



# **Wigan Safeguarding Children's Partnership**

**Annual Report 2022-2023**

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## Foreword from our 3 Lead Partners

We are delighted to welcome you to the Annual Report for Wigan Safeguarding Children Partnership (WSCP). Wigan Safeguarding Children Partnership operates in accordance with the Children and Social Work Act 2017 and Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 statutory guidance. It provides the safeguarding arrangements under which the safeguarding partners and relevant agencies work together to coordinate their safeguarding services, identify, and respond to the needs of children in Wigan, WSCP commissions and publishes Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews, and provides scrutiny to ensure the effectiveness of the local safeguarding arrangements.

Helping and protecting our children is everyone's responsibility, we aim to achieve this through collaborative efforts across those agencies who work with children, young people and families.

The ambition of our arrangements is that everyone within the safeguarding arena is empowered to recognise, respond, and fulfil their responsibilities to ensure that children, young people, and families are effectively safeguarded, and their welfare is promoted.

At the heart of these arrangements is a commitment from us, as safeguarding partners, to work together effectively, to encourage constructive challenge where needed, and to foster a culture of professional curiosity and continual learning that drives improvement. We are proud of the way our partners work together adapting and responding to local need and risk.

As a partnership, we recognise the important role that the safeguarding arrangements will play in coordinating a response that places the best outcomes for children and families at its centre. Safeguarding continues to change with new and emerging risks and our safeguarding approach and interventions must develop in tandem with the pressures and challenges within our communities. To face these new safeguarding challenges, we will work together across the public services, and voluntary sector to build sustainable contextual safeguarding interventions for our local population.

Whilst recognising our joint approach to safeguarding children and families we also celebrate those areas of individuality and strength within our organisations, such as the work of the NHS GM to ensure that Safeguarding is firmly embedded within the core duties of all organisations across the health system. It is the responsibility of every NHS-funded organisation, and all staff working in the NHS, to ensure that the principles and duties of safeguarding children and adults are holistically, consistently, and conscientiously applied.

The Council continues to develop its Children's workforce to deliver on its vision of earliest help, working in an asset-based way in line with the agreed principals of Be Kind, Be Courageous, Be Positive and Be Accountable.

*"We want all children in Wigan to be happy, healthy and safe; to feel listened to and to have the maximum opportunities to be ambitious. If children or their families need help and support it should be at the right time, by the right person and in the right place for them."*

Greater Manchester Police (GMP) have as one of its priorities, the safeguarding of our children in Wigan, GMP will work with partners to exercise their duties; to protect those who are most vulnerable; arrest those who offend against children and work in partnership for better outcomes for children and families. GMP strive to ensure children and families feel safe and that GMP Police Force are approachable and listen to their needs.

In the coming year we will continue to gain assurance on the quality of safeguarding across the borough and ensure that the right children get the right help at the right time and ensuring help and support is offered consistently at the earliest opportunity



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## **Section 1: What do we know about our children in Wigan.**

Wigan is Metropolitan borough in Greater Manchester. The Metropolitan Borough includes Central Wigan and Towns such as Atherton, Hindley, Ashton in Makerfield, Ince, Leigh, Golborne and Tyldesley.

The current population of the Metropolitan borough of Wigan is 329,800. It is the second most populated borough in Greater Manchester.

18.34% of the total population are children (0-18 year olds).

## **What we know about the safeguarding experiences of children in Wigan:**

### **Children's Safeguarding and Support**



Most children and young people receive the support they need from their families, communities and universal services, but everyone needs help sometimes, and some children, young people and families need more help due to the challenges they face.

Within Wigan, most children and young people are able to live safely within loving and supportive families. Wigan partnership want to ensure that families receive support at the right time, by the right person, in the right place and believe that more families could be supported earlier to avoid the need for a social work intervention.

The focus on early help is driving Wigan's ambition to reduce the number of children that need a social worker. The number of referrals for children to social care reduced in 2022-2023, the rate stood at 762 per ten thousand children compared to 774 in the previous year. This has in part been driven by a reduction in re-referrals down to 24% from 25% in the previous year. The number of children requiring a child plan to safeguard them has reduced

from 90 per ten thousand children to 83. Child protection in Wigan is now lower than statistical neighbours, however, has remained higher than national and northwest average. These reductions represent a positive direction of travel and are the impact of improving practice and a greater emphasis on early intervention and prevention. The renewed approach to whole family support in Wigan, including opening of family hubs and introduction of a new practice model for social care in 2023-24, will underpin improved experiences for children and families across the continuum of need from early intervention and prevention through to safeguarding. Wigan are confident that this is the right focus for our children and families.

Whilst the number of children that are cared for by Wigan is below statistical neighbours, there have been increases in this over the last 5 years, from a very low starting point. At the end of March 2023, Wigan's rate of cared for children stood at 100 per 10 thousand which equates 679 children. This places Wigan above national and northwest averages but below our statistical neighbour comparison group. We want to see the number of children we care for reduce and see children supported by their wider families without the need to be cared for. In the last 12 months we have seen an increase in the number of children cared for by their wider family. We continue to keep most of our children in care within the borough, at the end of 2022-2023 66% of cared for children resided in Wigan which is above all comparator averages. This means that children can maintain the links too their local area.

Wigan support a number of children and young people who are at risk of exploitation with criminal exploitation now more prevalent than sexual exploitation. In part this is due to an increased partnership awareness of vulnerable young people being targeted by organised crime groups to act as couriers in county lines drug dealing.

With regards to youth crime, the long-term trends for Wigan show an overall reduction of first-time entrants into the criminal justice system, mirroring what has happened nationally. For example, from April 2016 – March 2017 there were 63 children who entered the criminal justice system for the first time compared to 46 between April 2021 and March 2022. Effective prevention and diversion practice and partnerships has led to more children being kept out of the formal youth justice system and not acquiring a criminal record. However, this does mean that for those children who do meet that threshold they are more likely to have complex needs that require effective multi-agency responses.

As reoffending rates only track those children who have entered the formal system this has contributed to Wigan's rates being challenging and tracking slightly above the north-west regional and national rates and on par with those seen in 2016 & 2017. During 2020/21 proven reoffending rates did reduce, although that was somewhat influenced by the Covid19 pandemic. The number of children subject to formal youth justice outcomes has reduced significantly in the past 7-years. For example, in 2021/22 76 children received a formal outcome compared to 183 in 2016/17. This means that those smaller numbers of children now subject to outcomes such as court orders are more complex often with multiple, overlapping needs, which makes reoffending rates more challenging.

In addition, we are managing more children with complex needs in the community, rather than custody. For example, only 4 children received a custodial sentence in 2022/23, compared to 12 in 2020/21. This is a positive achievement as the evidence shows that when children are sent to custody this can often be a damaging experience, which also has a detrimental impact on longer-term reoffending rates.

A number of Serious Case Reviews and a national Safeguarding Practice Review have highlighted the risks to very young children, especially from non-accidental injuries. In Wigan we have also had serious case reviews in relation to exploitation concerns, mental health

has been a recurring factor for young people and parents and the impact of domestic abuse is a common theme. The Wigan Safeguarding Children Partnership (WSCP) is building stronger links with the Domestic Abuse Board. WCSP has also made Early Help one of its priorities as have the NHS GM, this is so that we can continue to build on the work that has gone before and address issues earlier as part of protecting young people.

### **Education and SEND Statistical Data**

Of the current population of 23,353 primary aged children, 96% of pupils attend a school that is judged good or better by Ofsted. This compares to 85% of 19,087 secondary pupils. All of our Special schools are judged good or better.

Wigan has an excellent take up of childcare places which is currently 93% for 2 Year Olds, and 97.7% for 3-Year-olds.

Currently 2,879 Wigan children have an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP) (this is across all ages 0 – 25) and an additional 6,895 are registered as having special educational needs but do not have or require an EHCP.

28% of school age pupils are currently in receipt of free school meals.

In the academic year 2022-2023, 99 pupils were permanently excluded from Wigan schools/academies. In addition, 4,065 suspensions were issued to pupils throughout the year.

At the end of the year, 105 children were classed as missing education (CME) and there were 375 children registered as electively home educated (EHE). Further to the above, 459 children had a reduced timetable issued by their school. The reasons for this vary from a programme to support challenging behaviours to school refusal and emotionally based school avoidance.

As a local authority, our overall attendance rate at the end of the year was 90.8% attendance. 22.7% of children were persistently absent (less than 90% attendance) and 3.76% of children who were severely absent (less than 50% attendance).

All of these factors add to the challenges that our children, young people and their families experience. We know that when children attend a nursery, school or other registered education setting, it can be a protective factor. Professionals can both identify and report any concerns and support a plan to help that child or their family. We also know that if children are not attending, they are more vulnerable not only to falling behind in their education, but to other environmental harms e.g. exploitation.

## **Section 2: Governance and Scrutiny of Wigan Safeguarding Children Partnership** **2022-23**

## **The responsibilities, values, and ambitions of Wigan Safeguarding Children Partnership**

### **Responsibilities:**

The Children's Safeguarding Partnership was formed pursuant to the arrangements described in Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018). Wigan Safeguarding Children Partnership has key responsibilities, some defined statutorily and others at a local level:

- Overseeing the production and delivery of the local safeguarding strategies and plans and to ensure that partner agencies have clear and effective strategic and operational responses to safeguarding the people of Wigan and that they discharge their responsibility effectively.
- Ensuring that robust systems and processes are in place to hold partner agencies to account in relation to safeguarding policy and practice and to ensure that serious incidents and/or breaches in policy and practice are fully investigated and lessons learned.
- Delivering and ensuring the provision of guidance, support, and workforce development to partner agencies to enable them to discharge their safeguarding responsibilities effectively.
- Producing annual business plans and strategic planning documents in line with statutory requirements.
- Ensuring compliance with all statutory requirements for monitoring and reporting safeguarding activity at strategic level (e.g., reporting of performance management information, compliance with inspections).
- Ensuring that an appropriate and effective infrastructure is in place to support the Executive in delivering local safeguarding strategy and business plans.
- Overseeing the commitment of resources to support safeguarding in Wigan.

### **Values:**

Our values illustrate the approach the partnership will take in delivering its vision.

- Children have the right to live their lives free from violence, abuse, and neglect and to feel safe in their homes and communities.
- All children and young people should have the opportunity to grow up safely and be protected from abuse and neglect, crime, and anti-social behaviour.
- Safeguarding children is a shared responsibility of all agencies and agencies commit to holding each to account.
- The individual, family and community should be at the heart of safeguarding practice, and we should value and actively seek their views and experiences to shape future practice and policy.
- High quality multi-agency working based on consensus, equality, respect, and collaboration is essential to good safeguarding outcomes.
- There is a commitment to continuous improvement and learning across the partnership.



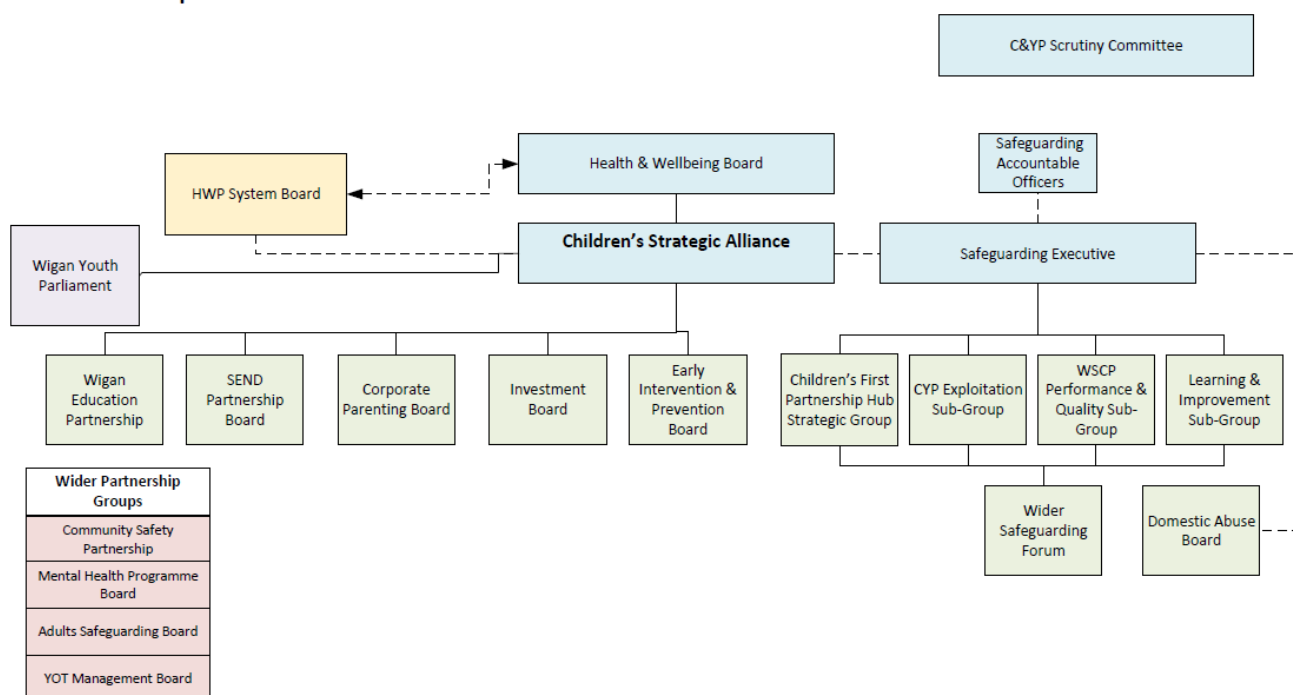
## Ambitions:

Our Ambition is that in achieving this we will:

- Champion the interests and rights of children and young people at risk of abuse and neglect.
- Ensure there is an emphasis on outcomes for children, young people, and families at risk of abuse and neglect.
- Provide independent and objective challenge and leadership that is essential to ensure the best outcomes for those in need of protection and safeguarding amidst competing priorities.
- Involve all partners, not just police, health and the local authority with a clear platform and duty to co-operate.
- Scrutinise and improve practice – using a range of new practice and individual user led approaches and meaningful measures to provide accountable oversight and feedback on performance and outcomes, with a focus on before crisis and that incorporates early help across the life course.
- Learn from experience and evidence of what works well – creating workable strategic and operational arrangements that fit form to function and are proportionate, efficient, effective, and adequately resourced.
- Meet the leadership challenge of connecting multiple partners together and collaborate to achieve common goals and within new ways of working.
- Ensure that every child and young person becomes a confident, resilient adult.

**The Governance of the Partnership sits within the structure outlined below:**

## Partnership Governance



## Governance in terms of Wider Strategic Partnerships

All Executive members are expected to promote the safeguarding children's agenda within wider strategic meetings and use the opportunities afforded to persuade and influence other parts of the system as and when necessary to ensure the delivery of the partnership's vision.

## Involving Children and Families

The Executive are keen to get the views of our children and families and plan to collect this through a number of routes:

- We will understand how our single agencies collect the voices of children and families through our Section 11 audit and our planned Peer Visits.
- We will collect the voice of children through audit.
- We will collect the voices of children and their families through our case reviews.
- We will collect the voice of children through consultation and focus groups.

Whilst we have oversight of single agency approaches to collecting the voices of families and we meet parents and children to elicit their voices through case reviews we still need to improve our engagement in this area and have plans to further embed our approach and to develop a response in 2023 – 2024. WSCP are also planning training for 2023 – 2024 in conjunction with Wigan Youth Zone and young people.

Within year for 2022 – 2023 the WSCP did conduct work with children at a local Primary School and a local Academy. This led to us sharing guidance with professionals and us recognizing the need for further training in this area. The work also fed into our practice priorities.

We asked the children what qualities they would want to see in the professional they worked with and what would make communication easier with those professionals – the responses can be found below:

## What children and young people have told us?



Year 5 and 6 at Ince Primary School told us they wanted professionals to have these qualities:

When asked what would make it easier to talk to professionals, the children at Beech Hill Primary School said:

- Speak to me in a quiet, comfortable, private space where we feel most comfortable, this could be at home or school – let us decide.
- Talk to us face to face and make good eye contact then we know you are listening.
- Talk in a way that matches our age – not using too much writing as it can be hard for some children.
- We would like to talk to people that we already have a relationship with.
- Having someone there we trust, like our teacher would make us feel more comfortable.
- Listen to us and don't interrupt.
- Doing what you say you will.

The student voice at Outwood Academy in Hindley, told us they wanted professionals to have these qualities:



When asked what would make it easier to talk to professionals, the children at Outwood Academy said:

- Speak to me in private and don't speak down to me
- To have someone I trust involved to support me
- Don't bombard me with questions
- For professionals to speak to me in an understanding way and not treat me like a baby
- Speak kindly and actually listen to what I am saying
- Make sure I feel safe, and I can talk to you

## Independent Scrutiny

Working Together 2018 states that the purpose of the independent scrutiny is to provide assurance in judging the effectiveness of multi-agency arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in a local area, including arrangements to identify and review serious child safeguarding cases.

Robust and objective scrutiny cannot rest with one individual or a single exercise, rather it requires a range of mechanisms to achieve two aims:

- To ensure Wigan has robust and effective safeguarding children's arrangements in place that are owned and delivered by key partners and all relevant bodies.
- To ensure that the plan is subject to regular constructive challenge throughout the year and that the three lead partners address identified weaknesses.

In our last annual report (**2021- 2022**) Wigan Safeguarding Children Partnership's Independent Scrutineer made the following recommendations for the Partnership (WSCP's response to these recommendations is in *italics*):

1. There is a need to "clarify links and working arrangements with other existing bodies such as the Community Safety Partnership and the Greater Manchester Alliance".

**Completed:** *Partners have shared membership of different strategic Boards and Partnerships and recognise that they represent children's safeguarding within each of these arenas. Partners recognise their joint impact and sphere of development for children and families. This work will need to be fully embedded in 2023 – 2024.*

2. There is a need to develop a multi-agency performance management framework which will play a pivotal role in aiding partners to evaluate the impact of their activity. This should be underpinned by an outcome focused approach (success criteria) and robust governance arrangements regarding the development and implementation of delivery plans.

**Partially Completed:** *This has been devised but needs to be fully embedded.*

3. The Annual report needs to provide information of the actions taken by partners to implement the recommendations arising from statutory learning reviews or any improvements secured as a result of the action taken. Also, the Annual report should contain information as to how the findings from National Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews have been considered or acted upon at a local level.

**Partially Completed:** *This is evidenced within the report – see the section on the work of the Executive and LCSPRs. WSCP acknowledges further work needs to be completed on 'closing the loop to measure both impact and distance travelled'.*

4. The decision to re-define priorities will aid the partnership to focus its attention on the issue(s) that will have the greatest impact on improving outcomes for children and families.

**Completed:** *The Priorities for WSCP have been defined and have now translated into outcomes within our strategic Plan.*

### **Section 3 WSCP Priorities**

#### **The Priorities for Wigan Safeguarding Children Partnership 2022-23**

It was agreed to carry the 2021-22 priorities forward into the first 2 quarters of the new year (2022- 2023). These priorities were:

- Neglect.
- Front Door arrangements i.e., how a multi-agency safeguarding system responds at the initial points of contact and management of concern.
- Children's mental health within the context of families.
- Domestic abuse within the context of families.

At the beginning of Quarter 3 the Executive held a Development Session due to changes at the senior strategic level in two of the three key statutory partners. At the Development Day the Executive agreed the core purpose of Wigan Safeguarding Children Partnership (WSCP) was to:

- Provide effective and informed leadership to the local safeguarding system (including implementation of strategies designed to keep children safe from abuse and neglect and build resilience in families and local communities)
- Deliver our shared responsibility for the safeguarding of children and young people in the borough (so everybody understands, embraces and is confident to deliver their responsibilities)
- Promote positive working relationships and effective communication with each other and children/young people and families to keep children safe from harm.
- Identify and act on local and national learning.
- Provide assurance to the Wigan community that services are continuously improving, and practitioners are making a difference to the safety of children.

The Development Day was also instrumental in developing a new set of priorities and agreeing several workstreams.

Linked to WSCP core purpose to keep children safe from abuse and neglect and to act on local and national learning, partners determined the following priorities:

- Delivering early help to children and families.

Supporting the workforce to be confident, knowledgeable, and skilled (to adopt a whole family approach to improving outcomes for children and families)

#### **Delivering the Priorities**

The priorities are decided by the Executive and outcomes are agreed for each priority. The Executive Leadership recognised the need for a 3-year Strategic Plan to be produced this would then be devolved to the subgroups who would then map the delivery of outcomes through activity. The progress of outcomes is reported to Executive on a quarterly basis, by exception.

The Business Unit will report on the Annual Plan at the start of the year, midyear, and year end. Future plans include Chairs of subgroups meeting twice yearly with a view to discussing areas of overlap or complimentary delivery.

The reasons for the new priorities are outlined below:

### **(Key Priority 1) Delivering Early Help to children and families:**

This priority was identified in response to emerging need. The intention is that by making this a priority the partnership will, in the short to medium term, start to build capacity and strength in partnership agencies to prevent children and family's needs escalating into needing safeguarding at the highest end of the continuum.

- This offer has always been there at a universal Level. The aim is to join the offer up more effectively and help partners to put systems and processes in place that will ensure a holistic offer to children and families.
- The development of Early Intervention also recognises and responds to the Government pilots of Family Hubs.
- This work will also be an early building block in preparing the partnership for the implementation of the McAllister Report into Children's Social Care (Stable Homes Built on Love).

### **(Key Priority 2) Supporting the workforce to be confident, knowledgeable, and skilled (to adopt a whole family approach to improving outcomes for children and families)**

This priority was selected as it is the confidence, knowledge and skills of our workforce that underpins the effective delivery of the whole safeguarding system.

Key Priorities 1 and 2 are closely interrelated in that the developing Early Intervention offer will rely not just on robust systems and processes being in place, but also on a comprehensive Training Offer delivered by partners to partners, enhancing multi agency relationships as they progress. To accommodate this, our Training Offer will now encompass the Earliest Help training offer.

In addition to this the Safeguarding Children Partnership also wanted to further develop the knowledge and practice of professionals following the learning from Reviews and multi-agency audits the previous year. This culminated in the development of Practice Priorities about how we work, rather than what we do, these are now part of the WSCP Training offer:

**Practice Priorities**

Wigan Council

**1. Professional Curiosity, Critical Thinking and Challenge:**

We need to check out everything we are told – with the children, with the network, with partner agencies: Triangulate it. Successfully engage those who may be reluctant to work with services.

[Professional Curiosity, Critical Thinking and Challenge - All Documents](#)

[Voice of Children and Their Daily Lived Experiences - All Documents](#)

**2. Impact and Analysis**

Make the links between the history and the current situation – what does it mean for the future?  
How likely is change (and sustained change)?  
What has been the impact of this child's situation?  
Always answer the **So What?** question in your analysis

[Impact and Analysis - All Documents](#)

**3. SMART Planning:**

Be specific about who will do what and by which DATE. Do not generalise – describe. What does support, or direct work, or family work, look like?  
Use the plan as a tool by which to measure progress. Go through the actions. What has been done? What difference has it made? How do we know this? If there has not been an impact, do we need to do something differently? If so, change the plan.

[SMART Planning - All Documents](#)

**The Deal 2030**

**Voice of the Child**

**QAPP Unit**



## **Structure and Governance**

The Executive decided that a change in structure and governance was required to make subgroups more effective and efficient removing any form of duplication. These changes were also designed to improve accountability and reporting routes to the Executive.

There was also an intention to recognise the wider system of Strategic Groups across Wigan Leaders and consider the development of close working interrelationships with those groups. This is to be facilitated by those attending other strategic groups ensuring that 2-way communication takes place.

**Refreshed published Multi Agency Safeguarding Arrangements** – to reflect those changes made on the Development Days

**A consistent approach to Practice** - There was an identified need to continue to have systems that identify and respond to variable practice, this is a challenge that affects the partnership and is apparent across case review activity and performance data.

A need to **capitalise upon wider system learning** including developing the safeguarding performance data framework that provides better intelligence and insight and will inform quicker identification and response to emerging issues.

A need for a full Wigan Safeguarding Children Partnership **training needs analysis exercise to be undertaken**. The training offer in place is based on a Training Needs Analysis from 2018 and needed to be updated.

**The training team to be refreshed** to reflect the changing training offer with contributions from across the partnership.

An **outcomes-based effectiveness framework** to be developed to help us to reflect on our achievements as a partnership. The point of an outcomes-based approach is to shift thinking from how services operate (what it does) to the good that is accomplished (what it achieves).

A **3-year Strategic Plan** to be produced and embedded.

## **Section 4: The work of Executive and its Subgroups**

### **What did The Children's Executive accomplish 2022-2023?**

The Children's Executive held oversight of the work of the subgroups, celebrating achievements and challenging when there were difficulties in the pace of progress. The Executive also had to respond to new safeguarding challenges. This is demonstrated through the reformation of the structure and the refresh of the Multi Agency Safeguarding Arrangements, both were adapted to ensure we had the most effective safeguarding system.

Executive oversight included:

- Redesign of the Front Door to ensure an effective partnership response.
- Formation of the Early Help Board
- The embedding of a revised Threshold of Need
- Developing workforce data sets for the areas of Police, Children's Social Care and Health
- Adopting Practice Priorities
- Monitoring of the finance for the Safeguarding Children's Partnership
- Legacy LCSPRs published
- Oversight and learning from National and Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews – including 'Star' and 'Arthur' and 'Child Q'.
- Training and Workforce Development.

### **What did Regulators tell the Partners?**

In May 2022 Children's Social Care (CSC) had their Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services (ILACs) Ofsted inspection and were graded Requires Improvement to be Good. This had followed a series of Focused Visits in the years 2018/19/20 where concerns were raised by the Regulator about the quality of social work practice and the work of the partnership. The Partnership was pleased that the subsequent hard work over the pandemic period had been recognised.

Specifically commenting about the WSCP Ofsted Inspectors said:

*'strategic governance has improved since the multi-agency safeguarding partnership separated from adults' social care to focus more specifically on services for children. There are regular corporate accountability meetings in which leaders offer more effective scrutiny of practice, informed by stronger performance data. Partners and stakeholders have confidence in the DCS to lead on the changes needed in order to make long-term sustainable improvements to social work practice.'*

There remained a number of areas that required improvement to ensure that practice was consistently good and these continued to be part of the Children's Social Care Improvement Plan, and were governed by the Children's Improvement Board where all partners were represented as well as independent scrutiny of the LGA and Wigan's Sector Led Improvement Partner (Essex Council).

### **Wigan Safeguarding Children Partnership Sub-Groups:**

The Subgroups are each co-chaired by Senior Leaders from the Partnership.



### **Strategic Childrens First Partnership Hub Subgroup**

**In 2022 to 2023 the Childrens First Partnership Subgroup was chaired by the Practice Director for Childrens Social Care (Local Authority)**

**The Group focussed on the following areas of delivery:**

- Increasing partnership participation in the children's first partnership hub
- Launching an Online Referral Portal
- Ensuring effective timeliness of response at the front door
- Developing Early Help

**Within the year the group achieved the following:**

A successful relaunch of the subgroup to include complex safeguarding, a refreshed terms of reference was produced to reflect this.

The effective implementation of the online referral portal which has resulted in an improved partnership response in the hub meaning children and families receive a timely service.

Further development of the partnership within the hub, including increasing the health resource, and ensuring a consistent presence of Start Well and Early Help coordinators thus supporting partners to develop the early help offer. There was also evidence of an increase in the number of Early Help assessments completed by partners indicating that families were receiving earliest help. Daily meetings were re-established with partners which reduced the number of contacts from Greater Manchester Police to the partnership hub, this meant that children get the right support from the right agency at the right time.



**Areas where further work is required are as follows:**

Though the partnership offer improved in the hub, there is still room for further improvement in terms of the response to Domestic Abuse. An IDVA will be joining the hub to strengthen the domestic abuse offer in the future. CAMHs are also exploring opportunities to increase mental health support to children and young people referred to the hub, particularly increasing awareness of the THRIVE model.

Now the online portal is live, data will be further developed to inform the partnership about the demographic and the needs of children and families referred to the children's first partnership hub.

The introduction of a consultation line and increased partner representation in the hub is planned to further strengthen the response to risk and support for children in need of help and protection in Wigan.

**What impact did the subgroup have in terms of Children and Families and in terms of Partnership?**

Data evidences that children are receiving a timely response when a contact is made. A report by the independent scrutineer confirms that decisions made about the level of support for children and families was appropriate.

The 'Front Door' was subject of a focussed visit by Ofsted (May 2023) which recognised children in need of help and protection are identified in a timely way in the children first partnership hub and there is appropriate representation from partner agencies co-located in the hub. Ofsted found information sharing between agencies is effective and that this contributes to timely and proportionate decision-making.

**WSCP Exploitation Subgroup**

The Exploitation Subgroup focussed on the following aspects for 2022-2023:

- Improving governance arrangements and reporting into the partnership so there was a shared understanding of performance around exploitation.
- Improving transition arrangements for young people into adulthood
- Developing the 'ACT Model' to ensure the service delivery model supported the right children at the right time.
- Realigning the group to report into the Childrens First Partnership Hub Subgroup to support an integrated approach.

The Exploitation sub-group operated until December 2022. Following the re-structure of the governance arrangements of WSCP the partnership saw an opportunity to integrate oversight and the group now sits under Childrens First Partnership Hub subgroup. This group remains well-attended with a real focus on driving the quality of conversations to accurately identify any barriers and areas for increased scrutiny. The mandatory six weekly reporting into the sub-group for both police and children's social care has improved the transparency of processes, operations, and cases within the Complex Safeguarding Team. There is a constant focus on ensuring that members of the group recognise their role as providing objective, critical oversight of the approach to exploitation.

There is also a Greater Manchester Child Sexual Exploitation Group that sits centrally. Peer Reviews are undertaken on an annual basis in each Authority and several cases are subject to multi agency audit. This provides us with important feedback for the Partnership to ensure we have effective services to tackle exploitation.

## **What impact did the subgroup have in terms of Children and Families and in terms of Partnership?**

The subgroup hosted a GM Adolescent Safeguarding event in 2022 and started to look at how each agency could develop their offer for adolescents and made key links within the context of understanding the impact of neglect. This in turn led to the development of the Greater Manchester Adolescent Safeguarding Framework, underpinned by six overarching practice principles. The service delivery has continued to develop in 2023 moving towards a more integrated approach towards meeting adolescents needs. This has included the development of Reach – Wigan's new safeguarding adolescent service.

The subgroups delivery plan took shape during 2022/23 around the three priorities, prevent, protect, and pursue and the prosecution of those responsible, these remain an area of focus. Learning from Reviews has been an important element. In 2022/23 the learning focused on ensuring our Complex Safeguarding Team was concentrated on exploitation only, not wider case holding. This change has meant the team are now focused on the identification and support for children where exploitation is a feature. Risk assessments tools have been improved significantly and case closure decisions are always made after multi agency decisions are made to ensure children get the right step-down decisions.

Feedback from children, young people and their families is routinely sought, a monthly summary of feedback is produced and shared.

### **Feedback from a Young Person:**

*'The support from the complex safeguarding team has been helpful and I now know a lot more about criminal and sexual exploitation. I feel more confident in my understanding of control and unhealthy relationships. I liked being able to meet you in the community'.*

### **Feedback from Parent:**

*It's had a good impact I would say, she's opening up more and she said she enjoyed chats with X. She's started doing bereavement counselling now too which I think is going to help cos she said she didn't want to talk to me about it. X is sending her over info for a debating group too she wants to do, which is good.*

The roll out of the 3D Virtual reality serious and violence crime reduction production across Wigan High Schools took place. In total 7 High Schools participated, and 600 children took part in the activity. This tool for schools supported awareness raising to serious violence and crime for secondary age young people, the aim was to help them to appreciate the impact of both for themselves and others.

Below is feedback from staff whose pupils engaged with this production:

*'It helped us to discuss many difficult issues and it also indicated who had experienced these issues.'*

*'The Pupils found the experience really good and engaged really well.'*

*'This was a great success and would recommend it any high school to use as a preventative measure for dealing with the issues.'*

*'Pupils engaged well with the content; some were particularly vocal as they watched'.*

*'They (our pupils) really enjoyed it, especially the fact it was filmed locally.'*

Some of our more emotionally affected children found some aspects hard to watch. But when talking it through they knew how to handle their own concern.'

The subgroup worked well to develop an integrated approach to exploitation sharing performance data and working to offer assurances through the system up to WSCP Executive level.

### **Early Intervention and Prevention Subgroup**

This Group was chaired by Director Prevention, Early Help & Sufficiency and Assistant Director Education.

The Subgroup focused on the following areas of delivery:

- Leadership, partnership, and governance arrangements to deliver our Early Help offer in Wigan.
- Identifying our core Early Help Workforce and developing our Early Help Team.
- Enabling delivery of a whole family, family hubs life course model across our localities and in partnership.
- Developing our early help family assessment.

#### **Within the year the group achieved the following:**

- Obtained buy-in from our partners to the shared vision and key objectives to ensure a truly integrated approach and developed a strategy and programme plan for Early Help and Family Hub development, encouraging that system approach to a more balanced system which will ensure help is provided to our families early enough to prevent crisis.
- Inclusion of Voluntary Community and Faith Sector at Board and in workstream and family hub development.
- Investment in Transformation Lead and Early Help Development Team.
- Utilising the Supporting Families outcomes framework within our new family assessment to determine improved outcomes for children and families.
- Identified key interdependencies, such as school attendance and Thrive.
- Identifying and making full use of community activities in the 7 neighbourhoods to ensure a family/community view.
- Developed a family voice and experience framework, to enable mechanisms for feedback.
- New Early Help Whole Family assessment was put in place, this was produced with partners. In addition, training was provided and made accessible to partners. This work will allow us to record all issues affecting the family and outcomes in a quantifiable way and run reports on these.
- Early Help drop ins were successful in enabling a coordinated approach to supporting our families when they need it.

#### **Areas where further work is required:**

- The group continues to establish a business case for future development of the family hub model.

- Gaining a full understanding of the VCSE landscape.
- Work is still ongoing to provide clarity in terms of location and alignment of Family Hub model with Start Well provision.
- Enabling a performance outcomes framework.

### **What impact did the subgroup have in terms of Children and Families and in terms of Partnership?**

- This subgroup has had a real impact on partnership. Ensuring a commitment from the WSCP and Integrated place-based delivery group, who have identified Early Help as a key priority. We have engaged all key partners in workstreams and development of our family hub model.
- We have undertaken the Early Help system guide self-assessment with partners for the second time, which will help us to identify our priorities for further improvement to mature as an early help partnership/system.
- The weekly drop-in session supports schools and partners with advice and consultation, has raised partners' understanding of thresholds. There has been an increase in the number of early help assessments completed by partner agencies.
- We have aligned our work with the children and young people's participation plan and have developed a framework for engagement and codesign. However, we have yet to see the impact of this on our children and young people and their families.
- We have developed a whole family early help assessment which will mean that families will only have to tell their story once and that partners have a truly integrated approach to early help to support the whole family. These assessments are thorough and detailed and inform subsequent plans which have clear targets, timescales and are regularly reviewed.
- Creative, child focused work is undertaken by the 'start well' service, and this has a positive impact on children's experiences and outcome.
- Introduction of our early help development team means that families are receiving earlier help and support which is coordinated to meet a range of complex need.

### **Performance Subgroup**

This was a newly formed group, formed to focus on multi agency Performance and to report to the Executive. The Performance Group was chaired by the Independent Scrutineer with a view to a partner taking the Chair in the future.

The Performance Group saw an improvement with regards to data and analysis of performance data through Quarter 2 and Quarter 3. Agencies are beginning to analyse their own data and the impact it has on their service as well as thinking about the impact that their data may have on other services and ultimately the children and families of Wigan.

There is now a set core membership of the Performance Subgroup and a corresponding term of reference outlining the purpose of the group. Meetings are set each quarter and there is a robust system in place for email reminders and data deadlines.

The current data set is under review, with the aims of creating an outcome focused data sets which combines all agency data to give a more Partnership focused data set that will provide an effective window on the safeguarding system.

## **Section 5: Learning from Case Reviews**

Through the year the WSCP reviews cases at different thresholds to consider the opportunity for partners to learn.

One form of case review is referred to as either a Local or a National Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews (as defined by. Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018). These reviews mean that the child has suffered 'significant harm'.

The purpose of a child safeguarding practice review is for agencies and individuals to learn lessons that improve the way in which they work, both individually and collectively, to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

In 2022 – 2023 WSCP did not participate in any National Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews. However, there were several Local Child Safeguarding Reviews (LCSPRs) in progress and one new local review commenced.

The table below outlines the progress of LCSPRs April 2022- March 2023.

| <b>LCSPR Progress</b>        | <b>Count</b> |
|------------------------------|--------------|
| LCSPR's started              | 1            |
| LCSPR's Published            | 5            |
| LCSPR's awaiting publication | 2            |

## **Key Learning**

There were several key learning themes identified through multiple review and audit processes these included:

- Unexplored individuals – those individuals acknowledged to be a part of children's lives but never considered in the widest sense.
- Poor consideration of the impact of parental issues on their capacity to parent
- Consideration and analysis of family history/previous contacts
- Due weight given to nonprofessional referrals.
- Impact of COVID 19
- Quality and timeliness of information sharing
- Responding to extra familial risk
- Consideration of Impact of Trauma and abuse on daily lived experiences.
- Application of local and national legislation and guidance.

It is positive that the thematic areas identified align with the WSCP practice priorities and demonstrates that the partnership understands its systems and practice-based gaps. There are workstreams and work plans ongoing to address identified themes throughout the coming year. The partnership understands that many of our learning themes are common nationally and we continue to make links to regional and national forums and research to strengthen our approaches to finding and embedding improvements.

## **What have we done to implement and embed learning? What went well?**

WSCP improved the LCSPR process to ensure that families were involved in developing our LCSPR reports, this enriched the content of our reports. In 2022- 2023 WSCP began a review of the case review process which includes strengthening single agency ability to identify learning at Rapid Review stage. A skills-based approach will seek to improve single agency analysis of their learning to determine next steps sooner. In addition, we ensured we focussed on the thematic learning within reviews rather than retelling the child's story.

WSCP have produced learning circles relating to 7 LCSPR's. This was in response to feedback from the partnership. Learning Circles are a PowerPoint Presentation with voice over. The Learning & Improvement team have delivered 4 face-to-face Learning Circle sessions to a multi-agency audience in this year. The learning circles have also been circulated to partners, where they have been adapted to suit their single agency requirements.

WSCP have produced a summary of learning undertaken via review processes in 2022. We are beginning to understand the impact of single agency learning and distance travelled in relation to local and national learning/priorities better. There is evidence that single agencies are acknowledging and responding to local and national learning. We are developing stronger routes to identifying and disseminating learning at the earliest opportunity.

We are also developing the Audit function to review key thematic areas of learning, 'one year on' to measure progress made in agencies because of those themes that have been identified through review.



## **Areas where we still need to make progress.**

Partners require more time to evidence the impact of new learning/workstreams in the system. The Business unit are working to strengthen the quality assurance process building on the Safeguarding Effectiveness framework to promote partnership accountability.

For some LCSPR's have experienced delay in publication. Delays were due to challenge in disclosure to involved parties, ongoing criminal investigations, and routes to publication.

These processes have been strengthened so that possible barriers to publication are given full consideration at earlier points in the review process. However, the Partnership accepts that there may still be rare occasions where due to the complexity of the children and families who are subject to review, delay may not be avoidable.

## **What we need to do?**

The Partnership are on a journey to ensure that all partners have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities. We will continue to work on strengthening processes and adding clarity to ensure that partners feel supported and enabled.

This year the partnership will work to develop a case review policy which is clear and effective in preventing delays in our review processes. Partners will be provided with a range of opportunities to contribute to the developments and practice-based sessions build skills and confidence in the application of the refreshed process.

The partnership continues to work on strengthening quality assurance and action tracking through workstreams. This will prevent duplication of work and a sense of lag around our action plan completion rates.

WSCP need to seek opportunity to come together to develop their shared understanding and priorities and to reflect on the distance travelled, where we are currently and where we are headed.

## **What impact have LCSPRs had?**

As noted nationally (Safeguarding Practice Review Panel, 2022\*), the partnership had recognised that LCSPRs were not delivering significantly more impact when compared to the impact already provided through the Rapid Review Process. Our processes identify that learning from the rapid review had already been implemented prior to the LCSPR and we have seen a decrease in the number of LCSPRs undertaken.

Similarly, to other partnerships nationally, we have identified a need for greater clarification around when an LCSPR was required. Partners have highlighted a need for clearer guidance and consistency in its application. Over the coming year, WSCP will consider the benefit of Thematic LCSPRs in offering additional value to rapid reviews.

It is apparent that communication/training/learning from review processes is being shared effectively by the WSCP business unit and that this is informing work planning and priorities across the partnership.

The WSCP audit schedule has been directly developed by learning from reviews and we have seen a new approach to audit completion developed and rolled out. This has brought

improved engagement from partners with more ownership of contributions and improved responses to actions set.

Partners have a clear understanding of the learning from LCSPR's and are beginning to recognise how this learning generates outputs across the system. There remain challenges in developing measurable outcomes, but there is evidence of work towards this which will continue in the coming year.

**\*Reference:**

Jonathan Dickens, Julie Taylor, Laura Cook, Joanna Garstang, Nutmeg Hallett, Cynthia Okpokiri and Julia Rimmer (2022) Annual review of local child safeguarding practice reviews.

**Section 6: Learning from Multi-Agency Audit in 2022-2023**

| Date                           | Theme                                          | Rationale                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Summary Of Findings                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 15 <sup>th</sup> June 2022     | Neglect                                        | Neglect features in almost all current LCSPR's. Multi agency and single agency audit processes tell us that progress and outcomes in relation to neglect are often impacted by assessment fatigue, professional over optimism, inconsistencies in reflective practice. The audit process will consider systemic learning and improvement opportunities across agencies to identify, respond to and improve outcomes in relation to neglect. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consideration of Parental capacity to sustain positive change</li> <li>• Recognition of the role of Young Carers</li> <li>• Record Keeping</li> <li>• The cumulative impact of neglect</li> </ul>                                                                             |
| 10 <sup>th</sup> August 2022   | Repeat Child Protection Plans (CPP)            | Our Performance data showed us that too many children in Wigan had been subject to repeat child protection planning.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good child focussed record keeping</li> <li>• Correct multi-agency representation at meetings</li> <li>• Incidents should not be seen in isolation.</li> <li>• Well documented Family relationships</li> <li>• The cumulative impact of domestic abuse on families</li> </ul> |
| 14 <sup>th</sup> December 2022 | Domestic Abuse                                 | To consider the impact of multi-agency arrangements in relation to repeat cases heard at Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) with children living in the household. Considerable investment and changes to process have taken place in relation to the partnership response to Domestic Abuse.                                                                                                                                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Record keeping on interventions</li> <li>• All plans should be shared with agencies working with the family</li> <li>• Recording the child's wishes and feelings</li> <li>• GP involvement is crucial</li> <li>• All plans should be SMART</li> </ul>                         |
| 8 <sup>th</sup> February 2023  | Non-Professional Contacts into the front door. | To consider the path of travel for non-professionals contacts which come into the front door. To ascertain the level of weighting given to these non-professional contacts and ensure that it is in line with standards. The audit will consider the effort and training has been given to ensuring that negative                                                                                                                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sourcing of information</li> <li>• Case recording</li> <li>• Escalation and Resolution procedures</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                  |

|  |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |  |
|--|--|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
|  |  | language is not placed in commentary, such as “malicious” to describe contacts, this links to National Recommendations from the Star and Arthur reports.<br>The audit will consider the quality of multi-agency working and that this is noted in case files and recordings. |  |
|--|--|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|

### **What went well?**

- The Audit Framework has improved.
- Good and improving multi – agency participation in audit
- Improved case analysis
- Improved challenge within meetings

### **Where can we improve?**

- We need to improve the leadership of our audit process, there is a plan in place to address this.
- Our audits need to be more outcome focussed; future audits will benchmark against what ‘Good’ looks like.
- We want to triangulate our audit with the voice of practitioners and are in the process of implementing this.

### **Section 11- Self Assessment Audits 2022- 2023**

Section 11 of the Children Act 2004, places duties on a range of agencies and individuals to ensure their functions and any services the contract to others fully consider and promote the welfare of children. Wigan Safeguarding Children Partnership conducts this activity biannually through a self-assessment audit.

### **What is working well?**

- Agencies have a clear leadership and safeguarding structure in place with senior individuals who take responsibility for safeguarding within their organisation.
- Agencies have a robust information sharing policy in place and this is shared with their staff.
- Agencies are committed to providing representation at all partnership meetings.
- Agencies have a clear whistle blowing policy in place and use induction and training opportunities to embed this into the workforce.
- Agencies have a supervision policy in place which support staff and are using staff surveys to gauge the wishes and feelings of their staff and are putting some of these in to practice.
- Agencies have safer recruitment policies in place and have appropriate safeguarding children training for their staff.
- Parental and carer views listened to across agencies and are beginning to shape plans and provision for children and families.

- Agencies feel they are making progress with embedding learning, agencies tend to use similar methods of dissemination i.e., 7-minute briefings shared with frontline practitioners and learning weaved through single agency training where relevant.
- Policies have been updated in response to COVID 19 and agencies moved quickly to provide virtual offers for children and families, whilst face to face working continued where necessary with COVID safe guidance.
- Practice was amended with consideration to safeguarding where lockdown prevented face to face contact.

### **Where can we improve?**

- Improvements continue to ensure good or better practice is embedded across all agencies.
- Training uptake is below target for some agencies.
- Some agencies need to further embed the supervision policy to ensure that it is making an impact on the lives of children.
- The voice of the child and family is not central to all work undertaken by different agencies.
- The voice of the child is missing from some plans, which means that their thoughts and views are not always taken into consideration when plans are made.
- Several agencies feel it is difficult to evidence when learning has been embedded in the front line.
- Larger number of children are now Electively Home Educated.
- While agencies are aware of bereavement support services, there is little understanding in relation to their capacity to support during the Pandemic.
- Learning processes were delayed during the pandemic.
- Increased demand for Mental Health services vs capacity.

### **Section 7: Training and Workforce Development**

In 2022 – 2023 Wigan Safeguarding Children's Partnership offered a range of training courses in various formats, assisting partner agencies in continuous development of their workforce, ensuring that statutory responsibilities were met. Within this year, there were 3655 eLearning course completions and 3173 delegate places used in face to face and virtual learning, meaning there was a total of 6828 course completions over the course of the year. Prior to the training offer being published, a learning needs analysis was completed with partner agencies, which recognised that the learning offer was aligned with practice priorities and was reflective of priority areas emerging from case review activity, and individual needs of partners.

One key development from this year was the refresh of Professional Curiosity and Challenge training, which was quality assured through a multi-agency group of partner representatives in line with the introduction of practice priorities. This course had a 638% increase in attendance from 29 places in 2021/22 to 219 in 2022/23. The feedback from delegates also reflects these positive developments with delegates feeling empowered to embed these values in their practice and feeling more confident overall in this area.

In line with identified priorities, a train the trainer programme for representatives from partners was also introduced in October 2022 for Graded Care Profile 2 training, facilitated

by NSPCC. This increased WSCP training capacity from 120 places in 2021/22 to 150 in 2022/23 and a projected 165 places in 2023/24.

As expected, courses with the highest level of attendance throughout the year reflect priorities outlined by leaders across partner agencies which included professional curiosity and challenge, case conference and child protection training, the children's referral process and Graded Care Profile 2

There was a high number of safeguarding courses completed by education providers across the year reflecting the comprehensive coverage of statutory courses provided through a robust 'buyback' offer, supported by the production of a model safeguarding policy and considering learning needs identified through the Section 175 safeguarding audit process. Over 1100 school staff accessed face to face safeguarding training and 264 senior leaders accessing Designated Safeguarding Lead training this year.

## **Section 8: Wigan Safeguarding Children Partnership Financial Report 2022-2023**

### **FINANCIAL REPORT – CHILDREN'S SAFEGUARDING PARTNERSHIP**

|                                                       | 2022/23 Actual | 2023/24 Estimate |
|-------------------------------------------------------|----------------|------------------|
| <i><b>Expenditure</b></i>                             | £              | £                |
| Salaries & Expenses                                   | 254,242        | 295,040          |
| Agency                                                | 4,403          | 0                |
| Professional Fees                                     | 33,634         | 35,000           |
| Equipment and Supplies                                | 21,762         | 23,000           |
| Conference and Meetings                               | 1,180          | 2,000            |
| <b>Total Expenditure</b>                              | <b>315,221</b> | <b>355,040</b>   |
| <i><b>Contributions</b></i>                           |                |                  |
| Greater Manchester Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust | 6,234          | 6,546            |
| Wigan Council                                         | 118,345        | 148,286          |
| Training Income                                       | 72,428         | 73,216           |
| GMICB                                                 | 75,434         | 56,160           |
| Wigan Borough CCG - (part year funding)               | 14,040         | 0                |
| WWL NHS Foundation Trust                              | 12,468         | 13,091           |
| Greater Manchester Police                             | 14,400         | 14,400           |
| National Probation Service                            | 1,872          | 1,966            |
| <b>Total Income</b>                                   | <b>315,221</b> | <b>313,665</b>   |
| <b>Funding Shortfall</b>                              |                | <b>41,375</b>    |

## **Section 9 Conclusion and next steps**

**In 2022-2023 WSCP achieved the following:**

- The new Structure was introduced at Quarter 3, with the aim to increase effectiveness.
- The Children and Young People Alliance was formed to support wider outcomes for children.



- The Early Intervention Strategic Group was formed to provide earliest help to children and families, this aims to ensure the right support by the right agencies at the right time for our families.
- The MASA was revised so that we could communicate the revised safeguarding arrangements, keeping partner agencies informed.
- Membership of all Groups was reviewed to ensure correct level of representation on the right group.
- Task and Finish Groups were undertaken to look at the Strategic Plan, a Learning Effectiveness Framework, and a Performance dataset. All ensuring that we have the correct systems and processes in place for quality assurance and continuous improvement.
- All of this will position the WSCP to operate more responsively and effectively in the future. The whole aim being to work towards a more collaborative approach than we have had previously.
- Partnership relationships and contributions have strengthened over the period.

## **Areas for further development in 2023–2024**

### **1) Understanding the ‘lived experience of our children and their families.**

We will capture the lived experience of our children and young people and their families.

### **2) Early Help and Intervention**

Our model for Early Help and Intervention will be further developed with the multi-agency partnership our aim to prevent children and family’s needs escalating into needing safeguarding.

### **3) Workforce Development**

We will deliver training that will equip the workforce to meet the needs of our children and families and ensure that we reflect any changes to the safeguarding landscape for example: Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023.

### **4) 3 Year Strategic Plan**

The 3-year strategic plan to be implemented.

### **5) Governance**

The streamlined governance structure will be reviewed to ensure that the partnership is operating effectively and to reflect the new iteration of Working together to safeguard Children 2023.

### **6) The Case Review Process**

The Case Review Process will be refreshed, and partner training delivered.

### **7) Wider System Learning**

WSCP will capitalise on wider system learning to provide better intelligence and insight and inform timely identification and response to emerging issues.

### **8) Measuring Impact**

The Partnership will introduce robust systems and processes to collect and analyse the impact of training, audit, and review.

### **9) Transitions**

‘Transitions’ is when children move from being seen as a child to being regarded as an adult.

In conjunction with Adult Partners WSCP will monitor this group of young people.

### **10) Funding**

Executive will consider how the partnership can achieve equity of funding.

In conclusion we hope we have managed to convey to the reader the breadth of the work completed and ongoing by Wigan Safeguarding Children Partnership in 2022-2023. None of this would have been possible without the dedicated input from our Partner agencies to whom we want to say thank you for all the hard work.

## **Section 10 Independent Scrutineer Report**

Statutory guidance requires the three safeguarding partners (which for the period covered by this report are Local Authority Chief Executive, Chief Constable of the local Police Force and Accountable Officer, Clinical Commissioning Group superseded by Chief Nurse, NHS GM (with effect from July 2022) or their delegated representative) to make arrangements for independent scrutiny of the yearly report they are required to publish.

Statutory guidance requires that statutory partners address the following in their yearly report:

- what they have done as a result of the arrangements, including on child safeguarding practice reviews, and how effective these arrangements have been in practice.
- evidence of the impact of the work of the safeguarding partners and relevant agencies, including training, on outcomes for children and families from early help to looked-after children and care leavers
- an analysis of any areas where there has been little or no evidence of progress on agreed priorities
- a record of decisions and actions taken by the partners in the report's period (or planned to be taken) to implement the recommendations of any local and national child safeguarding practice reviews, including any resulting improvements
- ways in which the partners have sought and utilised feedback from children and families to inform their work and influence service provision.

During the period covered by this report, I have undertaken independent scrutiny activity in respect of:

- the rate of referrals to the Children's First Partnership Hub (CFPH); this exercise also included evaluating the response to referrals made by family members and members of the public including anonymously to evaluate local practice against the findings of the National Review into the murders of Star Hobson and Arthur Labinjo-Hughes
- The National Panel briefing on domestic abuse; published in September 2022

Both of the above made recommendations to WSCP statutory partners which were designed to improve the effectiveness of the arrangements or the safeguarding system and therefore outcomes for vulnerable children and young people. Examples of recommendations made include:

- The Executive leads of the three child safeguarding partners to consider what action is required to engage domestic abuse specialist providers in the child safeguarding strategic partnership arrangements.
- The WSCP NHS GM Executive member to present the outcome of the review of health capacity in CFPH to WSCP Executive meeting.
- CFPH service lead to review the content of "what makes a good referral" webinar to reinforce the importance of recording a child's ethnicity

In addition, and in accordance with the requirements of statutory guidance, I have provided scrutineer feedback on rapid reviews and child safeguarding practice reviews. Furthermore, I have been an attendee at WSCP Executive meetings and met with statutory partners as required including Public Protection Unit, Greater Manchester Police. An example of the impact of this activity is further work to identify further learning in respect of a serious child safeguarding case and influencing the creation of the "engine room" meeting which brings senior managers together from the statutory partners to drive the operational delivery of the work of WSCP.



During the latter part of the year, facilitated by greater stability of leaders in Police and NHS GM, I have observed statutory partners come together and embrace their shared responsibility for continuous development of the partnership arrangements. Their ambition to improve the safety and wellbeing of Wigan's children and families is apparent and the re-defined priorities are intended to support the realisation of their ambition.

The report describes activity that has been completed through the safeguarding arrangements and significant effort and activity has been undertaken in respect of the "front door" and the development of the early help offer in support of a family focused approach. The report also details how learning is cascaded to the children's workforce including through a wide-ranging learning and development offer. I would endorse the reflection that there is further work to be done to evidence the impact of learning and workstreams; including the impact of training on practice e.g. has the increase in the take up of Graded Care Profile 2 training resulted in an increase in the use of the Graded Care Profile 2 tool? A critical friend reflection upon the content of the report is that the actions taken to act on the learning arising from rapid reviews, child safeguarding practice reviews (local and national), independent scrutiny and audits should be included in yearly reports. This is so the statutory partners can evidence the impact of their leadership and the arrangements. Furthermore, it would promote greater accountability e.g. what has changed to improve information sharing with/by GPs in respect of victims of domestic abuse considered at MARAC and what action has been taken at a local level in relation to the learning from National Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews.

Through chairing the performance subgroup, which was established in November 2022, I can say that, at the year end, there remains further work to do to develop the multi-agency dataset. For some partners, this is about the provision of data and for others, it is about the quality of the data and narrative provided. The current dataset impedes the oversight of the effectiveness of the safeguarding system; the inclusion of some performance data in future yearly reports would create a more evaluative report. That said, the data that is available has aided the identification of issues that require attention e.g. timeliness of referrals to LADO and timeliness of meetings held in response to referrals.

The final area for statutory partners to consider for inclusion in future yearly reports, is how they have sought and utilised feedback from children and families to inform their work and influence service provision.

I will close in a similar vein to the statutory partners, with a final, but very important comment; in whatever role you have played, thank you for your contribution to safeguarding children and young people during 2022-23.

Very best wishes

Liz Murphy

Independent Scrutineer, Wigan Children Safeguarding Partnership.  
9<sup>th</sup> November 2023.



END