

Wigan Children's Safeguarding Partnership – Professional Curiosity – 7 Minute Briefing

Definitions

- Professional curiosity- the capacity and skill of professionals to communicate in a way to understand a situation rather than to assume what is happening.
- Respectful uncertainty- applying critical evaluation to new information and maintaining an open mind

Themes from Wigan Review Processes which co-occur with Professional curiosity

- Disguised compliance
- Over optimism
- Silo working
- Lack of use of resolution policy/professional challenge
- Lack of consideration for lived experiences
- Lack of Think Family approach

What does good look like?

Professionals who are curious will value the personable aspects of their role. They use time spent with a family or individual to understand them. Professionals will not make assumptions but will ask questions to gain clarification. Professionals will let families and individuals know that they ask personal and sometimes prying questions in their best interest to keep them safe. Professionals will not judge or criticise. New information that does not support an initial assessment will be considered going forward.

Why is this important to Wigan?

The Deal for Children and Young People promotes getting to the heart of a problem and preventing children and young people from having to repeat their story, so that we can get interventions right the first time. We should be asking the right questions, to allow us to be critical and innovative in our work with children and families. The deal encourages progression in order to build resilience and better outcomes faster.

What can we consider?

- Are you able to have conversations which enhance assessments?
- Do you know about families outside of their immediate needs? Is this based on your own conversations?
- Are you aware of the barriers, systems may cause to being professionally curious, do you to ask more questions to fill in potential gaps?
- Do you regularly re-visit on going assessments to amend and adapt based on new knowledge?
- Do you share information with other professionals working with families in a timely manner?
- Are you aware of the need for verbatim recording and the impact that this can have if interpreted differently?
- What checks and balances does your service have in place to prevent desensitisation to common concerns such as neglect?

What can you do right now?

Do's

- Ask open questions
- Consider contradicting words and actions
- Speak to other professionals
- Speak to individuals alone
- Consider history
- Listen actively
- Manage workload effectively and seek support

Don't

- Make assumptions
- Avoid difficult conversations
- Miss or cut short appointments
- Paraphrase
- Delay recording or information sharing
- Normalise concerns just because they are frequent

Want to learn more?

- [The Deal for Children and Young People](#)
- [Visit our guidance and policies page for information on professional curiosity and dealing with disclosures.](#)