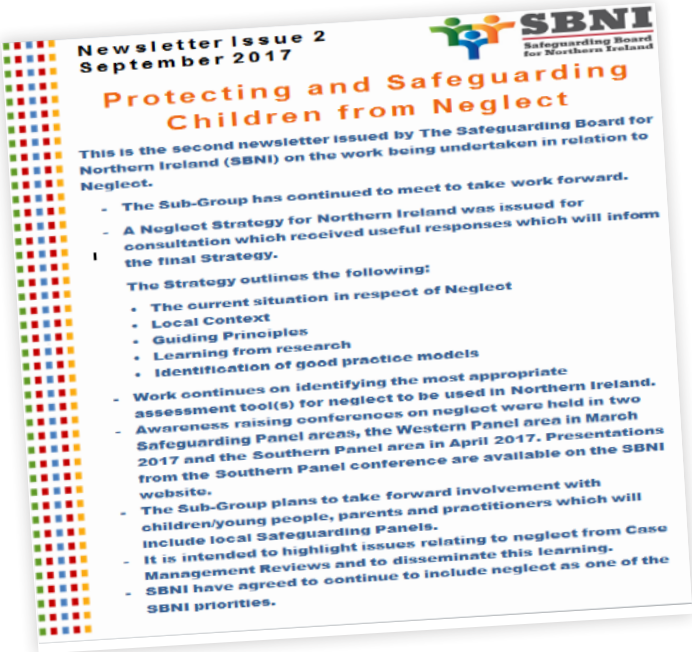
This Strategy encompasses the objectives listed above and includes the Sub-Group work plan which outlines how it intends to carry forward the work on addressing the issue of neglect.

A number of tasks were undertaken by the Sub-Group such as obtaining information about how agencies respond to the issue of neglect with the purpose of informing the Neglect Strategy. This information, along with a review of research, was used by the Sub-Group to identify the most appropriate tool for assessing neglect within Northern Ireland. Agencies were also asked to provide information on the training undertaken in relation to neglect within their agency with the purpose of ascertaining what is available to staff and to identify any gaps.

During 2017-2018 the SBNI sponsored two successful Safeguarding Panel Conferences to raise awareness regarding the issue of neglect.



A Neglect Newsletter was circulated during the reporting year to raise awareness of neglect and the work of the Neglect Sub-Group.





# SBNI Child Protection

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**Strategic Priority 5 ‘Building the capacity of the Safeguarding Board in the medium term’.**

**SBNI Business Plan 2017-2018, “To review the effectiveness of the Board in terms of meeting its Board’s core functions.” 5.1**

**Functions include:**

- **Creation of standards and performance indicators against which the Board can be measured;**
- **Judgement of how safely and effectively the child protection system is operating across the region;**

**The use of the section 12 legal duty to understand the current child protection/safeguarding governance arrangements each organisation has in place.**

**Business Plan Objectives:**

- **Use multi-agency data to inform child protection priorities.**
  - **Adopt an OBA approach to business planning**
  - **Develop a performance measurement framework to assess how well we are doing.**
  - **To reform the child protection arrangements by the introduction of the ‘Signs of Safety’ approach.**
  - **Address intergenerational abuse by introducing an Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE) informed approach across statutory partners.**
  - **Develop Section 12 process and evaluation**
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The purpose of the SBNI Child Protection Sub-Group is to ensure statutory partners meet regularly to consider the range of child protection information available and to use this to agree priorities which can be actioned through an outcome based accountability framework.

The 2017-2018 reporting period saw the Sub-Group agree and progress the following priorities:

- To work on measuring outcomes for children in the child protection system
- To reform the child protection arrangements by the introduction of the 'Signs of Safety' approach
- To address intergenerational abuse by introducing an Adverse Childhood Experience informed approach across statutory partners

### **How well are we doing?**

To measure outcomes for children in the child protection system the Sub-Group established a task and finish group to develop outcomes based indicators. The task and finish group identified the "Outcomes Family Star Plus" system as the most suitable process with which to measure three key areas:

1. The child's perspective – How safe they were prior to being included in Child Protection Register (CPR) and also following registration.
2. Parent's perspective on how safe their child was both prior to and after registration.
3. The child's and parent's views on the experiences of the child protection system.

The 'Outcomes Family Star Plus' provides a tool to help quantify the movement families and children make towards better outcomes. It is intended to commence a pilot during the 2018-2019 business year, running in each of the 5 Trust areas, to source regional statistics in order to undertake the appropriate analysis and evaluation of this tool. The results of this pilot will be reported in the 2018-2019 Annual Report.

### **Supporting the introduction of Signs of Safety**

A part of the tri-fold initiatives of improvement noted above the SBNI approved support for the use of the Signs of Safety (SoS)<sup>3</sup> practice model, across the health and social care sector, in the first instance. SoS is an innovative strengths-based, safety-organised approach to the protection of children and young people. It enables the investigation of risk to encompass strengths and signs of safety that can be built upon to stabilise and strengthen a child's and family's situation and will encourage practitioners to take a more trauma-informed approach to practice.

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<sup>3</sup> Signs of Safety: A Solution and Safety Orientated Approach to Child Protection Casework. Steve Edwards and Andrew Turnell

**Developing an ACE Aware Workforce**

In addition to the SoS work and in order to address intergenerational abuse by introducing an Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE) informed approach across statutory partners, the Sub-Group worked with the Children and Young People’s Strategic Partnership (CYPSP) and other partners to deliver a regional conference on ACEs which took place in November 2017. The delegates all came from a wide range of organisations in a position to take action on ACEs from: government, education, health and social care, safeguarding, policy, youth justice, policing, local government, universities and the community and voluntary sectors. The conference represented an important opportunity for all to agree how actions can be taken forward in Northern Ireland to contribute to improving outcomes for children and young people.



Following on from the conference and the public commitment of the SBNI to adopt a trauma informed approach to safeguarding practice, in the search for better outcomes for children and young people, the Department of Health announced that the SBNI would take forward the Early Intervention Transformation Programme (EITP) Workstream 4. This work stream aims to better understand the extent to which children and young people in Northern Ireland are impacted by ACEs and to strengthen the understanding of ACEs among professionals working with them, including those involved in child protection, and in the wider community. The Sub-Group worked for the remainder of the 2017-2018 reporting period to support this work, by informing the design and planning for how best the aims of the work stream could be translated into practice. The project will start formally in April 2018 and an update report will be provided in the 2018-2019 Annual Report.



The priorities identified by the Sub-Group dovetail to enhance how practitioners work with children and their families to improve outcomes. By having access to the Signs of Safety toolkit and by being ACE aware, practitioners will have greater opportunity to work in a therapeutic and trauma informed way in order to build resilience and improve outcomes for children and families.

The work of the Sub-Group will continue into the next business year and updates will be provided in the 2018-2019 Annual Report.

**Using data to safeguard children and young people**

The Sub-Group provided an analysis of the currently available child protection data in order to inform the strategic priorities for the 2018–2022 Strategic Plan. This analysis, combined with the input of children and young people and parents and carers, produced the Strategic Plan priorities which went to public consultation in January 2018. The Sub-Group was supported by partner agencies, such as the National Children’s Bureau NI, Parenting NI and Women’s Aid Federation NI, in ensuring the participation and engagement of children and young people in this very important process, which will provide the strategic direction for the SBNI for the next four years.



# Supporting those at risk of female genital mutilation

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## **SBNI Strategic Priority 2**

**‘Protect and safeguard children by responding to new and emerging concerns’**

**Develop a full understanding of new and emerging concerns impacting children and young people in Northern Ireland 2.3**

### **Business Plan Objectives:**

- **Safeguard those at risk or affected by Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and promote their welfare through effective multi-agency practice.**
  - **Establish an understanding of the extent of FGM within Northern Ireland.**
  - **Working with communities in a culturally sensitive manner.**
  - **Development of practice guidance and pathways.**
  - **Development of regional resources and training.**
  - **Data collection and analysis.**
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This new and emerging concern is being responded to in Northern Ireland by the SBNI Sub-Group which encourages a multi-agency approach to safeguarding those at risk or affected by Female Genital Mutilation (FGM).

The work of the FGM Sub-Group during 2017 - 2018 has focused on taking forward the Business Plan Objectives.

The Sub-Group has representation from communities particularly affected by FGM which is an extremely positive factor in taking forward work on this issue. Members have been working with communities in a culturally sensitive manner, developing regional resources and practice guidance, collecting data and providing training. A number of task and finish groups have been established to take forward the work. This includes:

#### **Training**

An accredited multi-agency Train the Trainers programme for 15 FGM champions from across member agencies of the SBNI has been undertaken with the assistance of the National FGM Centre. FGM awareness raising sessions were then undertaken with multi-agency staff by these trainers. So far 22 sessions have taken place with 437 staff. It is planned that these will continue to take place.

#### **Communication**

A poster and leaflet to raise awareness of FGM and assist understanding about what staff should do if they are concerned about a child and young person at risk of or have experienced FGM have been developed. These will be launched in 2018 – 2019.

### **Community Engagement**

A community engagement event on FGM, sponsored by the SBNI, was held for men from countries affected by FGM, in November 2017, in the Common Grounds café, Belfast. The key speaker and facilitator of the event was Dr Mohamed Eltayeb, a doctor who has considerable experience of working to end the practice of FGM both in his native Sudan and in Northern Ireland. The event was attended by approximately 12 participants, mainly Sudanese males.

This event followed the same format as an earlier SBNI community engagement workshop for women from countries affected by FGM, held on 6 February 2017, which was facilitated by Barnardo's National FGM Centre in collaboration with the PHA.

In his feedback on the event, Dr Eltayeb said that he found that the issue of FGM is considered to be very private among affected communities in NI. There is a reluctance to talk about FGM and people won't admit to practising it or having had it done. Therefore it is very hard to know what is happening. Families fear that they will be punished if they admit to FGM.

The following are the key findings from the evaluation of the event:

- All participants said that they had learned a lot about how dangerous and harmful FGM is.
- All participants said that they would come again to a similar event.
- One individual said that his attitude to FGM was now changed and he would not support it in future.
- All participants agreed that there was a need for more discussion/information about FGM in the news/social media.
- It was felt that there was a need for action to be taken where FGM was identified.
- It was recognised that education was important and that the topic of FGM should be included in the school curriculum both in Sudan and in schools in Northern Ireland.
- It was suggested that there should be leaflets on FGM for GPs and others likely to come into contact with those at risk.

### **Assessment**

An assessment toolkit has been made available for staff available at [www.nationalfgmcentre.org.uk/fgm-assessment-tool](http://www.nationalfgmcentre.org.uk/fgm-assessment-tool)

A FGM Pathway and Risk Assessment have been developed by the FGM Sub-Group which is in the process of being finalised.

# **Safeguarding children and young people who have a disability**

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**SBNI Strategic Priority 2 ‘Protect and safeguard children by responding to new and emerging concerns’**

**Develop a full understanding of new and emerging concerns impacting children and young people in Northern Ireland 2.3**

**This issue is being undertaken in relation to ‘new and emerging concerns’ and is in addition to that listed in the business plan.**

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Children and young people who have a disability are known to be particularly vulnerable to all forms of abuse. Contributory factors include physical vulnerability, communication difficulties, denial and lack of respect for their human rights.

During the reporting period the SBNI continued to work to take forward the actions arising from the study 'Safeguarding Disabled Children and Young People, a scoping exercise of Statutory Child Protection Services for Disabled children and young people in Northern Ireland' Dr Berni Kelly and Dr Sandra Dowling Queen's University Belfast 2015. This was progressed through the Children's Services Improvement Board (CSIB) chaired by the Director of Social Services at the Health and Social Care Board (HSCB).

The Children with Disability Sub-Group of CSIB has continued working to develop regionally agreed criteria for accessing children with disability social work services in each Health and Social Care Trust. This work is in its final stages and should be agreed during the first half of next year.

A regionally agreed definition of disability to improve staff confidence and consistency in recording disability for children and young people in contact with the child protection system has been agreed. It is the definition contained in The Disability Discrimination Act (1995): "a physical or mental impairment that has substantial or long-term effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities."

The revised Regional Core Child Protection Policies and Procedures have been developed to ensure the unique needs and/or additional risks for children and young people with a disability are more adequately reflected.

Health and Social Care Trusts have commenced the recruitment of specialist foster carers to provide alternative care options such as shared care arrangements, as part of providing support to avoid family breakdown for children and young people with a disability. Also therapeutic services are now available to support children and young people and their families.

# Guiding staff through the development of policies and procedures

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## **SBNI Strategic Priority 3 'Providing leadership and setting direction'**

**SBNI Business Plan 2017-2018** "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."<sup>3.1</sup>

### **Business Plan Objectives:**

- **Review current Child Protection and Safeguarding Policies and Procedures in Northern Ireland to identify those where potential improvements are required and make appropriate amendments.**
  - **Ensure they are accessible, easily reviewed and amended and placed on an e-based platform.**
  - **Review current Child Protection and Safeguarding Policies and Procedures to identify if any improvements are required in regard to the SBNI theme of neglect.**
  - **Review existing policies and procedures with respect to new and emerging concerns.**
  - **Ensure policies and procedures are informed by learning from Case Management Review (CMRs), Inquiries and research.**
  - **Develop guidance to assist external organisations when creating their own policies and procedures.**
-

## The development of child protection policies and procedures which operationalise government policy is a statutory responsibility of the SBNI.

The overarching cross-departmental safeguarding policy for the Northern Ireland is Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland, revised August 2017. All policies and procedures developed by the SBNI have their basis in this policy document.

The SBNI Policy and Procedures Committee is a multi-agency/multi-disciplinary group which has had a very busy year in progressing the Business Plan Objectives during 2017–2018.

### **Development of Core Policies and Procedures**

The development of core policies and procedures by the Committee was undertaken in collaboration with the Department of Health and member agencies and informed by learning from CMRs, inquiries and research. The revised Regional Core Child Protection Policies and Procedures were successfully launched on 28 November 2017 at an event held at the Templeton Hotel, Templepatrick and are now available on e-based platform at: <http://www.proceduresonline.com/sbni/>.

The event was very well attended with representation from multi-agency partners. Comments from delegates were very positive regarding the event which was considered by the company providing the e-based platform to be the most successful event they have attended.

Delegates were welcomed by Ms Bernie McNally, Independent Chair of the SBNI. Children from the local Templepatrick Primary School entertained delegates with beautiful singing which focused attention on the purpose of Policies and Procedures – to safeguard and protect children and young people. Ms Eilis McDaniel, Director of Family and Children's Policy in the Department of Health, then discussed the policy context.

The keynote speech was provided by Professor Brid Featherstone, University of Huddersfield.

A children and young people's perspective was provided by Ms Alicia Toal the Voice Of Young People In Care and two young people with direct experience of the child protection and Looked After system.

A mother whose children had been the subject of the child protection system gave a heartfelt portrayal from a parent’s perspective.

Mrs Marie Roulston, SBNI Policy and Procedures Committee Chair, then discussed the Committee’s journey to developing the Core Policies and Procedures. A multi-agency partner perspective was provided by the PSNI and video footage from the NSPCC, Children in Northern Ireland and the Education Authority, Northern Ireland.

A presentation of the e-based platform was then given by Ms Tracy Richards Lead Consultant, Tri.x. The event was closed by Ms Bernie McNally, SBNI Independent Chair.

The revised Regional Core Child Protection Policies and Procedures aim to help professionals and agencies to work more effectively in safeguarding children and young people from abuse and neglect.



**Templepatrick Primary School Choir and participants**



**Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland  
Annual Report 2017-18**

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**Participants who  
attended the  
launch event**



**Participants  
from the NHSCT  
who attended  
the launch event**



**SBNI Independent Chair and participants from  
the SHSCT**



**SBNI Independent Chair and  
National Director Northern  
Ireland, Action for Children**



**SBNI Independent Chair Bernie McNally, Mrs Marie Roulston Policy and Procedures Committee Chair and Professor Brid Featherstone, speakers at the Conference**



**Participants from the PSNI**



**Participants from the YJA**



**Participants from the EANI**



The revised Core Policies and Procedures replace the Area Child Protection Policies and Procedures (ACPC) and were implemented by Agencies on 15 December 2017.

Two documents were provided to support implementation including:

- Regional Core Child Protection Policies and Procedures - 'What are the Main Differences?' which contains information about the main differences in the revised Core Policies and Procedures from the previous ACPC Policies and Procedures.
- 'Top Tips for Using the Procedures Manual' which contains information for staff and organisations on how to access the Regional Core Policies and Procedures on the e-based platform.

These can be accessed at <http://www.safeguardingni.org/policies-and-procedure-committee>

The revised Regional Core Policies and Procedures will be subject to review and any amendments required can be easily made. All professionals are able to register on the platform to receive updates in order to be quickly informed of any amendments to policies and procedures.

Whilst the launch and implementation of the Regional Core Policies and Procedures has been the main focus of the Committee there has been on-going work undertaken in developing Safeguarding Practice Guidance and identifying emerging issues which may require new guidance.



**Speakers at the Launch event**



**Safeguarding Nurses/Health Visitors who attended the Launch**



**The SBNI Independent Chair and a representative from the NIHE**



**The SBNI Independent Chair and a representative from the PBNI**



# Next steps

This fifth annual report has outlined the challenges and changes the SBNI has faced over the year as well as the successes and improvements that have been achieved. Over the next 12 months the SBNI partnership intend to continue to build on this work as well as beginning to address any new priorities that the Board may set.

During this reporting period the SBNI partnership developed and consulted on the strategic plan for 2018 – 2022. Members agreed that the key high level strategic priorities of the SBNI still remained as relevant as ever. They have resolved to:

- work in partnership with other agencies, service users and communities to ensure children and young people are living in safety and with stability
- provide leadership and set direction for the safeguarding system across NI
- respond in a timely manner to new and emerging concerns
- drive improvements in the current child protection system
- continue to build the capacity of the Safeguarding Board to enhance the knowledge and skills of the entire membership to ensure the Board is providing effective, evidence-based responses to the safeguarding challenges now and in the years ahead.

In addition to these high level objectives the SBNI has agreed to adopt a trauma-informed approach to safeguarding in the search for better outcomes for children. The CDC-Kaiser Permanente Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) study is one of the largest investigations of childhood abuse and neglect and its impact on later-life health and well-being.

<https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/acestudy/about.html>

The study identified three main findings:

- Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) are common
- Adverse Childhood Experiences are strong predictors of later health risks, diseases and developmental disorders
- This combination makes Adverse Childhood Experiences one of the leading determinants of poor health and social dysfunction.

The research found that many adult diseases and developmental disorders begin early in life and that these could be reduced by the alleviation of toxic stress in childhood. The research indicates that severe and/or chronic adversity in childhood has a significant, negative impact on the child's development, well-being, life chances and future outcomes. Four or more adverse experiences correlated with a higher probability of poor outcomes for children throughout their lives, including a greater likelihood of suicide attempts, mental health problems, criminality and addictions. The research identified that people with six or more ACEs died nearly 20 years earlier on average than those without ACEs.

Realising these connections and intervening early with proven strategies, is likely to improve outcomes, aiding prevention and recovery.

The Early Intervention Transformation Programme (EITP) has commissioned the SBNI to deliver a professional training and development programme which aims to deliver training to a range of professionals from member agencies to enable them to become more trauma informed in their work.

The SBNI has also identified three Adverse Childhood Experiences for children in Northern Ireland which they have agreed to focus their collaborative efforts on over the next four years. These are:

- domestic violence
- child and parental mental health
- neglect

The SBNI will also continue to build on the vast amounts of important safeguarding work going on in all agencies, faith-based groups, sports clubs and communities across Northern Ireland in the fight against child abuse and neglect.

# **SBNI**

# **central**

# **support**

# **team**



<b>Bernie McNally:</b>	SBNI Independent Chair
<b>Margaret Burke:</b>	Professional Officer
<b>Helen McKenzie:</b>	Professional Officer
<b>Paul McNeill:</b>	Temporary Business Support Manager
<b>Lisa McEaney:</b>	Office Manager/Board Secretary
<b>Roisin Toner:</b>	Business Support Officer (CMR)
<b>Michael O'Hare:</b>	Business Support Officer (Committees)
<b>Nichola O'Neill:</b>	Administration Support



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# Glossary of terms



**Access NI** – body within Department of Justice that checks whether people applying to work with children have a criminal record

**ACE** – Adverse Childhood Experiences

**CAMHS** – Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services

**CDOP** – Child Death Overview Panel

**Child In Need** – a child who is unlikely to achieve or maintain a reasonable level of health or development without the provision of services

**ChNI** – Children in Northern Ireland

**CMR** – Case Management Review

**CPSSS** – Child Protection Support Service for Schools

**CSE** – Child Sexual Exploitation

**CYPSP** – Children and Young People’s Strategic Partnership

**DOH** – Department of Health

**DOJ** – Department of Justice

**EANI** – Education Authority Northern Ireland

**FGM** – Female Genital Mutilation

**Gateway** – the first point of contact for all new referrals to children’s social work services

**HSC** – Health and Social Care

**HSCB** – Health and Social Care Board

**LAC** – Looked After Child

**NCB** – National Children’s Bureau

**NSPCC** – National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children

**PHA** – Public Health Agency

**PSNI** – Police Service of Northern Ireland

**SBNI** – Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland

**VOYPIC** – Voice Of Young People In Care

# **Annex 1**

## **SBNI Business Objectives April 2017- March 2018**

## **Introduction**

The Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland (SBNI) is the key statutory mechanism for agreeing how relevant partners 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 Business Objectives**

The Business Objectives of the SBNI for 2017 – 2018 are divided into 5 parts in accordance with the corporate objectives outlined in the SBNI Strategic Plan for the years 2013 – 2017 which are continued into 2017-2018.

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
5. Building the capacity of the Safeguarding Board in the medium term.

**Strategic Priority 1:**  
**Work in partnership to ensure children and young people are living in safety and with stability**

1.2 Ensure safeguarding practice in relation to particularly vulnerable children is effective

**Children exposed to neglect**

Develop a Neglect Strategy for NI

To secure collective commitment for addressing neglect across all SBNI Member Agencies.

To demonstrate effective leadership in driving any required systems and process changes forward.

To improve awareness and understanding of neglect across all SBNI member agencies. This includes a common understanding of neglect, the impact of neglect and the thresholds for intervention.

To improve the recognition, assessment, use of assessment tools and responses to children, young people and families experiencing neglect.

To agree common outcomes, measures and metrics on the effectiveness of single agency and multi-agency service provision.

To ensure that the views of children/young people, parents/carers and staff inform practice and interventions.

To improve awareness, understanding and action on neglect for organisations that work with children, families and others.

## **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.

### **Child Sexual Exploitation**

Develop an understanding of CSE in Northern Ireland as experienced by Young People.

Raise awareness of CSE for Boys and Young men through engagement and resource development.

Raise awareness of CSE utilising social media.

Assist Policy and Procedure Committee by identifying good practice.

Report to the SBNI Board the delivery of the Marshall and Pinkerton Recommendations by SBNI member agencies.

Deliver the Night Time Economy Programme.

Develop CSE inputs for the Safeguarding App.

## **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).

### **E- Safety**

Plan and implement a coordinated approach to e-safety in Northern Ireland.

Promote the voices of children and young people as valued participants in the e-Safety Forum work.

Pull together key educational e-safety messages for children, parents and practitioners from existing resources into one location and providing a quality assurance function.

Ensure that the views of children and young people are integral to the work of the e-Safety Forum.

Inform and influence policy and practice development on e-safety in Northern Ireland.

Raise awareness of new and emerging threats in the 'on-line' world.



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

2.3 Develop a full understanding of new and emerging concerns impacting children and young people in Northern Ireland

### **Female Genital Mutilation**

Safeguard those at risk or affected by FGM and promote their welfare through effective multi-agency practice.

Establish an understanding of the extent of Female Genital Mutilation within Northern Ireland.

Work with communities in a culturally sensitive manner.

Development of practice guidance and pathways.

Development of regional resources and training.

Data collection and analysis.

## **Strategic Priority 3:** **Providing leadership and setting direction**

- 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

### **Policy and Procedures**

Review current Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Procedures in Northern Ireland to identify those where potential improvements are required and make appropriate amendments.

Ensure they are accessible, easily reviewed and amended and placed on an e based platform.

Review current Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Procedures to identify if any improvements are required in regard to SBNI theme of Neglect.

Review existing policies and procedures with respect to new and emerging concerns.

Ensure Policy and Procedures are informed by learning from Case Management Reviews (CMRs), inquiries and research.

Develop guidance to assist external organisations when creating their own policy and procedures.

## **Strategic Priority 3:** **Providing leadership and setting direction**

- 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.

### **Communication Strategy**

Develop and implement Communication Strategy.

Develop communications mechanisms for all deliverables.

Review the website and face book pages quarterly.

SBNI newsletter to be published with additional bulletins on specific issues as required.

Produce basic safeguarding leaflets and posters.

## **Strategic Priority 3:** **Providing leadership and setting direction**

- 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.

### **Communication and Engagement**

Undertake engagement activities with CYP, through the Safeguarding Panels and Committees of the SBNI to ensure their views are heard and responded to in relation to the SBNI priorities.

## **Strategic Priority 3:** **Providing leadership and setting direction**

3.4 To ensure that the SBNI Board and associated governance framework is fit for purpose.

To implement findings from the review of SBNI as appropriate.

Annual review of membership and TOR of Sub-Groups.

Publication and launch of Annual Report.

Oversee the Business Objectives and its progress.

Scrutinise the 2017-18 budget.

Review and submit annual equality and disability plan to equality commission.

Conduct annual review of MOUs.

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

4.1 Influence practice positively and enhance the learning from Case Management Reviews, by improving the CMR process.

### **Case Management Reviews**

Develop and implement a multi-agency CMR Practice Guidance.

Consider CMR Notifications against criteria for CMRs.

Aim to complete each CMR within agreed months of being commissioned.

On-going training programme for CMR Chair Leads and others including IAR Authors, CMR sub-group members of Panels and CMR Team members

Oversee the monitoring of CMR action plans and provide an update to Board.

Ensure messages / learning from CMRs are widely disseminated within all agencies.



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

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

### **This priority is being progressed by the PHA.**

- a. Develop roles and responsibilities in relation to SUDIs.
- b. Work with Department of Health in relation to the development of mortality & morbidity reviews.
- c. Implement CDOP process.
- d. Understand the number of young people who die by suicide.
- e. SBNI to undertake a thematic analysis of suicide among young people.
- f. Disseminate the learning from SBNI/PHA/QUB research into infant death.

## **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.

Develop communication and engagement best practice for delivery of SBNI priorities with CYP, parents / carers and professionals.

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.

Work with partners to ensure effective learning from CMRs is disseminated at panel level.

Implement the regional child protection multi-agency Regional Policies and Procedures.

Develop local Safeguarding Panel work plan based on local needs.

## **Strategic Priority 5:** **Building the capacity of the Safeguarding Board in the medium term**

- 5.1 To review the effectiveness of the Board in terms of meeting its Board's core functions. Functions include:
- Creation of standards and performance indicators against which the Board can be measured;
  - Judgement of how safely and effectively the child protection system is operating across the region;
  - The use of the Section 12 legal duty to understand the current child protection / safeguarding governance arrangements each organisation has in place.

Use multi-agency data to inform child protection priorities.

Adopt an OBA approach to business planning.

Develop a performance measurement framework to assess how well we are doing.

To reform the child protection arrangements by the introduction of the 'Signs of Safety' approach.

Address intergenerational abuse by introducing an Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE) informed approach across statutory partners.

Develop Sec 12 process and evaluation.