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**42nd Meeting of the Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland**

**Wednesday 23rd September 2020**

 **2:10pm-4.30pm**

**The Chestnut Suite, Lagan Valley Island Centre, BT27 4RL**

**Public Minutes**

**RECORD OF ATTENDANCE**

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| **Name** | **Title & Organisation** | **Present** | **Apology** |
| Ms Bernie McNally | Independent Chair Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland | 🗸 |  |
| Mr Neil Anderson | National Head of Service for Northern Ireland NSPCC |  | 🗸 |
| Natalie Whelehan | NSPCC deputising obo Neil Anderson | 🗸 |  |
| Ms Deirdre Mahon | Director of Women & Children's Services, WHSCT | 🗸 |  |
| Dr Martin Cunningham | GP representative of N.I. General Practice Committee |  |  |
| Mr Rodney Morton | Director of Nursing and Allied Health Professionals | 🗸 |  |
| Mr Declan McGeown | Chief Executive, YJA |  | 🗸 |
| Paul McStravick | Director YJA (Interim) Deputising obo Mr Declan McGeown | 🗸 |  |
| D/Chief Superintendent Anthony McNally | Head of Public Protection Branch, PSNI | 🗸 |  |
| Ms Paddy Kelly | Director Children’s Law Centre |  | 🗸 |
| Ms Cheryl Lamont | Chief Executive, PBNI  | 🗸 |  |
| Ms Pauline Leeson | Chief Executive Children in N. Ireland |  | 🗸 |
| Ms Una Turbitt | Director Interim Children and Young Peoples Services, EANI |  | 🗸 |
| Mr Colin Reid | Head of Safeguarding, Welfare and Inclusion deputising obo Ms Una Turbitt | 🗸 |  |
| Ms Marie Roulston | Director of Social Care and Children, HSCB | 🗸 |  |
| Mr Paul Morgan  | 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 | Head of Barnardo’s NI | 🗸 |  |
| Ms Barbara Campbell | Director of Social Work/Children’s’ Community services - SEHSCT |  |  |
| Ms Carol Diffin | Director of Social Work/Children's Community Services, - BHSCT |  |  |
| Mr Paddy Mooney | Director, Include Youth | 🗸 |  |
|  Dr Peter Hamill  | Church of Ireland Safeguarding  |  | 🗸 |
| Mr Peter Reynolds  | Chief Executive -NIGALA |  |  |
| Mr David Burns  | CEO Lisburn and Castlereagh Council Solace  |  |  |
| Dr Heather Reid  | Public Health Specialist Director of Public Health Research Development  |  |  |
| 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 Helen McKenzie  | Director of Operations  |
| Ms Teresa McAllister  | Professional Officer  |
| Ms Lisa McEneaney | Board Secretary/Office Manager  |

**Summary of Actions**

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| **Action No.** | **Action:** | **To be completed by:** |
| 1 | Clarity to be sought in relation to the funding of SBNI’s legal costs in respect of the on-going Judicial Review | SBNI Central Support Team |
| 2 | Ms Dargan to liaise with the working group considering the issues in respect of the recoding of Childrens names on the Child Protection Register and how this information is shared with GPs | Ms Dargan |
| 3 | Ms McKenzie to liaise with the Signs of Safety team to amend the Learning and Development Strategy Framework as appropriate  | Ms McKenzie |
| 4 | Ms Roulston to discuss with Mr Quinn and Ms O’Brien (HSCB) reference GP’s accessing the Trusts Safeguarding training | Ms Roulston |
| 5 | Work completed by Ms Michaela Glover in relation to the mental health admissions during Covid-19 to be shared with SBNI. | Ms Roulston |
| 6 | Ms Whelehan to forward child line statistics for onward circulation to Board members. | Ms Whelehan |
| 7 | Members to consider nomination of a Chair in respect of the Mental Health Sub-Group (to be established in 2021) and contact Helen McKenzie | SBNI members |
| 8 | Members to send their comments on the SBNI Annual Report 2019-2020 to Lisa.McEneaney@hscni.net by 28th September | SBNI members |

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| The Board approved the Child Safeguarding Learning and Development Strategy Framework 2020-2023 subject to a final review of Signs of Safety amendments as deemed necessary |

**Summary of Board Approval**

**Preliminaries: Apologies, Quorum, Conflict of Interest, Complaints**

The Chair welcomed SBNI members to the meeting. Ms McNally noted apologies from Paddy Kelly (Children’s Law Centre), Mr David Burns (Solace) and Pauline Leeson (CiNI). The Chair noted Mr Paul McStravick was deputising obo Mr McGeown, Mr Colin Reid was deputising on behalf of Ms Una Turbitt and Ms Natalie Whelehan was deputising for Neil Anderson NSPCC.

**Conflict of Interest**

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

**1 42/20C/ Previous Minutes**

1.1 The Chair stated that the minutes from the last Board meeting (19th February) were sent to members in June. Comments in relation to factual accuracy were raised and dealt with at this time.

1.2 The minutes were subsequently approved as an accurate record of the meeting.

**2.42/20C Matters Arising**

2.1 The Chair gave an update on the matters arising from the last Board meeting (19th February) (as below).

2.2 Mr Thomson to further review the CMR process taking into account Board members comments-Completed

2.3 Consideration will be given to conducting a thematic review of all CMRs conducted previously by the SBNI - Ongoing

2.4 Board Members to forward any comments on the content of the SBNI Development Day to Caitriona.livingstone@hscni.net-Not taking place due to Covid 19 Emergency

2.5 Board Members to forward any comments in respect of the MOU between the SBNI and the Home Office before 8th April 2020 to:-Caitriona.livingstone@hscni.net - Completed

2.6 The SBNI Financial Report 2019/20 will be presented at the April Board Meeting - Completed electronically

2.7 The SBNI will review July 2019 and February 2020 correspondence to clarify the change presently being proposed by DOH - Completed

2.8 Board Members to forward all outstanding ‘Members Agreements’ to Caitriona.livingstone@hscni.net as soon as possible-Completed

**3.0 Chairs Business**

3.1 The Chair welcomed Mr Paul McStravick to the meeting as Interim Director of Woodlands Juvenile Justice Centre.

3.2 The Chair advised that the SBNI had been named as a Party to a Judicial Review into the Appeals Process in relation to Child Protection Case Conferences. The Southern Health and Social Care Trust is involved more widely in this JR in relation to this case; however there are proceedings relating to the SBNI policy and procedures hence the joining of the SBNI.

3.3 Ms Mahon advised her understanding was that the SBNI policy and procedures were guidance not legislation. She queried how a Judicial Review can be undertaken on the policy and procedures when they are not legislation. The Chair advised a judicial review can be sought where there is a suggestion that a public body did not follow their procedures correctly.

3.4 Mr Guckian indicated public bodies can be judicially reviewed on their decision making. He asked why it is the SBNI’s decision being reviewed. Mr Guckian acknowledged that this should be set out within the proceedings.

3.5 Mr Rogers queried who funds SBNI’s legal costs. The Chair said this needs to be discussed with the DoH.

**Action 1**

Clarity to be sought in relation to the funding of SBNI’s legal costs in respect of the ongoing Judicial Review

**Action by:** SBNI Central Support team

3.6 Ms Adair advised that last year there was a presentation at the Belfast Safeguarding Panel in relation to the Child Protection Register. She indicated that there was an issue with children’s names being on the Child Protection register and also the GP database and these not being removed as timely as they should be.

3.7 Dr Cunningham stated that children’s names do not come off the register as quickly as they should from the GP data base when their names have been removed from the Child Protection Register. He advised that there is some tidying up which needs to be done within GP systems.

3.8 Ms Dargan advised that there is a group undertaking work in relation to this issue.

3.9 The Chair said that there may be a problem with inputting into the GP systems as GPs get notified by the local Health and Social Care Trust when a child’s name is either added to or removed from the child protection register. She asked Ms Dargan to look at this within the group that has been setup.

**Action 2**

Ms Dargan to liaise with the working group considering the issues in respect of the recoding of Children’s names on the Child Protection Register and how this information is shared with GPs

**Action by: Ms Dargan**

**4 EITP Project Review Report Years 1 & 2**

4.1 Mr Rogers discussed the EITP Project Review Report Years 1 & 2. (See Board paper BM42-09.20P1)

4.2 The Chair queried the funding the SBNI had received going forward. Mr Rogers advised that the SBNI have been funded to keep the project team together until March 2021 (to conclude some of the training in relation to work aims 1-3) but mostly to embed Trauma Informed Practice at a strategic level as per aim 4 of the project deliverables.

4.3 The Chair thanked the team for their work on the project and the significant amount that had been achieved in the first two years of the project and which was helpfully detailed in the Review Report.

**5 SBNI Child Safeguarding Learning and Development Strategy Framework 2020-2023**

5.1 Ms McKenzie presented the SBNI Child Safeguarding Learning and Development Strategy Framework 2020-2023. She explained that the Learning and Development Strategy Framework was not substantially different from the previous version but was suitably updated in relation to ACEs, trauma informed practice, culture, diversity and gender issues.

5.2 Ms McKenzie advised that the update addressed the impact of Covid-19 on training delivery. 5.3 Ms Diffin wanted to clarify the move to online training and said that medical staff, for example, leaving busy wards to attend training was a challenge. She asked is there a pre-set training programme. Ms McKenzie indicated that would be individual agencies decisions as to how they wished to deliver the training but that during the pandemic on line training would probably be the most relevant.

5.4 Ms Mahon stated that Signs of Safety is a way of ‘doing safeguarding’ which should be woven in to all of safeguarding and that she thought this was not explicit enough in the Framework and that some amendments could perhaps be made. Ms McKenzie advised that she would review the content and re-engage with members of the SoS team.

**Action 3**

Ms McKenzie to liaise with the SoS team to amend the Learning and Development Strategy Framework as appropriate

**Action by: Ms McKenzie**

5.5 Ms Roulston advised that Mr Quinn had undertaken a scoping exercise around the Health and Social Care Trust training teams in respect of GP’s accessing Trust delivered Safeguarding training. She said her understanding is that GP’s can access the Trust training. She advised she is happy to have a conversation with Dr Margaret O’Brien at the HSCB to discuss this further and provide clarity to the Board.

**Action 4**

Ms Roulston to discuss with Mr Quinn and Dr O’Brien (HSCB) regarding GP’s accessing the Trusts Safeguarding training

**Action by: Ms Roulston**

5.6 Ms Campbell advised she was happy to share information with SBNI in respect of a pilot the SEHSCT have running in Clough in the Down area

**6 Update on Recruitment of Professional Officer (CMR)**

6.1 The Chair advised that the SBNI Director has commenced a recruitment campaign for a professional officer to replace Ms Margaret Burke who left her post in March 2020. Ms Roberts had raised an issue in terms of the essential criteria for the post to be recruited and requested it was discussed at the Board as an agenda item. Ms Roberts advised the criteria is specific to social work and she felt other disciplines may be excluded from the application process for this post when they may have the correct skills, knowledge and experience to undertake the tasks associated with the post. Ms Roberts stated she could not identify anything in the job description that was specific to social work.

6.2 The Chair advised that when the SBNI was created in 2012 the two Professional Officer Job descriptions were developed and, they were designed to include one multidisciplinary and one specific to social work in order to maintain a balance. When consulting with the DoH recently they have advised that one of the posts should be social work based and one should be multidisciplinary.

6.3 The Chair advised that she was happy to take the views of the Board on this matter.

6.4 Discussion ensued between the members in respect of the criteria for the post. Key points raised were that the Director and Chair posts do not require a social work qualification and as such there was the potential for these all senior posts in the SBNI to not have any social work designation which members felt was unacceptable. It was also reiterated that only one of the professional officer posts requires a social work qualification and as such the balance is met for a non-social worker to fill the other post – as it is presently.

6.5 The general consensus was that the Board members agreed that the status quo should be maintained and that one of the posts should be a designated Social Work post.

**7** **Multiagency working during Covid-19**

7.1 The Chair thanked those members who had responded to the request to outline their agencies experience and response to the pandemic and outlining their multi agency working. The Chair queried from Board members if there was anything the SBNI could be doing better or more of during this difficult time. Ms Janes and Mr Mooney provided inputs from their respective agencies; Barnardo’s NI and Include Youth. This led onto a

General discussion in relation to the pandemic and;

* Domestic Abuse;
* The need for children and young people to have face to face contact. Although it was agreed that online services may be adequate for a short time;
* The Domestic Violence Partnership is creating online training for community and voluntary organisations. Questions were asked about Safeguarding Panels taking this forward;
* Concern in respect of the initial reduction in reporting of safeguarding concerns at the start of the Pandemic. These reporting figures have now returned to normal levels.

7.2 The Chair advised she was aware QUB are undertaking research in relation to the impact of Covid-19 on children’s mental health.

7.3 Chief Superintendent McNally advised that the PSNI have been working better and smarter in relation to domestic abuse following the Covid-19 pandemic. Mr McNally stated that when Covid-19 first began a multiagency working group was set up to meet on a weekly basis to discuss emerging issues. Mr McNally advised that the PSNI have introduced a system whereby the police call back every victim within 24 hours. Chief Superintendent McNally acknowledged that there had been a 1.5% increase in domestic abuse crimes during the lockdown period. .

7.4 Discussion took place in relation to the increase in mental health admissions in respect of adults and it is predicted that this will also potentially increase for children. Ms Roulston advised that Ms Michaela Glover was undertaking a piece of work in respect of children’s mental health during the Covid 19 emergency and she would ensure that this is shared with the Board.

**Action 5**

Work completed by Ms Michaela Glover in relation to the mental health admissions during Covid-19 to be shared with SBNI.

**Action by: Ms Roulston**

7.5 The Chair asked how caseloads are being managed by professionals. Ms Roulston advised that child protection concerns were still being investigated throughout the pandemic.

 7.6 Ms Roberts advised that in relation to Health Visitors safeguarding visits these continued throughout the Covid-19 pandemic although a significant number of Health Visitors had been re-deployed during the pandemic.

7.7 Ms Whelehan said that she would send the child line statistics for the lockdown period regarding, sexual abuse, physical abuse and online abuse to Ms McAllister for onward circulation to Board members.

**Action 6**

Ms Whelehan to forward the child line statistics regarding sexual abuse, physical abuse and online abuse to Ms McAllister for onward circulation to Board members

**Action by: Ms Whelehan**

7.8 Ms Diffin indicated the DoH have a restart plan on how services are moving forward which may be helpful for members to read. This is published on the DoH website.

7.9 Dr Cunningham advised that there is a rising incidence of of Covid-19 at present. He indicated that a lot of GP phone calls/consultations are in relation to mental health and suggested that this will probably have an impact on children.

 7.10 The Chair advised that mental health is one of the key strategic priorities for the Board. She indicated that the SBNI wish to set up a Sub-Group in relation to mental health. The Chair asked that if any of the members are interested in chairing this group then they should contact the Ms McKenzie.

**Action 7**

Members who wish to Chair the Mental Health Sub-Group to contact Ms McKenzie

**Action by: SBNI members**

**8 SBNI Domestic Violence- Response to call for Evidence**

8.1 Ms McAllister indicated there had been a call from the Justice Committee for evidence in respect of the Domestic Abuse Bill. She said that she liaised with members from the Sub-Group and a report representing the collated views of the Domestic Violence Sub Group was submitted.

**9 Annual Report**

9.1 The Chair indicated the Annual Report 2019-2020 was disseminated to the SBNI members and the DoH. She asked members to send their comments to Lisa.McEneaney@hscni.net by 28th September. The Annual Report will come back to the SBNI on the 14th October for approval.

**Action 8**

Members to send their comments on the SBNI Annual Report 2019-2020 to Lisa.McEneaney@hscni.net by 28th September

**Action by: SBNI Members**

9.2 The Chair advised that normally there is a development day on the 14th October; however given the amount of CMR notifications and postponement of meetings and associated Board business in April and June she suggested that the meeting on the 14th October at 1:30pm should be a rescheduled Board meeting.

9.3 Members confirmed that they were content with this.

9.4 Ms Lamont thanked the SBNI central support team for their help in helping her arrange online access for the todays meeting.

9.5 The Chair closed the public section of the meeting at 4:30pm