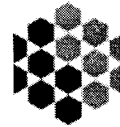


CONSULTATION DOCUMENT



Department of  
**Health, Social Services  
and Public Safety**

An Roinn

**Sláinte, Seirbhísí Sóisialta  
agus Sábháilteachta Poiblí**

www.dhsspsni.gov.uk

**THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A  
REGIONAL SAFEGUARDING BOARD  
FOR NORTHERN IRELAND**

**QUESTIONNAIRE JANUARY 2007**

The Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety invites you to respond to this consultation document on the Establishment of a Regional Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland.

Responses should be sent by letter or email to:

Linda Boomer  
Department of Health, Social Services & Public Safety  
Child Care Policy Directorate  
Room D1.4  
Castle Buildings  
Stormont  
Belfast  
BT4 3SQ

Email: [linda.boomer@dhsspsni.gov.uk](mailto:linda.boomer@dhsspsni.gov.uk)

**Your response must be received by 9<sup>th</sup> February 2007.**

**(Please tick box)**

I am responding:  as an individual  on behalf of an organisation.

Name: Professor Judith E Hill CBE

Job Title: Chief Executive

Organisation: Northern Ireland Hospice Care

Address: Head Office, 18 O'Neill Road,

Newtownabbey, County Antrim, BT36 6WB

Tel: 02890 781836 Fax: 02890 372761

Email: Judith.hill@nihospicecare.com

**Before completing your response, please see Appendix 1 about the effect of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 on the confidentiality of responses to public consultation exercises.**

Questions to answer. Please write clearly.

**PROPOSED ROLE AND SCOPE OF THE SAFEGUARDING BOARD FOR NORTHERN IRELAND (SBNI)**

**Q1: Do you agree that there should be one region wide Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland (SBNI)? If not, what alternative model would you suggest?**

**Yes. It makes sense that issues are regulated regionally, then all statutory and voluntary organisations will be applying the same standards and procedures.**

**Q2: Are there any other broad elements or interfaces which you think should be included in the scope of the SBNI's role in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children?**

**To develop regional multi-agency child protection training similar to that delivered in the 1980s and early 1990s.**

**Q3: Do you agree that a single database should be created for at risk children? If not, what alternative would you suggest?**

**Yes. I think this helps to ensure that children who are on the Child Protection Register, who move from area to area, can be supported by the relevant agencies without delay.**

**Q4: Are there any other objectives which you think should fall to the SBNI?**

**No**

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**Q5: Do you agree that statutory powers should be created to enable the Minister to require the setting up of similar databases as outlined in the Children's Act 2004? If not, what alternative would you suggest?**

**Yes. I support the use of statutory powers to facilitate the**

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**setting up of databases similar to those defined in the Children's**

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**Act 2004.**

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**APPOINTMENT AND ROLE OF CHAIRMAN AND LAY MEMBERS OF THE SBNI**

**Q6: Do you agree that the chairman and lay members should be public appointments? If not, what alternative would you suggest?**

Yes. The chair and lay members should be public appointments,  
but they must have the ability to develop an achievable strategy.

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**Q7: Do you agree that chairpersons and lay people should not serve for more than 2 terms, with each term lasting no more than 4 years? If not, what alternative would you suggest?**

A maximum of 8 years for lay participation in the SBNI  
is adequate.

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**Q8: What kind of experience, knowledge and qualifications do you consider is important for the independent chairman to have?**

Legal knowledge of family and child law, previous experience of  
multi-agency working and of child protection.

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**Q9: What kind of experience, knowledge and qualifications, if any, do you consider is important for lay members to have?**

Previous participation or at least knowledge of child protection  
matters. An interest in the subject and an understanding of the  
previous problems.

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**Q10: Do you agree that the SBNI should have its own secretariat and budget? If not, what alternative would you suggest?**

Yes.

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**HOW THE SBNI WILL OPERATE**

**Q11: Do you agree that membership of the SBNI should be drawn from the statutory, voluntary and community sectors? If not, what alternative would you suggest?**

Yes.

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**Q12: Do you agree that membership of the SBNI should be a statutory obligation? If not, what alternative would you suggest?**

Yes. If the establishment of the SBNI is to work to protect  
children, it needs to be.

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**Q13: Do you agree that membership of the SBNI should be drawn from senior members of relevant agencies? If not, what alternative would you suggest?**

Yes.

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**Q14: Do you agree with the level of seniority of the posts which are being proposed to comprise the SBNI? If not, what alternative would you suggest?**

Yes.

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**Q15: Do you agree that individual Agencies should be held accountable for ensuring co-operation and promotion of the welfare of the child? If not, what alternative would you suggest?**

Yes. As suggested, a line of responsibility for each organisation  
must be established with training and updates of staff mandatory  
(to include multi-agency training and updates for key personnel).

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\_\_\_\_\_

**Q16: Do you agree with the range of Agencies/Interests proposed to comprise the core membership of the SBNI? If not, what alternative would you suggest?**

Yes.

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\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
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**Q17: Do you agree with the proposal for rolling membership of the SBNI? If not, what alternative would you suggest?**

Yes. This ensures that the focus of SBNI remains appropriate  
and complacency doesn't set in.

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**Q18: Do you agree that rolling membership of the SBNI should be reviewed no later than every 4 years? If not, what alternative would you suggest?**

Yes.

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**Q19: What other expertise do you consider appropriate for the SBNI to utilise in order to discharge its functions effectively?**

Initially it may be useful to have workshops facilitated to ensure all understand fully previous identified problems, the aims and objectives of the SBNI and the Safeguarding Panels.

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**YOUNG PERSON'S REFERENCE GROUP**

**Q20: Do you think that a Young Person's Reference Group should be established? If not, what alternative would you suggest?**

It is imperative that young people are consulted, also children should be taught in schools how to protect other children. Schools also need focus on safety and prevention of accidents.

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**Q21: Do you agree that the Young Person’s Reference Group should be available to the SBNI through the chairman? If not, what alternative would you suggest?**

Yes. But young people will need to feel they are ‘getting  
something in return’ - they need to see outcomes, not just talking  
shops.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Q22: What age group should the Young Person’s Reference Group be drawn from?**

10 to 18 years.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Q23: How many members of the Young Person’s Reference Group should there be?**

10 to 12. This will allow for non-attendance.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Q24: How do you think that membership of the Young Person's Reference Group should be selected?**

Each of the new 5 HSST areas could look to nominate  
membership using pre-selected criteria.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Q25: How often do you think membership of the Young Person's Reference Group should be reviewed?**

Initially every two years, after that 12 to 18 months to allow  
them to 'move on'.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**SAFEGUARDING PANELS**

**Q26: Do you agree that there should be a Safeguarding Panel in each of the 5 new Trust areas? If not, what alternative would you suggest?**

Yes.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Q27: What interests/disciplines/agencies/providers do you think should comprise membership of the Safeguarding Panels?**

Senior personnel from multi-agency (statutory and voluntary) and  
multi-professionals, e.g. Social Services, Community Children's  
Nurses, Health Visitors, Barnardos, PSNI, NSPCC, teachers, GPs  
and youth workers.

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**Q28: What interests/disciplines/agencies/providers do you think should comprise membership of the sub-groups which will support the Safeguarding Panels?**

As for Q27 above, but representing the practitioners.

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**Q29: What do you think the functions of the sub-groups should include?**

Provision of multi-agency and multi-disciplinary training.

Participating in development of adequate policies and procedures  
and ensuring they are implemented in their organisations.

Participating in publicity drive.

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## SERIOUS CASE REVIEWS

**Q30: What do you consider the criteria to initiate a Serious Case Review should be?**

'Non-accidental' death of a child, severe or serious 'non-accidental'  
harm/injury to a child, an identified 'near miss' where it has been  
established that safeguards have or have almost failed.

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**Q31: What do you consider to be a reasonable time frame for the completion of a Serious Case Review to be?**

The timescale needs to portray efficient and effective review  
happening immediately and with achievable outcomes to prevent  
reoccurrence.

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## TIMESCALE

**Q32: Is the timescale proposed reasonable? If not, what alternative would you suggest?**

Yes.

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**Q33: Where, or with which host organisation, do you think the SBNI should be located?**

\_\_\_\_\_  
NSPCC or Social Services.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**TRANSFER OF FUNCTIONS**

**Q34: What difficulties, if any, do you foresee in the transfer of functions from ACPCs to the SBNI? What actions are needed to resolve these difficulties?**

\_\_\_\_\_  
The newly-established SBNI may need time (as mentioned  
\_\_\_\_\_  
previously) to understand its role and the reasons for change.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Accordingly, whilst members of the SBNI are being 'inducted' the  
\_\_\_\_\_  
ACPCs should continue. There then should be a period of one  
\_\_\_\_\_  
month for 'handover' or transition to SBNI.  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Q35: Is the time frame for transfer proposed reasonable? If not, what alternative would you suggest?**

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Yes.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**COMMUNICATING AND RAISING AWARENESS**

**Q36: What do you consider to be the most effective ways to engage the range of stakeholders, including the wider community who can contribute to the effective safeguarding and promotion of the welfare of children?**

- Multi-agency training

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- Media Campaign

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- Campaign in schools, youth clubs and nursery schools.

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- Local church involvement.

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**EQUALITY SCREENING**

**Q37: Is there any indication or evidence of higher or lower participation or uptake by different groups?**

<b>Group</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Not Known</b>
<b>Religious belief</b>			
<b>Political opinion</b>			
<b>Racial group</b>			
<b>Age</b>			
<b>Marital status</b>			
<b>Sexual orientation</b>			
<b>Gender</b>			
<b>Disability</b>			
<b>Dependency</b>			
<b>Comments</b>			
<p>Unsure. But stress recognition of our multi-cultural, multi-racial population.</p>			

**Q38: Do different groups have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to this policy issue?**

<b>Group</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Not Known</b>
<b>Religious belief</b>			
<b>Political opinion</b>			
<b>Racial group</b>			
<b>Age</b>			
<b>Marital status</b>			
<b>Sexual orientation</b>			
<b>Gender</b>			
<b>Disability</b>			
<b>Dependency</b>			
<p><b>Comments</b></p> <p>Yes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Language (e.g. Polish and Lithuanian population)</li> <li>▪ People with disabilities (hearing, visual or learning)</li> <li>▪ Those with literacy problems</li> </ul>			

**Q39: Have consultations with relevant groups, organisations or individuals indicated that policies of this type create problems that are specific to them?**

<b>Group</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Not Known</b>
<b>Religious belief</b>			
<b>Political opinion</b>			
<b>Racial group</b>			
<b>Age</b>			
<b>Marital status</b>			
<b>Sexual orientation</b>			
<b>Gender</b>			
<b>Disability</b>			
<b>Dependency</b>			
<p><b>Comments</b></p> <p>People with disabilities need to have information provided for them in a way that they can fully understand the issues.</p>			

**Q40: In relation to implementing this policy, is there an opportunity to better promote equality of opportunity or good relations by altering the policy or by working with others in Government or in the larger community?**

<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Not Known</b>
✓		

**Please elaborate:**

**Work with groups who include people with disabilities or who are from other countries to ensure they understand fully the problems, e.g.**

- **Disability Action**
- **Mencap**
- **NICEM**
- **Travellers Community**
- **Barnardos**

**Q41: With reference to Questions set out please summarise how you believe the policy may impact on organisations' obligation to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity.**

**Organisations will need to ensure clientele have access to information they understand. Other than that not aware of any difficulty.**

**Q42: Are there any relevant groups which you believe should be consulted at this time?**

**Please specify**

**As per Q40 and including groups representing ethnic communities.**

**Q43: What data do you think will be required to ensure effective monitoring of the policy following implementation?**

**Audits of:-**

- **Public awareness.**
- **Establishment and implementation of policies and procedures**
- **Impact on statistics (comparative to pre SBNI)**

**Q44: Any other comments on the policy and/or screening exercise?**

No.

**Q45: On the basis of answers to Questions above (and in particular positive answers), do you recommend that the policy should be subjected to a full impact assessment?<sup>1</sup>**

**Yes**

**No**

**Please elaborate**

Probably, although expected results and outcomes may be slightly ambiguous, decline in percentages may be more appropriate (percentages in relation to child population and the number of referrals to Social Services etc).

**Please advise if you are content to have your response published should the Department receive such a request (see Appendix 1 on Freedom of**

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<sup>1</sup> Screening guidance states that considerations and decisions need to be formally recorded. The Equality Commission for Northern Ireland may wish to examine the screening exercise at a later date. Please be aware that screening decisions and supporting documentation must be robust as under Freedom of Information this documentation can be released on request.

Information Act). If you are not content to have your response published, please indicate your reasons to assist the Department in reaching decisions using the guidance attached at Appendix 1.

*Please tick the relevant box*

(i) Content

(ii) Not content

**Please give reasons if not content:**