## Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Foreword by the Independent Chair</td>
<td>02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safeguarding snapshot</td>
<td>04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The role of the Safeguarding Board</td>
<td>06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meet the Board members</td>
<td>09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus on finance</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How the SBNI is structured</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning from practice – case management reviews</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child sexual exploitation – the work of the CSE Sub-Group</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local safeguarding panel activities</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safer in the digital world – the work of the E-Safety Forum</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safeguarding in Faith Communities</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tackling neglect – the work of the Neglect Sub-Group</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Think Family</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safeguarding children and young people who have a disability</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting those at risk of female genital mutilation</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guiding staff through the development of policies and procedures</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Next steps– the year ahead</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SBNI central support team</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glossary of terms</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annex 1: SBNI Business Objectives 2016-2017</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland has 29 member bodies 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.

Each agency is represented by a senior member of staff on the partnership which collectively provides leadership and direction to the child protection safeguarding system across Northern Ireland.

The year 2016-17 has been a challenging one for SBNI: working within the wider context of Departmental changes, continuing austerity, political instability and an increased negative spotlight on child protection issues across the UK. During this reporting period the Department of Health also commissioned and published an independent review into the effectiveness of SBNI, conducted by Professor Alexis Jay.

While the outcome of the Jay review provided a number of challenges to the partnership, its recommendations also provided an opportunity for the Safeguarding Board to modernise and reform.

Importantly, it provided the impetus the individual agencies needed to refocus the partnership on its collective responsibility to safeguard and protect children. The SBNI has embraced and implemented all of Professor Jay’s recommendations and has moved forward with renewed energy and vigour. In particular a Child Protection Sub-Group was established of statutory member agencies. The purpose of this Sub-Group is to ensure statutory partners meet regularly to consider the range of child protection information available and to use this to agree priorities moving forward which can be actioned through an outcome based accountability framework.
In January 2017 I was appointed interim Independent Chair, with a firm objective of embedding the changes recommended by Jay into the structure and operations of SBNI. I also set out to reaffirm the leadership role of the partnership in terms of child protection and safeguarding across the region.

This fourth annual SBNI report contains information on the many successes and improvements which have been achieved over the last 12 months – both individually and collectively. It specifically reports on engagement with children and young people, providing a platform for their voices to be heard amid the formality of case management reviews, data collection, new policy or procedures and key statutory functions.

The five strategic priority areas outlined in the SBNI’s 2016-17 Business Plan underpinned the work carried out during the year. These were:

1. Working in partnership to ensure children and young people are living in safety and with stability
2. Protecting and safeguarding children by responding to new and emerging concerns
3. Providing leadership and setting direction
4. Driving improvements in the current child protection system; and
5. Building the capacity of the SBNI in the medium term.

The SBNI has progressed work in preparation for the implementation of a Child Death Overview Panel. The process for establishing the Panel will be undertaken by the Public Health Agency. The SBNI continued to support other Partnerships, such as those working with children affected by domestic and sexual violence, hidden harm, legal highs, suicide and self-harm. For further details about this work please see Annex 1, SBNI Business Objectives 2016-2017.

Looking to the future, the SBNI is clear that its three big strategic priorities over the next three years are domestic and sexual violence, mental health and neglect. The focus will be on an evidence based approach to tackle these by addressing the key adverse childhood experiences known to contribute to poor outcomes for children in the long term.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone involved in the SBNI – particularly the office staff, the members, the independent panel chairs and other key stakeholders. I look forward to your continued support and co-operation in the year ahead.

Bernie McNally OBE
Interim Independent Chair
1,851,600 people in Northern Ireland\(^1\)

433,161 children under 18\(^2\)

23% of total population\(^2\)

34,124 children were referred to social services\(^3\)

7.9% of all children

24,689 children categorised as In Need\(^2\)

5.7% of all children

4,312 children In Need with a disability\(^2\)

17.5% of all children In Need

2,146 children on the child protection register\(^2\)

8.7% of all children in Need

9,196 family support referrals\(^2\)

4,279 child protection referrals\(^2\)

3,470 child protection investigations carried out\(^2\)

2,313 child protection assessments completed by Gateway\(^2\)

2,890 children in care of HSC Trusts (LAC)\(^2\)

77% in foster care\(^3\)

33% of these with kinship foster carers\(^2\)

13.5% children placed at home with parents\(^2\)

5.8% children in residential care\(^2\)

43 admissions to secure care (2015-2016)

24 of these were repeat admissions\(^3\)

171,612 pupils in primary schools\(^3\)

140,413 pupils in post primary school\(^3\)

23,825 pupils in funded pre-school education\(^3\)

102,127 are entitled to free school meals\(^3\)

30.4% of all pupils

\(^1\) https://www.nisra.gov.uk/statistics/population/mid-year-population-estimates


\(^3\) https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/school-enrolments-201617-statistical-bulletins
The role of the Safeguarding Board
The member organisations who make up the multi-agency partnership that is the Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland come from both the statutory and voluntary sectors.

They are led by an Independent Chair appointed 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.

**Working across sectors**
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 SBNI has 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 key statutory committees which effectively drive forward child protection collaboration at 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 has been appointed on the basis of their previous operational management experience within the child protection and safeguarding system. The role of the safeguarding panels is to take forward collaborative work locally around the key strategic priorities set by the SBNI. The panels have also a central role to play in identifying new and emerging issues from the ground ensuring that the SBNI is fully informed of any concerns emerging from local communities, parents, children and other 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 panel (CMR). 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 there have been exceptional outcomes for the children and young people concerned or are cases where things have not gone well and lessons need to be learned. The chair of this committee reports directly to the SBNI and the learning from each review is disseminated throughout the system via the local safeguarding panels.

Emerging concerns
Significant SBNI collaborative working also goes on within a number of short term inter-agency working groups set up to examine a particular issue or emerging concern. For example a Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) sub-group has been set up to take forward some of the child protection agenda recommended in child law specialist Professor Kathleen Marshall’s independent report into CSE in Northern Ireland and Professor John Pinkerton of Queen’s University Belfast’s thematic review relating to CSE and missing children (Getting Focused and Staying Focused).

Internet guidance
A further working group example is the E-Safety Forum which was set up to help keep children and young people and their families safe in the online world.

This forum aims to provide parents, children and families advice and guidance on how to deal with the threats posed by an ever changing technical/internet 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 young people, trying to help keep them safe.

Reporting on progress
Each of these short term groups meet regularly under the chairmanship of a board member and report directly to the SBNI on progress against agreed terms of reference. The work of each of these committees is outlined in the pages that follow in this annual report.
Meet the Board Members
Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland
Annual Report 2016-17

Yvonne Adair
Safeguarding Panel Chair, Southern and South Eastern areas

Paddy Kelly
Director, Children’s Law Centre

Marie Roulston
Director Women, Children and Families Division, Executive Director of Social Work, Northern Health and Social Care Trust

Neil Anderson
National Head of Service for N. Ireland, NSPCC

Cheryl Lamont
Chief Executive and Accounting Officer, Probation Board NI

Dawn Shaw
National Director, Northern Ireland Action for Children

Dr Martin Cunningham
GP Representative

Pauline Leeson
Chief Executive, CiNI

Andrew Thomson
Independent CMR Panel Chair

George Clarke
Detective Chief Superintendent, PSNI

Dr Clare Mangan
Director, Children and Young People’s Services, EANI

Una Turbitt
Assistant Director, Public Health Nursing for Children and Young People PHA

Kieran Downey
Director of Women & Children’s Services, Western Health & Social Care Trust

Paddy Mooney
Director, Include Youth

Brendan Whittle
Director, Children’s Services & Executive Director of Social Work, South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust

Brian Hanna
Safeguarding Panel Chair-Northern, Belfast and Western areas

Paul Morgan
Director, Children and Young Peoples Services, Southern Health and Social Care Trust

Lynda Wilson
Director, Barnardos NI

Liam Hannaway
Chief Executive of Newry, Mourne and Down District Council

Fionnuala McAndrew
Director, Social Care & Children, HSCB

Cecil Worthington
Director, Social Work/Children’s Community Services Belfast Health & Social Care Trust

Dr Carolyn Harper
Medical Director/Director, Public Health Agency (PHA)

Barbara McDermott
Director, Safeguarding, Down and Connor Diocese

Dr Carolyn Harper
Medical Director/Director, Public Health Agency (PHA)

Mary Hinds
Executive Director of Nursing, Midwifery and Allied Health Professionals (PHA)

Declan McGeown
Chief Executive, Youth Justice Agency
Focus on Finance
The Department of Health is the SBNI’s sponsor and allocates the annual budget which, for 2016-17, amounted to £730,716. This was supplemented by the Public Health Agency (PHA) with a provision of £63,288 and with Northern Ireland Executive programme funding for the development of an e-Safety Strategy and Action Plan for NI for £24,000. There was an underspend totalling £140,000 due to unavoidable staff vacancies and the absence of an Executive to approve progress on the draft e-Safety Strategy.
How the SBNI is structured
SBNI Strategic Priority 4

‘Driving improvements in the current child protection system’

SBNI Business Plan 2016-2017 to “Influence practice positively and enhance the learning from Case Management Reviews, by improving the CMR process”4.1
The SBNI has a statutory function to carry out case management reviews on notified cases where there either have been exceptional outcomes for young people or where things have gone wrong and significant learning for the system is involved. The main purpose of such reviews is to help strengthen the systems and processes for protecting children and young people from abuse and neglect by learning from our practice experience.

The task of conducting case management reviews (CMR) is primarily carried out through the CMR panel. An independent reviewer is appointed to examine the case. The Case Management Review panel meets monthly and is chaired by an independent member of the Board with senior manager representatives from a broad range of member agencies. The criteria for conducting a CMR is set down in legislation.

Each review establishes the facts of the case – what worked well, whether there are any lessons to be learned from the way statutory and voluntary bodies worked together and whether any changes are needed.

Since it was established in 2012 the SBNI has completed seven case management reviews, with an additional five cases currently under review. The Safeguarding Board has agreed to publish an executive summary of each completed review provided it is in the best interests of children, young people and families to do so.

Learning from CMRs are making a difference to the child protection system in the following ways:

- More focussed assessment of alcohol and drug use to enable a harm reduction strategy
- Enhanced and more robust information and process systems will enable those who will be required to act to have all the information they need to ensure appropriate safeguarding measures are taken
- When a child or young person goes missing the new updated protocol to be followed will be consistently and systematically applied.

Two training events were held during 2016/17 – the first focussing on completing reports while the second provided support on the use of the Chronolator software. Peer support events were also held for Independent CMR reviewers appointed to undertake CMRs. Work is now underway to establish a new CMR process in Northern Ireland to ensure the learning from reviews is shared in a timely manner and acted upon with the option for focussed and concise reviews. The CMR criteria is presently being revised and the recruitment of CMR independent chairs is taking place. Sharing of learning takes place with information being placed on the SBNI website and learning events are planned for later in the year.
Child sexual exploitation - the work of the CSE Sub-Group

SBNI Strategic Priority 2. ‘Protect and safeguard children by responding to new and emerging concerns’

Business Plan Priority 2016-2017 to, “safeguard children who go missing from their home or care and/or are at risk of sexual exploitation. 2.1
Child sexual exploitation (CSE) is a major threat to children in Northern Ireland and the SBNI has a key role to play in managing the issue. This is done through the Child Sexual Exploitation Sub-Group. The aim of this group is to work collaboratively to ensure the safeguarding and welfare of children and young people who are being sexually exploited, or who are at risk of being sexually exploited.

During the previous reporting period both Professor Kathleen Marshall and Professor John Pinkerton published two separate reports into various aspects of CSE in Northern Ireland. The implementation of the findings of these reviews became the focus of the CSE Sub-Group throughout 2016/17. CSE Effectiveness Audits were undertaken in response to one of the recommendations arising out of Professor John Pinkerton’s report and completed in January 2017. The findings from these audits are being taken forward by their respective agencies.
The Sub-Group primarily worked collaboratively with a range of organisations on the issue of CSE – raising general and professional awareness and helping to ensure consistency in messaging.

CSE Awareness Week in February was undertaken on social media, highlighting for example ways to get help if a young person is at risk of, or experiencing CSE. There was also a particular emphasis on the risks to young people of ‘sexting’.

The CSE awareness initiative also highlighted that boys and young men are at risk of sexual exploitation and promoted the voice of young men, encouraging them to use their experiences to help others.

The content of the awareness week focused heavily on input from young people who have been affected by sexual exploitation, using their experiences to help increase understanding of the issue. The campaign created 38,169 impressions of CSE Tweets on Twitter and 599 engagements.

CSE Awareness Week coincided with the start of the SBNI’s ‘Northern Ireland CSE Awareness Programme’. The programme began with the delivery of three educational plays to primary and post primary schools across Northern Ireland by Alter Ego Creative Solutions.

Two of the plays focused specifically on CSE and were aimed at post primary children: ‘Chelsea’s Choice’ - looked at how ‘Chelsea’ a 14 year old girl became a victim of sexual exploitation through her relationship with her ‘boyfriend’. The performance of the play was attended by over 8000 young people.

‘Crashing’ – explored how ‘Eddie’, having lost both his parents, ended up sleeping rough and was befriended by Michael who offers him a place to stay but clearly has another agenda. ‘Crashing’ had a total audience of 6,000 young people.

Both of these post primary plays presented an age appropriate scenario of CSE within the context of substance misuse and domestic violence. As preventative education is an important aspect of the SBNI’s awareness raising programme, the messages communicated by the plays addressed issues relating to the entire range of CSE activities including a focus on healthy and unhealthy relationships and the significance of the grooming process. The plays also highlighted ways young people can seek help and support from peers, parents, teachers and other professionals.

Evaluation after the performances was encouraging. It found that, of the 14,000 young people who saw the plays, almost all who attended felt they had a better understanding of what CSE is and would recommend the plays to others. They also had a better understanding of the grooming process, understood that grooming and sexual exploitation can happen to boys as well as girls and began to realise that CSE can be carried out by both men and women – old and young, working in groups or alone. The evaluation also showed an increased understanding of what constitutes a healthy relationship.
“We had the group in this morning for Chelsea’s Choice, and I have to say, they were excellent. The messages given to our Year 10s were clear and as a preventative message for safeguarding them, to make positive choices in the future, this was a very worthwhile, informative and engaging production. Discussion/explanations at the end, helped to reinforce the messages as well.”

“We had our first showing of Crashing this morning and I had to let you know how fantastic it was. The boys were completely engrossed with it and the actors were superb. Very hard hitting at times, but the fact that this is a true story meant that it was important for the boys to be exposed to its content. The discussion at the end was brilliant – the actors had obviously done their research and covered everything from what is a healthy relationship to all the forms of grooming and CSE.”

“We were delighted when the SBNI offered us the opportunity to see both Chelsea’s Choice and Crashing and following the event received excellent feedback from the audience. As the co-ordinator of child protection and safeguarding training and education with student teachers I often engage with a wide range of external partners to organise workshops, speakers, practitioners and specialists and indeed I often use an arts-based approach to learning and teaching myself. The young people who performed both of the above did so in the most professional, creative, talented and powerful way I have seen in my career to date. Please pass on our warmest congratulations and thanks to them for such excellent productions.” (Stranmillis University College, Belfast)

The third play in the CSE awareness programme was In the Net, which was performed to 11,000 children in primary schools across Northern Ireland. The play follows ‘Dotty’ aged 8, who finds out how to be safe online by going on a journey through the internet. The play reinforced messages about e-safety and cyber-bullying in an age-appropriate and fun way which focused on:

- 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.

By taking In the Net into primary schools it has allowed the important messages of healthy and unhealthy relationships and grooming to be discussed with younger children in an age appropriate manner and build the foundations for future messages in post primary school.
The delivery of the plays was only possible due to the partnership working of the SBNI membership. The Education Authority NI’s (EANI) regional Child Protection Safeguarding Service in Schools (CPSSS) facilitated the link up with schools to publicise the plays and each production was shared equally across all EANI geographical areas. In conjunction with NSPCC, promotional items carrying the Childline number were distributed to the schools to provide easy access to help for children and young people who saw the plays. Include Youth co-ordinated and hosted a performance of Chelsea’s Choice at the Kingspan stadium for 80 young people from several voluntary organisations.

Youth Action coordinated and hosted a performance of Crashing at their own theatre for over 100 young people, again including young people from a range of voluntary organisations. Further performances of these very influential educational plays are planned into the future.

Another aspect of the CSE Awareness Programme was the Barnardo’s Nightwatch NI project which aimed to raise awareness of CSE among organisations and employees who work in the Northern Ireland night time economy.

This programme particularly targeted staff working in the hotel and hospitality business, taxi drivers and NI Fire and Rescue Service and NI Ambulance Service. The programme provided advice, training and strategies for sharing information and reporting concern.

During 2016/17 the SBNI also specifically supported the issue of boys and young men (BYM) in relation to CSE. This involved challenging the cultural norms associated with machoism, signposting boys and young men to services, as well as improving professional and community understanding of the issue. The first Boys and Young Men workshop of 2016 was held on 14th October 2016 with the aim of putting the issue on the agenda for all member and partner agencies. The workshop attempted to deal with issues such as barriers to disclosure and gaps in professional knowledge in identifying and responding to CSE in boys and young men. The workshop was coordinated and facilitated by Barnardo’s NI Safe Choices project and hosted by Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon Police Community Safety Partnership. Other participants included community, voluntary and statutory stakeholders with presentations by PSNI, Southern HSCT, Youth Action, Youth Justice Agency and Cara – Friend. The out workings of the day included the development of awareness raising information for BYM created by young people themselves. This involved the development of information leaflets and posters, which are now being distributed across, community, voluntary and statutory sectors.
Local Safeguarding Panel Activities
A focus on the Business Plan’s five strategic priority areas – along with the cross cutting theme of neglect ensured a busy and productive year for the five local safeguarding panels who worked to deliver on the plan.

Each of the five local safeguarding panels have an independent chair and are interagency and multidisciplinary in nature. Each panel has representatives from local voluntary and community groups, the education sector, Youth Justice Agency, PSNI, Probation Board and VOYPIC. Health and Social Care representatives include nurses, doctors, social workers and professionals with special responsibility for children’s mental health services.

During the year 2016/17 local panels have concentrated on: improving panel membership; identifying emerging themes from local communities; working with other relevant local partnerships (Outcomes Group, Domestic Violence Partnership and Adult Safeguarding); improving multiagency governance in respect of the CMR process; embedding the Child Safeguarding Learning and Development Strategy; and work with GPs to achieve greater involvement in Child Protection Work.

**BELFAST AREA**

Key activities
- the panel completed two audits on case conference attendance to focus on improving the protection of children subject to the child protection process
- reflective practice sessions were held relating to CSE and other child protection issues.
- CSE awareness-raising sessions
- an audit of professionals and parents views of the child protection and conference process with a view to improving multi-disciplinary safeguarding practice.

**SOUTHERN AREA**

Key activities
- awareness raising sessions regarding bruising in pre-mobile babies.
- audit of Looked After Children and the risk to them of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)
- audit of attendance at child protection case conferences
- conference – Neglect Under The Microscope – What Works?
### SOUTH EASTERN AREA

**Key activities**
- multi-agency drug, alcohol and psychoactive substances workshop
- development of a family specific DVD showing the benefits of early intervention
- development of a protocol for GPs to identify parental mental health problems and referral pathway to social services
- audit of children on the child protection register two years or more, highlighting neglect.

### WESTERN AREA

**Key activities**
- a conference to launch the Safeguarding Board’s multi-agency neglect strategy was held in March 2017, focussed on how better to identify and respond to neglect. Follow up workshops were held in Omagh and Enniskillen
- the panel were interested in young people’s experience of the child protection process. They successfully used Ask First which is a tool developed by Participation N.I. enabling young people to express their views. The results of this work have led to improvements in how the child protection service is delivered to young people. The panel subsequently engaged the Verbal Arts Centre in Derry to assist in injecting these key improvement messages into the system both locally and regionally.

### NORTHERN AREA

**Key activities**
- use of reflective case reviews of complex local cases to help address areas of potential conflict arising from inter-agency working
- implementing the learning from the Northern Health and Social Care Trust/PSNI workshop on Child Sexual Exploitation
- implementing and reviewing SBNI Guidance on bruising in pre-mobile babies
- delivering a multi-agency information day on services for children and young people to pupils of a local post-primary school and their families
- launch of NHSCT Strategy for Safeguarding Children from Abuse and Neglect
- an examination of the potential risks posed by babies co-sleeping with their parents and the development of an improved consistent response by professionals and agencies.
Safer in the digital world

SBNI Strategic Priority 2 ‘Protect and safeguard children by responding to new and emerging concerns’. 2.2
Keeping children, young people and their families safer in the digital world has been the focus of the SBNI’s E-Safety Forum.

Over the past twelve months the Forum has worked on behalf of the Northern Ireland Executive and in conjunction with the National Children’s Bureau (NCB) to produce a draft E-Safety Strategy and accompanying action plan for Northern Ireland.

The strategy aims to:

- reflect existing evidence and good practice of e-safety approaches
- engage with existing e-safety mechanisms in the UK, seeking to add value and not duplicate
- educate and support children and young people and those responsible for their care and safety to develop skills and knowledge to stay safe online
- facilitate the responsible use of digital and internet technology
- facilitate access to age-appropriate support services including recovery services and information on how to handle online abuse if it happens.

The final draft presented to the Department of Health was co designed with children and young people, parents / carers and teachers and promotes both the voice and views of young people. The strategy is set to go out to public consultation early autumn 2017.

In October 2016 the Chair of the Forum was one of two keynote speakers during Parenting NI’s ‘Parenting in the Digital Age’ awareness week. He spoke at two events one for professionals and one for parents which were very well attended and which received excellent feedback.

Following these events the Chair and some members of the Forum took part in the Queen’s University Belfast Child Care Research Foundation conference to inform practice development, using current information on new and emerging threats in the on-line world and presenting a short film made by young people from the Youth Service, for young people, on the importance of digital down time.

“The children were enthralled and there was lots of discussion in the classroom afterwards.”

“The children were completely engaged throughout and thoroughly enjoyed the performance. The messages regarding e-safety and cyber bullying were expertly delivered.”

“An excellent production aimed at a group of children who are not normally targeted, well done.”
As part of Safer Internet Day 2017 the SBNI released a parents and professionals Safeguarding App, designed in conjunction with parents and children, which provides information on subjects such as child sexual exploitation, (il)legal highs, bullying, gaming, other forms of abuse and the importance of healthy relationships.

The App also supports a newsfeed and updates, signposting to key safeguarding services. It has geo location features, reporting information, advice and help including video and audio content with immediate access to ‘topic specific’ advice where and when needed. The App allows adults to have access to safeguarding information wherever they are and whenever they need it 24/7.

Release of the App took place at the same time as the tour of ‘In the Net’ across primary schools in Northern Ireland. The play, commissioned from Alter Ego Creative Solutions, and seen by more than 11,000 pupils, is about an eight year old girl called Dotty who finds out how to be safe online by going on a journey through the internet. During the performance messages about cyber bullying and e-safety were reinforced in an age appropriate way.

There was a very positive response to the play and feedback from the schools evaluation of the play and its content was excellent.

Alongside the App and In the Net, the Forum also supported Safer Internet Day 2017 by helping to sponsor a C2k schools DVD competition, with the Chair of the SBNI

“I spoke with many of the children after the performance and I can assure you they all got the message. There can never be enough of this form of support for schools.”

Winners Holy Trinity College.
The play was fabulous in every way, from the personable nature of the actors/actresses to the thought behind the concept and messages delivered. It tied in really well with our ongoing work regarding e-Safety and our celebration of Safer Internet Day 2017.

Bernie McNally and Forum member Caroline Karayiannis (EANI) presenting the prizes to the winners of the KS3 category, Holy Trinity College Cookstown and the Key Stage 2 winners, Fairview Primary School.

Both DVDs highlighted a whole school approach to e-safety and demonstrated talented and innovative ways to highlight important messages. The competition is an excellent way to promote the voices of children and young people in the work of the Forum.

A further significant piece of work completed in March 2017 by the SBNI was the production of an e-safety awareness raising training resource for both children and young people and their adult carers. The product known as VIRTUAL REALity pulls together key e-safety messages into one resource with specific messages for Key Stage 2 children and Key Stage 3 children, and advice and guidance for parents and other caring adults. During 2017/18 it is intended to deliver the resource, free of charge, to 1000 trainers. The content for the resource will be updated within 18 months in order to stay relevant and current for its target audience. During March 2017 the PSNI worked with Children in Northern Ireland (CiNI) to deliver cyber safety sessions to parents, carers and grandparents across NI. The PSNI used the VIRTUAL REALity content – and feedback for the sessions was highly positive.
Safeguarding in Faith Communities

The aim of the Inter Faith Sub-Group is to enhance the safety and welfare of children and young people within the range of faith group provisions across NI.
The Inter Faith Sub-Group of the SBNI draws its membership from the Church of Ireland, the Catholic Church, the Evangelical Alliance, the Presbyterian Church, the Methodist Church, the PSNI and the NSPCC.

It aims to deliver on its safeguarding responsibilities by:

- developing partnership working with others concerned in safeguarding children and young people in Northern Ireland
- developing and sharing good practice arrangements and safeguarding resources within the faith sector
- contributing to the review of SBNI child protection policy and procedures
- ensuring the adoption and dissemination of the revised child protection policy and procedures across the faith sector
- identifying key localised issues and developing key safeguarding initiatives within faith groups
- supporting the promotion within faith groups of appropriate safeguarding messages at an operational level.

It is acknowledged that at least 68% of youth groups in Northern Ireland are faith based and as such accessing volunteers and young people in these settings is a very important resource for anyone wishing to get key safeguarding messages to young people.

As in all other youth based organisations, social media platforms are widely used in the faith sector by volunteers, youth workers and young people to communicate and engage with each other. To ensure that these platforms are used safely the Inter Faith Sub-Group produced a safeguarding guide to the use of social media. The purpose of the guide is to promote the safe and positive use of all social media and all e-communications. The guidance provides simple, common sense advice about using social media, cameras, mobile phones and other various forms of communication technology in a safe and positive manner, protecting both young people and volunteers and employees who work with them.

The guidance forms part of the wider work undertaken by SBNI on e-safety and supplements materials produced by the E-Safety Forum.

The full guide – Use of Social Media and other E-Based Communication – is available at the SBNI website: [http://www.safeguardingni.org/](http://www.safeguardingni.org/)
The Inter Faith Sub-Group also held a half day conference – the first of its kind in Northern Ireland - on the role of faith communities in safeguarding children. The keynote speaker was the Rt Rev Mark Sowerby, Bishop of Horsham, Diocese of Chichester who spoke on the theology of safeguarding and highlighted both the challenges and the positive role the faith sector can play.

The event provided an opportunity to share safeguarding policies and procedures, training materials, resources and local community initiatives. It also enhanced communication and co-operation about safeguarding matters across faith groups and demonstrated a real commitment by faith communities to genuinely work together to protect and promote the welfare of all children and young people in Northern Ireland.

The conference generated a consensus that working together and sharing good safeguarding practice across faith communities was a positive thing to do. Two further lunchtime seminars were subsequently held, in Belfast and Ballymena, focussing on the role played by vetting in the safety and protection of children in faith communities and the importance of information sharing to the child protection agenda. There were presentations from the Police Service of Northern Ireland, Access NI and the safeguarding team from the Diocese of Down and Connor. The conference and follow up seminars were such a success that further similar events are planned for the future.
Tackling neglect

SBNI Strategic Priority 1

‘Work in partnership to ensure children and young people are living in safety and with stability’

SBNI Business Plan 2016-2017 to “Ensure safeguarding practice in relation to the issue of Neglect and particularly vulnerable children is effective.” 1.1
In the UK neglect is consistently cited as the most common reason for a child or young person to need a child protection plan or to be placed on a child protection register.

Neglect is the failure to provide for a child’s basic needs – adequate food, clothing, hygiene, supervision or shelter – and something that is likely to result in the serious impairment of a child’s health or development. Children and young people who are neglected often also suffer from other types of abuse and they become more vulnerable to predators who wish to do them harm.

In Northern Ireland nearly a quarter of children (106,000) are living in low income households and are deprived of four or more items that the majority of the population regard as basic necessities. Northern Ireland is the poorest region in the United Kingdom, with the greatest proportion of children living in poverty (Devaney and McConville 2016).

Four out of five children placed on the child protection register in Northern Ireland (80%) were registered because of either physical abuse or neglect or a combination of both. Neglect was the second highest category of abuse (664 children) after physical abuse (715 children). A total of 431 children suffered a combination of neglect and physical abuse.

The SBNI identified neglect as a cross cutting theme in its Business Plan 2016/17 and established a SBNI Neglect Sub-Group to tackle the issue on an multi-agency basis. The group began by developing an agreed multi-agency neglect strategy to help agencies in Northern Ireland who are involved with children, young people and parents to take actions to prevent, reduce and manage the effects of neglect on children, young people and families.

The main aims of this strategy are to:

- secure collective commitment for addressing neglect across all SBNI member agencies
- demonstrate effective leadership in driving any required systems and process changes forward
- improve awareness and understanding of neglect across all SBNI member agencies. This includes a common understanding of neglect, the impact of neglect and the thresholds for intervention
- improve the recognition, assessment, use of assessment tools and responses to children, young people and families experiencing neglect

1 (Devaney J. and McConville P. Childhood neglect – the Northern Ireland experience Research, Policy and Planning (2016) 32 (1), 53-63)
• agree common outcomes, measures and metrics on the effectiveness of single agency and multi-agency service provision
• ensure that the views of children and young people, parents/carers and staff inform practice and interventions
• improve awareness, understanding and action on neglect for organisations that work with children, families and others.

During 2016/17 the SBNI contributed to two conferences on neglect to raise awareness of the local context regarding the issue. A portal on neglect has also been developed on the SBNI website - and toolkits and resources have been posted on this site for the use of all staff working in this field. There are plans for further awareness raising, training and a multi-agency practice survey to enable shared learning.

In terms of measuring impact the following outcome indicators will be used to demonstrate the effectiveness of this strategy and its implementation:

• reduction in the number of re-registrations on the Child Protection Register under the category of neglect
• reduction in persistent absenteeism from school where neglect is known to be a concerning factor
• increase in the number of child dental registrations
• reduction in the number of child dental caries
• increase in the number of case conferences where the category of registration includes neglect
• increase in the referral rates to Social Services and Family Support Hubs referencing early identification of neglect.

The SBNI has now agreed that neglect will be one of its three big strategic priorities for the period 2017-2021 which means an even greater emphasis will be placed by all member agencies on dealing with the causes and impact of neglect on children and young people.
Think family
The need to think about the potential impact on the whole family when one of its members has a mental health problem continues to be an important element of the work of the Safeguarding Board.

During 2016/17 the SBNI played its part in the all-important joined up working on the Think Family regional action plan, supporting collaboration across all agencies to protect children and families.

The Health and Social Care Board, one of the member agencies of the Safeguarding Board, led on a range of initiatives including:

• Development of the Champions model across all five Health and Social Care Trusts in adult mental health and children’s services supporting collaborative and partnership working

• A two year pilot project in the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust to develop greater signposting and engage families in the conversation

• A focus on data collection has given an overview of the volume of families involved along with the qualitative aspect of the impact of family focused conversations

• A Think Family support practitioner started a one year secondment in Belfast Health and Social Care Trust in September 2016

• The Western Health and Social Care Trust recruited a Think Family support practitioner for one year to help mental health and family and child care staff focus on the impact of parental mental health issues in the family

• Development of a Think Family Social Work Assessment in adult mental health services is helping to highlight the importance of adverse life events in planning treatment and care.

• A two year research study involving Queen’s University, the University of Ulster and international academics is progressing well and will provide a benchmark of family focused practice in Northern Ireland

• Queen’s University is currently leading on a Think Family audit looking at case files in Trusts to see how the Think Family Protocol Responding to the Needs of Children whose Parents have Mental Health or Substance Misuse Issues is embedded in practice.
Safeguarding children and young people who have a disability

SBNI Business Plan 2016-2017 New and Emerging Issues

Children with a Disability
Children and young people who have a disability are known to be particularly vulnerable to all forms of abuse. Contributory factors include physical vulnerability, communication difficulties, denial and lack of respect for their human rights.

In order to understand fully how the needs of children and young people who have a disability were being met within the child protection system in Northern Ireland the SBNI commissioned a study from Queen’s University Belfast which reported in 2015.

The study was called “Safeguarding Disabled Children and Young People, a scoping exercise of Statutory Child Protection Services for Disabled children and young people in Northern Ireland” by Dr Berni Kelly and Dr Sandra Dowling QUB 2015.

It has provided the basis for future improvements to the child protection system for children and young people with a disability and their families. The actions arising are currently being taken forward by the SBNI through the Children’s Services Improvement Board chaired by the Director of Social Services at the HSCB.

These actions include:

• a regionally agreed definition of disability to improve staff confidence and consistency in recording disability for children in contact with the child protection system
• amendments to the current policies, to ensure the unique needs or additional risks for children with a disability are more adequately reflected
• a regionally agreed criteria for access to disabled services to ensure equality of access to services
• training to raise staff awareness of the signs and symptoms of abuse in the context of a range of impairment types
• more emphasis on the responsibility of child protection workers to use alternative communication styles to engage with children with a disability and increase their opportunity to disclose
• early intervention with provision of a range of support mechanisms which is crucial to prevent family breakdown where there is a child with a disability in the family recruitment of more specialist foster carers/shared care arrangements to provide alternative care options as part of children with a disability’s protection plans.

A follow up study of the child protection system response to children with a disability is planned by the SBNI to ensure improvements are embedded in the child protection system and equality of access to services is assured.
Supporting those at risk of female genital mutilation

Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland
Annual Report 2016-17

SBNI Business Plan 2016–2017 New and emerging issues
The exact number of girls living in Northern Ireland who are affected by Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is not known – but this issue of growing concern has been responded to in Northern Ireland by an SBNI Sub-Group encouraging a multi-agency approach to safeguarding those at risk or affected by it.

The Sub-Group has representation from communities particularly affected by FGM – and this is an extremely positive factor in taking forward work on this issue. Members have been working with communities in a culturally sensitive manner, developing regional resources, developing practice guidance, collecting data and providing training.

On February 6th - International Day of Zero Tolerance for FGM – women from affected communities shared insight and experiences to help understanding of FGM and how best to work with communities. Fifteen women from Sudan, Somalia and Yemen attended the event. There were also representatives present from the Black and Minority Ethnic community, Women’s Aid, and FGM support group leaders.

Some key learning from the day:

• the negative consequences of FGM were recognised by women from affected communities, particularly after the discussion of the health complications of the practice
• pressure to perform FGM still exists and can present a real risk to girls even when mothers oppose the practice
• women affected by FGM in Northern Ireland experience a range of physical and emotional health problems but find it difficult to access support services
• there are additional risks during labour for pregnant women who have experienced FGM.

Speaking after the special focus day, those who attended responded positively.

“This is the first time I knew there are four different type of FGM. I just know about two”.
“We talked about how to explain to other people how this happens and how we can stop it”.
“It is important to raise the awareness and know about all forms of FGM”.
“This is just the beginning and we will work together to widen our awareness”.

Following the awareness day the National FGM Centre, UK provided a two day multi-agency Train the Trainer programme for 15 people in Northern Ireland. Those attending agreed to deliver a total of 45 FGM awareness raising sessions by September 2018.
Guiding staff through the development of policies and procedures

SBNI Strategic Priority 3
‘Providing leadership and setting direction’

SBNI Business Plan 2016-2017 to “Seek to develop consistent practice across the region by reviewing the existing multi-agency policies and procedures to protect and safeguard children to ensure greater consistency and standardisation of practice.”3.1
The development of child protection policies and procedures which operationalise government policy is the statutory responsibility of the SBNI.

The overarching safeguarding policy for the Northern Ireland government is Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland.

This revised policy was issued by the Department of Health in March 2016 and is a cross sectoral policy which has been endorsed by all government departments in Northern Ireland.

The Policy and Procedures Committee of the SBNI is a multi-agency/multi-disciplinary group whose main task during 16/17 was to revise and update the extant Regional Child Protection Policy and Procedures which had been developed in 2005, to bring them into line with the new government safeguarding policy.

These revised SBNI policy and procedures were issued for public consultation in February/March 2017. There was a positive response with all agencies taking collective ownership of these very important documents. An engagement event with children and young people was also facilitated by the Voice of Young People in Care (VOYPIC) which provided positive feedback from the children and young people on how the response and reaction of professionals to allegations of child abuse impacts on them.

The new policy and procedures include core guidance which explains the process for all agencies on what to do if they are concerned about a child or young person and the role of statutory agencies such as the police and social services. Safeguarding practice guidance has also been made available to multi-agency staff and volunteers on specific areas of child protection.

Work is now underway to make them available on an e-based platform so that they can be accessed quickly – and updated without delay. The revised policy and procedures will be launched later this year.
Next steps
This fourth annual report has outlined the challenges and changes the SBNI has faced over the year as well as the successes and improvements that have been achieved. Over the next 12 months the SBNI partnership intend to continue to build on this work as well as beginning to address any new priorities that the Board may set.

In the coming year the SBNI partnership will commence work on the strategic plan for 2018 - 2022. In advance of this work the members have agreed that the key high level strategic priorities of the SBNI still remain as relevant as ever. They have resolved to:

- work in partnership with other agencies, service users and communities to ensure children and young people are living in safety and with stability
- provide leadership and set direction for the safeguarding system across NI
- respond in a timely manner to new and emerging concerns
- drive improvements in the current child protection system
- continue to build the capacity of the Safeguarding Board to enhance the knowledge and skills of the entire membership to ensure the Board is providing effective, evidence based responses to the safeguarding challenges now and in the years ahead.

In addition to these high level objectives the SBNI has agreed to continue its work in the area of neglect, specifically in the development of a Neglect Strategy for Northern Ireland. This strategy will help agencies in Northern Ireland which are involved with children, young people and parents to take actions to prevent, reduce and manage effects of neglect on children and families.

The SBNI will continue with the Department of Health on changes to the case management review process and associated guidance with an emphasis on a series of events to ensure learning from CMRs is disseminated and embedded within practice.
Whilst stakeholder engagement to define the strategic priorities for the strategic plan 2018-2022 will commence, the SBNI will continue to work in partnership to regarding:

- Child sexual exploitation
- E-Safety
- Female Genital Mutilation
- Policies and Procedures
- Children with a Disability.

The SBNI will also continue to build on the vast amounts of important safeguarding work going on in all agencies, faith based groups, sports clubs and communities across Northern Ireland in the fight against child abuse and neglect.
SBNI central support team
Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland
Annual Report 2016-17

Pictured left to right (front): Helen McKenzie, Chair Bernie McNally, Margaret Burke, Roisin Toner

Back row: Lisa McEneaney, Michael O’Hare, Joanne McCloskey.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Margaret Burke</td>
<td>Professional Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helen McKenzie</td>
<td>Professional Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paul McNeill</td>
<td>Business Support Manager (Temporary)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lisa McEneaney</td>
<td>Office Manager/Board Secretary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roisin Toner</td>
<td>Business Support Officer (CMR)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michael O’Hare</td>
<td>Business Support Officer (Committees)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joanne McCloskey</td>
<td>Personal Secretary to the Chair</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland
HSC Leadership Centre
12 Hampton Manor Drive
Belfast BT7 3EN

Office email: SBIInfo@hscni.net
Website: www.safeguardingni.org
Telephone: 028 9536 1810
Glossary of terms
Access NI – body within Department of Justice that checks whether people applying to work with children have a criminal record

ACE – Adverse Childhood Experiences

CAMHS – Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services

CDOP – Child Death Overview Panel

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

CMR – Case Management Review

CPSSS – Child Protection Support Service for Schools

CSE – Child Sexual Exploitation

CYPSP – Children and Young People’s Strategic Partnership

DOH – Department of Health

DOJ – Department of Justice

EANI – Education Authority Northern Ireland

FGM – Female Genital Mutilation

Gateway – the first point of contact for all new referrals to children’s social work services

HSC – Health and Social Care

HSCB – Health and Social Care Board

LAC – Looked After Child

NCB – National Children’s Bureau


PHA – Public Health Agency

SBNI – Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland

VOYPIC – Voice Of Young People In Care
Annex 1

SBNI Business Objectives
April 2016 - March 2017
Our Business Objectives

The Business Objectives of the SBNI for 2016 – 2017 are divided into 5 parts in accordance with the corporate objectives outlined in the SBNI Strategic Plan for the years 2013 – 2017.

1. Working in partnership to ensure children and young people are living in safety and with stability
2. Protecting and safeguarding children by responding to new and emerging concerns
3. Providing leadership and setting direction
4. Driving improvements in the current child protection system
5. Building the capacity of the Safeguarding Board in the medium term.
Strategic Priority 1: Work in partnership to ensure children and young people are living in safety and with stability

1.1 Ensure safeguarding practice in relation to particularly vulnerable children is effective

Children exposed to neglect

a. The Board to agree a working definition of neglect that will be applied within the context of neglect as an overarching theme across all SJNI Priority areas.
b. The Board to provide strategic leadership on the issue of neglect, informed by national research, and local initiatives and an associated gap analysis.

ACHIEVEMENTS

a. The definition of neglect outlined in Cooperating to Safeguard Children and Young People (revised 2017) is the definition used by the Board.
b. A Regional Strategy on neglect is being developed. This provides information on the local and national context. An annotated bibliography has been produced by QUB on behalf of the SJNI which outlines research in respect of neglect. Questionnaires were issued to Board Members regarding how the issue of neglect is handled and ascertaining the various approaches to neglect.
Strategic Priority 2: Protect and safeguard children by responding to new and emerging concerns

2.1 Work with member agencies to develop a coordinated strategy and working model to protect and safeguard children who go missing from their home or care and/or are at risk of sexual exploitation.

Child Sexual Exploitation

a. Complete the recommendations allocated to the SBNI from the Marshall Report.
b. Audit the range of CSE training and awareness raising amongst member agencies in line with the Learning and Development Strategy and Framework, identify areas for improvement and disseminate good practice.
c. Oversee the development of the CSE Audit tool as part of the Pinkerton Report overarching recommendation and work with member agencies to identify areas for improvement and to promote good practice.

ACHIEVEMENTS

The SBNI has delivered on all of its Marshall Recommendations with the exception of Key Recommendation 12 regarding the information sharing protocol which has been part delivered. The protocol is being developed in parallel with the development of information sharing guidance by the Department of Health and it is intended to sequence the publication of both documents. The planned audit of the range of CSE training and awareness raising amongst member agencies in line with the Learning and Development Strategy and Framework was not undertaken. It was considered not necessary as member agencies were already providing the necessary information to the Department of Health as part of quarterly updates on their implementation of the Marshall Recommendations.

The HSCB and PSNI developed a methodology/audit tool as part of the Pinkerton Report overarching recommendation. Following on from this CSE Effectiveness Audits were undertaken and completed in January 2017. A composite report detailing both audits was provided to the SBNI Board and the Department of Health. The identification of areas for improvement and the dissemination of good practice were shared at the CSE Sub Group. Further work will be undertaken in 2018 – 2019 to evaluate the effectiveness of member agencies in the fight against CSE. Between January and March 2017, a programme of work was carried out to continue to raise awareness of CSE among children and young people both generally and specifically to target boys and young men as the focus on this group particularly had not been as prevalent as with girls and young women. The SBNI commissioned two educational awareness raising plays to convey key messages about CSE and self-help and resilience strategies to deal with it. In particular, the plays focused on raising awareness about healthy relationships, the promotion of safe online use, understanding awareness of differing forms of both CSE and the grooming process and to sign-post relevant services and sources of help. The two plays were seen by over 13,300 post primary pupils in Northern Ireland during these dates. Additionally, student social workers, trainee teachers and PSNI child protection officers also had the opportunity to see the plays. The overwhelming solicited and unsolicited feedback on these performances was exceptional.
Strategic Priority 2: 
Protect and safeguard children by responding to new and emerging concerns

2.2 Work with member agencies to develop a coordinated strategy and working model to help children at risk of:
• Becoming criminalised through on-line activity;
• Bullying through cyber activity;
• Sexual abuse (through ‘sexting’ and on-line exploitation).

E-Safety

a. Develop the E-Safety Strategy for NI on behalf of the Executive.
b. Launch and monitor the usage and benefit of the SBNI Safeguarding Apps (focus on CSE & e-safety).
c. Provide strategic leadership on the delivery of consistent e-safety messaging and products for children and young people, parents and carers and professionals.

ACHIEVEMENTS

A draft e-Safety Strategy and Action Plan for Northern Ireland was developed by the SBNI on behalf of the NI Executive. Public consultation has not commenced as yet but this is outside the control of the SBNI.

In keeping with the intentions and principles contained with the e-Safety Strategy and to raise awareness about e-safety, safer internet use and cyber-bullying, the SBNI commissioned an educative play specifically aimed at primary school children, aged 7 to 11, to ensure key messages are delivered at a much earlier age than post-primary. In particular the focus was to put forward key messages and to reinforce these about e-safety and cyber-bullying in an age appropriate and fun way. Between January and March 2017 over 11,000 primary school children saw the play. Its key messages revolved around safe internet/social media use, how to keep personal information safe, and the effects of cyber-bullying on others, what to do if you are being cyber-bullied and what to do if you get that “Uh-Oh” uncomfortable feeling and know who to go to if you have questions or concerns. The overwhelming solicited and unsolicited feedback on these performances was exceptional.

As part of Safer Internet Day 2017 the SBNI released a parents and professionals Safeguarding App.
Strategic Priority 3: Providing leadership and setting direction

3.1 Seek to develop consistent practice across the region by reviewing the existing multi-agency policies and procedures to protect and safeguard children to ensure greater consistency and standardisation of practice.

Policy and Procedures

Multi-agency Policies and Procedures
a. Member agencies to implement the regional child protection multi-agency Regional Policies and Procedures (in-conjunction with Safeguarding Panels).

Achievements
Regional Core Child Protection Policy and Procedures were developed. They will be implemented during 17/18.
**Strategic Priority 3:**
**Providing Leadership and setting direction**

3.2 Raise awareness of child protection/safeguarding issues by developing a communication strategy to ensure that children, young people, families and communities are more aware of child safeguarding issues and how to get help if concerned.

**Communication Strategy**

Disseminate and implement the SBNI Communication Strategy.

**ACHIEVEMENTS**

Face to face discussions took place with children & young people on child protection and safeguarding issues. For example face to face discussions were undertaken with a group of Looked After young people in relation to ascertaining their views on the Regional Child Protection Policy and Procedures. Face to face discussions were undertaken with groups of Looked After young people in relation to the issue of child sexual exploitation and specifically with boys and young men. Young people with learning disabilities were also involved in the content development for the Safeguarding App.
Strategic Priority 3: 
Providing Leadership and setting direction

3.3 To ensure that the SBNI Board and associated governance framework is fit for purpose

Communication Strategy: Implement the recommendations of the external review of the SBNI.

To implement findings from the review of SBNI as appropriate.

Annual review of membership and TOR of Sub-Groups.

Publication and launch of Annual Report.

Oversee the Business Objectives and its progress.

Scrutinise the 2016-17 budget.

Review and submit annual equality and disability plan to equality commission.

Conduct annual review of MOUs.

ACHIEVEMENTS

During the year the SBNI has progressed implementation of the recommendations from the review of SBNI. The Terms of Reference for Sub-Groups were reviewed and are subject to on-going review. The 2015/16 Annual Report was prepared and will be published once it is accepted and laid by the Department in the Assembly. The Business Plan Objectives are subject to on-going review regarding progress. The SBNI continues to work closely with the PHA Finance Department to scrutinise the SBNI budget. Equality and Disability Plans progress report were reviewed and submitted to the Equality Commission. MOUs are reviewed on a bi-annual basis.
Strategic Priority 4:
Driving improvements in the current child protection system

4.1 Influence practice positively and enhance the learning from Case Management Reviews, by improving the CMR process.

Case Management Reviews

a. Improve the efficiency of the complete CMR process.
b. Extract the relevant learning from CMRs and for those that relate to neglect publish as a thematic.

ACHIEVEMENTS

a. Work to develop a new CMR process was undertaken in this reporting period with the aim of improving efficiency.
b. CMR Executive Summaries which identify the learning are disseminated to Safeguarding Panels. The learning from CMRs is extracted. It is planned to disseminate this learning at regional and local level. This includes the issue of neglect.
Strategic Priority 4: Driving improvements in the current child protection system

4.2 Initiate a child death overview panel in order to understand trends in child deaths and where possible take preventative action to reduce occurrences in the future.

This priority is being progressed by the PHA.

a. Develop roles and responsibilities in relation to SUDIs.
b. Work with DHSSPS in relation to the development of mortality & morbidity reviews.
c. Implement CDOP process.
d. Understand the number of young people who die by suicide.
e. SBNI to undertake a thematic analysis of suicide among young people.
f. Disseminate the learning from SBNI/PHA/QUB research into infant death.

ACHIEVEMENTS

In response to a recommendation made by Professor Alexis Jay in her Review Report, it has been agreed that the process of Child Death Review will be established and implemented by the PHA. Case Management Reviews, which can involve cases where children died in specific circumstances specified in Regulations, will continue to be undertaken by the SBNI.
Strategic Priority 4: Driving improvements in the current child protection system

4.3 To keep under review the effectiveness of the Safeguarding Panels in terms of meeting the SBNI core functions.

Develop communication and engagement best practice for delivery of SBNI priorities with CYP, parents / carers and professionals.

Support good multi-agency governance around the CMR process at Panel level and ensure there is a clear and common understanding from referral to dissemination of learning, and accountability of action plans.

Work with partners to ensure effective learning from CMRs is disseminated at Panel level.

Implement the regional child protection multi-agency Regional Policies and Procedures.

Develop local Safeguarding Panel work plan based on local needs.

ACHIEVEMENTS

A communication and engagement strategy is being developed which will incorporate best practice.

A multi-agency CMR process has been developed and implemented from referral through to action planning which ensures good governance is in place including at Panel level.

CMR Executive Summaries which identify the learning are disseminated to Safeguarding Panels.

Regional Core Child Protection Policy and Procedures are being developed and will be implemented at local Panel level.

Each Panel has developed a work plan based on SBNI priorities and local need.
Strategic Priority 5: Building the capacity of the Safeguarding Board in the medium term

5.1 To review the effectiveness of the Board in terms of meeting its Board’s core functions. Functions include:
- Creation of standards and performance indicators against which the Board can be measured;
- Judgement of how safely and effectively the child protection system is operating across the region;
- The use of the section 12 legal duty to understand the current child protection / safeguarding governance arrangements each organisation has in place.

Use multi-agency data to inform child protection priorities.
Adopt an OBA approach to business planning.
Develop a performance measurement framework to assess how well we are doing.
To reform the child protection arrangements by the introduction of the ‘Signs of Safety’ approach.
Address intergenerational abuse by introducing an Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE) informed approach across statutory partners.
Develop Sec 12 process and evaluation.

Achievements
A Child Protection Sub-Group has been established composed of SBNI statutory partners. This Sub-Group has a key role in interrogating the multi-agency data available to inform child protection priorities and to ascertain how well the child protection system is doing. An OBA approach has been adopted by the Sub-Group to its work. The key priorities for SBNI have been agreed as ‘Signs of Safety’ and Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs).

A process for Section 12 is being developed.
New and Emerging Issues

There are a number of safeguarding issues that can be classified as ‘new and emerging’. Whilst these may not be categorised as priorities within the SBNI Business Plan, it is still important that the Board is kept up to date with how these issues are progressing and more importantly being managed.

This section of the Business Plan is designed to be amended as need dictates. The safeguarding issues detailed below will be updated to the Board by the Board who has ownership of that issue.

Female Genital Mutilation.
Domestic and Sexual Violence.
Hidden Harm.
Legal highs.
Children with a Disability.
Self-harm and Suicide.

Achievements

The SBNI continued to work in partnership with the HSCB/CYPSP/PHA relating to the areas of Domestic and Sexual Violence, Hidden Harm, Legal Highs, Children with a Disability and Self-Harm and Suicide. The SBNI is a member of the CYPSP and has representation/links with these groups. The HSCB Director of Social Care and Children and the PHA are also members of the SBNI. This process ensures that duplication of effort is avoided.

The Children with Disability Sub-Group of CSIB has continued to develop regionally agreed criteria for accessing children with disability social work services in each Trust.

The SBNI as a member of the CYPSP had previously been involved in work regarding the issues affecting children and young people experiencing Domestic and Sexual Violence through the CYPSP Sub-Group, chaired by the HSCB. Following on from the cessation of this Sub-Group and during the 16/17 reporting period of this Annual report it became apparent that whilst the experiences of adults in relation to domestic and sexual violence was being addressed through the relevant domestic violence partnerships and the structures associated with the delivery of the “Stopping Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse in Northern Ireland Strategy”, published on 11 July 2016, those of children and young people did not have a clear voice. The SBNI resolved to progress how it could support the voice of children and young people in the next reporting period.
In relation to Hidden Harm, PHA commissions a specialist service in each HSCT area for families impacted by parental substance misuse (provided by Barnardos and Start 360) as well as training for professionals working in the area of hidden harm under its regional workforce development drug and alcohol training programme (provided by ASCERT). Each Drug and Alcohol Coordination Team and Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership has been tasked with keeping hidden harm on both of their agendas to ensure a continued focus on this area of work now that the regional Hidden Harm structures have been stood down.

In relation to Self-Harm and Suicide, PHA commissions a wide range of local and regional services and programmes in support of the DoH’s ‘Protect Life’ Strategy from prevention, early intervention, intervention and postvention. PHA also continues to support the NI Registry of Self Harm which monitors the prevalence of self-harm presentations to emergency departments throughout the region in order to help shape the development of services and better meet the needs of those represented by the figures in the registry.

The Psychoactive Substances Act 2016 came into force on 26 May 2016 across the United Kingdom and restricts the production, sale and supply of psychoactive substances often referred to as “legal highs”. During 2016/17, the PHA tasked its DACT Connections services (one per HSCT area) with raising awareness amongst stakeholders, and the general public, about the change in the law and the dangers (personal, societal and legal) of continuing to use such substances.

The SBNI FGM Sub-Group has the aim of safeguarding those at risk or affected by FGM and promoting their welfare through effective multi-agency practice and four Task & Finish Groups have been set up to take the work forward. Two members of the community are members of the Task and Finish Group with regard to working with communities in a culturally sensitive way. An engagement event with affected communities has taken place and had positive feedback.

1. Development of practice guidance and pathways – a risk assessment and pathway is being developed.

2. Development of regional resources and training – there is an NI link to the FGM National Unit website. A two-day Train the Trainer Programme has been established and implemented. FGM is included in existing safeguarding awareness programmes and a section on the SBNI website is being developed.

3. Data collection and analysis – a questionnaire was issued and responses received from stakeholders. FGM is being recorded within NIMATS, and a link made to the University of Ulster research on FGM.