

56th Meeting of the Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland

Wednesday 19 April 2023

2.30pm – 3.15pm – Zoom Virtual Platform

P u b l i c M i n u t e s

R E C O R D O F A T T E N D A N C E

Name	Title & Organisation	Present	Apology
Ms Bernie McNally	Independent Chair Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland	✓	
Mr Tom Cassidy	Director of Women & Children's Services, WHSCT	✓	
Dr Naoimh Whyte	GP representative of N.I. General Practice Committee	✓	
Ms Bronagh Muldoon	NSPCC Head of Services NI		✓
Ms Mary Aughey	Director of Woodlands JJC, YJA	✓	
D/Chief Superintendent Anthony McNally	Head of Public Protection Branch, PSNI	✓	
Ms Paddy Kelly	Director, Children's Law Centre		✓
Ms Amanda Stewart	CEO, Probation Board NI	✓	
Ms Pauline Leeson	Chief Executive Children in N. Ireland		✓
Ms Una Turbitt	Director (Interim) Children and Young Peoples Services, EANI		✓
Ms Elaine Craig	Interim Assistant Director for Pupil Wellbeing and Protection, EANI	✓	
Ms Catherine Cassidy	Deputy Director of Social Care, SPPG	✓	
Ms Lyn Preece	Director of Children's Services & Executive Director of Social Work, SEHSCT	✓	
Mr Colm McCafferty	Director of Children & Young People's Services SHSCT		✓
Ms Emily Roberts	Designated Nurse for Safeguarding Children and Young People, PHA	✓	
Ms Lorna Ballard	Director NI, Action for Children	✓	

Ms Maura Dargan	Director of Women, Children & Families Division/Executive Director of Social Work, NHSCT	✓	
Ms Michele Janes	Director of Barnardo's NI	✓	
Dr Joanne McClean	Director of Public Health, PHA		✓
Ms Heather Reid	Public Health Specialist, PHA (deputising OBO Dr McClean)	✓	
Ms Kerrylee Weatherall	Interim Director of Children's Community Services, BHSCCT	✓	
Mr Paddy Mooney	Director, Include Youth		✓
Dr Jacqui Montgomery-Devlin	Head of Safeguarding, Council for Social Witness, Presbyterian Church in Ireland representing the SBNI Interfaith Committee	✓	
Ms Dawn Shaw	Chief Executive Officer, Children's Court Guardian Agency for Northern Ireland.		✓
Ms Heather Moore	Director of Environmental Services, Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council		✓
Mr Andrew Thomson	Independent Chair of the CMR Panel	✓	
Ms Yvonne Adair	Independent Safeguarding Panel Chair, Southern, South Eastern and Belfast Areas	✓	
Ms Mary Rafferty	Independent Safeguarding Panel Chair, Western and Northern areas	✓	
Mr Simon Rogers	Non-Executive (Lay) Member	✓	
Mr Gerard Guckian	Non-Executive (Lay) Member	✓	
In Attendance			
Ms Alex McCoy	Board Secretary SBNI		
Ms Helen McKenzie	Director of Operations SBNI		
Ms Teresa McAllister	Professional Officer SBNI		
Ms Joanna Brown	Professional Officer SBNI		

Summary of Actions

Action No.	Action:	To be completed by:
1	Amendments to paragraph 4.6 of the minutes from the SBNI Public Board Meeting to be sent to Alex.McCoy@hscni.net for inclusion.	Mr Simon Rogers
2	Any amendments to the SBNI Business Plan 2023-2024 to be forwarded to Alex.McCoy@hscni.net by 28 April 2023.	All Members
3	A letter of response will be forwarded to DoH in relation to the CPSOG Child Criminal Exploitation Briefing paper and recommendations. The letter will outline resourcing requirement and concerns as discussed by members with respect to progressing the recommendations which have been attributed to the SBNI.	The Chair
4	The SBNI Board Meeting on Wednesday 13 September 2023 will be held on a face-to-face basis. Members will be advised of a venue for this meeting in due course.	SBNI CST

Summary of Board Approval

The minutes from the Board Meeting on 15 th February 2023 were approved as an accurate record of the meeting, subject to discussed amendment.
The SBNI Business Plan 2023-2024 was approved.
The SBNI's consultation response to the draft Domestic and Sexual Abuse Strategy 2023 – 2030 was approved.
The Declaration of Assurance Year End Statement March 2023 was approved.

Preliminaries: Apologies, Quorum, Conflict of Interest, Complaints

The chair welcomed SBNI members to the meeting. Apologies were noted from Ms Pauline Leeson, Ms Dawn Shaw, Ms Bronagh Muldoon, Ms Paddy Kelly, Ms Heather Moore and Mr Colm McCafferty. The chair noted that Ms Heather Reid is deputising on behalf of Dr Joanne McClean.

Conflict of Interest

The chair requested that members declare any Conflicts of Interest as and when they arise throughout the meeting.

Chair's Business

The chair did not raise any additional business.

1 56/23P Previous Minutes

- 1.1 Mr Rogers noted an amendment to paragraph 4.6 of the minutes to clarify his comments in relation to the Department of Health's, Strategic Planning and Performance Group (DoH, SPPG) representation on the Board.
- 1.2 Members agreed the minutes from the last Board meeting on 15th February 2023 as a factual and accurate representation of the meeting, subject to the aforementioned amendment.

ACTION 1 – Amendments to paragraph 4.6 of the minutes from the SBNI Public Board Meeting to be sent to Alex.McCoy@hscni.net for inclusion.

2 56/23P Matters Arising

- 2.1 Complete
- 2.2 Complete
- 2.3 Complete
- 2.4 Ongoing – on the Agenda for the DoH/SBNI Accountability Meeting

3 56/23P SBNI Business Plan 2023 - 2024 (Please refer to Board Paper BM56-04.23P1A and BM55-02.23P1B)

- 3.1 The chair outlined the SBNI Business Plan 2023-2024 and noted that this plan details the objectives and associated actions to be progressed through the business year to support delivery of the SBNI Strategic Plan 2022 – 2026, as well as the SBNI's statutory duties and ad-hoc Committees. The draft Business Plan has been developed by the SBNI Committees, Panels and the Central Support Team.
- 3.2 There were no further comments or queries in relation to the SBNI Business Plan 2023-2024.
- 3.3 Ms McKenzie clarified that the SBNI Business Plan will now be sent to the DoH for comment. She requested that any amendments that members have are forwarded to Alex.McCoy@hscni.net by 28 April 2023.

ACTION 2 – Any amendments to the SBNI Business Plan 2023-2024 to be forwarded to Alex.McCoy@hscni.net by 28 April 2023.

- 3.4 The SBNI Business Plan 2023-2024 was approved.

4 56/23P PHA Reshape and Refresh (Please refer to Board Paper BM56-04.23P2)

- 4.1 The chair reported that the PHA is reviewing its functions and structures and has commissioned Ernst and Young (EY) to bring forward recommendations for a refresh and reshape of the agency. The SBNI is corporately hosted by the PHA and as part of this review, the hosting arrangements of the SBNI and whether it should be removed from the PHA have been considered. The SBNI was not part of the initial consultation and only became aware of the query over its hosting arrangements following publication of the review 'Phase 1 Report'. The chair highlighted that any change to the SBNI's hosting arrangements by the PHA will require a change in the SBNI Regulations.

- 4.2 Subsequent to the SBNI becoming aware of the query over its hosting arrangements, the chair reported that they, alongside colleagues in the DoH, have met with EY to address the hosting arrangement. The SBNI believe that they are appropriately placed within the PHA and will keep members informed of progress in relation to this issue.
- 4.3 Ms Roberts commented that the review is underway and there has been ongoing engagement with separate directorates. Ms Roberts has echoed the concerns of the SBNI in her engagement, particularly to indicate that safeguarding is part of the wider Public Health initiative and should remain as part of the PHA. Ms Roberts does not have any further information as to when the review will be finalised and what the structure will look like, but noted that workshops are planned for early May and it is hoped that these will shed light in relation to timelines for completion of the review.

5 56/23P 'Addressing the criminal exploitation of children in Northern Ireland' - Recommendations from the Child Protection Senior Officials Group (Please refer to Board Paper BM56-04.23P3A, BM56-04.23P3B, BM56-04.23P3C & BM56-04.23P3D)

- 5.1 The chair highlighted that the Commissioner for Children and Young People, published an advice paper on 'Safeguarding Children and Young People from Abuse and Exploitation from Criminal Gangs' in 2021 and as a result the Child Protection Senior Officials Group (CPSOG) set up a Task and Finish Group, of which the SBNI was a member, to examine how the wider safeguarding system could provide a strategic approach to address this issue. The Task and Finish Group has produced a briefing paper setting out the context for improving the response to Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) in Northern Ireland and within this, 15 recommendations have been made, of which the SBNI are listed as having lead responsibility for 8. While the SBNI supports the recommendations, the Chair advised that fulfilment of these recommendations will require adequate resourcing for the SBNI in terms of both budget and staff.

- 5.2 Ms McKenzie commented that the SBNI Business Plan indicates the volume of work that the SBNI is committed to. She assured members that she has advised the DoH regarding this and the resourcing implications of the SBNI taking forward recommendations attributed to them, both for the Central Support Team (CST) and member agencies. It was emphasised that it is important that the practicalities of taking forward the recommendations are further explored.
- 5.3 Mr Guckian noted that there is a recommendation which suggests broadening the Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) Committee to the Child Exploitation Committee, incorporating both CSE and CCE. This recommendation may not be considered to require additional resourcing, and it may be beneficial for further discussions to take place at Committee level.
- 5.4 D/Chief Superintendent McNally, as Chair of the CSE Committee commented that a definition of CCE is required. In addition, the scale and scope of this needs to be clarified before resourcing requirements can be fully resolved. The CSE Committee would require to understand the scope of this issue before it can be determined if it is possible to amalgamate CCE within this work area. Ms McKenzie agreed, and added that the clarification of CCE also needs to be considered within a wider context of; Policy and Procedures, training and pathways of support for children and young people. This is a complex area of business and how to proceed in light of diminishing budgets and workforce needs to be explored, as she is concerned that the CSE Committee may not have the capacity to incorporate CCE. It was agreed that it would be beneficial for the SBNI to write to the DoH, outlining resourcing requirements and concerns as discussed by members with respect to progressing the recommendations which have been attributed to the SBNI.

ACTION 3 – A letter of response will be forwarded to DoH in relation to the CPSOG Child Criminal Exploitation Briefing paper and recommendations. The letter will outline resourcing requirement and concerns as discussed by members with respect to progressing the recommendations which have been attributed to the SBNI.

- 5.5 The chair sought clarity as to whether funding could be provided by the Executive Programme on tackling Paramilitarism and Organised Crime. Ms McKenzie advised that they do not have any additional funding in order to support these recommendations.

6 56/23P The SBNI's consultation response to the draft Domestic and Sexual Abuse Strategy 2023 – 2030 (Please refer to Board Paper BM56-04.23P4A & BM56-04.23P4B)

- 6.1 Ms Brown advised that the draft Domestic and Sexual Abuse Strategy 2023-2030 is building on the current 'Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence Strategy' which is due to expire at the end of 2023. It has been designed around 4 pillars; including partnership, prevention, support and justice and has been informed by detailed consultation and analysis. In February 2023 the DoH and Department of Justice (DoJ) launched a public consultation, seeking views from interested parties in respect of the draft strategy and this will close on 2 May 2023. The SBNI are mindful that individual agencies will be responding to this consultation.
- 6.2 Ms Brown noted that a Task and Finish Group was set up by the Domestic Violence and Abuse Committee to look at the 9 key questions emanating from the Call for Views in January 2022 and develop a consolidated response to the consultation. Within this response, a number of key issues have been raised, as outlined in Board paper BM56-04.22P4B, for which Board approval is sought.
- 6.3 The SBNI's consultation response to the draft Domestic and Sexual Abuse Strategy 2023 – 2030 was approved.

7 56/23P Declaration of Assurance Year End Statement (Please refer to Board Paper BM56-04.23P5)

- 7.1 The chair advised that the Declaration of Assurance Year End Statement attests to the effectiveness of the system of internal control by the SBNI. The chair informed members that an issue had arisen in relation to remuneration of Panel Chairs, whereby the incorrect circular detailing method of payment

had been used inadvertently and without the approval of the Department of Finance (DoF). This had been reported as an unlawful spend of £38,000. The DoH and DoF have now approved the circular which is to be used in future and new processes have been implemented to prevent a reoccurrence

- 7.2 The Declaration of Assurance Year End Statement March 2023 was approved.

8 56/23P AOB

- 8.1 Ms Craig sought clarity as to whether the SBNI would require to be involved in developing guidance on 'Operation Encompass' as part of interagency protocols, given the extensive involvement of the SBNI at the beginning of the Pilot. On discussion, Ms Dargan noted that only the PSNI and the Education Authority are involved with the development of this policy and the matter was recently addressed at the Policy and Procedures Committee, The Committee is of the view that the SBNI only require involvement when there are a significant number of partner agencies involved. The chair agreed that it would be useful for the guidance around Operation Encompass to be shared with the SBNI Board for information purposes only, and updates on the model given periodically.
- 8.2 The platform of future Board Meetings was discussed. Since the onset of Covid these have been being held on a virtual basis, which has been extremely beneficial from a logistical point of view. However, in the interest of networking, the chair proposed that at least one meeting per year is held in person and suggested that the Board Meeting in September could be held on a face-to-face basis. This was agreed by Members.

ACTION 4 – The SBNI Board Meeting on Wednesday 13 September 2023 will be held on a face-to-face basis. Members will be advised of a venue for this meeting in due course.

- 8.3 The next SBNI Board meeting will be held on Wednesday 14 June 2023.

BM56-04.23PM

8.4 The chair closed the Public section of the meeting at 3.15pm and thanked Members for their attendance.

Bernie McNally

Independent Chair SBNI