



Learning from CMR'S 2020 -2021

Case Management Review Learning 2020 -2021

Case Management Reviews (CMRs) are a statutory function of the SBNI which are undertaken by the Case Management Review Panel. The CMR Panel meets on a monthly basis, is independently chaired by Mr Andrew Thomson who is a 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 improve the child protection system through learning from experience 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 makes a decision whether or not a CMR should be undertaken.

During 2020 - 2021, as a consequence of the onset of COVID-19, the Case Management Review Panel 'paused' meetings between April 2020 and July 2020. CMR Panel meetings resumed in August 2020. Meetings assumed a 'virtual' blended format utilising a virtual platform.

During this period of 'pause' SBNI continued to receive notifications and processed them accordingly.

Volume of CMR Notifications

During the reporting year 2020-2021, 23 CMR notifications were received by the SBNI in respect of 23 children and young people. One child was subject to a notification by more than one agency. Of these notifications, only two met the criteria for Case Management Reviews to be commissioned.

A total of two completed CMRs were presented to, and approved by, the SBNI during the reporting period. From these, 15 recommendations were identified.

Prior to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the average time taken to undertake CMRs was nine and a half months. Direct work on CMRs was interrupted as a consequence of the aforementioned 'pause' introduced, which allowed member agencies to focus on service delivery at the initial stages of the public health emergency. Direct work on CMRs was impacted as a consequence of staff members from member agencies being unable to complete Individual Agency Reviews (IARs). In some instances CMR review teams were depleted due to COVID-19 illness, isolation or shielding. Timelines were required to be amended as a consequence of this. Despite these interruptions staff endeavoured to ensure as timely a response to the completion of reviews as possible in the difficult and uncharted circumstances.

Improvements made as a result of CMRs

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

- a Review of the Information Sharing Agreement (November 2019) between PSNI and HSCT's is currently underway
- the Resolution of Professional Differences Protocol has been developed and approved ([Resolution of Professional Differences Protocol](#))
- HSCTs have agreed that Children/Young People who experience CSE will be managed within the existing Child Protection Framework
- a Review of the 'Protecting Looked After Children' (PLAC) Guidance is underway
- joint work between PSNI and HSCTs regarding the 'Return to Home' interviews for Children who have been 'Missing' is underway
- renewed development of Interagency work considering Training for Practitioners working with children who experience CSE is underway
- work on the 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

- the Pre-Mobile Baby Protocol for bruising/marks has been further revised and published in the Core Policy and Procedures manual
- the SBNI Neglect Strategy designed to improve outcomes for children and young people by ensuring that prevention, early recognition and agency responses to children, young people and families affected or potentially affected by neglect are appropriate and effective
- 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
- PBNI has implemented a number of measures to address the learning from the CMR. The CMR Team noted that a new file monitoring system has been introduced which includes a requirement on Area Managers to monitor files which are randomly selected
- PBNI Practice Standards have been amended to include a standard stipulating that if the supervising probation officer is aware a service user has children, or caring responsibilities for children, or regular access to children, he/she shall contact social services within 10 working days of the case being allocated to ascertain if the Service User or their partner are known to social services and in what capacity
- PBNI has implemented a new system to ensure all cases where there are concerns in respect of domestic violence and/or potential child protection, are discussed during formal supervision.

Dissemination of Key Messages/Learning from CMRs

Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic interrupted the SBNI's schedule of annual and regional dissemination events. Events planned for the autumn 2020 were unable to proceed as a consequence of respective surges in the prevalence of the virus. Member agencies were wholly focussed on service delivery with significantly reduced staff during these unprecedented times and the SBNI took the decision to postpone events.