



**Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland**  
**Selection of Organisations from the**  
**Voluntary Sector to the**  
**SBNI Board**

## **Purpose**

This paper sets out the legislation and criteria that the SBNI Independent Chair and the SBNI Board (the Board) will apply to appoint representatives from voluntary organisations to the Board.

## **Governing Legislation**

Under Section 1 of the Safeguarding Board Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 (the Act) and Regulation 3 of the Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland (Membership, Procedure, Functions and Committee) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2012 (the Regulations) the Board must include representatives from at least three but not more than five persons from voluntary organisations.

## **Selection Mechanism**

A mechanism for selecting voluntary representation has been established by the Board and approved by the Department of Health. The mechanism includes selection criteria and an agreed scoring system.

## **Essential Criteria**

Applications from voluntary sector organisations across Northern Ireland, must meet all of the criteria specified below to be shortlisted for interview:

- **1 - Organisational Category** – the applicant organisation must fall into one of three specified organisational categories;
- **2 - Capacity** – In line with Department of Health Guidance – the applicant organisation must have the capacity to safeguard and promote children's welfare;
- **3 - Sufficient Seniority and Associated Authority** – the applicant organisation must be able to appoint a representative at a level of seniority with authority to make decisions on behalf of the organisation; and
- **4 - Context** - The applicant organisation must be able to demonstrate that it operates within Northern Ireland

## **Criteria 1 - Organisational Category**

Representation is being sought from organisations which fall into **one** of the following categories:

**1. A children and young people's umbrella organisation representing the sector with the capacity and networks to disseminate information and collate views and opinions. An organisation must be able to evidence that it:**

- A. Has in place a clear and effective communication network involving a significant range and number of organisations and can provide evidence that this system has been positively evaluated by user/member organisations
- B. Actively informs and communicates information relating to safeguarding utilising a range of methods.
- C. Understands Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and can demonstrate how it is operationalised in its work.
- D. Can collate opinions and represent the views of a number of its member organisations

**2. An organisation with a history of promoting and reflecting the voice of the child. An organisation must be able to evidence that it:**

- A. Acts as a champion for children's rights and has in place a corporate/business plan or strategic objectives promoting the rights of children
- B. Has established mechanisms and practice models for communicating with children and young people and can demonstrate same
- C. Understands Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and can demonstrate how it is operationalised in its work.
- D. Has successfully promoted the rights of children and young people and can provide evidence of specific projects/initiatives

**3. An organisation with a successful track record, with an emphasis on direct work with children and families around issues, not limited to; mental health and/ or domestic violence and/ or child exploitation. An organisation must be able to evidence that it:**

- A. Has an established and proven track record working with children and young people and their parents/ carers to address the negative impact of and not limited to; mental health and /or domestic violence and /or child exploitation.
- B. Can demonstrate that its work is undertaken jointly with parents and children and young people and how the focus on the child is maintained.
- C. Operates an effective 'working together' approach with other agencies working directly with children.
- D. Understands Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and can demonstrate how it is operationalised in its work.
- E. Has clear lines of accountability and professional supervision when direct work is undertaken with children and young people and the organisation evaluates the impact of supports provided with particular reference to outcomes for children.

**Criteria 2 - Capacity**

An organisation must have the capacity to safeguard and promote children's welfare in the context of the services which they currently provide.

It must be able to demonstrate that it can fulfil the Section 12 Duties of the Act and in particular be able to make arrangements to ensure:

- that its functions can be discharged having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people
- the services it contracts out to others are provided having regard to that need.

The organisation must have in place Child Protection Policy and Procedures, including employment vetting procedures to support safer recruitment.

It must be able to evidence that it is committed to embedding a Trauma Informed Approach in all aspects of its corporate and service provision.

### **Criteria 3 - Sufficient Seniority and Associated Authority**

An organisation must be able to demonstrate that it is structured and governed in a way that its representative can fulfil the expectations of a Board member as outlined in the SBNI Member's Agreement document, in particular:

- speak with authority on behalf of their organisation
- be able to commit their organisation to policy and practice development
- secure the support of their organisation for the strategic and business plans of the SBNI and then hold their organisation to account for performance in delivering against these plans

It must be able to demonstrate that safeguarding is an integral part of the governance arrangements for the organisation and that it has designated lead officer with responsibility for child protection.

### **Criteria 4 - Context**

An organisation must be able to demonstrate that it operates within Northern Ireland.

It must be able to demonstrate that it provides within its services to children and young people and their families, a safeguarding and/or protection function.

It must be able to demonstrate that staff training on safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people is in place for those staff in contact with children and families and that this includes multi agency training.

It must also must be able to demonstrate that within the context of providing those services to children and young people and their families, it has a clear line of accountability for work on safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people.

## **Application Process**

All applicants will be required to submit an online application to seek to become a member of the SBNI.

The application will include:

- A statement of the organisation's responsibilities to children and young people;
- Demonstration of the organisation's lines of accountability for its work on safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people;
- A commitment to be able to sign up to the SBNI Members' Agreement should an offer of appointment be made.
- Statements demonstrating how their organisation meets each of the criteria specified above.

Once an application has been received, the SBNI will carry out due diligence to determine if the organisation will be invited to interview.

Once shortlisted, the organisation's representative will be invited for interview. The interview will include a presentation in which the representative will be asked to demonstrate how their organisation can support the statutory objective of the SBNI. The specific title of the presentation will be provided to applicants should they be shortlisted for interview.

The interview panel will consist of the SBNI Independent Chair, at least one Board member and no more than three, and a representative from the Department of Health, the SBNI's Sponsor Branch. At the discretion of the Chair, a member of SBNI staff may be invited to attend as an adviser, with no voting rights

## **The Outcome of the Application Process**

All applicants will be advised in writing of the decision of the interview panel. The panel's decision is final. There will be no right of appeal.

If an organisation is successful, the representative of the organisation will be appointed to the SBNI Board on a probationary basis for a period of six months, at

the end of which the SBNI Chair and Board will ratify membership, if appropriate, for a period of no more than four years.

The SBNI's Members' Agreement (Annex 1) sets out the expectations which the SBNI has of its represented bodies and how they will work together. In particular the agreement sets out the purpose of being a Board member, the expectations placed on members, the responsibilities of being a member, how they should represent SBNI within their organisations and high-level roles to assist the workings of the Board.

Applicants should familiarise themselves with its contents.

## Annex 1

### Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland (SBNI) – Members Agreement

#### **1. Statement of Purpose -**

Each member of the SBNI will commit to working in partnership with other members, to contribute to the:

- I. creation of an effective inter-agency partnership which is capable of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people in Northern Ireland.
- II. promotion of the rights of children as a central tenet of the work of the SBNI.
- III. provision of highly effective professional leadership in relation to universal, targeted and specialist safeguarding services.
- IV. demonstration of high levels of influence and impact across all issues where the safety and well-being of children and young people needs to be considered.

#### **2. Each Board Member is expected to:**

- I. speak with authority, on behalf of their organisation.
- II. be able to commit their organisation to policy and practice development.
- III. secure the support of their organisation for the strategic and business plans of the SBNI and then hold their organisation to account for performance in delivering against these plans.
- IV. be open and transparent in evaluating their safeguarding arrangements and promoting good practice by sharing performance information with the Board, as appropriate.

#### **3. Responsibilities of the Independent Chair of the SBNI**

The Independent Chair is responsible for:

- I. providing the strategic leadership and direction of the Board.



- II. ensuring the effective performance and discharge of its statutory functions.
- III. promoting a Children's Rights Agenda
- IV. ensuring Board business is conducted in an open and transparent manner.
- V. ensuring members are given equal opportunity to help develop the values, philosophy and strategic functions of the Board.
- VI. ensuring members are treated equally and have equal opportunity to contribute to decision making.
- VII. ensuring that reports/issues surrounding respective agency/organisations are discussed in advance with the relevant member before any report or comment is issued to the Department, Minister or media.
- VIII. ensuring safeguards are in place to ensure that sensitive personal information provided by the member agencies to the SBNI is protected and handled appropriately.
- IX. acting as an honest broker and critical friend to all members.
- X. ensuring that new members receive appropriate induction with the objective of enhancing the member's effectiveness on the Board or relevant Committee.
- XI. ensuring the SBNI's governance processes are fit for purpose and regularly reviewed.
- XII. ensuring the Board business (agenda, minutes and matters arising) is managed in accordance with agreed standards.

#### **4. Responsibilities of being a Board Member:**

- a) Maintaining a clear focus and commitment to the work of the Board by:
- I. making every effort to attend meetings.
  - II. preparing for meetings by reading minutes and associated papers and making the work of the SBNI the priority, when attending to SBNI business.
  - III. adhering to the principle that the safety and rights of children and young people is the paramount concern for SBNI members.
  - IV. contributing fully to Board discussions and accepting corporate responsibility for decisions made.
  - V. ensuring there is a cooperative working relationship with all members of the SBNI.
  - VI. making an effective contribution to the work of the SBNI by scrutinising and challenging safeguarding arrangements across the partnership.
  - VII. bringing to the Board's attention, in a timely fashion, any action or risk concerning their member agency which would adversely impact on the SBNI's functions or reputation.

#### **4 Responsibilities of being a Board Member**

b) Representing the SBNI within their agency/organisation by:

- I. promoting the work of the SBNI including the principle that the safety and rights of children and young people is of paramount concern to the Board, within their agency/organisation
- II. ensuring there is effective communication between their organisation/agency and the SBNI on all relevant safeguarding matters.
- III. ensuring that SBNI sensitive information is protected and handled appropriately by them and their colleagues, according to their agency's information governance policy and procedures.
- IV. quality assuring the work of their agency/organisation in terms of ensuring deadlines are met and agreed reports are produced to a satisfactory standard.
- V. supporting, but also holding to account in terms of commitment and performance, any of their agency representatives or professionals who are nominated to the Boards' Panels or Committees.
- VI. disseminating information about the performance of their agency/organisation in terms of delivering on key SBNI statutory functions.
- VII. maintaining oversight of the actions taken by their agency/organisation to implement the learning points from Case Management Review's, audits, inspectorial or regulatory reports.

#### **4 Responsibilities of being a Board Member**

- c) Assisting the SBNI to work effectively by:
- I. meeting their duties and responsibilities under the Safeguarding Board (NI) Act 2011, in relation to co-operation with other agencies.
  - II. ensuring that decisions made by the SBNI, with regard to safeguarding arrangements are implemented and adhered to within their agency or organisation.
  - III. providing, as requested, representation from their agency, to work on the SBNI Panels, Committees and Sub-Committees.
  - IV. ensuring, where appropriate, that their agency or organisation contributes to the work of the Case Management Review Panel by completing any required reports, to an agreed standard and timeframe.
  - V. respecting and maintaining the confidentiality of all sensitive information provided by the SBNI and its constituent agencies.
  - VI. providing agency specific information to the Board as required, by legislation.
  - VII. accepting shared responsibility, for delivering on the SBNI's Strategic and Business Plans by ensuring that agreed tasks are completed and timely management information is provided to allow satisfactory completion of the SBNI's Annual Report.

#### **5. Responsibilities of the Case Management Review Panel Chair**

The Case Management Review (CMR) Panel Chair is responsible for;

- I. chairing the CMR Panel;
- II. making a recommendation to the Board on whether, in the opinion of the CMR Panel, a CMR should/should not be undertaken;
- III. reviewing individual CMRs at regular intervals and quality assuring the work of the Independent CMR Team Chairs;
- IV. undertaking regular oversight of the progress of each CMR;

- V. ensuring identified learning accurately reflects the facts and findings of the CMR;
- VI. ensuring the CMR is at all times conducted in accordance with SBNI Regulations and Guidance;
- VII. providing advice to and seeking the approval of, the Board as to the findings of the CMR, and the learning points identified;
- VIII. ensuring that learning from CMRs is disseminated;
- IX. have oversight of agencies' action plans in relation to progressing recommendations from CMRs and update the Board.

## **6. Responsibilities of the Independent Safeguarding Panel Chairs**

The Independent Safeguarding Panel Chairs are responsible for;

- I. chairing the 5 Safeguarding Panels
- II. ensuring that Safeguarding Panel Action Plans reflect delivery of the statutory functions of the Panel
- III. working with Board members to ensure that membership of the Panel is at a senior level and reflects the SBNI membership.
- IV. ensuring that the Safeguarding Panels meet as and when required but, at a minimum, on four occasions per year
- V. ensuring that the Panels support the SBNI to deliver its Statutory functions and duties.
- VI. ensuring that learning from CMRs is effectively implemented by SBNI member bodies.

## **7. The Role of the Central Support Team**

The Central Support Team will support the Members by:

- I. ensuring effective and efficient use of the Board's resources
- II. leading on the development of the Strategic Plan, annual Business Plans and the Annual Report.
- III. assisting member agencies to meet the SBNI business objectives and to coordinate the relevant SBNI work undertaken to safeguard children and young people.

**On behalf of:**

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**On behalf of the Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland:**

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_