

## 50th Meeting of the Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland

Wednesday 16 February 2022

3.30pm – 4.15 pm – Zoom Virtual Platform

### Public Minutes

### RECORD OF ATTENDANCE

Name	Title & Organisation	Present	Apology
Ms Bernie McNally	Independent Chair Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland	✓	
Ms Deirdre Mahon	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	✓	
Mr Stephen Martin	CEO Youth Justice Agency		✓
Mr Rodney Morton	Director of Nursing and Allied Health Professionals, PHA	✓	
Mr Paul McStravick	Director YJA deputising obo Mr Stephen Martin	✓	
D/Chief Superintendent Anthony McNally	Head of Public Protection Branch, PSNI		✓
D/Superintendent Gary Reid	Public Protection Branch, PSNI deputising obo Chief Superintendent McNally		
Ms Paddy Kelly	Director, Children's Law Centre		✓
Ms Pauline Leeson	Chief Executive, Children in Ireland	✓	
Ms Amanda Stewart	CEO, Probation Board NI	✓	
Ms Una Turbitt	Director (Interim) Children and Young Peoples Services, EANI		✓
Ms Shauna Collinson	Assistant Director, Education Authority deputising obo Ms Una Turbitt	✓	

Mr Brendan Whittle	Director of Social Care and Children, HSCB		✓
Ms Catherine Cassidy	Deputy Director of Social Care and Children, HSCB Deputising on behalf of Mr Brendan Whittle	✓	
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 Barbara Campbell	Director of Children Services SEHSCT		✓
Ms Linda McConnell	Assistant Director Children & Young People's Family Support and Safeguarding Services deputising obo Ms Barbara Campbell	✓	
Ms Michele Janes	Head of Barnardo's NI	✓	
Dr Stephen Bergin	Director of Public Health and Medical Director, PHA		✓
Mr Maurice Meehan	Head of Health and Social Wellbeing Improvement deputising obo Dr Stephen Bergin	✓	
Ms Carol Diffin	Director of Social Work/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		✓
Ms Dawn Shaw	Chief Executive Officer -NIGALA	✓	
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	✓	
<b>In Attendance</b>			
Ms Caitriona Livingstone	Administration Support SBNI		
Ms Alex McCoy	Board Secretary/Office Manager		
Ms Helen McKenzie	Director of Operations		
Ms Teresa McAllister	Professional Officer		
Ms Joanna Brown	Professional Officer		

**Summary of Actions**

<b>Action No.</b>	<b>Action:</b>	<b>To be completed by:</b>
1	The Minutes of the SBNI Public Board meeting from 8 <sup>th</sup> December 2021 will be updated to show Ms Barbara Campbell, Director of South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust was in attendance	SBNI Central Support Team
2	A link to the Child Care in Practice Newsletter will be added to the SBNI website and quarterly updates of the Journal to be shared with the Board.	SBNI Central Support Team
3	Nominations for the SBNI position on the Child Care in Practice Board should be sent to <a href="mailto:Alex.mccoy@hscni.net">Alex.mccoy@hscni.net</a> by 25 <sup>th</sup> March 2022	Board Members

**Summary of Board Approval**

The minutes from the Board Meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> December 2021 were approved as an accurate record of the meeting.

The Practice Learning Note was approved

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

The Chair welcomed SBNI members to the meeting. Ms McNally noted apologies from Mr Stephen Martin, Mr Brendan Whittle, Dr Stephen Bergin, Ms Una Turbitt, Dr Jacqui Montgomery-Devlin, D/Chief Superintendent Anthony McNally, and Ms Paddy Kelly. The Chair noted Mr Paul McStravick was deputising on behalf of Mr Stephen Martin, Ms Shauna Collinson was deputising on behalf of Ms Una Turbitt, D/Superintendent Gary Reid was deputising on behalf of D/Chief Superintendent Anthony McNally, Mr Maurice Meehan was deputising on behalf of Dr Stephen Bergin, Ms Linda McConnell was deputising on behalf of Ms Barbara Campbell and Ms Catherine Cassidy was deputising on behalf of Mr Brendan Whittle

**Conflict of Interest**

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

**Chairs Business**

The Chair welcomed Dr Whyte to the meeting (NIPGC) who is replacing Dr Martin Cunningham. The Chair also noted Ms Elaine Craig Interim AD Education Authority will attend future Board Meetings representing the Education Authority on a temporary basis during Ms Collinson's maternity leave.

The Chair provided an update regarding the SBNI Central Support Team recruitment. Ms Alex McCoy has been appointed as the Office Manager/Board Secretary. There are a number of Business Support positions advertised and interviews are expected to take place soon. Advertising will take place shortly for a new Trauma Informed Practice Implementation Manager to replace Ms Maria Morgan who is returning to her substantive position in the BHSCT. Members will be notified when this post is advertised should they wish to bring to the attention to their staff.

The Chair drew the Boards attention to some recent communications:

- Response to Mr Sean Holland's Letter re Evaluation Report (for noting)

- The Chair wrote to Mr Holland and explained that whilst some of the issues contained within CMRs may carry the same generic heading the specific issues are not the same as in previous years.
- The Chair also advised that the SBNI include examples of good practice in all CMRs and are developing the ways in which we can learn from CMRs and ensure timely and relevant dissemination of learning
- Call for Views
  - The Chair drew the Board's attention to the launch for Calls for Views. On 10 January 2022 the Office of First and Deputy First Minister, Minister of Health and Minister for Justice launched 'Call for Views' to inform development of 2 new Strategies for NI.
    1. Domestic and Sexual Abuse Strategy to be led by Departments of Health and Justice
    2. Equally Safe - A Strategy to tackle Violence Against Women and Girls led by NI Executive Office

The Chair noted the consultation closes on 21st March 2022 and is available at [www.consultations.nidirect.gov.uk](http://www.consultations.nidirect.gov.uk)

### **1 50/22P Previous Minutes**

- 1.1 Members agreed the minutes from the last Board meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> December 2021 were factual and accurate with one minor amendment

#### **Action 1**

The Minutes of the SBNI Public Board meeting from 8<sup>th</sup> December 2021 will be updated to show Ms Barbara Campbell, Director South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust was in attendance

**Action By:** SBNI Central Support Team

## **2 50/22P Matters Arising**

2.1 Completed

2.2 Completed

2.3 Completed

2.4 Completed

## **3 50/22P Learning Note Policy and Procedure Pre-Birth Case Conference (Please refer to Paper BM50-02.22P1)**

3.1 Ms Dargan drew the Board's attention to a recent issue brought to the notice of the SBNI Policy and Procedures Committee. The issue relates to the categorisation of a baby's Registration on the Child Protection Register at birth, following an Appeal in a local Health and Social Care Trust (HSCT).

3.2 Ms Dargan advised that the SBNI may wish to consider issuing a Practice Learning Note to member agencies to alert them to this issue and avoid a repeat Appeal situation.

3.3 The Chair sought the Boards view on:

- the appropriateness of the dissemination of such a Learning Note and
- whether the Policy and Procedure Committee can issue similar Practice notes (if issues arise) without bringing them to the attention of the Board in advance

3.4 The Board approved the issuing of Practice Notes and agreed it was appropriate that Practice Notes are brought before the Board before issue. If an exceptional situation arises which requires immediate notification to members the SBNI Independent Chair can issue a Practice Note and seek retrospective approval at the next Board meeting.



**4 50/22P Covid Pandemic Challenges - pertaining to Service Delivery in the child protection system**

- 4.1 The Chair commented on the Covid Pandemic Challenges – pertaining to Service Delivery in the child protection system.
- 4.2 Mr Thomson confirmed the CMR team are aware of the pressures on staff in their day to day work and appreciate and understand the difficulties for staff completing additional work in relation to CMRs.
- 4.3 Ms Diffin commented that there have been underlying workforce pressures in the BHSCT since October 2021 with significant fewer numbers of social work staff applying to work in children services. The Trust has a Business Continuity plan in place, which was approved by the BHSCT Board. The BHSCT are currently managing a ‘Risk Based’ approach to ensure the highest risk cases in Child Protection continue to take priority.
- 4.4 Ms Dargan also commented in respect of the workforce issues prevalent in the NHSCT. Ms Dargan advised that the Gateway teams and FIT teams are struggling significantly with 30-40% absence rates. Ms Dargan confirmed the front-line child-care teams’ vacancies are becoming increasingly difficult to fill.
- 4.5 Ms Mahon from the WHSCT also confirmed staff shortages in particular with social workers. Ms Mahon informed the Board that staff were redeployed from areas deemed less high risk, with child protection and statutory functions work being prioritised.
- 4.6 Mr McCafferty also confirmed the same issues regarding workforce availability in the SHSCT as in the other Trusts. Mr McCafferty confirmed there are currently a high number of unallocated child care cases in the SHSCT.
- 4.7 Ms Collinson advised members that Education has benefited from improved connection between health and education to support vulnerable young people. Ms Collinson confirmed school principals have commented on the difficulty of accessing social workers. Ms Collinson also highlighted the ongoing industrial action with education and welfare officers and the impact on the education service. Ms Collinson stated that there are over 1,000

young people currently waiting for Education Welfare Support and a request had been submitted for additional staff.

4.8 Dr Whyte commented that Covid has placed a huge strain on GP Services. She confirmed that there are significant waiting lists for children to see Consultants.

4.9 The Chair thanked everyone for their comments and agreed there needs to be a longer-term solution regarding the workforce issue and other challenges the members are experiencing. The Chair added that it was useful to share concerns and how Board members can work collaboratively.

#### **5 50/22 SBNI Finance Update Report (Please refer to paper BM50-02.22P2)**

5.1 Ms McKenzie referred to the SBNI Finance Update Report and confirmed that the budget is on track to spend in year.

#### **6 50/22 SBNI Strategic Plan 2022-2026 (Please refer to paper BM50-02.22P3)**

6.1 The Chair advised the Board that the draft SBNI Strategic Plan 2022 – 2026 went out for public consultation on 21<sup>st</sup> January 2022. It will run for 12 weeks and conclude on Friday 15<sup>th</sup> April 2022.

6.2 The Chair confirmed the Consultation documents are hosted on the SBNI website and online completion is preferred, to assist with analysis of response and high-level analytics.

6.3 The Chair confirmed the Consultation can be accessed at [sp2022consultation.safeguardingni.org](https://sp2022consultation.safeguardingni.org).

6.4 The Chair advised the Strategic Plan will be formally discussed at the Board Development Day in May 2022.

**7 50/22P Child Care in Practice Briefing Report (see refer to BM50-02.22P4)**

- 7.1 The Chair advised members that the SBNI contribute a small grant to the Child Care in Practice for academic research on child care issues and their newsletter will be added to the SBNI website.

**Action 2**

A link to the Child Care in Practice Newsletter will be added to the SBNI website and quarterly updates of the Journal shared with the Board.

**Action By:** SBNI Central Support Team

- 7.2 The Chair informed the Board that the SBNI membership of the Child Care in Practice Board is currently available and requested that any members who would be interested in this position should forward their interest to the SBNI Central Support team.

**Action 3**

Nominations for the SBNI position on the Child Care in Practice Board should be sent to [Alex.mccoy@hscni.net](mailto:Alex.mccoy@hscni.net) by 25<sup>th</sup> March 2022

**Action By:** Board Members

**8 50/22 AOB**

- 8.1 The next SBNI Board meeting is Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> April 2022.

The Chair closed the Public section of the meeting at 4.15pm.

**Bernie McNally**

**Independent Chair SBNI**