



Learning from CMR's

2019 – 2020

CMR Learning 2019 /20

Consideration of CMR Notifications

During the year 2019-20, 25 CMR notifications were received by the SBNI in respect of 30 children and young people. A number of these children were notified by more than one Agency. Of these notifications, in the Business year 6 Case Management Reviews were commissioned.

A total of 2 CMRs were presented to and approved by the SBNI during the reporting period. From these 9 recommendations were identified. The average time taken to undertake CMRs during the reporting period was 9.5 months which is the same duration as that recorded in the last business year. These more timely Reviews ensure that learning from CMRs is fed back into the Child Protection system sooner.



Summary of learning arising from these Reviews

Detailed below is an overview of the learning elicited from the completed reviews in the 2019 /20 business year.

- The need to ensure adherence to legislation, policies and procedures and guidance relating to both Child Protection and Looked After Children was highlighted in a number of reviews. It was recommended that member agencies put quality assurance mechanisms in place to ensure compliance with these legislative and policy requirements. It was recommended that member agencies should also provide appropriate training to all staff to ensure they are clear on what is expected from them.
- Assessing and making decisions in relation to 'threshold levels for professional intervention' was a key feature of some reviews. These reviews identified the need for improved line management oversight, supervision and auditing of thresholding decisions made by staff.
- A number of reviews related to emergency contact with the Regional Emergency Social Work Services (RESWS) with recommendations that

information sharing mechanisms between the Health and Social Care Trusts, and the RESWS should be reviewed to ensure that the team has access all relevant and necessary information outside office hours.

- One review detailed the need for clarity in relation to the nature of police checks which are sought in respect of persons with whom a child is to be placed in an emergency situation. This will inform the risk assessment and decision making, information received should be recorded thereafter.
- The process for carrying out assessments for children presenting with symptoms of Autism Spectrum Disorder should be undertaken to ensure a timely response to their needs.
- Mechanisms should be explored to identify children, particularly those with special educational needs, who experience frequent school moves, to ensure their educational needs are being adequately addressed.
- Several Reviews highlighted the critical importance of adhering to Legislation, Policy and Procedure specifically in respect of the sharing information with other staff particular on a multi-agency basis.



Improvements made as a result of CMRs

The core purpose of CMRs is to help improve the child protection system in Northern Ireland. Below are some of the improvements which have been as a result of the CMR process.

- One Review highlighted the General Practitioner's role in Safeguarding process as critical. Work on enhancing the specific role for the GP within the

Child Protection system continues to be addressed within the SBNI GP Sub-group and with the Health and Social Care Board

- The pre-mobile protocol for bruising/marks has been further revised and published in the Core Policy and Procedures manual.
- The process to ensure information sharing takes place between agencies has been further reviewed and changes made. This revised process has now been circulated to agencies. Training and awareness raising sessions have taken place.
- A Revision of the Joint Investigation of Child Abuse and Neglect by Social Workers and Police Officers has been undertaken. Training/awareness raising planned to take place May 2020 has been deferred to later in the year as a consequence of the COVID 19 Public Health Emergency
- The police data base has been updated to ensure that alerts in respect of Children who are subject to a Child Protection Plan are available to Police Officers at all times.
- New Guidance on the transfer of cases between Health and Social Care Trusts is being developed.
- Work has been taking place to streamline and enhance practice across the region in relation to children/young people who display harmful sexual behaviour.
- Guidance to staff regarding children/young people who are subject to paramilitary threat has been developed and disseminated to all member agencies.

