



Trauma Informed Practice Team Newsletter
Summer 2026

Welcome to the Summer edition of our newsletter

As we move into the warmth and brightness of summer, we are reminded of the importance of growth, renewal and connection, principles that sit at the heart of a trauma-informed approach. This season invites us to pause, reflect on how far we have come, and nurture the progress that continues to unfold across our organisations and communities.

Like the longer days that offer more light and space, we are seeing trauma-informed practice gaining strength and visibility, through deepening partnerships, peer learning networks and a shared commitment to creating environments where people feel safe, supported and understood. Each step forward, however small, contributes to a wider landscape of change.

In this edition, we celebrate the seeds that have been planted and the work that is beginning to blossom. We share stories of learning, examples of innovation and opportunities to continue growing together. Whether you are just beginning your journey or have long been cultivating trauma-informed practice, we hope this newsletter offers encouragement, inspiration and practical insight.

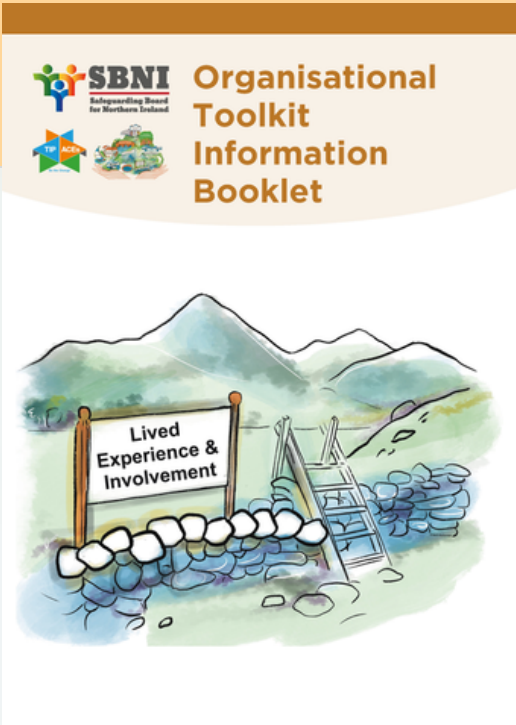
Some of us may be lucky enough to spend some time by the sea this summer. Just as the tide moves in and out, energy, capacity and focus naturally rise and fall over time. When organisations make space for this ebb and flow through realistic expectations and relational ways of working, they help create environments where people can feel safer, more regulated and better able to sustain their work over the longer term. As we move through summer, with compassion as our anchor, let's allow ourselves space for both energy and rest, and for recovery and growth to continue in their own time.

Thank you, as always, for the care, energy and dedication you bring to this work.

If you have not received this from the SBNI TIP team and would like to be added to our distribution list please email us with your details on:

sbni.info@hscni.net

Lived Experience at the Heart of Trauma-Informed Practice



A trauma-informed approach is strengthened when the voices of those with lived experience are meaningfully involved in the design, delivery and evaluation of services. Research commissioned by the Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland found that the inclusion of people with lived experience was viewed as one of the most important enablers of trauma-informed implementation across organisations in NI.

Include Youth's work highlights how lived experience can be embedded meaningfully into practice by involving young people directly in shaping how services are understood and delivered. Their approach includes co-designing and co-delivering initiatives and training with individuals who have first-hand [Click here to access the Information](#) experience of issues such as seeking asylum, being in care, or experiencing marginalisation.

For example, their Hidden Voices workshop was developed and delivered in partnership with individuals with direct experience of seeking asylum, ensuring that insight is not only shared but shapes understanding based on real experiences rather than assumptions.

By positioning lived experience as a source of expertise, Include Youth enables authentic insight, challenges perceptions and promotes a more empathetic and relational approach to those who have experienced adversity and trauma. Embedding lived experience requires organisations to reflect on power, inclusion and choice, and to create feedback-rich environments where people feel safe to contribute in ways that suit them.

include
YOUTH

Placing lived experience at the centre is not an added task; it is fundamental to building compassionate, effective and trauma-informed organisations and will lead to more tangible and sustainable change. To find out more about Include Youth and their work, please visit their website by clicking on the logo.

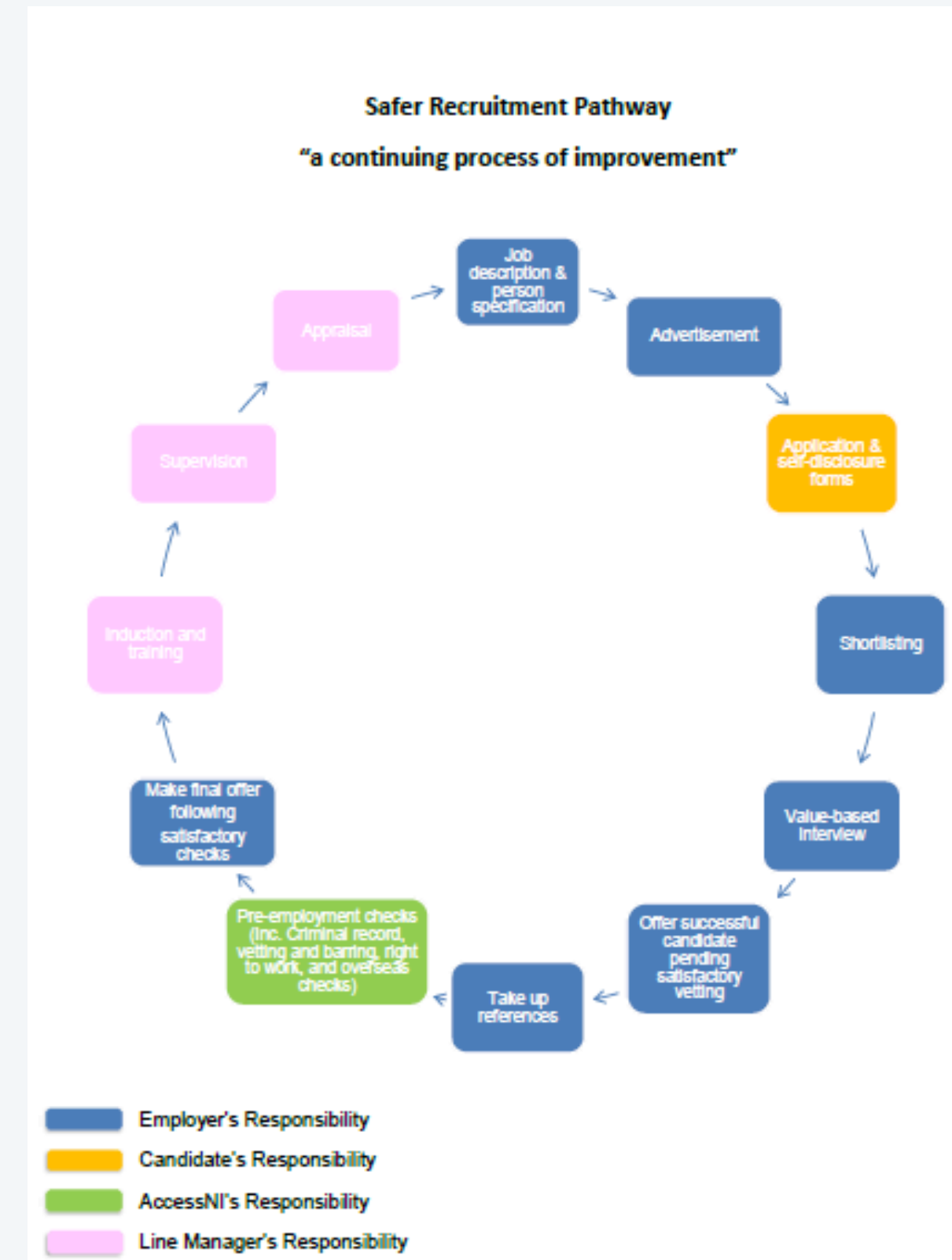
More Than a Process: Safer Recruitment as a Foundation of Trauma-Informed Organisations

The SBNI Safer Recruitment Guidance (April 2026) reinforces safer recruitment as a core safeguarding responsibility for all organisations working with children and young people. As a foundation of trauma-informed systems, safer recruitment is an ongoing process that helps prevent harm before it occurs and ensures that only suitable individuals are placed in roles with children.

Robust recruitment processes clearly communicate that children's wellbeing is paramount. The guidance promotes trust and transparency through fair, consistent and values-based recruitment, including clear role descriptions, safeguarding messages and structured decision-making. It also reflects the 6 trauma-informed principles by encouraging proportionate, sensitive risk assessment when concerns arise, balancing respect for individuals with a clear priority on children's safety.

By embedding safer recruitment across induction, supervision and training, and viewing it as a shared responsibility, organisations strengthen inclusive, reflective and learning-focused cultures. When aligned with trauma-informed principles, safer recruitment becomes more than just a process. It becomes a way of building safer, more trusted environments where children and young people are protected and supported to thrive.

[This guidance will be soon be available to view on the SBNI website.](#)



Learning Together: Derry Well Women's Trauma-Informed Story

Over the past year, Derry Well Women has taken significant steps to embed a trauma-informed approach across its services, recognising this as essential to delivering the best possible support to women. This commitment was a shared decision across staff and the Committee, reflecting a collective ambition to strengthen everyday practice.



The journey began with all staff and Committee members completing the SBNI's Module 1 and Module 2 trauma-informed training, alongside additional face-to-face sessions for senior staff. This created a strong foundation of understanding across the organisation. Early efforts focused on two priority areas: environment and workforce wellbeing. Staff at all levels contributed to organisational checklists, offering ideas through a trauma-informed lens. Importantly, the voices of service users were central. Feedback gathered through evaluations and focus groups helped shape improvements and ensure changes reflected women's lived experiences. More recently, the organisation has been working through policy and practice, alongside aspects of leadership. While this has been a substantial task, it has enabled policies to be reshaped in line with trauma-informed principles, strengthening consistency and quality across services.



This work has already led to tangible changes. The centre environment has been softened through improved signage, lighting and décor, while practical additions, such as a welcoming reception space, refreshments and calming therapy music, enhance the experience for women. Staff wellbeing has also been prioritised through a structured programme of activities, now embedded into team culture. Overall, the impact has been significant. The organisation reports improved communication, stronger teamwork, enhanced staff wellbeing and positive feedback from the women it supports. Derry Well Women's journey demonstrates how a thoughtful, collective approach can create meaningful and lasting trauma-informed change.



Embedding Trauma-Informed Practice Using SIM and USD

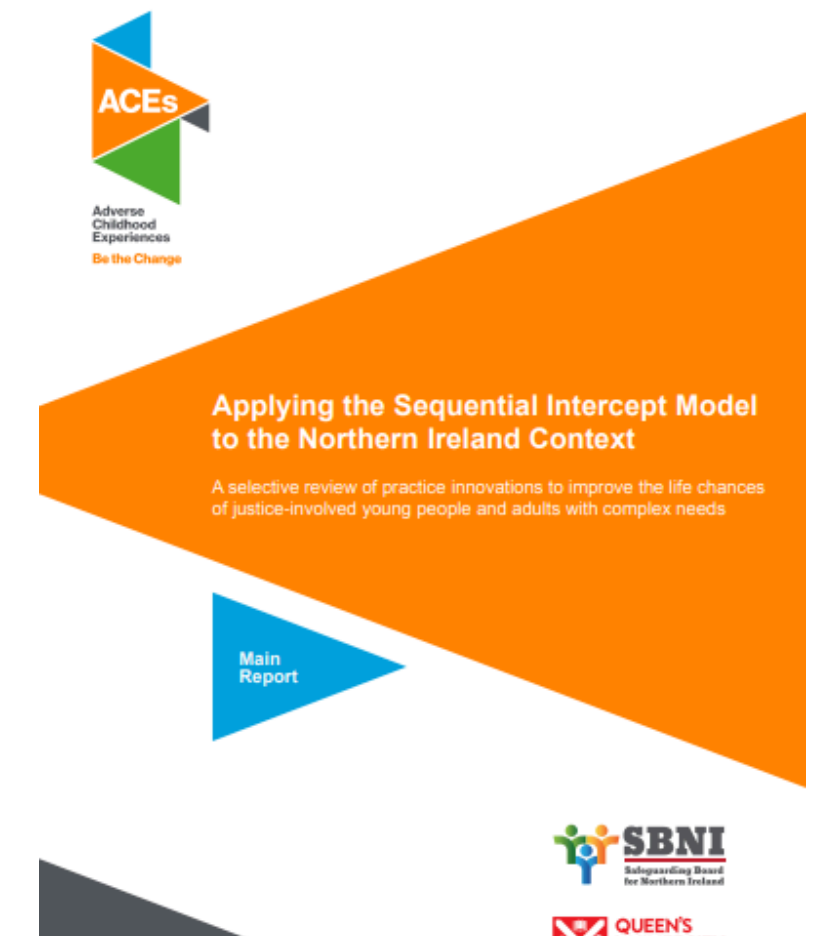
Embedding a trauma-informed approach requires organisations to understand both how people experience services and how systems respond to those who have experienced adversity and trauma. The Sequential Intercept Model (SIM) and the Universal Service Delivery (USD) model are two complementary frameworks that support this work and have been used in Northern Ireland to strengthen trauma-informed systems and practice.

The Sequential Intercept Model (SIM) helps organisations identify key points where individuals come into contact with services and where there is a risk of escalation or crisis, enabling earlier, more compassionate and trauma-informed responses. Applying the Sequential Intercept Model to the Northern Ireland Context provides a selective review of practice innovations using SIM to improve outcomes for justice-involved children, young people and adults with complex needs.

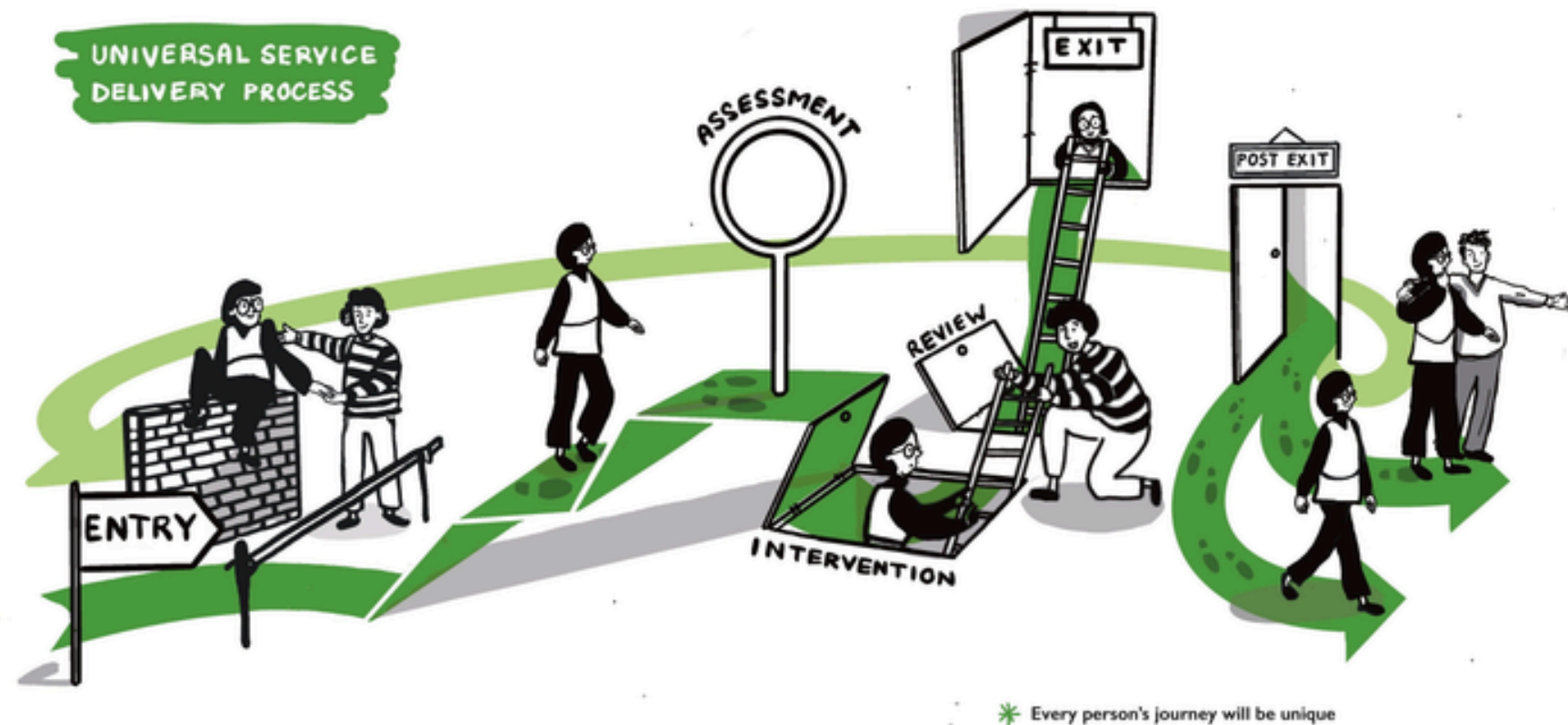
With a particular focus on justice, health and social care, youth justice and community safety, the paper highlights opportunities for early intervention across the justice pathway, the importance of cross-agency and health-led approaches, and the value of continuity of support in reducing harm, unnecessary criminalisation and long-term disadvantage. While often associated with justice settings, the Sequential Intercept Model can be applied across any sector to map journeys, improve collaboration, and support earlier, more effective intervention

To access the document, click on the front cover image. You can also access this document for further reading:

[The 'Sequential Intercept Model' – a trauma-informed diversionary framework](#)



Embedding Trauma-Informed Practice Using SIM and USD



The Universal Service Delivery (USD) model is a pathway that holds people safely from first contact through to service exit and beyond, adjusting levels of support as needs change without disconnecting relationships. It is not a ladder that people climb as their needs escalate. Instead, the USD model is about continuity, proportionate support, and joined-up working, ensuring that individuals and families experience services as coherent, humane and responsive. When applied through a trauma-informed lens, it helps prevent people from falling through gaps, reduces re-traumatisation during transitions, and reinforces the importance of consistent, trusting relationships across the entire service journey.

Together, the SIM and USD models are used to identify gaps and duplication across the system, informing the development of a cross-sectoral action plan with clearly defined roles and responsibilities. The SIM model provides strategic mapping, while the USD model focuses on operational mapping. Used together, SIM and USD support a whole-system trauma-informed approach, linking strategy, leadership and frontline practice. They offer a shared framework for creating safer, more responsive services for both the people who use them and the staff who deliver them.

Quarterly Captures!



NOTA NI and NOTA ROI hosted an all-island conference bringing together 120 practitioners to explore “Responses to Disclosures of Sexual and Domestic Abuse: Best Practice Approaches”.

The Conference focused on 3 core themes:

1. Justice responses that work: Examining effective, fair, and compassionate responses for victims and survivors.
2. Victim, survivor, and lived experience voices: Placing lived experience at the centre of learning and practice.
3. Trauma-informed safeguarding: Embedding safeguarding and trauma-informed practice throughout every stage of the process.

Orla Connolly and Sheina Rigg delivered a presentation on the day about embedding a trauma informed approach across settings and services.

Thank you and congratulations to all participants who completed our Trauma-Informed Leadership Programme, ‘Leading with a Trauma-Informed Lens’, which concluded with its final session on 4 June. Your willingness to reflect, connect and lead by modelling and promoting the six principles of a trauma-informed approach has been greatly valued and is strengthening trauma-informed leadership across our system.

TIP Alerts and Updates



The Online Safety Hub is a central place where young people, parents, carers, and professionals can find practical advice about child safety online, all in one easy-to-use site.

It's updated regularly with resources from trusted organisations as part of the Northern Ireland Executive's [Keeping children and young people safe: an Online Safety Strategy for Northern Ireland](#).

Inside the Hub, you'll find an [adult section](#) with core messaging and signposting on key online safety topics, a library of [resources](#), and a [research and evidence bank](#) to keep you informed. There's also a [Young Person's Hub](#) offering supportive, non-judgemental guidance for under-13s and teens to help them manage their online lives safely and confidently. To make it even easier to explore, the Hub has video tours for [adults](#) and [young people](#) that guide you through its features.

The Hub is designed for sharing. Feel free to take, use, and share the resources widely within your networks.

[Click here to access the Online Safety Hub](#)



The Social Care Council has launched the fourth series of its 'Care to Chat' podcast, beginning with an episode exploring what it means to be a trauma-informed organisation. The episode features Orla Connolly, Trauma Informed Practice Implementation Manager at SBNI, alongside other sector leaders sharing insights on embedding a trauma-informed approach in practice.

In the episode, Orla highlights how trauma is widespread across society and can shape how people think, feel and respond. When we realise this and understand that relationships matter, we can respond with compassion, supporting recovery and improving staff and service user experience.

Listen to the first episode and follow the series here:

[NISCC Care to Chat Podcast](#)

TIP Alerts and Updates



The **Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) Practitioner Guidance** is now available on the SBNI website.

This important resource supports practitioners to recognise, prevent and respond to CCE using a trauma-informed, gender-conscious and child-centred approach, reinforcing that children who are exploited and coerced into criminal activity are victims of abuse and not perpetrators.

Developed in partnership with practitioners and informed by lived experience, the guidance promotes early intervention, multi-agency collaboration, and consistent safeguarding responses across sectors.

To access the guidance **click on the image above**

Trauma-Informed Leadership Development: Now Open for Expressions of Interest



We are developing a new suite of trauma-informed leadership development programmes designed to support leaders at different stages of their journey.

Options may include:

- a half-day introductory session to embedding a Trauma-Informed Approach (TIA)
- a one-day overview of trauma-informed leadership
- a 5-part Leading with a Trauma-Informed Lens programme incorporating reflective practice spaces.

These programmes would aim to support leaders to build safer, more supportive cultures and embed trauma-informed principles in a meaningful and sustainable way.

Please scan the QR code to complete the expression of interest form to help us plan for our autumn programmes.

Expression of Interest 2026: SBNI
Trauma Informed Leadership
Programmes



TIP Alerts and Updates



Trauma-Informed Approach Peer Support Networks – Autumn 2026

We are pleased to invite colleagues to take part in Trauma-Informed Approach (TIA) Peer Support Networks, which will be running in 5 locations across the region this autumn. These in-person workshops have been developed in response to, and building on, the peer support workshop held in January and to support the long-term sustainability of a trauma-informed approach through locally based, peer-led networks.

The networks offer a safe, collaborative space for people working across health, social care, justice, education and the community and voluntary sectors to come together. They are intended to support those at different stages of their trauma-informed journey through reflection, shared learning and practical discussion.

Dates, locations and times:

- Belfast area:** 29 September 2026, 10.00am–1.00pm
- Northern area:** 13 October 2026, 10.00am–1.00pm
- Southern area:** 20 October 2026, 10.00am–1.00pm
- Western area:** 10 November 2026, 10.00am–1.00pm
- South Eastern area:** 24 November 2026, 10.00am–1.00pm

To express your interest in attending, please scan the QR code and select the locality you wish to attend. Venue details will be shared once registration is complete.



A SUMMER PAUSE

As summer continues to unfold, we invite you to pause — briefly, if that's all that's possible, and complete any of the statements below in whatever way feels right. There's no expectation to answer them all. You might write a word, a sentence, or simply sit with one line for a moment. Sometimes noticing is enough.

My ideal summer day is.....

This summer, I noticed I had more energy when...

A moment of calm for me recently was...

Something that was a nice surprise this summer was...

I felt most myself when...

One way I gave myself permission this summer was...

A small moment that mattered more than I thought was...

This season reminded me that I need...

Something I learned about myself was...

A place (indoors or outdoors) where I felt at ease was...

As summer moves on, I want to carry forward...

If you have any feedback on the newsletter, we would welcome your comments or suggestions.

If you would like any promotional material or if you have any questions in relation to embedding a trauma informed approach, [please email us at the address below](mailto:sbni.info@hscni.net).

If you wish to be added to the TIP team distribution list for any future circulations regarding information or events or if you would like your details removed from the list, please email us at: sbni.info@hscni.net