

Annual Report 2021-2022



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Foreword

As the Independent Chair of the SBNI, I am delighted to present our ninth annual report.

The Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland has 27 members 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.

2021-2022 has been characterised mainly by a society emerging from the trauma and challenge of COVID-19. Vulnerable and at-risk children were particularly disadvantaged during the COVID-19 pandemic so it was important that not only were they supported to get life back to normal but were also supported to deal with the long term impact of numerous lockdowns.

The SBNI member agencies have been working hard throughout the last year to get services back on track and to respond positively to the emerging needs of children and young people.

The SBNI has now completed the strategic planning cycle for 2018-2022 and has undertaken a major piece of work to develop a new strategic plan for 2022-2026. This plan has now been approved by the SBNI and will be operational in April 2022.

As part of the planning process the SBNI have been taking stock of all the achievements of our member agencies throughout the last four years. Over this period, we have been focussing on addressing the SBNI strategic priorities of:

- domestic violence and abuse
- child and parental mental health
- neglect.

This ninth annual report will concentrate on how we have approached each of these issues as well as reporting on progress made against each of our strategic objectives and commitments laid out in our 2021-2022 business plan.

This report will also focus on the achievements of each of our statutory committees, particularly highlighting the work of the five SBNI Safeguarding Panels which are working locally to ensure a consistent approach to safeguarding across all of Northern Ireland. The work of the Case Management Review Panel will also be covered, with a particular emphasis on the improvements in the child protection system identified as a result of the multi-agency in depth reviews we conduct when things go wrong. These, of course, identify examples of good practice too. The report will also highlight the findings of a recent evaluation of the impact of the case management review process.

This annual report will also provide a further update on the SBNI work on Trauma Informed Practice (TIP) detailing progress made in embedding it into member and partner agency policy, procedure and practice.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone involved in the SBNI particularly the children and young people we have engaged with, our staff, the members, the Independent Panel Chairs and other key stakeholders involved in trying to make Northern Ireland a better place for children to grow up in. I look forward to your continued support and co-operation in the year ahead.

BERNIE MCNALLY OBE
SBNI INDEPENDENT CHAIR



The Role of the Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland

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

They are led by an Independent Chair, appointed through the public appointments process, 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 SBNI Business Plan 2021-2022 (at Annex Two) lists these priorities and their progress is detailed within this annual report.

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.

Safeguarding Panels

The statutory committees which effectively drive forward child protection collaboration at a 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 (there are two chairs covering the five panels) has been appointed on the basis of their previous operational management experience within the child protection and safeguarding system and are members of the Board. The role of the Safeguarding Panels is to take forward collaborative work locally to deliver the key strategic priorities set by the SBNI. The panels also identify new and emerging issues from the ground, thereby ensuring that the SBNI is 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 either there have been exceptional outcomes for the children and young people or they 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 to relevant agencies via the local Safeguarding Panels.

Child Sexual Exploitation Sub-Group

The Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) Sub-Group was established to develop an understanding of CSE in Northern Ireland as experienced by young people. It has taken a collaborative approach to raise awareness and further develop member body and community understanding of CSE here in Northern Ireland. The sub-group is chaired by a detective chief superintendent from the PSNI.

Online Safety Forum

The SBNI Online Safety Forum was set up to help keep children and young people and their families safe in the online world. This forum aims to provide parents/carers, children and families with advice and guidance on how to deal with the threats posed by an ever-changing technological/online 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 children and young people, trying to help keep them safe. The forum is chaired by a detective chief inspector from the PSNI.

Child Protection Sub-Group

The Child Protection Sub-Group was established to provide a vehicle for the statutory partners, within the SBNI, to focus on their statutory responsibilities concerning improved protection of children and the embedding of models of practice, such as Signs of Safety and Trauma Informed Practice. The sub-group is chaired by the director of children's services and executive director of social work in the Western Health and Social Care Trust.

Neglect Sub-Group

The SBNI Neglect Sub-Group was established to tackle the issue of neglect in Northern Ireland by providing strategic leadership to ensure safeguarding practice in relation to neglect and particularly vulnerable children is effective. The sub-group is chaired by an assistant director of the Public Health Agency.

Domestic Violence and Abuse Sub-Group

The SBNI Domestic Violence and Abuse Sub-Group was established to facilitate connectivity with local and regional initiatives and ensure the child or young person is recognised as a victim in their own right in a situation where domestic violence and abuse is a feature. The sub-group is chaired by an assistant director of children's social services from the Southern Health and Social Care Trust.

Interfaith Sub-Group

The SBNI Interfaith Sub-Group facilitates co-operation between various faith groups and the SBNI to encourage effective communication and engagement in key safeguarding initiatives. Membership of the group is derived from the Catholic Church Diocese of Down and Connor, the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, the Church of Ireland, the Methodist Church, the Islamic Centre and the Salvation Army. The sub-group is attended by representatives from the NSPCC, the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) and the Health and Social Care Board (HSCB). It is chaired by the Head of Safeguarding for the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.

Child Death Overview Panel

A Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP) was provided for in the legislation setting up the SBNI. However, the relevant articles of the legislation have not been commenced at this time and consequently a CDOP has not yet been established.

In this reporting year the SBNI facilitated an independent review of the Child Death Overview Panel in Northern Ireland to provide the Department of Health with the expert opinion as to how the CDOP can be established here in Northern Ireland.

The Review Report is currently under consideration by the Department of Health.

Reporting on Progress

Each of these groups meets regularly and reports directly to the SBNI on progress against agreed terms of reference.

Engagement

The 'SBNI Strategy for Engaging with Children and Young People' was approved in September 2021. The purpose of the strategy is to ensure that the views and voices of children and young people are heard and responded to in relation to the safeguarding and child protection system in Northern Ireland. The strategy provides advice, direction and guidance on how the SBNI member agencies (at Board, Safeguarding Panel and sub-group levels) will engage with children and young people and reflect their voices, views and needs in SBNI-related work activity.

The work of each of the groups mentioned above is outlined in the pages that follow in this annual report.

Governance Committee

Strategic Priority 1: To provide leadership and set direction in the safeguarding and protection of children and young people.

SBNI Business Objectives 2021-2022:

1.6: The SBNI Board and associated governance framework is fit for purpose.

Governance Committee

The Governance Committee met quarterly throughout the 2021-2022 reporting period and continues to be chaired by one of the SBNI's lay members. In addition to the Chair, the committee is made up of:

- four SBNI members including a member with Case Management Review (CMR) experience
- one member of the SBNI Central Support Team with a governance remit
- one Safeguarding Panel Chair
- the committee may also invite to attend as required any other members who can provide relevant information and assistance.

The Governance Committee continues to deliver on its purpose which is to review the establishment and maintenance of an effective system for governance across the whole of the SBNI's activities and to support the achievement of the SBNI's objectives while minimising the exposure to risk.

The committee has achieved this through application of an assurance framework which assures that the SBNI operates in accordance with its statutory objectives, duties and functions. This assurance framework further identifies the principal risks to the attainment and fulfilment of those objectives, duties and functions together with measures and controls to manage these principal risks. The SBNI risk register has been updated, with risks managed appropriately and is regularly reviewed by the SBNI.

The work of the Governance Committee supports the learning culture across the SBNI by ensuring that lessons learned are acted upon. These lessons can arise for example from case management reviews, independent evaluations and reviews. It also furthers the SBNI's objective to coordinate 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.

The Governance Committee keeps under review the effectiveness of the SBNI's structures and working arrangements, including the inter-relationship and accountabilities of the various committees and groups that undertake the work of the SBNI to ensure that at all times the SBNI operates to the highest standards of public sector governance. The committee had oversight of the development of the SBNI Annual Report 2020-2021 as well as the SBNI Business Plan 2022-2023, prior to recommending it to the Board for its review and subsequent approval.

The Governance Committee provides assistance and support to the Independent Chair in the preparation of the SBNI's Annual Declaration of Assurance, with the Chair of the committee participating in the SBNI Assurance and Accountability meetings with the Department of Health. It also has regard to the memorandum of understanding between the SBNI, the PHA and the Department of Health whilst recognising that each member body of the SBNI is also required to operate within its own governance arrangements.

Safeguarding Snapshot

Statistics Snapshot 2021-2022

1,903,100

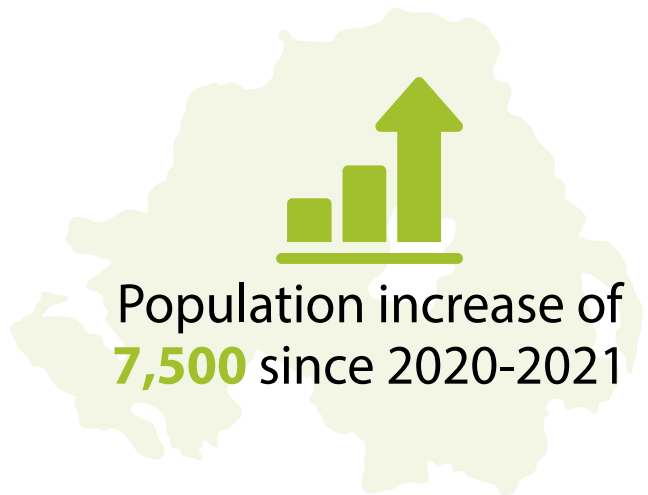
PEOPLE IN NORTHERN IRELAND



967,000
(50.8%) female



936,200
(49.2%) male



478,400

25.6%
of total
population

CHILDREN UNDER 18



60,979

CHILDREN UNDER 18 WHO WILL HAVE EXPERIENCED FOUR OR MORE ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES (ACES)⁶

12.7%
of all children
under 18

COMPARED WITH PEOPLE WITH NO ACES THOSE WITH 4 OR MORE ACES ARE⁷

2 times more likely to be have a chronic disease



6 times more likely to smoke tobacco or E-cigs



3 times more likely to have respiratory disease



11 times more likely to have smoked cannabis



3 times more likely to develop coronary heart disease



16 times more likely to have used crack cocaine or heroin



4 times more likely to develop type 2 diabetes



20 times more likely to have been incarcerated in their life



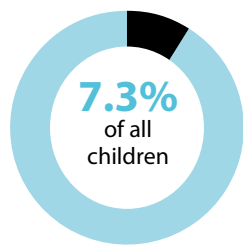
4 times more likely to be a high risk drinker



Statistics Snapshot 2021-2022

34,969

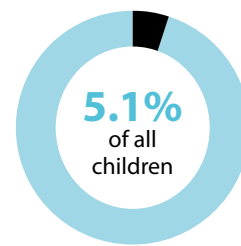
**CHILDREN
WERE REFERRED
TO SOCIAL
SERVICES FOR
ASSESSMENT
OF NEED²**



(increase of **2,899**
from 2020-2021)

24,545

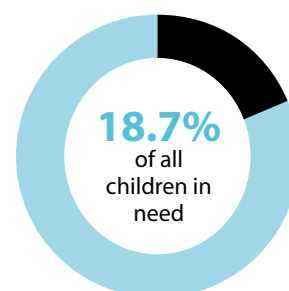
**CHILDREN
KNOWN
TO SOCIAL
SERVICES AS
A CHILD IN
NEED²**



(an increase of **1,450**)

4,601

**CHILDREN KNOWN
TO SOCIAL SERVICES
WITH A DISABILITY**



Learning

2,115

Autism (ASD/ADHD/Asperger's)

1,796

Physical

442

Sensory

165

Other

83

1,552

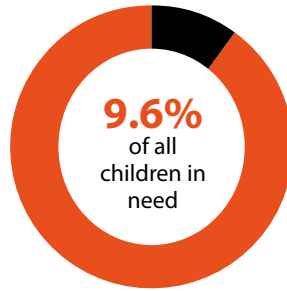
**CHILD
PROTECTION
REFERRALS**

(decrease of **369**
from 2020-2021)



Statistics Snapshot 2021-2022

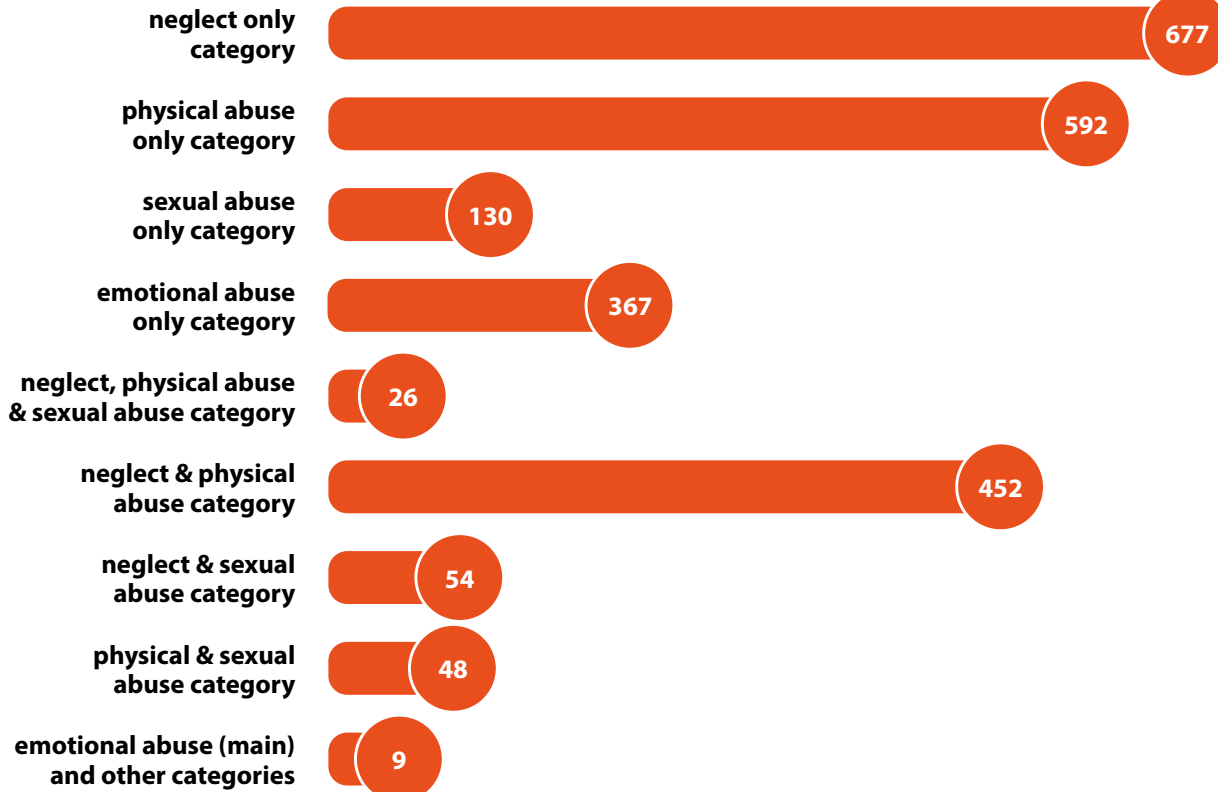
2,346
CHILDREN ON
THE CHILD
PROTECTION
REGISTER



1,173
males



1,173
females



90
CHILDREN
ON THE
CPR WITH A
DISABILITY

3,208
CHILD
PROTECTION
INVESTIGATIONS
CARRIED OUT

2,177 by social workers

708 by joint protocol

60 by police

↑ (an increase of 245 from 2020-2021)

8208
FAMILY SUPPORT
REFERRALS
REQUIRING A UNOCINI

5376
FAMILY SUPPORT
ASSESSMENTS
COMPLETED AT GATEWAY

3268
ABOVE ASSESSMENTS
CLOSED AT GATEWAY

1997
COMPLETED FAMILY SUPPORT
INITIAL ASSESSMENTS
TRANSFERRED TO FIT

1800
CHILD PROTECTION ASSESSMENTS
RECEIVED AND REQUIRING A
UNOCINI ASSESSMENT

897
COMPLETED INITIAL
ASSESSMENTS
TRANSFERRED TO FIT

1409
CHILD PROTECTION
ASSESSMENTS
COMPLETED AT GATEWAY

408
CHILD PROTECTION
ASSESSMENTS
CLOSED BY GATEWAY

Statistics Snapshot 2021-2022

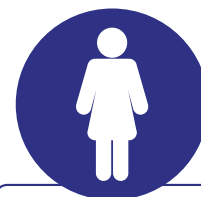
3,624

CHILDREN IN CARE
OF HSC TRUSTS (LAC)

(increase of **94** on previous year) ↑



1946
male



1678
female

1,626

KINSHIP
FOSTER CARERS



1,076

CHILDREN IN
FOSTERING

(STRANGER - EXCLUDING RELATIVES)



1,626

CHILDREN
IN KINSHIP
CARE



241

CHILDREN IN
RESIDENTIAL CARE

(STATUTORY/VOLUNTARY/SECURE)



248

CHILDREN
PLACED AT HOME
WITH PARENTS



61

CHILDREN
PLACED FOR
ADOPTION



135

OTHER
PLACEMENTS



472

CHILDREN IN CARE
RECORDED AS
HAVING A DISABILITY



256

LOOKED AFTER
CHILDREN ON CHILDREN
PROTECTION REGISTER



899

CHILDREN DISCHARGED
FROM CARE DURING
THE YEAR

(AN INCREASE OF **173** FROM 2020-2021)



899

CHILDREN ADMITTED TO CARE
DURING THE YEAR

63

residential

703

fostering

66

placed at home with parents

0

placed for adoption

67

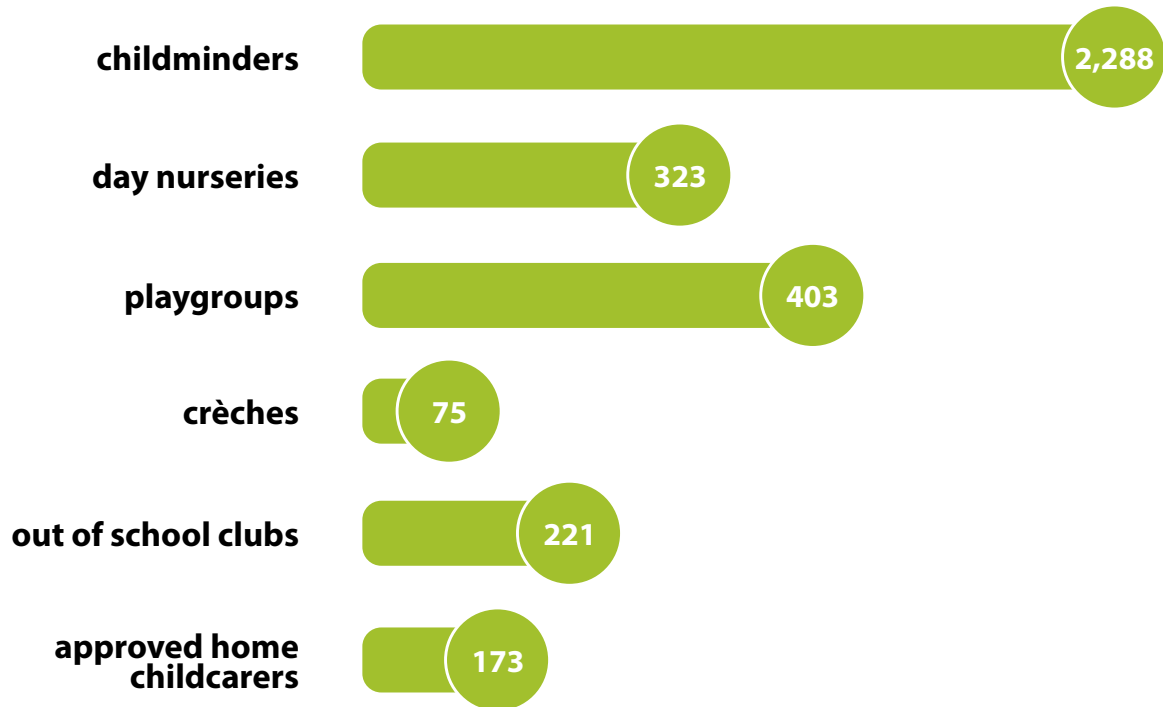
other

Statistics Snapshot 2021-2022

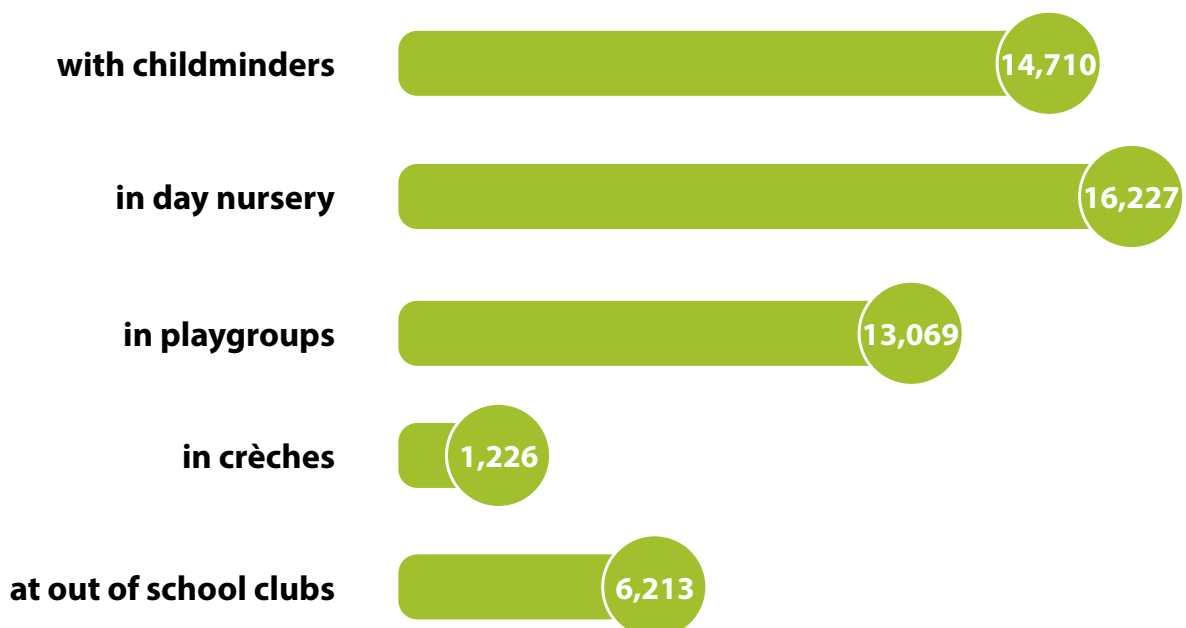
12 OF THESE WERE
REPEAT SUBMISSIONS

53 ADMISSIONS TO
SECURE CARE

3,606 PEOPLE OR FACILITIES REGISTERED
FOR THE PROVISION OF DAY CARE
FOR CHILDREN UNDER THE AGE OF 12
(a decrease of **80** on the previous year)



59,213 PLACES PROVIDED

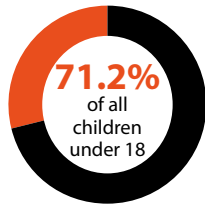


Statistics Snapshot 2021-2022

347,165

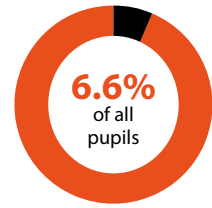
**PUPILS IN SCHOOLS
IN NORTHERN
IRELAND**

(PRIMARY, POST-PRIMARY & FUNDED PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION)
(SLIGHT INCREASE OF 2,265 SINCE 2020-2021)



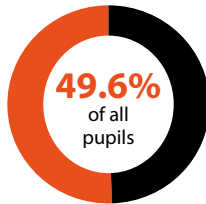
22,939

**PUPILS IN
FUNDED
PRE-SCHOOLS**



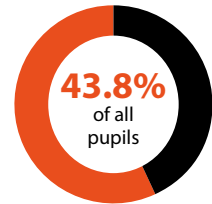
172,325

**PUPILS IN
PRIMARY
SCHOOLS**



151,901

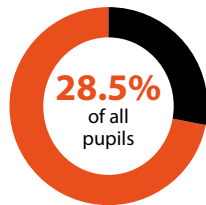
**PUPILS IN POST
PRIMARY
SCHOOL**



98,800

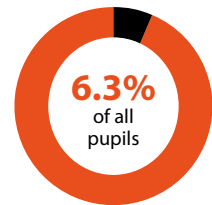
**ARE ENTITLED
TO FREE SCHOOL
MEALS**

(increase of 1,169 since 2020-2021)



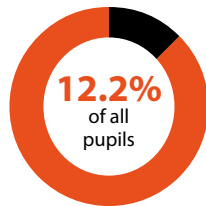
22,000

**PUPILS WITH A
STATEMENT OF
SPECIAL
EDUCATIONAL NEED**



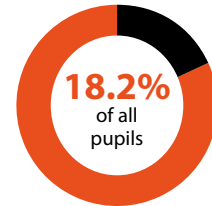
42,500

**PUPILS WITH SPECIAL
EDUCATIONAL NEEDS
BUT NOT A STATEMENT**



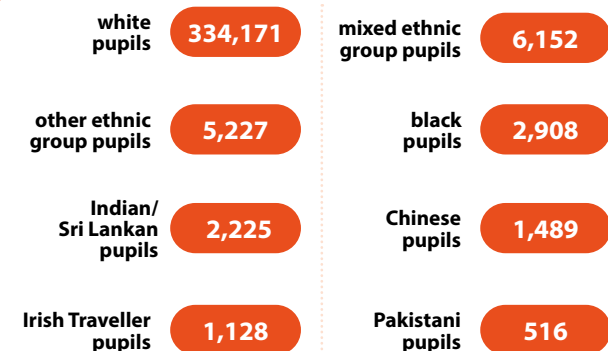
64,500

**PUPILS WITH SOME
FORM OF SPECIAL
EDUCATIONAL NEED**



6,600 PUPILS ENROLLED IN
39 DEDICATED
SPECIAL SCHOOLS

2,700 PUPILS EDUCATED
IN MAINSTREAM
LEARNING
SUPPORT CENTRES

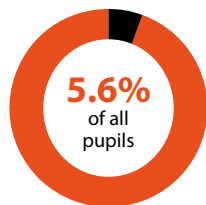


Protestant pupils **109,481**

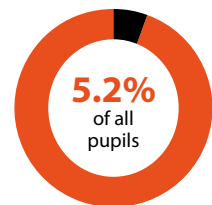
Catholic pupils **177,855**

Other Christian/Non Christian/
no religion/ not recorded pupils **65,509**

19,700
**PUPILS RECORDED
AS NON-WHITE**

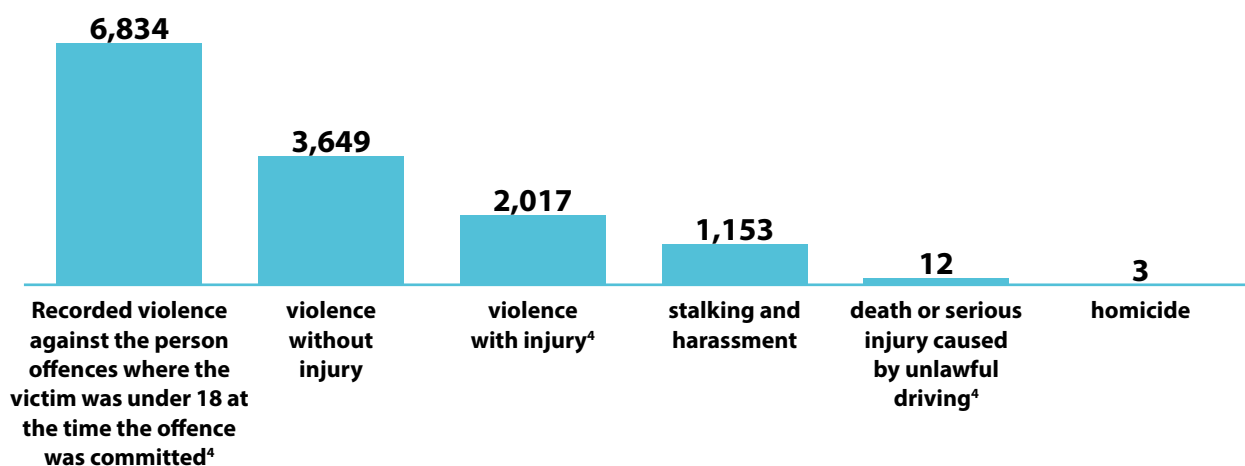
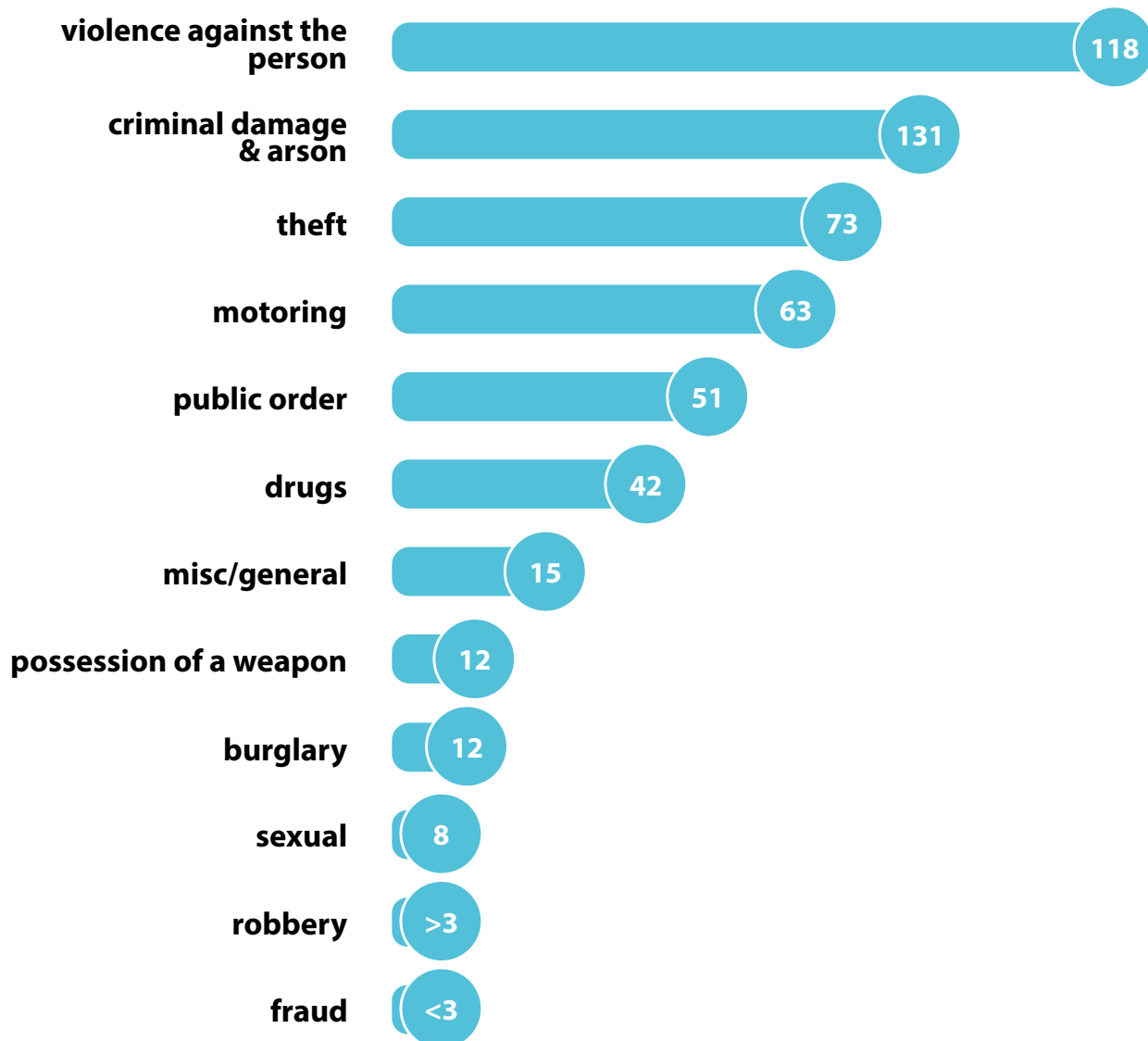


18,400
**NEWCOMER
PUPILS**



Statistics Snapshot 2021-2022

532 CONVICTIONS AT COURTS FOR DEFENDANTS AGED UNDER 18



Meet the Board Members



Bernie McNally
SBNi Independent
Chair



Amanda Stewart
Chief Executive
Probation Board for
Northern Ireland



Deirdre Mahon
Director of Children's
and Women's Services
and Social Work
Western Health and
Social Care Trust



Carol Diffin
Director of Children's
Services and Social Work
Belfast Health and Social
Care Trust



Barbara Campbell
Director Children's
Service's and Executive
Director of Social Work
South Eastern Health
and Social Care Trust



Maura Dargan
Divisional Director of Women,
Children and Families Division
Executive Director of Social Work
Northern Health and Social Care Trust



Rodney Morton
Director of Nursing
and Allied Health
Professional
PHA



Emily Roberts
Safeguarding Nurse
Consultant
PHA



Brendan Whittle
Director of Social Care
and Children, HSCB
(now SPPG)



Una Turbitt
Director
Education Authority



Colm McCafferty
Director of Children
& Young People's
Services SHSCT



Anthony McNally
D/Chief Superintendent,
PSNI



Dawn Shaw
Chief Executive
Officer, NIGALA



Heather Moore
Director of Environmental
Services, Lisburn &
Castlereagh Borough Council



Jacqui Montgomery Devlin
Head of Safeguarding
Presbyterian Church in
Ireland and Chair of the SBNi
Interfaith Sub-Group



Bronagh Muldoon
National Head of Service
for Northern Ireland
NSPCC



Michele Janes
Director
Barnardo's NI



Lorna Ballard
Director
Action for Children
Northern Ireland



Paddy Mooney
Director
Include Youth



Pauline Leeson
Chief Executive
Children In Northern
Ireland



Paddy Kelly
Director
Children's Law Centre



Paul McStravick
Director, Youth Justice
Agency



Gerry Guckian
Independent Lay
Member



Simon Rogers
Independent Lay
Member



Andrew Thomson
Independent Chair
CMR
Safeguarding Board NI



Mary Rafferty
Safeguarding Panel Chair
Northern, and Western
Areas
Safeguarding Board NI



Yvonne Adair
Safeguarding Panel Chair
Belfast, Southern and
South Eastern Area's
Safeguarding Board NI



Stephen Bergin
Director of Public
Health and Medical
Director, PHA

Focus on Finance

The Department of Health (DoH) is the sponsor department of the SBNI and allocates an annual budget.

For 01 April 2021 to 31 March 2022, this was **£659,183**.

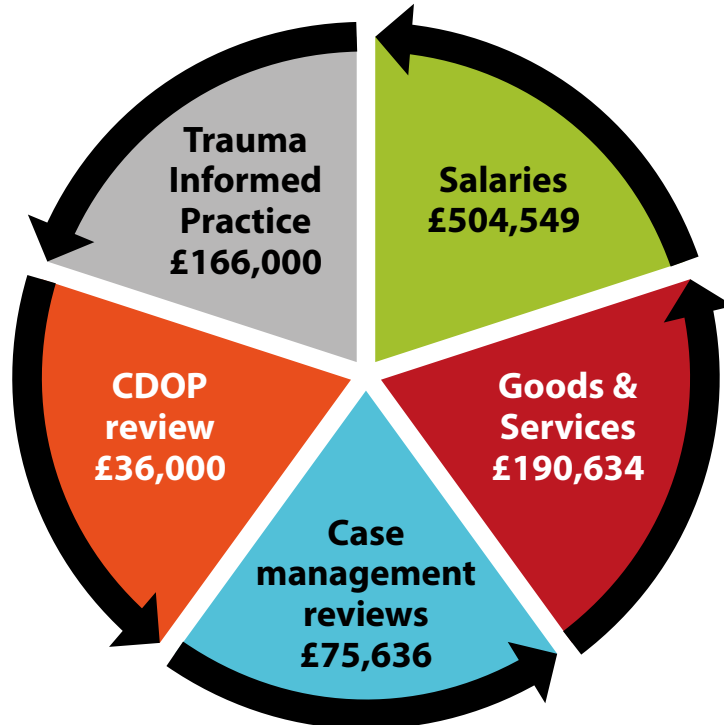
In addition to this, the Health and Social Care Board provided **£75,636** to fund the SBNI for Case Management Reviews.

In addition to the recurrent budget, the SBNI was also allocated a budget of:

- £36,000 by the DoH to review the establishment of a Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP)
- £166,000 by the Executive Programme on Paramilitarism and Organised Crime, to continue the work of embedding Trauma Informed Practice across member and partner agencies and departments.

The total budget for the SBNI for April 2021-March 2022 was: **£936,819**.

How our money was spent by 31 March 2022:



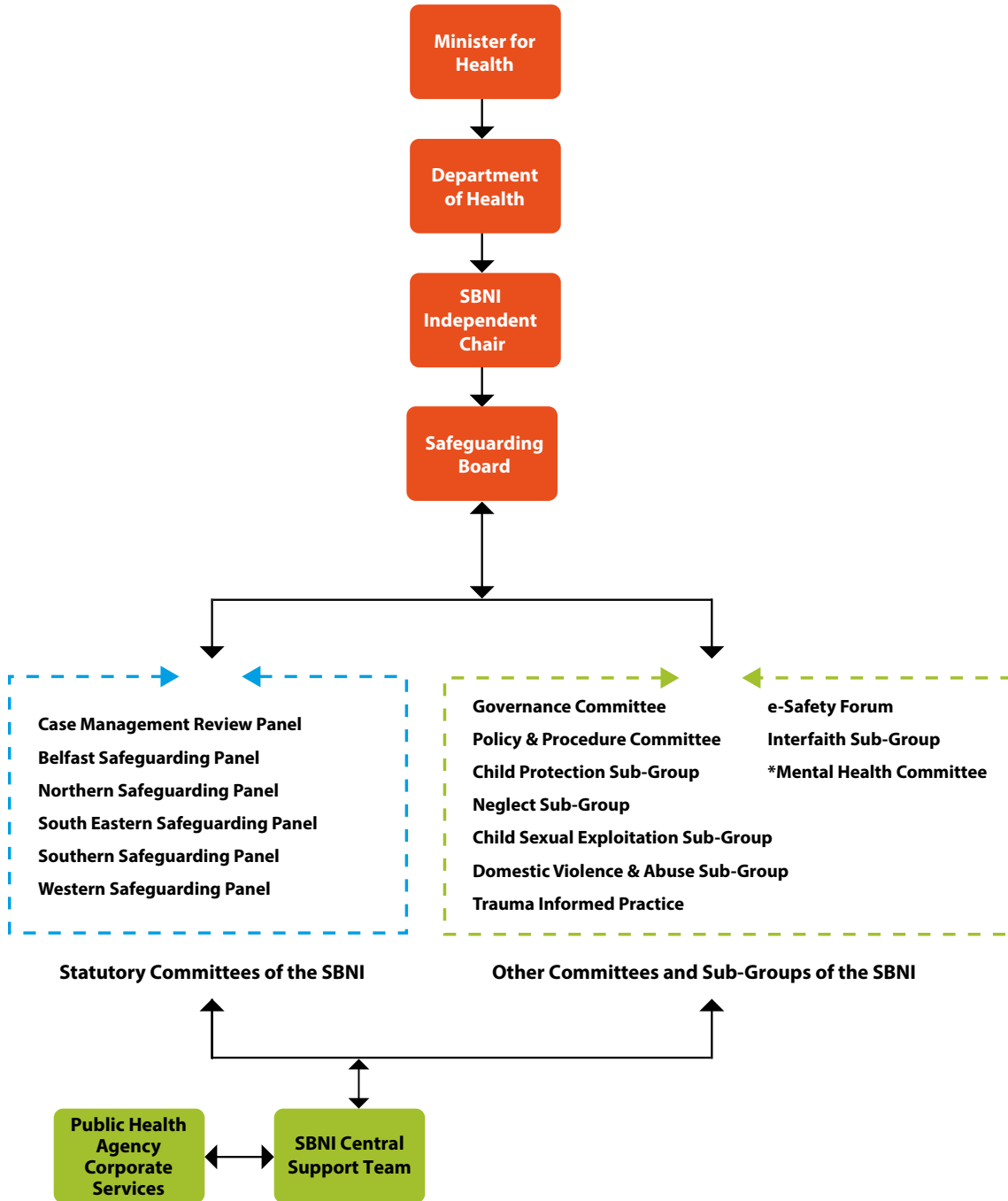
Significant Goods and Services Spend in Year:

- SBNI operational running costs: **£91,418**
- strategic planning process with children and young people: **£13,000**
- policies and procedures: e-platform management of regional core policy and procedures and associated guidance development: **£6,800**
- CMR Chronolator licence: **£4,830**
- CMR dissemination events: **£6,000**
- CMR author training: **£1,950**
- SBNI APP platform support: **£3,450**
- partnership support of Child Care in Practice journal: **£5,000**
- enhanced SLA with BSO Equality Unit: **£6,969**
- online safety resources for schools: **£17,200**
- ACE awareness – neglect, domestic violence, mental wellbeing, child exploitation resources for schools: **£8,500.**

At 31 March 2022 the SBNI had spent its allocated budget in full.

How the SBNI is structured

SBNI Organisational Structure (April 2021 – March 2022)



Case Management Reviews

Learning from practice

Strategic Priority 1: To provide leadership and set direction in the safeguarding and protection of children and young people.

SBNI Business Objectives 2021-2022:

1.5: Statutory partners consider the range of child protection information available and use this to agree priorities which can be actioned through an outcome-based accountability framework.

Case Management Reviews are a statutory function of the SBNI which are undertaken by the Case Management Review Panel.

The Case Management Review (CMR) Panel meets on a monthly basis, is independently chaired by Mr Andrew Thomson, (SBNI board member) and includes membership from senior representatives of agencies represented on the Board. The panel's role is to consider notifications in respect of serious incidents involving children and young people to identify:

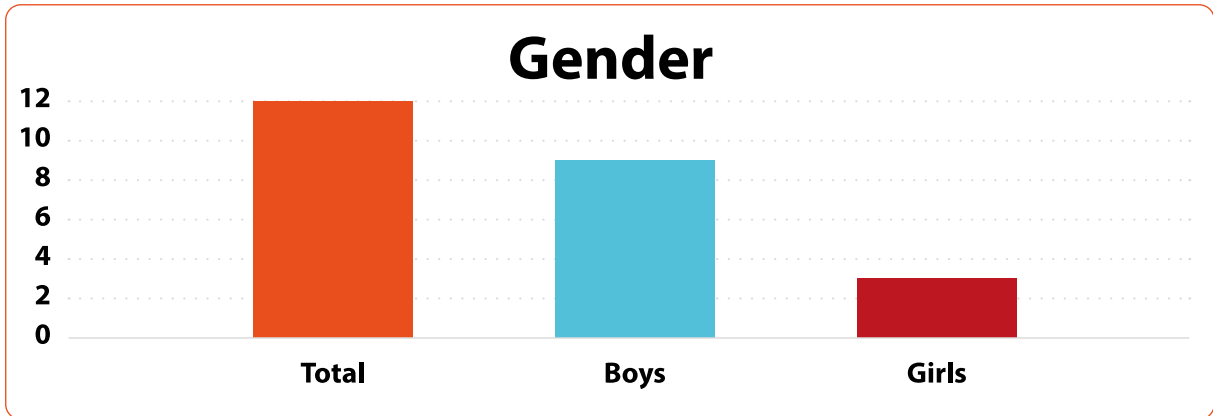
- where there have been positive outcomes for children and young people or
- where things have not gone well and there is significant learning.

The purpose of this is to enable the child protection system to be strengthened thereby further protecting children and young people in Northern Ireland. The CMR Panel interrogates the information provided to it by the notifying agency and makes a recommendation to the Board as to whether or not to commission a CMR. The recommendation is considered by the Board which decides whether or not a CMR should be undertaken.

During the business year, as a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Case Management Review Panel continued to meet via a 'virtual' platform. Panel meetings continued on a monthly basis.

CMR Notifications

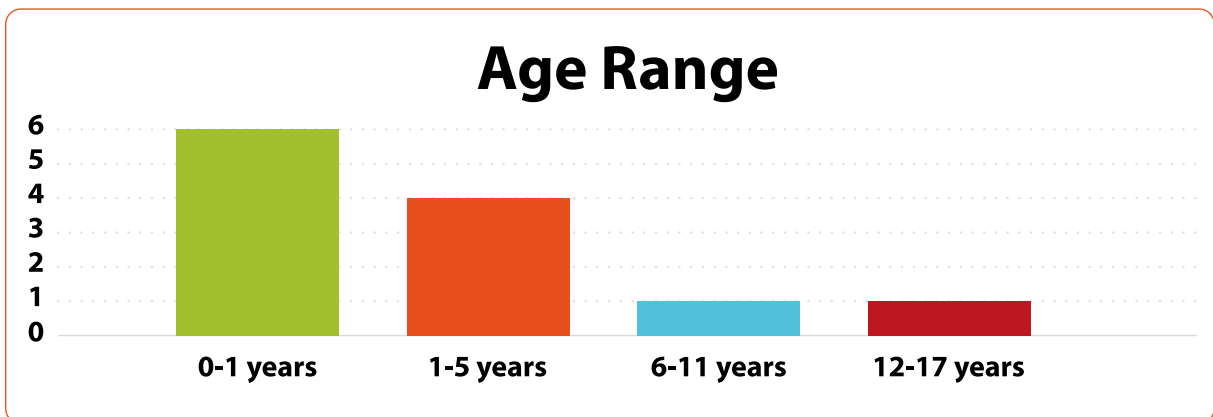
During 2021-2022, 12 CMR notifications in respect of 12 children were received by the SBNI. Of these notifications, three Case Management Reviews were commissioned. Nine of the children were boys and three were girls.



Gender of children subject to CMR Notification

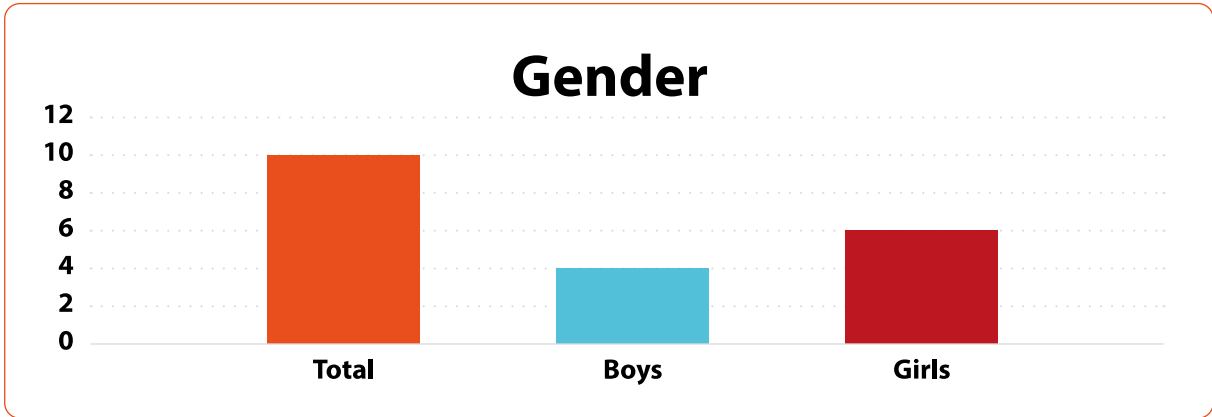
The age range of these children were as follows:

- 0-1 year old: 6 children
- 1-5 years old: 4 children
- 6-11 years old: 1 child
- 12-17 years old: 1 child.



Age range of children subject to CMR Notification

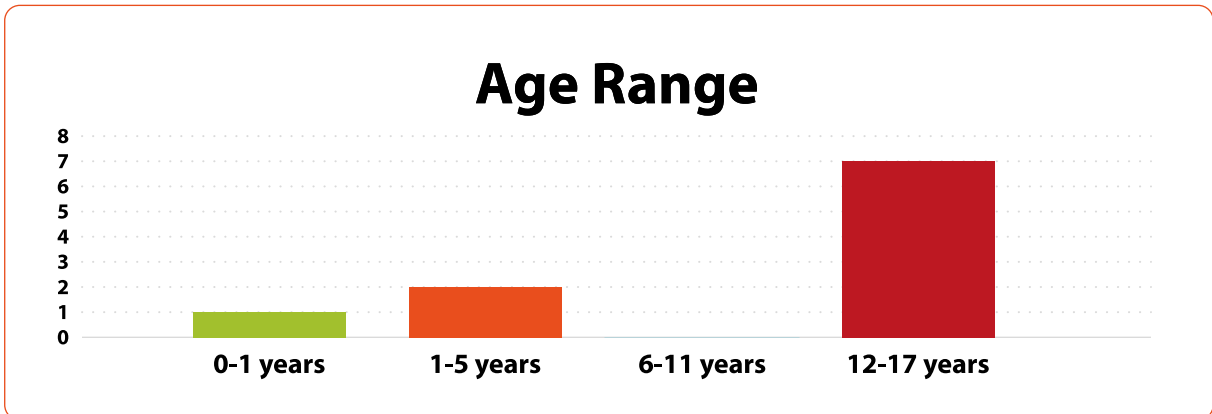
During 2021-2022, six completed Case Management Reviews were presented to and approved by the Board. These reviews focused on 10 children (three males and seven females).



Gender of children involved in completed Reviews

The age range of these children were as follows:

- 0-1 year old: 1 child
- 1-5 years old: 2 children
- 6-10 years old: 0 children
- 11-17 years old: 7 children.



Age range of children involved in completed Reviews

Prior to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic the average time taken to undertake CMRs was 9.5 months. This timeframe has been significantly impacted as a consequence of the various lockdowns and circuit breakers in 2020-2021 and as a consequence the average time for the 6 CMRs completed in 2021 – 2022 was 16 months¹. Work in undertaking the reviews has been affected by the unavailability of staff members from member agencies to complete Individual Agency Reviews (IAR's) as a consequence of both COVID-19 and workforce pressures. Timelines consequently were required to be adjusted. Despite these interruptions staff endeavoured to ensure as timely a response to the completion of reviews as was possible in the difficult and uncharted circumstances. It is anticipated during the next business year timelines for the completion of reviews shall significantly reduce.

Summary of learning arising from these reviews

There were 34 recommendations associated with the completion of these reviews which fall into broad themes associated with:

- child sexual exploitation and peer on peer domestic abuse
- physical abuse
- harmful sexual behaviour.

All of the recommendations can be found at Annex One.



1 NB: 2 of the 6 cases involved 4 children each and were impacted by a COVID DoH approved stand down of 4 months, coupled with additional timelines associated with, amongst other factors, the number of CYP in each case. Taking the remaining 4 cases separately and removing the 4 month stand down they averaged completion in 8.25 months.

CMR Evaluation

During the previous business year, work on a review of 19 CMRs undertaken between 2012 and up to and including November 2020 was undertaken. Emphasis was placed on data mining, theme identification and analysis. In June 2021 the evaluation report was presented to and approved by the SBNI Board. The aim of the evaluation was as follows:

- identify common themes and trends across review reports commissioned by the SBNI
- highlight the key learning points from reviews which have assisted in the development of systems and processes to improve child protection and safeguarding in Northern Ireland since the formation of the SBNI
- examine the key changes to the review process since 2012 and comment on the effectiveness of these changes
- consider the effectiveness of the process for dissemination of learning from CMRs across the safeguarding system.

The review sought to extrapolate thematic areas evident across case management reviews undertaken between 2012 and 2020. Detailed below are thematic areas identified by the evaluation across the reviews:

- information sharing within and between agencies
- supervision, staff support and training
- organisational and staffing issues
- compliance with established policies and practice
- risk assessment
- assessment and analysis of Information
- good practice.

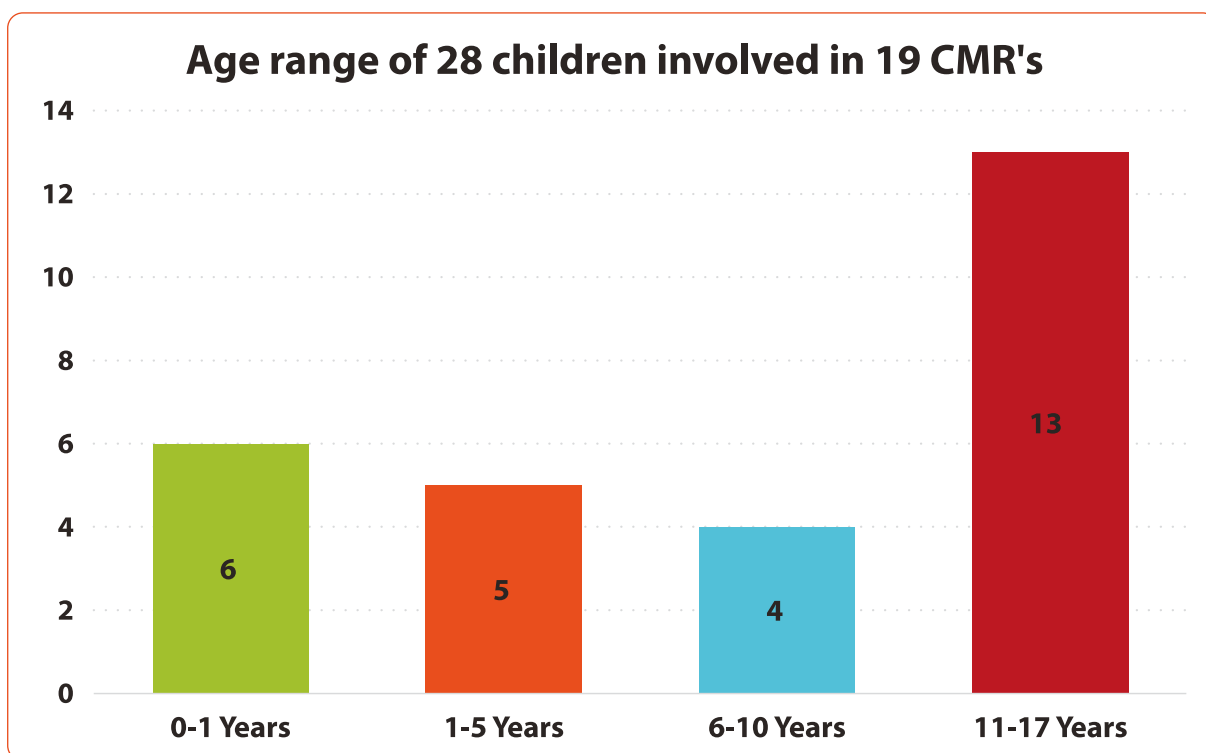
Improvements made as a result of CMRs

All CMRs by their very nature generate recommendations for improvement. These CMRs are followed up by comprehensive action plans by member agencies to ensure all recommendations are given due consideration and appropriate implementation.

Highlighted below are some completed and ongoing reforms, noted in the Evaluation Report, which have come about as a result of CMR reports:

- greater understanding in relation to the thresholds for referrals relating to child protection and neglect and an increased awareness in schools of the role of the Education Authority (EA) Child Protection Support Service
- the timeliness of responses to referrals and the need for initial assessments to be holistic and include all family members

- greater liaison with the PSNI Public Protection Branch and other agencies involved in cases where a child has died and the death is unexplained or suspicious
- the Health and Social Care Board reviewed the timescales in initial responses to cases referred to the HSCTs, where those cases involved indicators of neglect combined with physical harm to children
- the need for and subsequent development of a consistent and co-ordinated multi-agency approach in Northern Ireland, in relation to young people who display harmful sexual behaviours and to individuals who cause concern in the context of families
- commissioning of expert reports to be subject to agreed standards and governance processes
- development of guidance on the resolution and escalation of concerns and information sharing developed
- development of a policy to establish the role and responsibilities of staff in universal services when parents refuse to engage with the child health service
- the Information Sharing Agreement between the PSNI and HSCT's (2019) has been further revised
- closer collaboration in relation to individuals who are a cause for concern
- ongoing consideration of legislative changes and the development of guidance in relation to children on care orders who reside in a different trust area
- development of a regional data base and guidance in respect of children living in kinship care placements
- a review of the Protocol for the Joint Investigation by Social Workers and Police Officers of Alleged and Suspected Cases of Child Abuse (NI) to include arrangements for oversight by management and support for children who find it difficult to make a complaint
- the Pre-Mobile Baby Protocol for bruising/marks has been further revised and published in the Core Policy and Procedures manual
- the PSNI 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
- development of new guidance on the transfer of cases between Health and Social Care Trusts is under development
- development of guidance to staff regarding children/young people who are subject to paramilitary threat has been developed and disseminated to all member agencies
- increased awareness for staff regarding parental mental health and its impact on children and young people
- 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.



Dissemination of Key Messages/Learning from CMRs

The focus of a CMR is on learning, that is: 'learning from what has worked well and then build upon it; and what has not worked well and determine how this should be prevented in the future' (DoH Guidance 2012 (revised 2014)).

All completed CMR reports, including identified learning and recommendations, are shared with the organisations involved. Copies of all reports are provided to appropriate and relevant organisations to ensure regional learning within specific sectors.

In addition, dissemination of learning from CMRs is on-going with regional and local events regularly held across Northern Ireland. This sharing of learning is coordinated and undertaken jointly by the CMR Panel and the Safeguarding Panels. All CMRs completed in the preceding year are discussed. The events in 2021-2022 were held via virtual platform which enabled a wider group of professionals to attend than may have been able to attend if the sessions were delivered in person.

During the business year, seven dissemination of learning events were undertaken by the SBNI.

The first event was a local event for the Western Area Safeguarding Panel which had been postponed during the previous business year as a consequence of COVID-19 and workforce pressures.

The remaining six events focussed on the thematic learning from the CMR Evaluation 2020 as well as three reviews which were completed in the previous business year.

A regional event for senior managers and cross departmental colleagues was delivered in December 2021 with five local Safeguarding Panel events then delivered in the final quarter of the business year.

These events were attended by in excess of 700 professionals including managers and practitioners from across the multi-disciplinary and agency spectrum.

As in previous years the evaluation of these events was extremely positive. Member agencies however are keen to explore how the SBNI can better disseminate and embed the learning extrapolated from the completed reviews. To this end a 'Learning Collaborative' has been established, co-ordinated by Ms Barbara Campbell Director of Children's Services SEHSCT and populated by multi-agency partners to determine how this may be undertaken. The outcome of this collaborative will be reported upon in the next reporting year.

On-going training programme for CMR authors

Training for CMR authors continued to be delivered in this reporting year. Training focused on the following areas:

- facilitation for the new CMR authors to shadow more experienced authors as they undertook reviews
- use of electronic platform training - ensuring authors had skills to undertake their reviews via Zoom
- child sexual exploitation
- domestic homicide reviews
- learning from serious case reviews in Great Britain.

CMR action plans

Each agency identified in a CMR recommendation is responsible for producing an action plan as to how they intend to undertake/implement the recommendation, including the timescales involved. These action plans are reviewed by the relevant local statutory Safeguarding Panel.

Safeguarding Panels

Strategic Priority 1: To provide leadership and set direction in the safeguarding and protection of children and young people.

SBNI Business Objectives 2021-2022:

1.4: The child protection and safeguarding system will be improved by hearing the views of children and young people, parents and carers through engagement with the SBNI Safeguarding Panels.

and

Regulation 31: Functions of Safeguarding Panels:

- (a) co-ordinating the implementation of the Safeguarding Board's strategic plan for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children**
- (b) monitoring the implementation of the Safeguarding Board's policies and procedures**
- (c) promoting an awareness of the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children**
- (d) implementing any arrangements established by virtue of regulation 38(b) for sharing the findings of case management reviews and**
- (e) promoting communication between the Safeguarding Panel and children and young persons.**

Safeguarding Panels

As a consequence of the ongoing COVID-19 restrictions, virtual panel meetings continued during 2021-2022. This format continued to meet the needs of members and the purpose of the panel, albeit reducing the opportunity for informal networking. All five panels have experienced some changes in membership in year resulting from organisational realignment, resignations and promotion. The induction booklet which was introduced in 2020-2021 has continued to prove beneficial. Attendance at panel meetings remained good and chairs continue to monitor attendance and to follow up and support as appropriate.

A well-attended five panels' development event was held (virtually), on 27 September 2021. Members were asked to review panel work and progress over the previous four years and views were sought on potential priorities as part of the 2022-2026 strategic planning process. The morning was facilitated by the HSC Leadership Centre with positive commitment and interaction between members, resulting in useful and constructive contributions, suggestions and feedback.

1. Co-ordinating the implementation of the SBNI Strategic Plan 2018-2022

The primary purpose of the Safeguarding Panels is to fulfil the objectives of the SBNI Strategic Plan through the delivery of the annual business plan at a local level. This is achieved by coordinating and utilising the multi-agency/disciplinary expertise and resources. Panels drew up work plans to progress the final year of the SBNI's Strategic Plan 2018-2022 and its specific priorities: neglect, domestic and sexual violence and mental health.

Neglect

As a strategic priority of SBNI, the focus on this important issue continued and due to great demand from panel members, three additional webinars were facilitated to raise awareness on the impact of neglect on the health and wellbeing of children. These were delivered between January and March 2022 and were very well attended with 347 representatives from a wide range of disciplines within Health and Social Care; local councils; education; probation; youth justice; Woman's Aid; the NI Fire and Rescue Service; the PSNI and from the wider community and voluntary sectors. The webinars were facilitated by the NSPCC representative from the Neglect Committee with presentations from panel members with a working knowledge of the impact of neglect. In addition, the NSPCC representative from the Western Panel delivered a seminar on neglect to undergraduate paramedics at the University of Ulster (Magee Campus).

Panels continued to support and plan for the forthcoming 'Train the Trainer' training in the Graded Care Profile, the agreed tool for the assessment of neglect.

Domestic and Sexual Violence

This strategic priority has remained an active issue within the panels. The delivery of the Domestic Abuse Risk Assessment for Children (DARAC) was prioritised, with panels funding training places for a number of social work staff in each panel area. Barnardo's NI provided a comprehensive and useful overview of DARAC to all five panels to facilitate membership knowledge on how this assessment would support children and their families.

The 'Operation Encompass' pilot was initiated in the South Eastern Panel area (September 2021). Two presentations, at different stages, were delivered to panel members in that area, from those involved in its implementation, informing them of progress. Additionally, the PSNI and the Education Authority representatives on the South Eastern Panel were able to give regular update to all members. Operation Encompass will roll out across all panel areas commencing in mid-2022. In the Northern area, the designated officer for child protection within the Education Authority provided an information session to inform the members of the support that will be available to children/young people in school as a result of this service.

The production of a video by young people who have lived experience of domestic abuse and who have benefitted from the support of Armagh/Down Women's Aid, jointly funded by the Southern Panel and Women's Aid has been in progress and will be ready for implementation in July 2022. This will be available for awareness raising throughout Northern Ireland. Also, in the southern area, the panel had an informative presentation from the Domestic Abuse Support Worker based in Craigavon Area Hospital, a very worthwhile project jointly resourced to date by Women's Aid and the Southern Trust. This panel also heard and responded to the evaluation of the Promoting Positive Relationships (PPR) programme, delivered by Probation Board NI, for non-adjudicated perpetrators of domestic abuse. The South Eastern Panel benefitted from hearing of the recommendations and consequent outcomes of the Belfast & Lisburn Women's Aid Review of Services for Children and Young People: this was delivered by the children & young person's worker.

Within the area of sexual violence, some panels have continued this year to make progress with the Harmful Sexual Behaviour Framework, with some having completed their training needs analysis and relevant members progressing training within their respective organisations.

Mental Health

Mental health continued to be a standing item on panel agendas and all panels were pleased this year to support the commencement of the SBNI Mental Health Committee.

An update was provided to the Northern Panel on Think Child Think Family and on preventing harm and empowering recovery. These presentations support the members from diverse organisations/agencies to understand what is available within statutory services to support families when there are mental health concerns.

Child Sexual Exploitation

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE), whilst not listed as a specific strategic priority, is retained as a standing item at each panel meeting, with the police representative giving an update within the confidential section as to the local position, both in terms of young persons at risk and persons of concern. Although the CSE input to the confidential section of the panel is led primarily by the PSNI and formally supported by the Health and Social Care Trust, it serves to include and involve all members, particularly those from education, youth justice and probation, into an area which is of significant continuing concern. The recommendations from the Criminal Justice Inspectorate Northern Ireland (CJINI) Report on CSE and the SBNI commissioned CSE Evaluation Report 2020 have also been the focus of significant discussion at panel meetings. In addition, the Western Panel received a very informative presentation on the Sexual Exploitation Ends Now (SEEN) service delivered by Barnardo's. There has been a request within some of the panels this year to consider within this section of the meeting, any arising issues relating to child criminal exploitation.

2. Monitoring the implementation of SBNI's Policies and Procedures

All five panels continued work to ensure that members are kept informed of core policies and procedures with respect to safeguarding children and all panel members have been requested to download the revised SBNI app and to encourage staff to do the same. This gives immediate access to policies and procedures in addition to useful support and links. In this year, the SBNI Pre-Mobile Baby Protocol has been made available, with the associated training, to support staff. Additionally, each panel contributed to the review of the Child Protection Case Conference Appeals process. The review into the Child Death Overview Panel was also discussed.

3. Promoting an awareness of the need to safeguard children

Panels receive and review the child protection data and activity specific to their HSC Trust at each meeting. This is presented by the Assistant Director for Children's Services and enables the identification of trends, consideration of potential responses and encouragement for multi-agency collaboration. The Northern Panel received presentations to update on the delivery of multi-disciplinary/multi-agency safeguarding training within the trust, a Signs of Safety update and the sharing of Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health revised child protection standards. The Belfast Panel also received an update on Signs of Safety Approach. These presentations all assist and support panel members' knowledge and understanding of how statutory services are working to improve service delivery.

The Belfast Panel received a very useful presentation from the NSPCC staff that are responsible for the delivery of PANTS rule, an initiative that helps children understand that their body belongs to them and that they should tell someone they trust if anything makes them upset or worried.

Sharing the findings of CMRs

Each panel is responsible for ensuring that the key learning from Case Management Reviews is disseminated. Within this reporting year, all five panels had their events planned (virtually) for delivery during January and February, to follow on as soon as was possible from the regional event. Due to extreme workload pressures within the Trusts, four of the five events were postponed, with only the Southern Panel event proceeding as planned on 17 January. The Belfast Panel event was held on 31 March 2021 and the other three in April. Due to pressures, the Southern event, whilst well attended, did not have the numbers originally anticipated. The remaining four events which were rearranged were well attended. The situation regarding case management reviews, inclusive of new notifications, pending reviews, approved reports and ongoing action plans remains a vital and substantial part of the confidential section of each panel meeting. The CMR Evaluation Report produced by SBNI, was concluded and shared in panels this year. Panel members were encouraged to discuss and respond to the report. A sub-group of the South Eastern Panel did so, with a well-formed series of suggestions, which has been passed to the 'learning collaborative' which is taking this forward.

Promoting communication between the panels and children and young people

Engagement with children and young people to ascertain their views and encourage their active participation remains a standing item at each panel meeting. The SBNI-commissioned report by Barnardo's, [SBNI Strategy for Engaging with Children and Young People 2021](#), was completed toward the end of 2020-2021 and was shared with the panels. A sub-group within two panels reviewed the report and produced very useful and interesting responses which were passed to SBNI professional officers for reference and inclusion within the committees. A number of the panels appreciated presentations from their Youth Justice Agency member on their engagement strategy and its impact on their work with young people and families. The South Eastern Panel contributed funding towards Barnardo's' Early Intervention Youth Committee which produced an excellent 'Connected Minds' video. In the Western Panel, the NSPCC provided an update to the panel on their ongoing work to support children and young people during COVID-19. The Northern Panel was updated in this reporting year on a pilot initiative to provide on-site engagement and support for children and young people with a pilot group of primary schools and a post primary school. Data outcomes informing future service delivery will be available to panel members in 2022-2023.

Child Protection Sub-Group

Strategic Priority 1: To provide leadership and set direction in the safeguarding and protection of children and young people.

SBNI Business Objectives 2021-2022:

1.5: Statutory partners consider the range of child protection information available and use this to agree priorities moving forward which can be actioned through an outcome-based accountability framework.

Additional priorities of the Child Protection Sub-Group for 2021-2022 were:

- **to undertake an analysis of child protection data to inform the child protection system**
- **to reform the child protection arrangements by the introduction of the Signs of Safety (SoS) approach**
- **to address intergenerational abuse by introducing an Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE) informed approach across statutory partners.**

The SBNI Child Protection Sub-Group was established to provide a vehicle for the statutory partners within the SBNI to focus on their statutory responsibilities concerning improved protection of children.

The SBNI Child Protection Sub-Group meets at least five times per year, 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 Chair of the Child Protection Sub-Group is a director of Children's Services from the Western Health and Social Care Trust. Membership of the group comprises all five Health and Social Care Trusts, the Public Health Agency, the Education Authority Northern Ireland, the Department of Justice, the Health and Social Care Board, the Police Service Northern Ireland, the NSPCC and the Probation Board NI. The Child Protection Sub-Group has focussed work plans on the following areas.

Analysis of child protection system and underpinning process

Data Analysis

This year the sub-group focused on analysing data sets to enable it to measure the effectiveness of the child protection system. The Education Authority (EA) presented data relating to the EA's Child Protection Support Service Report, drawing attention to information received through the Education Helpline Service. The service received 4,538 between September 2019 and August 2020. The largest number of these calls originated from designated safeguarding staff within schools during term time. Other calls were received from EA staff, members of the public, parents and other agency professionals.

The NSPCC reported on:

- NSPCC Helpline referrals in NI from April 2020-March 2021
- NSPCC Helpline referrals in NI Main Concerns – April 2020-March 2021
- number of ChildLine counselling sessions where the child is based in Northern Ireland.

The Health and Social Care Board presented comprehensive data concerning children in need, types of referrals, length of time on Child Protection Register, de-registrations and re-registrations. The data is outcomes-focussed capturing both the voices of children and parents.

Signs of Safety

Signs of Safety (SoS) is currently in its fourth year of implementation. A guidance document for Signs of Safety is now being reviewed by the SBNI Policy and Procedures Committee to assist staff with the implementation of the practice model. A regional steering group is developing performance management rationale and ensuring sustainability of the model by applying it in all initial and review child protection case conferences. The HSCB in partnership with the Trust's implementation officers undertook a small-scale pilot project over a four month period to capture the experiences of parents and children participating in case conferences. The pilot took place between 01 October 2021 to the 31 January 2022. Anonymised data was collected from 100 case conferences both initial and review cases. Below is an indication of some of the qualitative feedback.

What went well?

- **61%** of respondents felt that the conference went well
- **4%** felt that there was a good outcome to the conference
- **4%** felt that there were aspects of the conference which could be improved
- **1%** felt that the conference did not go well
- **30%** did not respond or didn't know or response didn't indicate a good or bad outcome.

What could be improved?

- **27%** felt that the conference did not need improved
- **14%** felt that the meetings are better on a face to face basis
- **11%** felt that hearing the voice of the family/child could be improved at the meeting
- **7%** felt that there should be better preparation prior to the meeting
- **3%** felt that the social workers should ensure that the report is accurate
- **1%** felt that the social worker should do what they say they will do
- **27%** provided no response
- **7%** felt that there were other aspects which could be improved (more time for the meeting/trust/contact with social worker, concern regarding data sharing)
- **3%** were unhappy with the process.

The data received from the pilot project has been analysed by HSCB and will form part of wider scale evaluation of SoS.

Safeguarding Children in Sport Strategic Group (SCSSG)

The SBNI is a member of the multi-agency Safeguarding Children in Sport Strategic Group (SCSSG). The group comprises members from voluntary and statutory agencies with knowledge of sport and child protection procedures, with the priority of ensuring children's participation in sport is always safe and fun. Agencies represented on this forum are:

- Athletics NI
- Department for Communities (DfC)
- Department of Health (DoH)
- Expert by lived experience
- Health and Social Care Trust
- Irish Football Association
- Irish Rugby Football Union
- Local Government Safeguarding Network
- Northern Ireland Sports Forum (NISF)
- National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (Child Protection in Sport Unit – CPSU)
- Police Service of Northern Ireland
- Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland (SBNI)
- Sport Ireland
- Sport Northern Ireland (SNI)
- Swim Ireland
- Ulster Gaelic Athletic Association
- Volunteer Now.

The group worked collaboratively to support the development of the Safeguarding Children in Sport Strategic Plan. The strategic plan's aim is to ensure every child and young person can participate in sport and associated physical activities free from the risk of harm or abuse. This vision will be achieved by ensuring the five key objectives are achieved:

- all publicly funded and 'recognised' sporting organisations have safeguarding children and young people policies and procedures in place that are proportionate to their activity and capacity
- throughout sport there is awareness that all children have an equal right to protection from all forms of abuse and exploitation. We must ensure that children's rights are upheld, they are listened to know who to turn to and everybody acts on their responsibilities to safeguard and protect children and young people
- develop and monitor appropriate quality-assured safeguarding training to meet the needs of all stakeholders in sport
- robust safe recruitment policies are in place

- mechanisms are in place to enable the sport/leisure sectors and statutory bodies to work together at a strategic and local level to safeguard children and young people consistently across all settings.

The SBNI worked with the SCSSG to provide advice on trauma informed systems change tools which could help to develop effective impact assessment tools to measure the impact of the [Safeguarding Children in Sport Strategic Plan](#).

The Trauma Informed Practice (TIP) project is an SBNI workforce development project the aim of which is to ensure that SBNI members and partner agencies embed Trauma Informed Practice in their organisations. Year three of that work has now concluded. Years one to three focussed on research and then developing and delivering training across health and social services, justice, education and the community and voluntary sectors. While continuing to provide support for training, more recently work has begun to support cross organisational and sector work on strategic planning and governance. The SBNI is providing support to agencies to apply the Sequential Intercept Model (SIM) underpinned by the Universal Services Delivery process, to ensure their policies and practices are trauma informed.



The work was originally funded through the Early Intervention Transformation Programme (EITP) and the Department of Health but in 2021-2022 was solely funded by the Executive Programme on Tackling Paramilitarism and Organised Crime.

The objectives for 2021-2022 were:

- deepening collaboration: the SBNI supports cross-sectoral collaborative working and coordination to generate trauma informed systemic approaches for those impacted by childhood adversity through promoting an awareness and understanding of the application of the Sequential Intercept Model (SIM) and Universal Service Delivery (USD) process
- embedding ACEs and TI knowledge: the SBNI supports organisations to further embed ACEs and TIP knowledge across the system through promoting awareness and understanding of the application of the Universal Service Delivery Process underpinned with SAMHSA Six Key Principles and 10 Implementation Domains as a methodology to improve outcomes
- developing organisational practice: the SBNI supports organisations to translate the knowledge and learning of their current organisational practice through the mapping of the USD process into strategic planning/action planning to enhance/develop organisational and system governance

- sustaining workforce development: the SBNI supports and encourages organisations and government departments to continue to develop their workforces to raise awareness of childhood adversity and trauma sensitive approaches to practice through promoting an awareness and understanding of the SIM and USD process methodology.

Both the Health and Justice ministers in their opening remarks at the Action Trauma Virtual Summit of June 2021 outlined Northern Ireland's Trauma Informed 'journey' and the SBNI's role within that. The Health Minister acknowledged the impact of COVID-19 upon the NI population and the delivery of services and emphasised that:

**"It is essential that our approach is informed by the developing ACEs research and Trauma Informed Practices"
(Robin Swann, June 2021).**

The Justice Minister opened the last day of the summit saying:

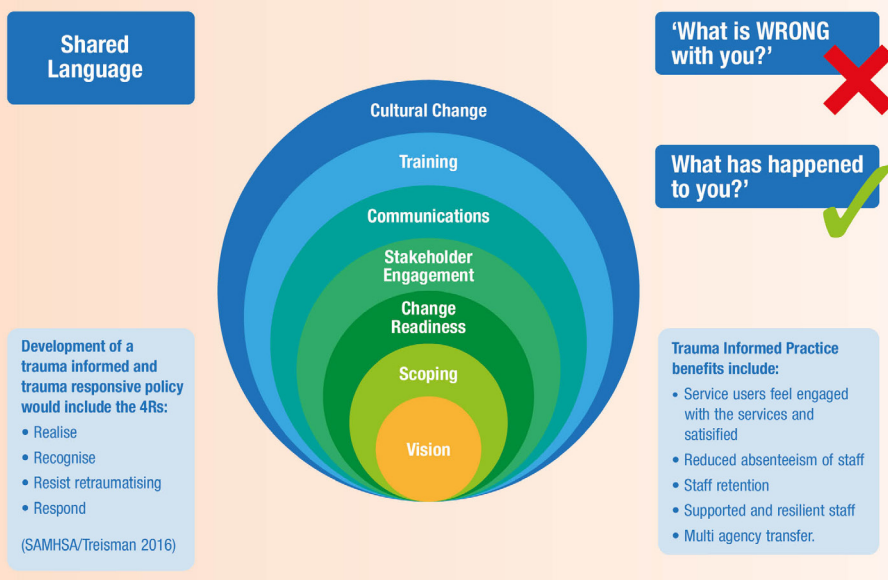
**"It is my vision that the Department of Justice and its agencies should strive to become trauma-informed organisations through culture, policy and practice. In effect this would be the golden thread running through each organisation...my department has ensured that a trauma-informed approach has been endorsed by the departmental board and referenced as a priority within our business plan for 2021/2022..."
(Naomi Long, June 2021).**

In November 2021 the Minister for Education announced that the entire education sector workforce would be able to avail of training in Trauma Informed Practice using SBNI adapted materials. That involves around 60,000 staff.

In 2021-2022 the project team reduced to two Implementation managers and work was continued mostly through virtual platforms due to the impact of COVID-19. Inevitably, the pandemic and accompanying restraints also impacted upon leaders' ability to make change in their workforces and upon the workforce's capacity to progress change. In spite of the constraints the team continued to engage and make progress across the five sectors of justice, health and social care, education and the community and voluntary sector. Work with housing, local government and the faith communities was also taken forward.

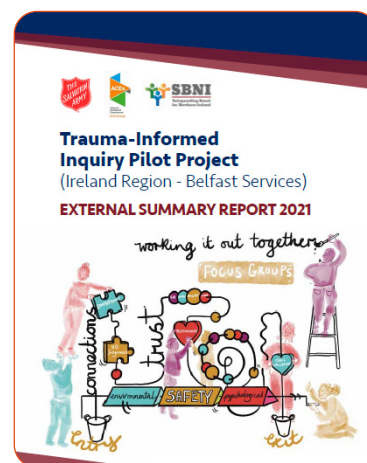
The project continued to be evaluated by the National Children's Bureau using an outcomes-based accountability framework. Full report cards are available here [Year 4 - TIP Report Card No. 1 - Apr to Sep 2021 \(safeguardingni.org\)](#) and here [Year 4 - TIP Report Card No. 2 - Oct 2021 to Mar 2022 2.pdf](#)

A Trauma Informed Organisational Culture



Detail of TIP work

Activity by the TIP team was focussed upon developmental workshops and meetings which supported organisations to embed TIP. This included recorded webinars with inputs from partner agencies who could provide detail of how they applied the SIM/USD models, specifically the Youth Justice Agency and the Salvation Army (from both parenting and homeless men’s services perspectives). Both partner agencies’ presentations at these webinars were highly effective in motivating other participants. A total of 247 individuals attended SIM/USD webinars across the year. The Salvation Army was supported by the SBNI to publish a report which will be accessible through the SBNI website.



Training for trainers was mostly provided by our commissioned partner ASCERT, resulting in 124 new trainers able to deliver within their organisations and partnerships. In addition, training was completed with higher and further education lecturers, where professional training degrees were targeted ie allied health professionals at the University of Ulster, psychology and criminology undergraduates at QUB and St Mary’s University for teacher training. There was commitment to embed the modules into their teaching curricula. This was to complement the training that is already delivered in professional degrees eg nursing, social work and Stranmillis teacher training, youth and community work and play work.

The e-learning modules - which are designed as introductions to the key concepts regarding ACEs and developing trauma sensitive practice- continued to be popular. The modules are hosted on the HSC learning website www.hsclearning.com for those registered statutory organisations, and we were delighted that ASCERT generously offered to host the same modules for the community and voluntary sector, resulting in free access to a wide workforce www.ascert.biz. This was an excellent example of collaboration on ASCERT part. In addition, Queen's University Belfast and the University of Ulster hosted the modules on certain department/school's pages for ease of access for their students:

- three hundred and eighty-seven (387) completed Level 1 (ACEs awareness) and 233 completed Level 2 (Developing Trauma Sensitive Practice) through the HSC website
- six hundred and forty-nine (649) completed Level 1 and 542 Level 2 through ASCERT's website.

In November 2021 the minister for education launched an enhanced Level 1 ACE awareness module for the education sector with materials specifically geared toward schools. [EA Welcomes the launch of Adverse Childhood Experiences \(ACES\) Training | Education Authority Northern Ireland \(eani.org.uk\)](#)

It is now hosted on the EA's website; Level 2 training is delivered by a facilitator to schools and training roll out commenced in spring 2022.

Two thousand, one hundred and seventeen practitioners registered for and completed the Solihull Approach 'Understanding Trauma' module. It is a detailed theoretical exploration of trauma which can build upon the TIP e-learning modules and the facilitated TIP modules. The multi-user licence was renewed by the SBNI TIP project in October 2021. This time the Solihull Approach included two additional modules: 'Understanding Brain Development' and 'Understanding Attachment' both of direct relevance to practitioners working with children/young people/adults who have experienced ACEs and trauma. (These modules also complement the PHA's purchase of Solihull Approach online parenting courses www.InOurPlace.co.uk. Access code: NI BABIES).

UNDERSTANDING YOUR CHILD
SOLIHULL APPROACH

FREE for professionals* across Northern Ireland

Online courses:

- **Understanding Trauma** - This course covers Type 1 and Type 2 trauma, the window of tolerance, going through a traumatic experience, neurology and trauma. recognising trauma, recovery from trauma, and more...
- **Understanding Attachment** - This course is for practitioners who want to understand more about attachment, and shows how containment and reciprocity underpin the quality of an attachment.
- **Understanding Brain Development** - This course is for practitioners who want an introduction to brain development from antenatal period to adolescence.

Each course will take approx 3.75 hrs CPD per course

*To attain Solihull Approach Advanced Trained Practitioner status, just send a copy of your certificates for the 2 Day Foundation training and three Advanced Trainings (online or face to face) to solihull.approach@uhb.nhs.uk

For technical support contact:
solihull.approach@uhb.nhs.uk
or 0121 296 4448 Mon-Fri 9am-5pm

Step 1: Create (or convert to) a 'professional' account
Go to www.solihullapproachparenting.com
Select 'Online courses for professionals'

OR

Go to www.inourplace.co.uk
sign in to existing account and click 'unlock professional courses'

Step 2: Once signed in to your professional account, enter access code:
BETHECHANGENI

Step 3: To return to the course go to www.solihullapproachparenting.com or visit www.inourplace.co.uk and click on 'Already have an account? Sign in'

Implementation Domains



SAMHSA, 2014

Sustainability is a key factor of the TIP project. The e-modules provide an important building block as does training of the workforce(s). Efforts have also been made to develop a more strategic understanding in organisations of how to take a trauma informed approach to policies and practices. The TIP team has, therefore, been working with various agencies, where possible on a multi-agency basis to help them embed TIP.

Working with the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust human resources and occupational development colleagues, the TIP team used a trauma informed lens to support the review of the regional policy, 'Management of Violence and Aggression in the Workplace'.

Recommendations were made, some of which were incorporated into the document by the working group. This then had potential to influence across all statutory HSC organisations both in terms of recognising and responding to people who may be traumatised but also in terms of supporting staff.

Some examples of the work of the SBNI Trauma Informed team are detailed below (some of these initiatives began in 2020-2021).

Health and Social Care

- regional policy Management of Violence and Aggression (MOVA)- first use of a trauma-informed screening tool presented to MOVA working group considering imagery, balance between responsiveness to service user's needs and response to staff's needs, discipline issues
- being a trauma-informed manager: ACEs, trauma and resilience training for middle managers through HSC leadership
- ACEs - trauma and community resilience: Social Work and Community Development DoH funded post graduate course for social work at University of Ulster
- input regarding ACEs, trauma and the SIM/USD model to Quality Improvement Regional Group
- integrating with regional developments such as NIFITC Framework for Integrated Therapeutic Care for Looked After Children.

HSC Clinical Education Centre (CEC) post qualifying training for nursing and allied health professionals

- collaborative TI partnership regarding nursing with CEC, universities, Belfast HSC Trust, to develop a nursing pilot
- training for nursing consultants to deliver TIP modules
- continuing embedding ACEs/TIP materials into CEC courses ie Domestic abuse and safeguarding children and adults.

Belfast HSC Trust

- engagement of senior leadership
- establishment of implementation group to represent all services within the Trust
- development of a scoping tool to gauge workforce training needs and existing skills
- development of a strategic plan
- examining potential for pilots across the Trust in homeless people's services, older people's services, physical health and disability services, Muckamore Abbey Hospital, nursing
- examining wellbeing strategies.

Northern HSC Trust

- workforce development- TIP trained psychologists supported their peers delivering a T4T course accruing another 16 trainers in the Trust; TIP manuals were supplied plus video resources etc.
- communication strategy.

South Eastern HSC Trust

- prison health governance- delivery of training in partnership with NI Prison Service.

Education

Schools

- pilot schools continuing- mapping children's experiences of school
- supporting incorporation of TIP into school business plans
- continuation of leadership Implementation group in EA
- development of school specific online module of Awareness raising of Adverse Childhood Experiences [ACEs \(google.com\)](https://www.google.com).

Southern Regional College (further education) - pilot college

- strategic plan for staff training
- incorporation of materials into curriculum as relevant eg Health and Social care
- board of directors trained in SIM/USD
- initial planning for accreditation of SBNI TIP modules with Open College Network.

Higher Education Institutions (Queen's University Belfast and University of Ulster)

- training lecturing staff, support staff and school leadership staff to deliver SBNI TIP modules as part of curriculum (included ongoing delivery in social work, nursing and teacher training) to undergraduates of allied health professionals; psychology; criminology; teacher training; youth work; youth justice (post grad) and community development
- support staff regarding TI approaches suitable for student support
- embedding of ACEs awareness and TIP to different years of nursing, working with emotional wellbeing strategies within nursing to support staff and to ensure retention of newly graduated nurses; mentoring schemes with university; research being conducted by academic staff.

Community & Voluntary Sector

- Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership (CYPSP) 2019-2029 Strategy- incorporating language regarding potential traumatic impact of Aces and need for preventative responses
- partnership and sharing of resources with Volunteer Now (lead in CVS Safeguarding Children and Adult training for CVS).

Faith

- Salvation Army (see report above)
- Down & Connor Diocese- development of business plan incorporating TIP; governance training.

Justice

- development of DoJ departmental TI delivery plan
- continuing development of the Youth Justice Agency and PSNI Trauma Informed journey
- trauma proofing policy procedure's/service delivery across the justice sector
- developing multi-agency support hub operating protocols and a mapping review.

The trauma-informed work of the SBNI will continue into the next reporting period.

Neglect Sub-Group

Strategic Priority 3: To improve outcomes for children and young people affected or potentially affected by neglect through promoting the early recognition and improvement of agency responses.

SBNI Business Objectives 2021-2022:

3.1: Promote early intervention with the aim of preventing children and young people experiencing neglect

3.2: Raise awareness of neglect with children/young people, parents/carers and staff

3.3: Work with partner agencies to provide training in how to improve the recognition, assessment, and responses to children, young people and families experiencing neglect

3.4: The child protection and safeguarding system will be improved by hearing the views of children and young people, parents, carers and staff through engagement with the SBNI Safeguarding Panels in relation to neglect.

Neglect Sub-Group

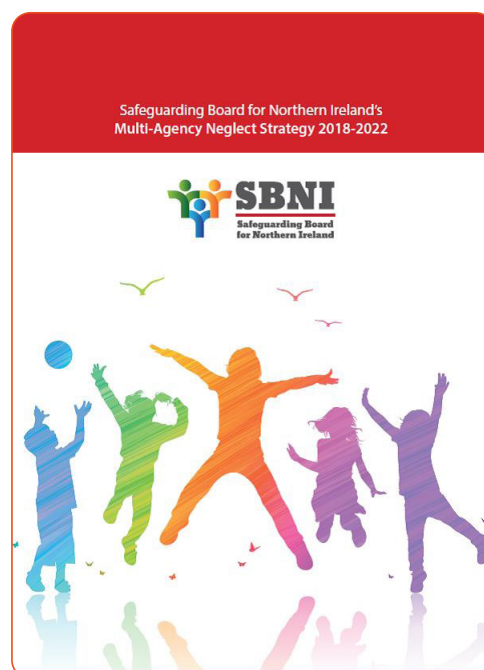
Neglect continues to be a major focus for the SBNI, constituting one of the key strategic priorities for 2018-2022. The issue is addressed by the SBNI through the work of this multi-agency Neglect Committee. Within Northern Ireland neglect continues to affect large numbers of children and young people. This is reflected in the number of children registered on the NI Child Protection Register in relation to neglect. In March 2022 a total of 677 children were registered solely under the category of neglect which was the largest single reason for registration accounting for 28.85% of the total child protection registrations. In addition, the registration category of neglect is included along with other forms of abuse in respect of 532 children. In total therefore, as of 31 March 2022, there are 1,209 children where there are significant concerns in respect of neglect (51.53% of children with a child protection plan are deemed to be at significant risk of neglect)².

The single category of neglect therefore represents the highest category of children on the register. Neglect and physical abuse is the highest combined category with 452 children subject to these concerns. Twenty-six (26) further children are at risk of neglect, physical and sexual abuse combined.

The SBNI Neglect Strategy

The work of the Neglect Sub-Group during the reporting year 2021-2022 has continued to focus on the implementation of the SBNI Neglect Strategy. The strategy aims to assist agencies in Northern Ireland involved with children, young people and parents to act to prevent, reduce and manage effects of neglect on children and families.

The sub-group has sought to ensure that the issue of neglect continues to be addressed at local level through the Safeguarding Panels. Each panel has neglect as a standing agenda item and discussions centre on how agencies are now working together through their individual agency neglect action plans.




2 <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/quarterly-child-protection-statistics-northern-ireland-january-march-2022>

NSPCC 'Graded Care 2' Assessment Tool

During the 2020-2021 business year member agencies within the Children Service Improvement Board considered and analysed a regional options appraisal to identify a consistent assessment tool for utilisation by practitioners to measure gradations of neglect. The tool agreed by this forum was the NSPCC Graded Care 2 Assessment Tool (GCP2). The planned approach for regional implementation is for the NSPCC to initially deliver a Train the Trainer programme to identified agency representatives. They in turn would cascade that learning, particularly the use of the agreed assessment tool, in their organisations. Unfortunately, delivery of the Train the Trainer programme has been delayed as a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic, combined with workforce pressures amongst the majority of SBNI member agencies. Work, therefore, has focussed on identifying appropriate service leads for the project delivery and providing an opportunity for them to meet with the NSPCC implementation manager to both familiarise them with the GCP2 model and the NI Implementation Plan. Dates have been agreed for the next business year to deliver the NSPCC Train the Trainer programme to 40 individuals from 15 member agencies.

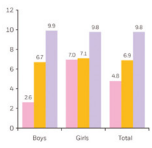
Graded Care Profile 2

The Graded Care Profile 2 is the only authorised update of the original GCP
 – It is a practical tool designed to provide an objective measure of the care of children.
 The GCP2 model is primarily based on the qualitative measure of the commitment shown by parents or carers in meeting their children's developmental needs.



Background


It is estimated that 10% of all children in the UK are currently experiencing neglect. It is the single most frequent reason for children to be subject to a child protection plan or registration. There is strong evidence that the identification and assessment of neglect presents particular difficulties for practitioners.



Category	Percentage
Contact sexual abuse	2.1
Severe physical abuse	6.2
Severe neglect by a parent or guardian	9.9
Total	18.2

Who can use the tool

The tool can be used by a variety of professionals who wish to evaluate the care of a child where concerns about neglect exist.



Effectiveness

What the research said


STRENGTHS OF THE GCP

- Improved Assessment Process
- More objective, evidence-based assessment
- Identifies parental strengths as well as areas of concern
- Unpacks parenting – improved breadth and depth of assessment
- Promotes child centered approach
- Participative process that promotes parental engagement

On a 5 point scale, the usefulness of GCP2 was rated as 4 or 5 in two thirds of cases (N=114).

What is GCP2

GCP2 is an evidence based tool to help practitioners assess when poor parenting becomes neglectful.



GCP2 Areas

Physical Care Area A

- Nutritional
- Housing
- Clothing
- Hygiene
- Health

Safety Area B

- In presence of carer
- In absence of carer

Developmental Care Area D

- Stimulation
- Approval
- Disapproval
- Acceptance

Emotional Care Area C

- Carer
- Mutual engagement

GCP2 Grades

The GCP2 looks at what life is like for the child. This ensures the child is kept central to the assessment. The grades are descriptive, and measures the quality of care from 1, where the child is always first to 5, where the child is not considered.

1
Always met

2
Met

3
Met most of the time

4
Not met most of the time

5
Never met

Conclusion


GCP2 has been found to be reliable and valid. It can be used in the knowledge that it has sound psychometric properties, and is a reliable and valid assessment tool in aiding practitioners in the assessment of child neglect. – Ref: Johnson R, GCP2 Reliability and Validity NSPCC 2015

GCP2 has enabled practitioners and parents to respond effectively by identifying what intervention or support is required in order to address areas of concern. As a consequence the plans are smart and robust and the families are engaging with the multi-agency support offered; there is evidence improvements are being made. – C Fletcher Section

Acknowledgments

Dr Srivastava
 Dr Richard Fountain
 Dawn Hodson

NSPCC 2013 prevalence report, Radford et al 2011.
 Ref: Johnson R, GCP2 Reliability and Validity NSPCC 2015



EVERY CHILDHOOD IS WORTH FIGHTING FOR

© 2017 NSPCC. Photography by Tom Hui. The child pictured is a model. Registered charity England and Wales 255445, Scotland SC037712.

Neglect awareness raising and training

Awareness raising sessions regarding neglect have continued to take place at local Safeguarding Panel level supported by members of the Neglect Sub-Group.

During the reporting year members of the sub-group and the Safeguarding Panel Independent Chairs delivered three Level 1 and 2 awareness raising webinars to a total of 347 attendees. The webinars were evaluated and feedback, as in previous years of delivery, was extremely positive. Similar to business year 2020-2021, delivery of the sessions was conducted on a virtual platform as a consequence of the COVID-19 restrictions. Again, one of the unintended benefits of the virtual platform was the ability to reach a much wider audience.

The 347 participants who availed of the awareness raising sessions came from the following range of professional groupings:

- Social +
- PSNI
- Education Authority
- Teachers
- Health
- Psychiatry
- Third sector organisations (numerous)
- Occupational Therapy
- Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)
- Youth Justice Agency
- Probation Board NI
- Sporting organisations' allied health professionals
- Interfaith representatives.

Feedback from previous sessions suggested a need for a specialist focus on poverty and neglect. In conjunction with the NSPCC (an SBNI member agency) and the University of Ulster (UU) the sub-group ensured that all those who attended the neglect awareness sessions were invited to a specialist Poverty and Neglect Symposium hosted by UU in April 2022.

Views of children/young people, parents/carers and practitioners

A task and finish group was re-established during the 2020-2021 business year to explore how awareness raising regarding neglect amongst children and young people could be enhanced and how their views could be sought appropriately.

The group's work was constrained by the COVID-19 regulations but in 2021-2022 commissioned the delivery of the Invictus theatrical performance to be available to all schools via video stream.

The group determined that it would identify five schools (the makeup/gender/ religious affiliation etc.) in line with the Section 75 equality requirements of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, from across Northern Ireland and engage young people on how they understood specifically the area of emotional neglect before and then after viewing the Invictus performance.

Action for Children appointed two youth participation officers to undertake this work. The preparation for this engagement occurred within the business year and five focus groups were held in year. The remainder of the focus groups will be held in April 2022 and a report will be completed on the outcome of these sessions.



Focus on Outcomes

A task and finish group was established by the Neglect Sub-Group to consider how best to measure the impact of the Neglect Strategy.

The committee has found it difficult to identify clear indicators to evidence the success of the Neglect Strategy. It is hoped, however, that the following indicators, will, over time show whether increased awareness/training through implementation of the Neglect Strategy has made a positive impact in the numbers of children and young people affected by neglect. It is anticipated that referral and child protection registration figures may increase in the initial stages but reduce in the future.

The key indicators agreed by the Neglect Sub-Group to measure the outcome are as follows:

- attendance of children at school who are subject to a child protection plan under the category of neglect
- the number of re-registrations (within three years of original deregistration) on the child protection register under the category of neglect

- the number of dental registrations in respect of children per Health and Social Care Trust (HSCT) for children aged 0-2 years and 3-5 years
- the number of children who have had dental caries extractions per HSCT by age group
- the number of children escalated to Gateway from the Early Intervention Support Service and the reason
- the % of children under the category of neglect registered on the child protection register by HSCT
- the number of NSPCC helpline referrals that relate to the issue of neglect.

The sub-group undertook a data mining exercise in the above areas. It was recognised however that the COVID-19 pandemic had significantly skewed figures across most areas hence the ability to analyse and interpret the data has been significantly compromised. It is hoped over time that outcomes will indeed evidence the positive impact the neglect strategy is having on professional and community recognition and professional's ability to assess and address this difficult and complex area.

Sustainability

The sub-group is mindful that the SBNI is moving into a new strategic planning period (2022-2026). At the time of writing the new strategic plan is currently being consulted upon and it is possible neglect may not be a priority within this new planning cycle. The committee has therefore begun to identify where the work undertaken in the current planning cycle (2018-2022), and as highlighted in the strategy, may be embedded into core business within member agencies to ensure sustainability. The committee is also developing a virtual portal on the SBNI website to host the materials developed. A podcast video of the extremely successful awareness raising session will be filmed and uploaded onto the site. The development of this sustainability plan will continue in the early part of the 2022-2023 business year.

Domestic Violence and Abuse Sub-Group

Strategic Priority 2: To provide a voice to children and young people affected by domestic violence and abuse.

SBNI Business Objectives 2021-2022:

- 2.1 Work with government departments and their agencies to prevent domestic violence and abuse (DVA) from occurring**
- 2.2 Work with partners engaged in the DVA arena to raise awareness among parents/carers and professionals of the effect of DVA on children and young people**
- 2.3 Work with partners engaged in the DVA arena to promote education for children and young people in how to recognise, respond and seek help in relation to DVA.**

Domestic Violence and Abuse Sub-Group

The SBNI has adopted a strength-based, trauma-informed approach to safeguarding children and young people, underpinned by research relating to Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). As part of this, the SBNI in its Strategic Plan 2018-2022 has placed specific focus on three of the most significant ACEs for children and young people living in Northern Ireland: neglect, mental health and domestic violence.

The SBNI Domestic Violence Sub-Group was established in 2018. The sub-group is chaired by an assistant director of children's social services from the Southern Health and Social Care Trust. Membership comprises of representatives from the five Health and Social Care Trusts, the Police Service of Northern Ireland, the Probation Board of Northern Ireland, the Public Health Agency, the Youth Justice Agency, Include Youth, Barnardo's, Women's Aid Federation NI, the NSPCC, the Education Authority Northern Ireland and NEXUS. The representatives from the five Health and Social Care Trusts also chair the five local domestic violence partnerships. Their presence on the SBNI Sub-Group therefore facilitates connectivity with local and regional initiatives.

The sub-group has continued to meet via an online platform throughout the reporting period April 2021 to March 2022. This facilitated sharing of data and information across the multi-disciplinary group on how agencies were responding individually and collectively to the increase in domestic abuse calls to the PSNI. Latest PSNI data suggests that in 2021 there were 32,000 reports to the PSNI of domestic abuse, which equates to 17% of all reported crime to the PSNI.

The focus of the sub-group is to ensure the child is recognised as a victim in his/her own right in a situation where domestic violence is a feature.

The group endeavours to progress this via a number of work streams as follows.

Objective 2.1 – Working with government departments and their agencies to prevent domestic violence and abuse (DVA) from occurring.

The SBNI participates in two domestic violence forums to promote the voice of the child as a victim of domestic abuse in their own right:

- the Stakeholders Advisory Group (SAG) co-chaired by the Department of Health and Department of Justice
- the PSNI Independent Advisory Group (IAG) chaired by a PSNI Chief Inspector with responsibility for domestic violence.

1. Stakeholders Assurance Group (SAG)

The Cross Departmental Strategic Delivery Board (SDB) is responsible for delivering the 20 priorities contained within the Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse Strategy (March 2016). The SDB comprises senior officials from the government departments of Health, Justice, Education, Communities and Finance. The Stakeholder Assurance Group (SAG) was established to provide advice and quality assurance to the SDB as required. During this reporting year the SAG focussed on its mid-term strategy review as well as developing plans for year seven of the strategy.

The SBNI members of the Domestic Violence Sub-Group participate in the Stakeholder Assurance Group ensuring the voice of children and young people is represented to policy makers and influencers. The SAG is co-chaired by senior civil servants from the DoH and the DoJ and comprises key domestic violence stakeholders. The group meets quarterly and exchanges information on policy developments and planning.

The chair of the SBNI Sub-Group has a primary role within this group which includes providing leadership to twice yearly workshops to consider specific areas of domestic violence particularly as they relate to the impact of domestic violence on children. The SBNI sub-group chair informs the SAG of any developments that directly affect children and young people.

Domestic Abuse and Civic Proceedings Act NI 2021

The SBNI Sub-Group has worked with the Stakeholders Assurance Group to support the development of the new Domestic Abuse and Civic Proceedings Act 2021. Members of the sub-group were involved in a multi-disciplinary conference hosted by the Law Society in November 2021 to educate professionals in the field of coercive control and the impact of domestic abuse on children and young people.

Significantly, the Domestic Abuse and Civic Proceedings Act Northern Ireland 2021 provides for a new domestic abuse offence for Northern Ireland which criminalises coercive controlling behaviours, as well as recognising children and young people and the impact that coercive and controlling behaviour has on them as individuals through the child aggravator section. The section acknowledges that children do not have to be present or witness the domestic violence for it to have a detrimental impact on their wellbeing.

The legislation also enables a statutory rule allowing information-sharing from the police to an education provider about an incident of domestic abuse concerning a child who is a pupil or a student of that provider. For the purpose of the regulations an education provider includes:

- nursery schools, pre-school education and facilities or settings at which pre-school education is provided
- primary and secondary schools
- further education colleges
- the College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise (CAFRE)
- bodies or facilities which are contracted by the Department for the Economy to provide publicly funded vocational training programmes or apprenticeships.

How this legislation is being used operationally is detailed later in this section regarding Operation Encompass.

2. Independent Advisory Group (IAG)

The SBNI participates in the Domestic Violence Independent Advisory Group (IAG). This group was set up and is chaired by the Police Service Northern Ireland. This is a dynamic forum which was previously 'adult-focused'. The presence however of the SBNI representation on the group allows for consideration of the child as a victim in his/her own right and promotes the child's voice in police management of domestic abuse. The group acts as a 'critical friend' to the police service. Its main aim is to increase trust and confidence in policing in respect of its response to domestic abuse. The IAG also provides constructive advice to the PSNI in improving the quality of service delivery to victims of domestic abuse, stalking, harassment and honour-based violence across all communities.

Membership of the IAG comprises a PSNI Chair, representation from the Multi- Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC), PSNI Rape Crime Unit, the Policing Board, Women's Aid Federation of Northern Ireland, Men's Advisory Project, Public Prosecution Service, Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunal Services, Victim Support, Action on Elder Abuse and the NSPCC.

Call for views for a Domestic Abuse Strategy and an Equally Safe Strategy

On 10 January 2022 the SBNI attended the launch of Call for Views by the Office of the First and Deputy First Minister of Northern Ireland, and the Ministers of Justice and Health to inform the development of two new strategies:

- Domestic and Sexual Abuse Strategy, led jointly by the Department of Health and the Department of Justice
- Equally Safe Strategy (a Strategy to tackle Violence Against Women and Girls) led by the Executive Office.

The new Domestic and Sexual Abuse Strategy will adopt an inclusive approach and apply to all victims of domestic and sexual abuse regardless of a person's gender or gender identity. It is intended to raise awareness, support victims and address offending behaviour. The SBNI provided a submission to inform the development of the new strategy.

Ending Violence Against Women and Girls Strategic Approach

The development of a strategic approach to ending violence against women and girls (EVAWG) is an Executive priority. The Executive agreed to bring forward a strategy to tackle the root causes of violence against women and girls that must be inter-sectional and focus on all forms of violence, with a particular emphasis on behavioural and attitudinal change. The strategy will be complemented by the Domestic and Sexual Abuse Strategy and Gender Equality Strategy and will be of relevance to other areas, such as tackling paramilitarism and the New Beginnings work on women in the workplace.

The SBNI is working in partnership with The Executive Office to ensure EVAWG is embedded within the principles of Trauma Informed Practice enabling the first fully trauma informed strategy within NI. This will include:

- trauma informed commissioning
- capturing victims' experiences and ensuring effective service provision
- workforce development
- evaluation and review processes.

The Domestic Abuse Risk Assessment Tool for Children (DARAC)

The DARAC model was developed by Barnardo's in 2017. It is a tool that has been designed for professionals who are undertaking an assessment of the risks to children living in a home where domestic abuse has already been identified. Barnardo's have developed a one day training programme to support organisations on the use of the DARAC model for the assessment of the risk of domestic abuse. The SBNI has funded each HSC Trust to train a number of staff in this model. Training was completed in June 2021. That month Barnardo's also facilitated a briefing session to support managers from all the Trusts represented on

the one day training programme in June 2021. Further to this, in September 2021, Barnardo's presented an overview of the DARAC tool to all of the SBNI Safeguarding Panels. The Health and Social Care Board (HSCB) has convened a task and finish group to progress regional implementation for DARAC training as well as considering which staff should be prioritised for training. The task and finish group are currently considering implementation of DARAC throughout children's services. Progress of this work will be reported on in the next business year.

Equally Safeguarded Recommendations

The SBNI Sub-Group published Equally Safeguarded in March 2020. This report analyses the Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse in Northern Ireland, 7-year Strategy. Its content was generated from two processes: a scoping exercise and a training needs analysis of the strategy. Both processes were planned and initiated by the SBNI in consultation with its Domestic Violence and Abuse Sub-Group. The work was mandated by the Stakeholder Assurance Group. Following on from the results of the training needs analysis, an education task and finish group was established and throughout this reporting period has continued to develop a standardised framework for training and development that recognises the different levels of training required at the varying points of support intervention. This work will continue into the next business year and the SBNI sub-group is already planning a workshop in September 2022 facilitated by Women's Aid Federation to bring professionals together to identify current training available and map that across the SBNI Learning and Development Framework. This work will be reported on in the next business year.

Objective 2.2. Working with partners engaged in the DVA arena to raise awareness among parents/carers and professionals of the impact of DVA on children and young people.

Southern Trust Achieving Best Evidence Cadre Pilot Evaluation Report June 2021

In June 2021 the Southern Trust's Achieving Best Evidence Cadre Pilot Evaluation Report was published.

In July 2020 a joint Police Service of Northern Ireland/Southern Health and Social Care Trust (SHSCT) pilot establishing an Achieving Best Evidence (ABE) Cadre for ABE interviews in relation to children and young people commenced. The pilot ran for six months ending on 31 December 2020.

The purpose of the pilot was to promote the welfare and protection of children engaging in ABE interviews by:

- improving the ABE interview process
- improving the standard and quality of the ABE interview
- supporting children to have the opportunity to engage in the ABE process and provide their best evidence.

The cadre approach was one where a team of experienced ABE interviewers from PSNI and SHSCT Children and Young People's Services social work staff completed all ABE interviews for children in the SHSCT area during the pilot.

The evaluation of the pilot indicated that the cadre approach demonstrated improvement in:

- standards with regard to joint working between agencies and professionals involved
- co-working relationships and interview planning and preparation resulting in a more efficient, effective ABE interview
- the overall process with it being more attuned to the child or young person's needs.

A number of strategic recommendations have been proposed in the report to improve the ABE interview process and support children and vulnerable or intimidated witnesses to provide their best evidence. The HSCB has developed a forum to consider the implications for similar cadre models in other trust areas. These decisions are affected by current workforce pressures within children's services. However, a senior social work manager has been appointed by the HSCB to the Central Referral Unit to work in partnership with the PSNI to develop a strategic approach to ABE through a cadre model.

The sub-group is currently progressing the recommendations identified within the Equally Safeguarded Report. In general, these identify the need for all organisations that come into contact with adults, children and young people that may be experiencing domestic and sexual violence, to understand the issues, recognise symptoms and to know how to respond based upon best practice and multi-agency working. One important, suggestion, however, is that a range of information material should be developed for children, parents/ carers in relation to the ABE process.

Operation Encompass

In 2018 the Domestic Violence Strategic Delivery Board (SDB) asked the SBNI to establish a task and finish group to progress the potential for a pilot of Operation Encompass in Northern Ireland.

Operation Encompass is an early intervention partnership between the police and schools, with the aim of supporting children who are victims of domestic abuse. The initiative has been operating in England and Wales for over 10 years and involves a report to school by police before the start of the next school day when a child or young person has been involved or exposed to a domestic abuse incident the previous evening. The premise is that schools can then enable the provision of timely care and support for the child or young person involved.

The SBNI has worked with the SDB to inform the necessary legislative changes required to progress Operation Encompass in Northern Ireland. The miscellaneous section of the Domestic Abuse and Civil Proceedings Act (NI) 2021 received Royal Assent in March 2021 and this has supported phase two of the Operation Encompass pilot.

Pilot Project

The initial pilot project (phase one) was launched on 6 September 2021. It involved all of the schools within the district served by Downpatrick PSNI. This included around 50 schools of all types – nursery, primary, secondary, special, EOTAS, Irish medium and independent Christian.

At the start of the pilot the Domestic Abuse and Civic Proceedings Act (NI) had not been enacted which meant there were no regulations enabling information to be shared between police and the education provider about an incident of domestic abuse involving a child. The pilot project, therefore, initially worked on the basis of parental consent. Regrettably some parents did not consent to the school being informed. The pilot moved to phase two in January 2022 and included all schools within Newry, Mourne and Down Council Area. At this point parental consent was not required.

Information on the scheme to member agencies is via the Domestic Violence and Abuse Sub-Group and the two relevant SBNI Safeguarding Panels.

Training

The Child Protection Support Service (CPSS) within the Education Authority worked with schools to prepare their school communities for the pilot ensuring the following steps had been taken:

- update made to child protection policy
- letter sent to parents
- information provided to governors
- all designated safeguarding staff trained.

Joint training also took place between Education Authority and PSNI staff. The Policing College also delivered the SBNI co-designed Adverse Childhood Experience and Trauma Informed Practice Training to front line officers.

The table below outlines the PSNI statistics for period September 2021-March 2022.

PSNI - Operational Encompass Monthly Statistics								
	6 Sep 2021 Pilot Commences	Oct 21	Nov 21	Dec 21	Jan 22	Feb 22 Pilot expands NM&D	Mar 22	Total
Domestic Incidents meeting criteria	9	13	23	12	13	31	40	141
Number of children present/involved	15	22	44	22	27	51	73	254
Schools identified each month	10	16	14	13	9	21	40	123
Support Hub referrals to number of schools	6	7	9	8	2	12	23	67
Parental Consent for Police referral to school concerning their child	4 Parents & 9 Children	5 Parents & 7 Children	12 Parents & 20 Children	6 Parents & 11 Children	2 Parents & 3 Children	15 Parents & 28 Children	22 Parents & 40 Children	66 Parents & 118 Children
Schools involved in Op Encompass - to date (refer to school Stats table)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	50 of 135 Schools

Whilst the pilot is currently progressing, the Education Authority has submitted a research proposal to examine the impact of Operation Encompass on the confidence and skills of school safeguarding teams in providing support to child victims of domestic violence. This will include a pre and post pilot questionnaire as well as targeted semi-structured interviews.

To date feedback from schools has been extremely positive, identifying supportive mechanisms for children and their families, a sample of feedback from teachers can be seen below:

"One of our pupils came into school on Monday morning after witnessing domestic violence in the home. He didn't act out of character or tell an adult that he was struggling in any way. The call came through from the police early that morning. I was then able to go and speak to the child involved and offer support. As the day went on, the child began to open up to their class teacher about what had happened. They didn't need to 'find the words' or explain to their teacher why they were so sad, because of Operation Encompass. I feel that since we knew about the incident so quickly, we were able to provide immediate support."

Proposed Regional Roll out

The Department of Education has established an Operation Encompass implementation group (attended by Department of Education, Department of Justice, Department for Economy, the EA, the PSNI, three teachers from different sectors and the South Eastern Trust Lead for Domestic Violence and Abuse). School training and support material is currently being finalised with school recruitment and training due to commence in April 2022. The regional roll out for schools will be managed through a phased process due to have reached all local areas by early 2023, this will involve over 1,100 schools/Education Other Than At School (EOTAS) in Northern Ireland. The Department of Education will be including Operation Encompass in formal departmental guidance for schools.

Parental Alienation

Parental Alienation is a concept derived from the theory of Parental Alienation Syndrome (PAS). This term was developed by American child psychiatrist Richard Gardner to describe a child's rejection of one parent and a strong connection with the other parent. Researchers have disputed Gardner's theory and the World Health Organisation has recognised this and removed PAS from its classification index.

However, in response to the growing discussion of 'Parental Alienation' in conjunction with domestic abuse in Northern Ireland, the SBNI's Domestic Violence and Abuse Sub-Group hosted two closed webinars. The webinars presented UK research and NI case studies where 'Parental Alienation' has been cited within family court proceedings, subsequently posing serious safeguarding concerns where domestic abuse has been present within the home.

The first webinar for SBNI member agencies took place in July 2021, the second was held in March 2022 for NI Guardian Ad Litem Agency (NIGALA) Guardians and NIGALA Panel Solicitors, to draw attention to the consequences of Parental Alienation terminology being used within Family Courts. Often this terminology is used by the perpetrator of domestic abuse to gain access to their children through the Family Court system.

Listening to the voice of children and young people affected by domestic violence and abuse

In August 2021 the SBNI was contacted by an early intervention programme working with young people in a local Safeguarding Panel area. A young person who had experienced domestic violence had developed a presentation, which they were keen to be made available for all schools within NI. The presentation demonstrated the impact of the young person's experience of domestic violence and abuse. The SBNI agreed to discuss a process with the Education Authority which would enable the young person's experience to be captured as an educational piece that could be used during programmes of training for teachers focussing on the impact of domestic abuse for children.

Following a number of meetings and in partnership with the EA Child Protection Support Service (CPSS), the young person was able to make a short audio recording which will be used to assist teachers to gain an understanding through a trauma-informed approach of the systems and processes necessary to enable a young person who has experienced domestic abuse to feel safe at school.

Working with partners engaged in the DVA arena to promote education for children and young people in how to recognise, respond to and seek help in relation to DVA.

Story Framework – A tool for working with children who experience domestic abuse



In June 2021 the SBNI Board approved use of the Story Framework: Listening to the voice of a child living with domestic violence and abuse'. It is a visual and interactive child friendly framework providing guidance to workers who engage in direct work with children aged 5-17. It was produced for the SBNI based on the story framework that was developed within the South Eastern Trust. The framework is a visual child friendly framework promoting building of relationships through listening to the children's stories and experiences and encouraging active participation.

The framework is underpinned by trauma informed principles and is cognisant of the Signs of Safety Approach. It is also valuable to use alongside other approaches being undertaken with parents. The Story Framework can be accessed here: [Story Framework](#)

Mental Health Committee

Strategic Priority 4: To provide a voice for children and young people affected by mental health issues.

SBNI Business Objectives 2021-2022:

- 4.1: Work with partners to raise awareness among parents/carers and professionals of the effect of poor mental health on children and young people**
- 4.2: Work with partners to promote awareness for children and young people in how to recognise, respond and seek help in relation to mental health**
- 4.3: Work with partners to promote training in how to improve the recognition, assessment, and responses to children, young people and families experiencing the impact of mental health issues.**

Mental Health Committee

The SBNI Mental Health Committee held its first meeting in October 2021. It is chaired by an assistant director from the Northern Health and Social Care Trust and comprises representation from; the PSNI, the EANI, the PHA, Action for Children, Pure Mental NI, the CYPSP, the NIGALA, the YJA, NSPCC, the Chair of the SBNI Interfaith Committee, as well as representatives of the five Health and Social Care Trusts.

The committee built on activity undertaken by the SBNI during the COVID-19 pandemic. This in turn was underpinned by the Mental Health Strategy 2021-2031, Mental Health Action Plan and COVID-19 Mental Health Response Plan. The committee placed a policy emphasis on providing a voice for children and young people affected by mental health issues.

During the COVID-19 pandemic a number of member agencies and their associated departments issued new strategies and action plans. The committee focused on reviewing these strategies. It did so from a multi-agency system perspective, while focussing on children and young people's mental health, as evidenced in the DoH documents the Youth Wellbeing Survey 2020 and the Protect Life 2 Strategy for Preventing Suicide and Self Harm in Northern Ireland 2019-2024. It also engaged with researchers from the University of Ulster to analyse data and identify areas of concern to help inform SBNI priorities. The researchers had been involved in producing the Mental Health of Children and Parents in NI Youth Well-being Preventative Survey 2020. Part of this evidence gathering and base lining included review of the HSC Children and Young People Emotional Health and Well Being Services Framework, DE Children and Young People Emotional Health and Wellbeing in Education Framework 2021, and, as mentioned above, the Protect Life 2 Strategy 2019-2024.

The committee was conscious that supporting positive mental health for children and young people has many advocates and interested parties. It placed its emphasis on how best to impact multi-agency policy development and subsequent implementation to raise awareness, highlight appropriate responses and ensure appropriately trained staff. As such, from the information reviewed the committee identified a need to produce a minimum standards framework for mental health awareness. The development of the framework has commenced in this reporting year and will carry into the next reporting period. The intention is that it will be adopted for use by member and partner agencies for use across the system and be embedded into individual agency policy statements.

The committee also identified a need to provide a greater focus on the learning from case management reviews in relation to mental health, not only of children and young people but the impact on them of poor mental health of a family member. Following on from this, the committee is exploring ways to share learning to ensure improved outcomes for children and young people.

Hearing the voice of children and young people

None of the aforementioned activity would be credible to the SBNI if it was not shaped by the authentic voice of children and young people. The SBNI heard what young people expect from mental health services in Northern Ireland, through the National Children's Bureau facilitated Young People's Charter. The charter was co-designed and co-facilitated by young people with lived experience of mental ill health and those interested in improving mental health services for young people in Northern Ireland. The SBNI supports the charter.

Whilst the voice of young people is heard through the charter and on the committee, through the membership of Pure Mental, the SBNI also consulted young people through the strategic planning process. Young people were saying very clearly what they thought needed to be done in relation to their mental health. Groups of young people who had specific experiences, such as those who have experienced care, from ethnic minority backgrounds and with a disability shared their views. These have also informed the work of the committee.

In addition to hearing directly from children and young people the SBNI was invited to be part of a collaborative to help inform the research agenda on the mental health of care-experienced young people. The research was led by the University of Edinburgh, Queen's University Belfast, the University of Bath and Cardiff University. The researchers had been working closely with care-experienced young people across the UK to listen to their voices about how they think research could best address their needs. The SBNI was invited to be part of professional stakeholder online workshops to gather views on how research can help to address the mental health needs of this group. The outcome of these workshops is currently awaiting publication and an update will be provided in the next annual report.

Plans are being progressed with the Education Authority's Intercultural Service in relation to the mental health of children and young people who are new to Northern Ireland and/or are seeking asylum. Also, the links between the impact of domestic violence and children and young people's mental health are being progressed with the Domestic Violence and Abuse Sub-Group. In this reporting year the committee, with other SBNI committees, supported the roll out of the *Invictus*³ play in post primary schools across Northern Ireland. An evaluation has been undertaken as to what young people thought about the impact and learning of the play and what could be done better. The analysis of the evaluation will be provided in the next reporting period.

Recognising what the SBNI heard from young people about the importance of their mental health it has carried the issue of mental health into its next 2022-2026 Strategic Plan as one of its three strategic priorities. The work undertaken by the committee in year has provided a strong evidence base on which to deliver sustainable outcomes moving forward.

3 INVICTUS: An awareness theatrical play for young people around adversity, resilience and mental health.

Child Sexual Exploitation Sub-Group

SBNI Strategic Priority 1: To provide leadership and set direction in the safeguarding and protection of children and young people.

SBNI Business Objectives 2021-2022:

1.5: Statutory partners will consider the range of child protection information available and use this to agree priorities moving forward which can be actioned through an outcome-based accountability framework:

- **ensure services in respect of child sexual exploitation are effective across SBNI member agencies by implementing the actions arising from the 14 recommendations in the Leonard Evaluation Report.**

Child Sexual Exploitation Sub-Group

The Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) Sub-Group was established to:

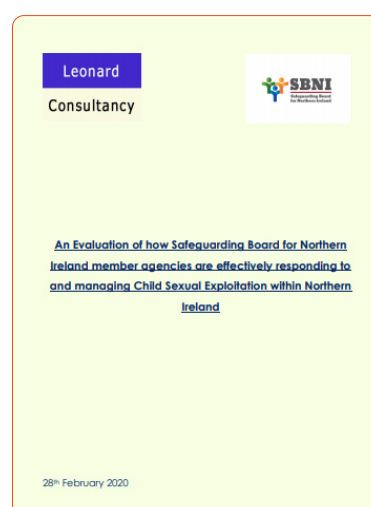
- develop an understanding of CSE in Northern Ireland as experienced by young people through a collaborative approach, to raise awareness and further develop agency and community understanding of CSE in Northern Ireland
- assist the SBNI Policy and Procedure Committee by identifying good practice and to highlight areas where practice requires to be improved
- report to the SBNI Board on the delivery of the recommendations by member agencies of the Marshall Report into Child Sexual Exploitation in Northern Ireland, an inquiry by Professor Kathleen Marshall November 2014 (The Marshall Report) and Getting Focussed and Staying Focussed – a Thematic Review of Child Sexual Exploitation November 2015 (Pinkerton).

The SBNI CSE Sub-Group is chaired by a PSNI Detective Chief Superintendent and comprises of senior management representation from Health and Social Care Trusts, Health and Social Care Board (HSCB), Education Authority Northern Ireland (EA), NSPCC, Probation Board (PBNI), and Barnardo's NI.

This year the sub-group has continued to focus on implementing recommendations from the [CSE Evaluation Report 2020](#) (The Report) which was published on 06 July 2020 (available on the SBNI website) and, where relevant, recommendations in the Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland (CJINI) review of CSE in NI published on 30 June 2020⁴. The reports make recommendations to improve management of CSE. A cross departmental group – the Child Protection Senior Officials Group (CPSOG) - oversees the governance of the implementation of the action planning of both reports. The SBNI's Independent Chair and the Chair of the SBNI's CSE Sub-Group report on actions associated with the reports on a quarterly basis to CPSOG. A sub-group of the CPSOG continues to support the governance framework surrounding the implementation of both reports and the SBNI has representation on this group.

In order to progress implementation of the recommendations, the CSE Sub-Group 'themed' the recommendations into three broad areas:

- governance
- operational
- preventative/partnership.



4 <http://www.cjini.org/TheInspections/Inspection-Reports/2020/April-June/Child-Sexual-Exploitation-in-Northern-Ireland>

Building on the action planning and assurance framework developed in the last reporting period the sub-group has been able to monitor effectively, in year, the progress and subsequent sustainable implementation of recommendations within the themed areas.

Progress of Recommendations

Significant progress has been made in implementing the recommendations. An overview of some of recommendations and improvements that have been implemented in this reporting year is provided below.

CSE Risk Assessment

The Report highlighted that, at the time of publication, the process of assessing a young person and then placing them on a separate 'CSE list' was not compatible with child protection policy and that the practice should cease. This recommendation has been achieved and now when a child or young person is assessed as at risk of CSE, the child protection pathway will be instigated. This improvement in practice recognises, as reflected from The Report's review of case files, that there are other factors associated with CSE. The approach recognises the child's experiences within the context of complex child abuse and the requirement for the case to be managed within the child protection processes. As a result, sharing of information between all relevant professionals and agencies will be enhanced. In addition, increased consistency of assessment and recording of child sexual exploitation will inform not only information pertaining to CSE prevalence but also information to assist bringing perpetrators to justice.

The sub-group commissioned Dr Helen Beckett of the University of Bedfordshire to review the current CSE risk assessment used in Northern Ireland. The intention was to develop an assessment framework which conceptualises effectively the experience of children and young people of harm and which takes account of protective and strength-based factors necessary to prevent further harm occurring. Following consultation with Dr Beckett, a task and finish group from the SBNI CSE Sub-Group held workshops to apply the Signs of Safety approach to the revised assessment. A working group has been established to implement these quality improvement measures, and its progress will be reported on in next year's annual report.

Training

The Report highlighted the importance of multi-agency training in order to increase understanding of practitioner and agency; roles, responsibilities, powers and limitations, whilst also helping to build professional relationships. The Report dedicated 11 supporting recommendations to address different aspects and components of training essential for a holistic understanding of CSE. A desktop training package was developed and piloted in December 2021, initially targeted at PSNI/HSCs. Initial evaluations of the training have been positive, and it is also being reviewed by service users to ensure the training reflects the key messages relating to those who are/have been sexually exploited. When this is finalised, the training will be offered to all SBNI member agencies and the uptake and outcomes associated with it will be reported on in the next business year.

Work is underway to develop a CSE e-learning programme, similar in design to the Department of Justice's e-learning package associated with the new domestic abuse legislation. This will continue to be progressed throughout the business reporting year 2022-2023.

Night time Economy

The Report recommended specific engagement with those professionals and organisations involved in the night-time economy, such as Hospitality Ulster, councils and taxi companies to promote awareness of child sexual exploitation within this sector. Considerable awareness raising work in relation to the night time economy has been undertaken by the sub-group led by the PSNI and Barnardo's NI. In March 2022 the PSNI led on a CSE awareness pilot with Hospitality Ulster, the Security Industry Association and the Harbour Police. The pilot was successful, and the awareness model is now being developed to include multi-agency engagement with more elements of the night time economy. Engagement with local councils has resulted in bespoke training for local businesses within one council area, with the view to progressing this through SOLACE⁵ to develop a regional model for implementation. Work with the night time economy is continuing and as the scale and scope of the training expands it will be reported on in the next reporting period.

Missing Persons Protocol

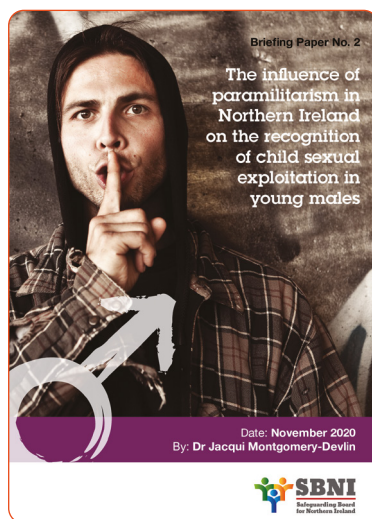
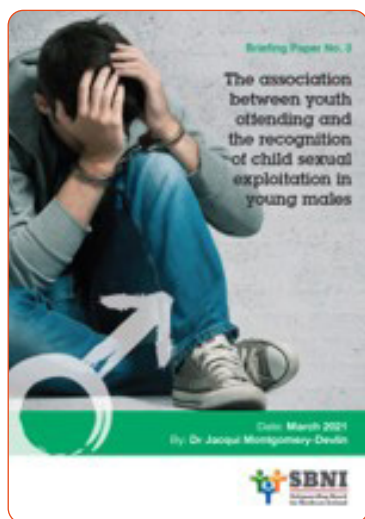
The Missing Persons Protocol is an operational document used by the HSCB and the PSNI. In relation to the work of the SBNI CSE Sub-Group the Missing Persons Protocol is particularly relevant to children in care. Research shows these children are more susceptible to going missing and, when they do go missing, being exposed to exploitation, misuse of drugs/alcohol and being involved in harmful behaviour. The safeguarding concerns for children who go missing are often complex and multi-layered and therefore require a coordinated, multi-agency approach to keep children safe and to provide the most appropriate response. In line with the report and CJINI Report recommendations, the

5 Solace is the UK's leading membership network for public sector and local government professionals.

HSCB/PSNI are reviewing and updating the Missing Persons Protocol. The principles of Trauma Informed Practice underpin the protocol in order to ensure multi-agency cooperation to reduce risk and harm and enable a child’s safe return and prevent repeat missing occurrences. The updated protocol will be in operation early in the 2022-2023 business year.

Boys and Young Men

Boys and young men are often overlooked as victims of child sexual exploitation. They are less likely to report abuse or exploitation themselves; practitioners need to be aware of the signs and indicators of abuse that boys and young men may exhibit. The SBNI CSE Sub-Group has formed a boys and young men advisory group chaired by Barnardo’s NI to consider issues impacting on boys and young men. The Chair of the advisory group reports directly to the SBNI CSE Sub-Group. This year the SBNI commissioned Youth Action and VOYPIC to facilitate focus groups with boys and young men to explore issues affecting them, their understanding of the term child sexual exploitation and to obtain their views on current awareness information and materials and to seek their involvement on the development of future materials. A full report will be presented to the SBNI CSE Sub-Group during the Summer/Autumn of 2022.



Throughout September 2021, the SBNI sub-group hosted three webinars generously facilitated by Dr Jacqui Montgomery-Devlin, based on her research and briefing papers examining the impact of CSE on boys and young men. The webinars considered:

- potential impediments to the recognition of the sexual exploitation of young males under 18
- the influence of paramilitarism in Northern Ireland on the recognition of child sexual exploitation in young males
- the association between youth offending and the recognition of child sexual exploitation in young males.

Each webinar was attended by over 70 delegates and feedback was exceptionally positive.

As child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse, the SBNI CSE Sub-Group has been involved in other aspects of the child abuse agenda. The SBNI was pleased to be part of work relating to the model which emanated from research commissioned by the Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People⁶, and recommendations from The Gillen Report (2018)⁷ to explore the requirements for developing the Barnahus model in Northern Ireland. The Barnahus model is a justice model that originated in Iceland which supports multi-agency coordination between children's health services, policing, social services and the judicial agencies to simplify the justice process for children who are providing testimony of a crime committed against them or where sexual abuse including child sexual exploitation is suspected. Outcomes associated with this work will be reported in the next annual report.



6 Putting the Child at the Centre: Barnahus (Children's House) - a one door approach to supporting children who have been sexually abused in Northern Ireland published February 2022.

7 The Gillen Report recommendations for improvements in the law and procedures in relation to serious sexual offences in Northern Ireland.

Online Safety Forum

SBNI Strategic Priority 1: to provide leadership and set direction in the safeguarding and protection of children and young people.

SBNI Business Objectives 2021-2022:

1.5: Statutory partners consider the range of child protection information available and use this to agree priorities which can be actioned through an outcome-based accountability framework:

- **continue to plan and implement a coordinated approach to online safety in Northern Ireland as per the NI Executive's 5-Year Online Safety Strategy and 3-Year Action Plan.**

The Online Safety Forum

The 21st century has seen huge advancement in technology that allows access to unlimited information on devices that fit into our pockets. Social media platforms enable all of us to stay connected and for many young people, it can be a vital part of staying connected to the world around them. The SBNI is committed to supporting and empowering children and young people to engage in online activities in an educated, safe, responsible and respectful way. At the same time the SBNI will promote awareness of supportive strategies and messages that will help safeguard young people and support them to develop digital resilience to enable them to enjoy the opportunities that the online world can potentially offer.



Keeping children and young people safe:
an Online Safety Strategy for Northern
Ireland
2020-2025

 Northern Ireland
Executive
www.northernireland.gov.uk

OFCOM reported in 2020-2021⁸ that:

- nearly all children aged 5-15 went online. Laptops, tablets and mobiles were the most commonly used devices
- just over half of 5-15s used social media sites or apps rising to 87% of 12-15s
- just over half of 12-15s have had some form of negative online experience.

The commitment to promote a coordinated response to help children and young people stay safe online is reflected through the work of the Online Safety Forum. The forum is chaired by a detective chief inspector from the PSNI Public Protection Branch. The forum's membership comprises of representatives from the following agencies: Public Prosecution Service Northern Ireland (PSSNI), the five Health and Social Care Trusts, the National Crime Agency, the Education Authority Northern Ireland, C2K (Education Technology Managed Service for Schools), NSPCC, the Council for Curriculum Examinations and Assessment (CCEA), Include Youth, the Northern Ireland Anti-Bullying Forum (NIABF), the National Children's Bureau (NCB), NEXUS NI, Parenting NI and a SBNI Professional Officer.

During the business year the forum was represented on the UK Council for Internet Safety (UKCIS) Education Working Group and the UKCIS Vulnerable Persons Working Group.

8 https://www.ofcom.org.uk/data/assets/pdf_file/0025/217825/children-and-parents-media-use-and-attitudes-report-2020-21.pdf

Keeping Children and Young People Safe: An Online Safety Strategy for NI 2020-2025:

The Northern Ireland Executive commissioned the SBNI to oversee the development of an Online Safety Strategy. This is an overarching framework to support the development and implementation of a comprehensive cross-government action plan that will improve online safety by:

- reflecting emerging evidence of good practice in online safety approaches
- engaging with existing online safety mechanisms in the UK and beyond, seeking to add value to existing work rather than duplicate
- educating and empowering children and young people, and those responsible for their care, to facilitate their informed use of digital technology
- educating children and young people on how to manage and respond to harmful online experiences, while ensuring they can access age-appropriate support services, including recovery services, should the need arise
- facilitating the meaningful participation of children and young people, parents and carers, and those who support them, in relevant policy and service development.

The strategy and associated action plan⁹ were published by the DoH on behalf of the Executive on Safer Internet Day February 2021. The SBNI was awarded funding to recruit an online safety coordinator and once the recruitment process is complete they will assist in taking forward the completion of the Action Plan.

Progress on this work will be reported on in business year 2022-2023.

What children told us about staying safe online

The SBNI is committed to listening and responding to the voices of children and young people. With this in mind the SBNI commissioned the National Children's Bureau NI (NCB) to conduct focus groups with children of primary and post-primary school age in order to help inform the SBNI's Strategic Plan 2022-2026. In addition, Parenting NI and VOYPIC were asked to conduct parenting focus groups to determine the areas of concern for parents. In total, 104 children and young people took part in focus groups. From these focus groups, the recurrent areas of concern for primary school age children related to online safety and concerns regarding cyber bullying. Post-primary school age children were concerned about the influence of digital platforms such as TikTok, with young people feeling that they have little control over what they see, sighting incidences of radicalisation, cyber bullying and online hate speech as particular areas of concern. Focus groups conducted with parents reported very similar findings.

⁹ <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/health/online-safety-strategy.pdf> and <https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/health/online-safety-action-plan.pdf>

The data from these focus groups will help inform development of core online safety messages for children and young people, parents and carers, in conjunction with key stakeholders in line with the Online Safety 3-Year Action Plan. Some of the concerns children and parents raised are listed below:

- “people that offer you free stuff and you might get a virus”
- “people sending you stuff that they shouldn’t be sending you – nasty messages pictures and comments...”
- “people can make nasty videos...send videos to all of your friends your friends will leave you and start to be nasty...”



Post primary:

- “I think that especially young people who are quite lonely or being exploited by strangers what you were saying earlier with the disability, that they are not really aware of who is speaking to them. I know this has happened to quite a few people being messaged by strangers, but they know that it’s a stranger”
- “if you go into a shop or an arcade or a cinema there is a betting machine like Deal or No Deal. There is no age restrictions on it. Anyone can do it.”



Anti-Bullying Week and Safer Internet Day

The Northern Ireland Anti Bullying Forum coordinates Anti Bullying Week which was held on 15-19 November 2021. The SBNI was delighted to be able to sponsor the creative arts competition. The theme this year was ‘One Kind Word’ and there were over 180 entries including visual art, written word and video.

The theme of this year’s competition reflected the theme for Anti Bullying Week, with three categories:

- A. One Kind Word
- B. Kindness Fuels Kindness
- C. Break the Cycle

There were four age categories based on the school year/age group of the child or young person during Anti Bullying Week 2021:

- pre-school year – Primary 3
- primary 4-7
- year 8-10
- year 11 and over.



The standard of entry for the competition was outstanding; a video showcasing the winners from each category can be accessed from the link below and is presented by the Minister for Education NI.

[Anti-Bullying Week 2021 Creative Arts Competition Winners - End Bullying](#)

Safer Internet Day Campaign

On Safer Internet Day the PSNI, led a proactive press campaign encouraging parents to spot the signs of abuse/grooming on Safer Internet Day, providing a link to a YouTube video. This was an informative video aimed at parents and distributed via the Education Authority to all schools.

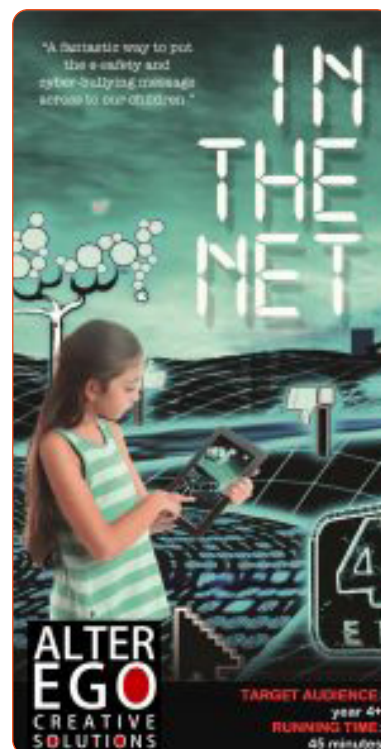
There was also social media activity including tips for parents when talking to their child about their online behaviour. There is an accompanying dedicated webpage with information on how to keep children safe online. As part of a joint PSNI/SBNI communications plan information will continue to be released in the next reporting year: [Police help parents spot the signs of abuse on Safer Internet Day | PSNI](#)

In the Net

In response to children and young people's concerns regarding online safety and the SBNI's commitment to supporting children and young people and professionals engaging with them to stay safe online, the SBNI commissioned 'Alter Ego' to deliver 'In the Net' to schools in business year 2021-2022. Due to COVID-19 regulations the play was filmed and distributed to primary schools through the C2K network coordinated by EA's Child Protection Support Service.

In the Net was made available to all pupils in P6 and P7 and raises awareness around online safety and cyber-bullying in a fun and friendly way.

In the Net is centred around Dotty, a young girl who has just got a shiny new [iPad] but she's not being too safe online. She's posting personal information, chatting to strangers and making rude comments about school friends. When her behaviour results in her being pulled into the computer Dotty finds herself caught 'In the Net' and she must go on a hero's journey – a hero's journey to find out how to be safer and nicer to people online.



The play covers:

- safe internet/social media use
- keeping personal information safe
- the effects of cyber-bullying on others
- what to do if you are being cyber-bullied
- what to do if you get that 'Uh Oh' feeling online
- what makes a healthy relationship
- what to do if you have questions or concerns.

Sharing Nudes and Semi Nudes

As noted in the SBNI Annual Report 2021-2021, the Online Safety Forum recognises the growing area of 'Sharing Nudes and Semi Nudes' in schools whereby children and young people electronically send explicit text and pictures of themselves to peers. The forum recognised the absence of guidance specifically in Northern Ireland for teachers managing this difficult issue on a day to day basis. A task and finish group has been established to progress this work for all education settings:

- early years
- primary
- post primary
- further education colleges.

Interfaith Sub-Group

Strategic Priority 1: To provide leadership and set direction in the safeguarding and protection of children and young people.

SBNI Business Objectives 2021-2022:

1.5: Statutory partners consider the range of child protection information available and use this to agree priorities which can be actioned through an outcome-based accountability framework:

- **continue to promote effective collaboration of stakeholders in ensuring children involved in the faith sector are protected and safeguarded.**

Interfaith Sub-Group

Northern Ireland faith groups recognise their obligation to protect children and young people with whom they come in to contact through the creation and promotion of a safe environment which protects them from harm. Faith organisations have a capacity to be a positive influence on children, providing the supporting structures and environment that places welfare first.

Faith groups in Northern Ireland are represented within the SBNI partnership and work in collaboration with other SBNI committees to encourage effective communication and engagement in the development of key safeguarding initiatives. The groups continue to promote the importance of sharing safeguarding resources, skills and knowledge.

The Interfaith Sub-Group seeks to facilitate co-operation between various faith groups and the SBNI. Membership of the group is derived from the Catholic Church Diocese of Down and Connor, the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, the Church of Ireland, the Methodist Church, the Islamic Centre Belfast and the Salvation Army.

The sub-group is attended by representatives from the NSPCC, the PSNI, and the HSCB and is supported by a professional officer from the SBNI. The aim of the SBNI Interfaith Sub-Group is to enhance the safety and welfare of children and young people within the range of faith group provisions across NI.

The Interfaith Sub-Group endeavours to harness a bottom-up approach to safeguarding and to work towards strengthening the interfaces between the voluntary, community and faith-based groups. This links to the SBNI ethos of ensuring that safeguarding practices are grounded at a local level and delivered by groups on the ground.

In particular, the Interfaith Sub-Group undertakes the following functions:

- develop partnerships between the faith groups, the SBNI and others concerned in safeguarding children in Northern Ireland
- develop and share good practice arrangements and safeguarding resources suitable for use within this sector and encourage use across any faith groups
- review the wider SBNI policy and procedures for their applicability across the faith group sector in conjunction with the SBNI Policy and Procedures Committee and seek to ensure the dissemination and adoption of SBNI policies and procedures
- identify key localised issues and develop safeguarding initiatives within faith groups, while sharing these with the wider SBNI membership
- support the promotion within faith groups of appropriate safeguarding messages at an operational level.

During the 2021-2022 the sub-group was delighted to welcome representatives from the Islamic Centre Belfast as new members to the sub-group.

The sub-group welcomed a new Chair in the reporting year: Dr Jacqui Montgomery-Devlin Head of Safeguarding, Council for Social Witness, Presbyterian Church in Ireland and who is also the SBNI Board Member representing the faith sector.

Interfaith Conference – Safeguarding Children and Young People in a Digital World: A Faith Sector’s Response

This year the sub-group hosted a virtual conference for all faith leaders. The aim of the conference was to:

- raise awareness of issues for children and young people in a digital world, and related offences in NI
- raise awareness of the impact of the digital world on the emotional health and wellbeing of children and young people
- explore ways in which the faith community can support the digital wellbeing of children and young people.

The conference was opened by the SBNI Director of Operations with reflection provided by Dr David Bruce, the Moderator for the Presbyterian Church NI. The PSNI reminded delegates of the responsibility we all have to safeguard children and young people, discussing particular issues concerning online safety that impact upon children and young people and strategies to help safeguard them. The NSPCC discussed the NI Online Safety Strategy and Action Plan and the new Online Safety Bill currently passing through parliament. Love for Life presented their Inspiring Relationships programme and Thrive Academy, which is a social enterprise whose aim is to help young people thrive online through bespoke digital resilience education.

Over 86 delegates registered for the conference and evaluations were very positive. 100% found that conference was very informative and accessible.

Safeguarding e-learning package for new faith leaders

Following on from work which commenced in the previous business year, the Interfaith Sub-Group completed the development of an online-learning platform for young leaders in respect of key safeguarding responsibilities associated with this role. A group of young leaders had met to develop a brief and design the contents of the platform. The group had also been tasked to consider how the voice of young people could be better portrayed in safeguarding training. The Interfaith Sub-Group engaged the Northern Regional College (NRC) which specialises in the production of e-learning resources. This has proved to not only be a cost-effective measure but also supported local enterprise and benefitted young

people attending the college who worked on the project. NRC are hosting the e learning package which can be accessed from the SBNI website.

Contributors to the sub-group

This year the sub-group engaged with Victim Support NI to learn about 40 years of providing witness services to adults and children. This included Sexual Offences Legal Advisors (SOLAs), three qualified lawyers providing support to victims from reporting of crime to commencement of trial and child independent sexual violence advocates who support children and young people from the reporting of the crime through the court process.

The sub-group also engaged with the Safe Families Service launched in Northern Ireland in January 2021 originating from USA and supporting families in need, isolated and disconnected from family support; working with families through the local church and seeking to prevent children from entering the care system. Safe Families are working in partnership with NHSCCT social services. Any child involved with children social services is assessed to see whether there is a need for Safe Families intervention. The organisation is currently working with churches to identify church champions and volunteers to work in partnership with Safe Families through volunteering, donation and support.

Dissemination of information relating to the extension of the Abuse of Trust legislation

Provision to extend the scope of the law on the abuse of a position of trust, to include the areas of sport and religion, was made in the Justice (Sexual Offences and Trafficking) Bill. The Bill was introduced into the Assembly on 05 July 2021 and is due to receive Royal Assent in April 2022. It will be known as the [Justice \(Sexual Offences & Trafficking\) Act \(Northern Ireland\) 2022](#).

The Interfaith Sub-Group believed it was important to communicate this change in legislation to the faith sector as early as possible.

While the Department of Justice prepare more detailed guidance on the interpretation and application of the new legislative provisions, the Interfaith Sub-Group has commenced work with the DoJ to agree an interim briefing paper for the faith sector, and work to support awareness of the legislation through communication throughout the faith sector. This will be progressed and reported on within the business year 2022-2023.

Next Steps

This ninth Annual Report has outlined the work of the Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland during the past year, as its membership, along with people across Northern Ireland and further afield, have dealt with the ongoing and unique challenges brought about by the COVID-19 Pandemic.

The SBNI anticipate that 2022-2023 will bring similar challenges as agencies begin to rebuild and renew after the pandemic, while still responding to public health needs such as long COVID, increased waiting lists, disruption to the school year as well as the mounting costs associated with the economic downturn and increased public expenditure.

Moving forward the SBNI will commence the work of its new Strategic Plan 2022–2026; which will set out the strategic priorities on which members will focus their work, informed by the views of children and young people, their parents and carers, and the partner organisations we work with.

The primary responsibility of the SBNI membership is to protect children and young people from risk and harm and ensure that effective work to protect children and young people is properly coordinated and conducted. We will ensure that the new strategic plan is supported with a business plan that will measure and monitor this work to confirm that we are making a difference.

In addition to the new strategic priorities the SBNI members will continue to progress the actions from the Online Safety Strategy and our work to raise awareness of adverse childhood experiences and embed trauma informed practice across the workforce. We will also seek to prevent children and young people from being sexually exploited and by delivering the recommendations contained with the Child Sexual Exploitation Evaluation Report 2020, to improve services to them.

We will also be ready to adapt our business activity to ensure that we respond to new and emerging safeguarding and child protection concerns, as separate priorities as they arise, over the duration of the next business year and will continue to keep the key and current safeguarding risks and issues affecting children and young people in Northern Ireland, at the forefront of our work.

Finally, the SBNI remains committed to promoting the dissemination of safeguarding learning and good practice through its local Safeguarding Panels and Case Management Review Panel in order to inform and improve the work of its member agencies to continue to fight against harm and abuse of all children and young people in Northern Ireland.

Glossary of Terms

ABE	Achieving Best Practice
ABW21	Anti-Bullying Week 2021
Access NI	A body within the Department of Justice that checks whether people applying to work with children have a criminal record
ACE/s	Adverse Childhood Experience/s
App	Application
CAMHS	Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services
CCEA	Council for Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment
CCMS	Council for Catholic Maintained Schools
CDOP	Child Death Overview Panel
CEC	Clinical Education Centre
CES	Centre for Effective Services
Child In Need	A child who is unlikely to achieve or maintain a reasonable level of health or development without the provision of services
CiNI	Children in Northern Ireland
CJINI	Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland
CMR/s	Case Management Review/s
CMRP	Case Management Review Panel
CPSOG	Child Protection Senior Officials Group
CPSS	Child Protection Support Service
CSE	Child Sexual Exploitation
CVS	Community and Voluntary Sector
CYP	Children and Young People
CYPSP	Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership
DARAC	Domestic Abuse Risk Assessment Tool for Children
DE	Department of Education
DfC	Department for Communities
DfE	Department for the Economy
DoH	Department of Health
DoJ	Department of Justice

Glossary of Terms

DSC	Delivering Social Change
DVA	Domestic Violence and Abuse
EA	Education Authority
ECHO	Extension of Community Healthcare Outcomes
EITP	Early Intervention Transformation Programme
EOTAS	Education Other Than At School
EVAWG	Ending Violence Against Women and Girls
EWG	Education Working Group
Gateway	the first point of contact for all new referrals to children's social work services
GCP2	Graded Care Profile 2
GP/s	General Practitioner/s
HSC	Health and Social Care
HSCB	Health and Social Care Board (which closed on 31 March 2022 with its functions transferring to the Department of Health)
HSCT/s	Health and Social Care Trust/s
IAG	Independent Advisory Group
IAR/s	Individual Agency Review/s
ISA	Information Sharing Agreement
LAC	Looked After Child
LDSF	Learning and Development Strategy Framework
MARAC	Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference
MOVA	Management of Violence and Aggression
NCA	National Crime Agency
NCB	National Children's Bureau
NI	Northern Ireland
NIABF	Northern Ireland Anti-Bullying Forum
NICON	Northern Ireland Confederation for Health and Social Care
NIGALA	Northern Ireland Guardian Ad Litem Agency
NIRARG	Northern Ireland Regional ACE Reference Group
NRC	Northern Regional College

Glossary of Terms

NSPCC	National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children
PAS	Parental Alienation Syndrome
P&P	Policies and Procedures
PfG	Programme for Government
PHA	Public Health Agency
PPR	Promoting Positive Relationships
PPS	Public Prosecution Service
PSNI	Police Service of Northern Ireland
QUB	Queen's University Belfast
RAMP	Risk Assessment Management Plan
RESWS	Regional Emergency Social Work Services
SAG	Stakeholders Assurance Group
SARC	Sexual Assault Referral Centre
SBNI	Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland
SCSSG	Safeguarding Children in Sport Strategic Group
SEEN	Sexual Exploitation Ends Now
SDB	Strategic Delivery Board
SIM	Sequential Intercept Model
SoS	Signs of Safety
TI	Trauma Informed
TIP	Trauma Informed Practice
ToR	Terms of Reference
UK	United Kingdom
UKCIS	United Kingdom Council for Internet Safety
USD	Universal Service Delivery
UU	University of Ulster
VOYPIC	Voice Of Young People In Care
YJA	Youth Justice Agency

Annex 1: Case Management Review Learning Recommendations 2021-2022

Detailed below is an overview of the learning elicited from the completed reviews in the 2021-2022 business year.

Child Sexual Exploitation and peer on peer domestic abuse:

- the HSCT and the PSNI consider a review of their governance arrangements for the timely sharing of information between the Trust and the PSNI CSE team, to include a review of their processes
- relevant agencies should consider raising awareness and training in respect of domestic abuse among young people to include coercive control
- the HSCB should consider the provision of training to all the Trust's field work and residential staff in respect to domestic abuse among young people within the Looked After Children population and the responses to it
- the HSCB as commissioners of children's homes should consider wakened night staff within the children's homes to support the implementation of the safety plans for the respective young people
- the SBNI to liaise with NISCC to highlight the issues in respect of (a) relationship with RQIA and expectation regarding inspection and (b) clarify the requirement on the provision of induction between recruitment agency and Trust/employer
- the SBNI to liaise with RQIA to highlight the issues on how inspections against NISCC Standards in Children's Residential Homes are undertaken including the potential for "thematic" inspections
- the DoH to consider a review of the Protecting Looked After Children Guidance (DoH, February 2018) to include the appropriateness of the role of risk management meetings
- following consideration of the review mentioned above, DoH to consider the appropriateness or necessity of revising Co-operating to Safeguard Children Guidance to include guidance on multi-agency risk assessment in particular "high risk" Looked After Children
- the HSCB in collaboration with HSCTs should undertake a review of existing community based residential care to consider (a) whether capacity is sufficient to meet the complex needs of Looked After Children and (b) whether rationalisation of children's homes, staff turnover, recruitment and retention are factors impeding the delivery of a safe, stable, therapeutic model of care for children in residential care
- the HSCB and HSCTs, in collaboration with DoH, to consider how best to ensure that the application of Signs of Safety is effectively integrated into residential child care practice and aligned to LAC guidance and risk management processes

- consideration should be given as how best to address the shortage of social work staff in the context of the Work Force Review commenced by the DoH in 2020, in collaboration with HSCB and HSC Trusts. With the specific issue in mind of recruitment and reliance on agency workers in delivering a social work service to children with complex needs in residential care.

In respect of physical abuse:

- the Education Authority to consult with the Department of Education recommending the implementation of a policy and system for all educational settings that ensures electronic recording and monitoring of safeguarding (wellbeing and pastoral) issues
- the Education Authority Child Protection Support Service should develop a key set of principles and a checklist of actions, to strengthen child protection practice and culture in schools, and ensure designated teachers, principals and boards of governors are trained in its implementation
- the Education Authority to consult with the Department of Education recommending updated regional Safeguarding Guidance in Schools to include advice to governors and school leadership of the need for dedicated time and resources for designated teachers to effectively implement school procedures
- the HSCB in conjunction with GP representatives should consider and agree an appropriate process to ensure Public Health Nursing is notified of new NI entrant pre-school children, who attend a GP and do not immediately complete GP registration
- the HSCB should oversee the development and dissemination of an electronic CHS 8 form through the CH Regional User Advisory Group
- the SBNI should consider developing guidance, resources and training focussed on professional curiosity
- a task and finish group to review the current information sharing arrangements between the HSCB and PSNI (PDU and PPD) in order to redress current gaps. To provide policy and procedural guidance with inter-agency training to ensure that staff are fully conversant with the parameters of the various checks available to them. This should include a central repository and processes to ensure that all concerned are working from the same current ISA
- a review will be undertaken of the ISF form by the task and finish group to provide social workers with prompts to assist them in specifying the information they are seeking from the PSNI in instances of fostering/adoption extraneous to Access NI ECRC applications
- the HSCB to consider implementation of policy and procedures accompanied by guidance for staff and training to ensure that checks are completed through the appropriate process if a potential carer is, or has been, a serving member of the armed forces
- regional fostering and adoption services to develop the regional training pathway to include remote learning (Skills to Foster and Core Issues Training) that can be delivered to kinship foster carers including those across jurisdictions. This will support kinship

carers in being engaged in training which is separate from the Long-Term Foster Care Assessment process. Training completion by carers and on-going training needs should be reviewed by the Fostering Panel

- the PSNI (PDU, Chief Officer Delegate) to review procedures with Access NI in relation to ECRC applications to ensure that the relevant chief officer delegate has sight of all information from other forces to permit informed decision making
- the PSNI to consider providing all PDU staff with child safeguarding training and this should include all PDU Quality Assurance Framework Training Team
- the HSCB to undertake a review with 'XX' (Vol Organisation) to ensure all child protection and safeguarding arrangements are suitably aligned to the expectations set out in 'Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland, 2017'
- the HSCB to ensure that all organisations which have a key safeguarding role and which interface with statutory Children's Services are trained in Signs of Safety to ensure there is a shared understanding and common language for professionals, workers volunteer's parents and children, within which issues and concerns, needs and risks, dangers and protective factors, can be collaboratively explored and shared. This will aim to address any ambiguity in approach and shared understanding of roles
- for any woman who is pregnant and referred into the Addictions Triage Hub an assessment will be offered by the community addiction team before consideration is given to referring to the community and voluntary sector partner drug/substance misuse organisations. The HSCB should oversee this change in practice regionally, already introduced by the BHSCT
- the HSCB should oversee a change to the GP referral form to addictions triage hubs to include a section/tick box identifying 'child care' concerns or if the names of children are on the Child Protection Register
- the NHSCT has established a working group to consider how collaborative working between community addictions services (adults) and statutory children's services can be better promoted in keeping with Think Family. The HSCB should oversee the regional roll out of the recommendations from this NHSCT Initiative
- the HSCB should consider the options available for the implementation of (1) drug screening as part of the work by HSC Trust Children's Services for those families where drug/substance is an acute issue and presents safeguarding issues and risks to children (2) support to appropriately interpret the results of such screens
- to support the child protection process, taking account of the risks presented by vulnerable mothers with a history of drugs/substance misuse, consideration by the HSCB should be given to developing specific best practice guidance and training on discharge planning meetings. Such guidance should include assessing risk of harm to the parent and new born child involving members of the multi-disciplinary team
- in 2019 the Public Health Agency issued guidance to health professionals on 'Promoting Safer Sleeping for Infants and Reducing the Risk of Sudden Infant Death'. This guidance should be re-issued to all HSC professionals and the wider refuge/refuge sector as part of staff awareness.

In respect of harmful sexual behaviour

- the statutory partners and signatories to the Protocol for the Joint Investigation by Social Workers and Police Officers of Alleged and Suspected Cases of Child Abuse NI to revise the protocol to provide detailed guidance on decision making on single vis a vis joint investigation with particular reference to LAC
- the Education Authority Welfare Service to review the practice of routine case closure of Year 12 young people to ensure that closure of statutory involvement is sufficiently flexible to allow the needs of the service user to be met
- Police College NI to review the training provided to officers and staff on children and young people who display harmful sexual behaviours and, where gaps are identified, a training plan should be developed and delivered within an identified timeframe.

Annex 2: SBNI Business Objectives 2021-2022

Strategic Priority 1: To provide leadership and set direction in the safeguarding and protection of children and young people

1.1 Objective: Greater consistency and standardisation of practice through the provision of the 2017 Regional Core Child Protection Policy and Procedures:

- continue to seek assurance that member agencies have disseminated and embedded the 2017 Regional Core Child Protection Policies and Procedures (P&P)
- continue to identify gaps in the dissemination and embedding by member agencies and ensure these are actioned accordingly
- continue to align the Signs of Safety approach to complement the Core P&P and support embedding the approach into the child protection arrangements
- continue to review, disseminate and implement the following policies and procedures:
 - Case Conference Appeals Process
 - Information Sharing Guidance.

Summary Update:

The Policy and Procedures Committee continues to seek assurance on an ongoing basis in relation to the dissemination and embedding of updates to the core child protection policies and procedures.

The committee has completed its work to align the Signs of Safety approach to complement the Core P&P and support embedding the approach into the child protection arrangements.

As part of its statutory function the SBNI has and will continue to disseminate and implement the new policies and procedures. Work on the finalisation of the Case Conference Appeals Process and Information Sharing have into the next reporting period.

1.2 Objective: Greater consistency and standardisation of practice through the provision of relevant 2018 Practice Guidance to support the Regional Core Policy and Procedures:

- develop and disseminate relevant Regional Safeguarding Practice Guidance to support Regional Core Child Protection P&P in collaboration with the DoH and other agencies.

Currently, these are:

- Pre-Mobile Babies Protocol
- Sexually Active Children Guidance

Summary Update:

Practice guidance was developed and issued in relation to Pre-Mobile Babies Protocol whilst the Sexually Active Children Guidance has moved into the next reporting period.

1.3 Objective: Children, young people, families and communities are more aware of Child Protection and Safeguarding Issues and how to get help if concerned through an Engagement and Communication Strategy:

- develop and agree a two-year SBNI Engagement Strategy 2021-2023.

Summary Update:

The objective is complete. Detail on the SBNI Strategy for Engaging with Children and Young People 2021 can be found in the main body of the report.

1.4 Objective: The Child Protection and Safeguarding system will be improved by hearing the views of children and young people, parents and carers through engagement with the SBNI Safeguarding Panels:

- Safeguarding Panels will continue to review the existing fora of:
 - children and young people
 - parents and carers
 - identify the additional opportunities for eliciting their views and opinions.
- continue to engage with children and young people, parents and staff to ensure their views are heard and responded to in relation to the child protection/safeguarding system.

Summary Update:

This is an ongoing statutory objective of the Safeguarding Panels, which has been undertaken, the details of which are noted in the main body of the annual report.

1.5 Objective: Statutory partners consider the range of child protection information available and use this to agree priorities moving forward which can be actioned through an outcome-based accountability framework:

- continue to undertake CMRs as per the SBNI legislation, guidance and disseminate the associated learning across all sectors
- continue to review and evaluate the Case Management Review process
- complete the analysis and review of the themes emanating from CMRs

- continue the analysis of child protection data to inform the child protection system and underpinning process.

Adverse Childhood Experiences

- continue to address intergenerational abuse by embedding a trauma informed approach to practice and culture by the application of a Sequential Intercept Model/ Universal Service Delivery (SIM/USD) process.

CSE

- ensure services in respect of Child Sexual Exploitation are effective across SBNI member agencies by implementing the actions arising from the 14 recommendations in Leonard Evaluation Report.

E-Safety

- continue to plan and implement a coordinated approach to Online Safety in Northern Ireland as per the NI Executive's 5-Year Online Safety Strategy and 3-Year Action Plan.

Interfaith

- continue to promote effective collaboration of stakeholders in ensuring children involved in the faith sector are protected and safeguarded.

Child Death Overview Panel Review

- scope and address the gaps in multi-agency information required for the establishment of a Child Death Overview Panel by producing a report to identify the preferred option, based on agreed selection criteria, providing a clear route forward on how child deaths in Northern Ireland are reported to, and reviewed by the CDOP for the purpose of learning and identifying modifiable factors that may prevent future child death.

Summary Update:

All of the aforementioned objectives have been undertaken, the details of which are noted in the main body of the annual report.

1.6 Objective: The SBNI Board and associated governance framework is fit for purpose:

- attend bi-annual assurance and accountability meetings with the Department of Health
- continue to review of membership and terms of reference for committees and sub-groups
- develop and produce an annual report for 2020-2021 for provision to the Department of Health
- develop and produce a strategic plan for 2022-2026 for provision to the DoH
- oversee the business objectives, their progress and manage associated risk

- manage SBNI finances 2021-2022
- review and submit annual equality and disability plans to the Equality Commission Northern Ireland
- conduct biennial review of MoUs.

Summary Update: All of the aforementioned objectives have been undertaken the details of which are noted in the main body of the annual report.

Strategic Priority 2: To provide a voice to children and young people affected by domestic violence and abuse

2.1 Objective: Work with government departments and their agencies to prevent domestic violence and abuse (DVA) from occurring:

- continue to participate in the regional Stakeholder Assurance Group (SAG), the Independent Advisory Group (IAG) and the Strategic Delivery Board (SDB) to ensure that the voice of children and young people is represented.

2.2 Objective: Work with partners engaged in the DVA arena to raise awareness among parents/carers and professionals of the effect of DVA on children and young people:

- take forward the key strategic recommendations within the Equally Safeguarded Report endorsed by the SBNI and Regional Domestic and Sexual Violence Stakeholders Assurance Group to address gaps and develop service provision for children and young people affected by domestic violence and abuse.

2.3 Objective: Work with partners engaged in the DVA arena to promote education for children and young people in how to recognise, respond and seek help in relation to DVA:

- take forward the strategic training recommendations within the Equally Safeguarded Report endorsed by the SBNI and Regional Domestic and Sexual Violence Stakeholders Assurance Group to develop a standardised training and development framework that recognises different levels of training required at varying points of support intervention to assist agencies working with children and young people affected by domestic violence and abuse
- continue to work with the Strategic Development Board regarding the implementation of Operation Encompass in Northern Ireland.

Summary Update:

All of the aforementioned objectives have been undertaken the details of which are noted in the main body of the annual report.

Priority 3: To improve outcomes for children and young people affected or potentially affected by neglect through promoting the early recognition and improvement of agency responses

3.1 Objective: Promote early intervention with the aim of preventing children and young people experiencing neglect:

- implement the regional assessment tool in respect of the recognition and assessment of neglect.

Summary Update:

The aforementioned objective has been undertaken by the Neglect Sub-Group with the NSPCC Graded Care Profile agreed as the regional assessment tool. Training was delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and this will be undertaken in the next reporting period.

3.2 Objective: Raise awareness of neglect with children/young people, parents/carers and staff:

- continue to improve awareness and understanding of neglect for SBNI member agencies and partners who work with children and young people, families/carers
- continue to circulate awareness raising materials to improve public awareness, understanding and action on neglect for children and young people, families/carers.

3.3 Objective: Work with partner agencies to provide training in how to improve the recognition, assessment, and responses to children, young people and families experiencing neglect

Summary Update:

The aforementioned objective has been undertaken and an update can be found in the Neglect Sub-Group, the Safeguarding Panels and CMR chapters of the annual report.

3.4 Objective: The Child Protection and Safeguarding system will be improved by hearing the views of children and young people, parents, carers and staff through engagement with the SBNI Safeguarding Panels in relation to neglect

The Safeguarding Panels will continue to:

- support the delivery of awareness
- training to staff and all relevant stakeholders
- ensure their views are heard and responded to in relation to neglect.

Summary Update:

The aforementioned objective has been undertaken the detail of which is noted in the main body of the annual report in the Safeguarding Panels chapter.

Strategic Priority 4:

To provide a voice for children and young people affected by mental health issues

4.1 Objective: Work with partners to raise awareness among parents/carers and professionals of the effect of poor mental health on children and young people:

- establish an SBNI Mental Health Committee to progress this priority and outcomes
- continue to work with member/partner agencies to identify how the SBNI can support raising awareness of the effect of poor mental health on children and young people
- continue to support actions arising out of research in respect of mental health
- continue to disseminate CMR learning regarding the impact of poor mental health.

4.2 Objective: Work with partners to promote awareness for children and young people in how to recognise, respond and seek help in relation to mental health:

- continue to work with member and partner agencies to identify how the SBNI can support the recognition and response to the effects of poor mental health.

4.3 Objective: Work with partners to promote training in how to improve the recognition, assessment, and responses to children, young people and families experiencing the impact of mental health issues:

- continue to work with member and partner agencies to identify how the SBNI can support them in relation to the promotion of training on mental health.

Summary Update:

The aforementioned objectives have been undertaken, the details of which are noted in the main body of the annual report in various chapters to including mental health, CMR and Safeguarding Panels. This work has been identified as a strategic priority in the new strategic plan and as such the work of the committee will continue into the next reporting period.