



Memorandum of Understanding
Between the
Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland
And the
Northern Ireland Social Care Council

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1. Parties to the Memorandum of Understanding

The parties to the agreement are:

The Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland

(SBNI) HSC Leadership Centre

12 Hampton Manor Drive

Belfast, BT7 3EN

And

The Northern Ireland Social Care Council

(NISCC) 25 Great Victoria Street, Belfast

BT2 7AQ

The document is jointly owned by Mrs Glenys Johnston, Chair of the SBNI and Mr Colum Conway, Chief Executive of NISCC.

2. Purpose of the Memorandum of Understanding

2.1 The purpose of this memorandum of understanding is to provide appropriate and effective information sharing between both organisations and to promote high standards regarding social care practice in the area of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

2.2 The Memorandum does not affect existing statutory functions or supersede any existing policies or agreement relating to the activities of SBNI or NISCC.

2.3 Nothing in this Memorandum of Understanding restricts the exercise of each body's respective statutory responsibilities.

2.4 The Memorandum of Understanding is not enforceable by law, however SBNI and the NISCC agree to adhere to its principles and to show due regard for each other's activities.

3 Functions of SBNI

3.1 The SBNI is an unincorporated statutory body established under the Safeguarding Board Act (NI) 2011. The SBNI relies on governance and accountability arrangements established within the Public Health Agency.

3.2 The objective of SBNI is to coordinate and ensure the effectiveness of what is done by each person or body represented on the Board, for the purpose of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

3.3 SBNI has the following key functions:

- Must develop policies and procedures for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in Northern Ireland;
- Must promote an awareness of the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children;
- Must undertake such case management reviews as prescribed and review such information as may be prescribed in relation to the deaths of children in Northern Ireland;
- Advise the Health and Social Care Board and local commissioning groups in relation to safeguarding and will promote communication between the Board itself and with children and young people.

3.4 The SBNI may:

- Compile and analyse information concerning safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.
- Provide advice or information on any matter concerning safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.
- Subject to consultation with the Department, publish any matter concerning safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

3.5 The SBNI legislation creates statutory duties on member agencies in relation to the following:

- Duty to cooperate (section 10);
- Duty to supply information (section 11);
- Duty to make arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children (section 12).

3.6 The SBNI employs social work staff to discharge its functions. The SBNI agrees to adhere to the 'Code of Practice for Employers of Social Care Workers'.

4 Functions of NISCC

4.1 NISCC is a non-departmental public body established under the Health and Personal Social Services Act (NI) 2001.

4.2 The aim of the NISCC is to protect the public through improving standards, raising the standards of social care practice and strengthening the professionalism of the social care workforce.

4.3 NISCC has the following functions:

- Set standards of practice for social care workers and their employers;
- Register social workers and social care workers;
- Regulate social work education and training;
- Promote education and training for all social care staff;

4.4 NISCC has a statutory responsibility to maintain a register of social workers and social care workers. Once registered, social workers and social care workers must abide by the standards set in the NISCC Code of Practice and continue to meet the requirements for registration.

4.5 NISCC has a statutory responsibility to investigate complaints about registrants received from any source. NISCC has published conduct rules which set out its regulatory powers. It has the power to suspend or remove registrants from the register.

5 Collaborative working between the SBNI and the NISCC

5.1 The working relationship between SBNI and NISCC will be characterised by regular ongoing contact and exchange of information in respect of areas of mutual interest. Relevant staff from both organisations will liaise with each other regarding any issues needing cooperation and joint action.

5.2 There will be an annual meeting between both Chairs and Chief Executive to discuss issues of mutual interest and review the MoU.

5.3 In sharing information SBNI and NISCC will ensure compliance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

5.4 SBNI will be responsible for undertaking case management reviews in relation to individual cases and such reviews may make recommendations relating to standards of professional practice for social care workers. As NISCC has responsibility for setting and promoting standards of practice for social care staff, the SBNI will, in such circumstances, consult NISCC in relation to such recommendations and the dissemination of learning arising from such reviews.

- 5.5 SBNI will also be responsible for developing policies and procedures for safeguarding of children which will relate directly to the practice of social care workers involved in this work. SBNI will consult/involve (where appropriate) NISCC in relation to the development/dissemination of new or amended policies and procedures.
- 5.6 SBNI will through its Education and Training Committee, be responsible for monitoring the content of Learning and Development Strategy Framework (LDSF) and agencies compliance of same. NISCC will monitor and audit training requirements for individual registrants in relation to their professional registration. Both organisations will share information about training development plans, approaches and initiatives, identified deficits and training needs.
- 5.7 NISCC may receive a complaint about the practice of a registered Social Worker or Social Care Worker. NISCC may in these circumstances seek to clarify with SBNI as to whether a Case Management Review is ongoing and its progress and timescale. SBNI, if it is considered appropriate, may provide advice or information to NISCC.
- 5.8 Each organisation, to the extent that it is reasonably able to do so, and subject to any confidentiality requirements imposed by law or by the organisation itself, will provide information for investigations and initiatives to promote the objectives of the two organisations. If requested each organisation will endeavor to assist the other in securing expert advice.
- 5.9 SBNI and NISCC will consult each other in relation to internal guidelines where they relate to the other organisation's responsibilities or interests.
- 5.10 SBNI and NISCC will liaise with each other in order to determine how any media interest relating to a mutual concern is to be handled.
- 5.11 Each organisation will share information which it feels may be of interest to the other, including:
- Strategic and corporate business plans;
 - Information on responses made to consultation papers and Government reports;
 - Information arising out of policy development and research.

6 Review of the Memorandum of Understanding

Where further opportunities for cooperation are identified this MOU may be reviewed and will be revised annually.

Endorsement

SBNI-

**Interim Independent Chair
Mrs Glenys Johnston OBE**

Glenys Johnston

**Lead Professional Officer
(Margaret Burke)**

Margaret Burke

Date

4-2-16

NISCC-

**Chair
(James Perry)**

James E. Perry

**Chief Executive
(Colum Conway)**

Colum Conway

Date

4/02/2016.

Date of next review of this MOU will be April 2017.

