

# WIGAN CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE & THEIR FAMILIES STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP & WIGAN SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARD

Please note this is a controlled procedure. Any procedure appearing in paper format is uncontrolled and must be checked against the Internet version prior to use.

## PROCEDURE FOR LEAD PROFESSIONAL (REFERENCE: CP3.1) DATE May 2008

Author: Change for Children and Young People Co-ordinator

Approved by: Nick Hudson (Director of Children and Young People's Services;/ Chair of Wigan Safeguarding Children Board)

Issue: 1      Revision: 0

### Revisions (since issue)

Section	Brief Description	Date	Issue	Revision	Approved By
---------	-------------------	------	-------	----------	-------------

#### 1      **PURPOSE**

This procedure seeks to:

- 1.1. Underpin the implementation and operation of the role of lead professional within practice arrangements to improve outcomes for children and young people in Wigan.
- 1.2. Describe agency and inter-agency working practices in respect of members of the Children's Workforce (see Section 5) undertaking the role of Lead professional in the context of Wigan's Change for Children and Young People System.
- 1.3. Ensure that organisations of the Children, Young People and their Families Strategic Partnership and Safeguarding Children Board fulfil their duties and obligations in this area of work as prescribed in legislation and guidance.

## 2 SCOPE

This procedure applies to all managers and members of the Children's Workforce within the geographical boundary of the Metropolitan Borough of Wigan.

## 3 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND DIVERSITY

This procedure applies to all managers and members of Children's Workforce in Wigan, and all service users, regardless of the social identities of ethnicity, physical cognitive and/or sensory abilities, gender, sexuality, class, spirituality (Faith) or age.

## 4 SAFEGUARDING

All the members of the Children's Workforce in Wigan will have CRB enhanced clearance. This procedure should be read in construction with the Wigan Safeguarding Children Board procedures visit [www.wigansafeguardingchildrenboard.co.uk](http://www.wigansafeguardingchildrenboard.co.uk)

## 5 REFERENCES

- Children Act 2004
- Statutory guidance on the role and responsibilities of the Director of Children's Services and Lead Member for Children's Services
- Statutory guidance on the duty to co-operate and on making arrangements to safeguard and inter-agency co-operation to improve the well-being of children under Sections 10 and 11 of the Children Act 2004
- CAF: Implementation Guidance for Directors of Children's Services in Local Areas
- CAF: Guide for Service Managers and for Practitioners
- <http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/deliveringservices/caf>

## 6 DEFINITIONS AND INDICATORS

Please see Supporting Document: Definitions and Indicators (Ref: SD Def and Ind)

### Definitions of Lead Professionals

- 6.1 Research indicates that children, young people and families who require support from a number of agencies/ professionals often receive a programme of services that is fragmented and poor quality. Government's reason for introducing the role of lead professional is to ensure children, young people and their families in Wigan (and other local authorities) receive effective co-ordinated, person-centred services.
- 6.2 Many members of the children's workforce could effectively carry out the lead professional role - the skills, competence and knowledge are common across the full range of professional disciplines, experience and roles.
- 6.3 The agency/member of the Children's Workforce who carries out the role of lead professional will vary according to the identified, or unmet, needs of the child.
  - 6.3.1 For example, the lead professional for a child who requires regular physiotherapy, has speech delay and feeding difficulties, will be different to the lead professional required in the case of a child and their family whose primary support needs are to improve the mother's self-esteem, help the parents develop effective behaviour management skills, and provide additional support to the child in school to support their behaviour and learning.
- 6.4 Members of the Children's Workforce carrying out this role in Wigan will be drawn from the widest range of practitioners - including voluntary sector organisations and

statutory services, depending on which agencies/workers are currently involved with the child, young person or family. This could include (but is not limited to):

- 6.4.1 Personal advisers, health visitors, midwives, youth workers, family workers, substance misuse workers, nursery nurses, education welfare officers, community children's nurses, school nurses, support staff in schools – e.g. learning mentors, probation officers, community psychiatric nurses, YOT Officers, school based police officers, and colleagues in voluntary and independent sector organisations.
- 6.4.2 In the case of support staff working within schools who take on the lead professional/ change co-ordinator role – e.g. learning mentors - this should not create an additional burden but will lead to targeted support and access for the pupils and families who need it.

## **7 STANDARDS**

Research and evaluation have identified the skills and competencies which enable members of the Children's Workforce to effectively undertake the role of lead professional. The core skills are, the ability to:

- 7.1 Communicate effectively with children, young people, parents/caregivers and colleagues from other agencies,
- 7.2 Establish a professional relationship with children, young people and their families – based on trust and an ability to communicate without the use of professional/agency jargon,
- 7.3 Encourage children, young people and their families to work with other members of the children's workforce, and make informed choices about the services they need and receive,
- 7.4 Support children and young people - and support parents/caregivers to support the child/young person - to implement action plans to enhance the well-being of the child/young person,
- 7.5 Establish effective professional relationships with colleagues from the widest range of services and sectors,
- 7.6 Convene and chair inter-agency meetings,
- 7.7 Translate their knowledge and experience into effective practice, and
- 7.8 Work with children, young people, parents/caregivers and colleagues from other agencies to plan, deliver, monitor and evaluate packages of services and support.

## **8 PROCESS**

### **IDENTIFICATION OF LEAD PROFESSIONALS**

- 8.1 Organisations of the Strategic Partnership will work with the Change for Children and Young People Co-ordinator to audit their workforce - to identify and support members of the children's workforce in operational units who meet the suitability and competence criteria to effectively undertake the role of Lead professional
- 8.2 Organisations of the Children, Young People and their Families Strategic Partnership will work with the Change for Children and Young People Co-ordinator to audit the operational managers and senior practitioners in their organisation – to identify levels of skill, experience and competence to manage and supervise members of the Children's Workforce who will undertake the role of Lead professional
- 8.3 Before any member of the children's workforce is offered the opportunity to access training to take on the role of Lead professional they must have undergone an 'Enhanced' Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) check.
- 8.4 Factors relevant in the identification of potential Lead Professionals and potential managers of such colleagues by the organisations of the Strategic Partnership would include:

- 8.4.1 The qualifications of staff – including their practice qualification, any post-qualification awards, and their continuing professional development.
- 8.4.2 Newly qualified staff will not be considered for training to take on the role of Lead professional until not less than 18 months after their qualification.
  - After this period – and after training - such staff should take on the role under the mentorship of an experienced Lead Professional/ Change Co-ordinator for a period of not less than 12 months.
- 8.4.3 Except in exceptional circumstances (e.g. severe staff shortages due to ill health/unfilled posts), social care agency/bank nurses/supply workers should not take on the role of Lead professional.
- 8.4.4 Individuals with significant, relevant life experience, but who have not had the opportunity to gain a professional qualification, will – at the recommendation of their manager – be offered the opportunity to access training to enable them to take on the Lead professional role.

#### **MANAGEMENT OF LEAD PROFESSIONALS**

Arrangements that are effective in enabling members of the children's workforce to undertake the role of lead professional are vital for embedding the role in Wigan's inter-agency practice.

- 8.5 Managers in the Children's Workforce who take on the role of managing staff taking on the role of lead professional must be:
  - 8.5.1 Fully aware about the role of lead professional and the demands which that role may place on a practitioner,
  - 8.5.2 Able to monitor the caseloads staff, and have the authority to re-allocate cases if required,
  - 8.5.3 Competent and capable of directing other members of their team/agency to assist and support colleagues taking on the role of lead professional/ change co-ordinator,
  - 8.5.4 Able to constructively challenge the lead professional and other practitioners about progress being made in a specific case,
  - 8.5.5 Able to effectively deal with complaints (from children, young people, their parents/caregivers or other practitioners) or performance issues, and escalate the level of intervention if required,
  - 8.5.6 Able to plan and deliver effective models of supervision (see Section 10 of this procedure), and
  - 8.5.7 Able to work with members of their team/agency to identify appropriate training and support opportunities for staff, and enable their staff to access such training and support.
  
- 8.6 The time and workload implications of taking on the lead professional role will vary according to the scale and complexity of the identified needs of the child, young person, their parent/caregiver, the number of practitioners involved and the duration of the intervention. Managers will need to take the following into account:
  - 8.6.1 Being lead professional will be more time-intensive than being a supporting practitioner in the same case.
  - 8.6.2 The lead professional will not always be the same member of the team - and the time pressures involved in undertaking the role can be set against other cases where the demands on their time may be less intense.
  - 8.6.3 Such variation will need to be taken into account:
    - in operating the lead professional system.
    - when operational managers set and allocate caseloads.
  - 8.6.4 There will be specific implications for staff working part-time in a multi-agency setting and part-time in their base agency. Clear communication is essential between managers in both services so that the worker is not overwhelmed with lead professional and caseload responsibilities.

## **SUPERVISING CASEWORK BY MEMBERS OF THE CHILDREN'S WORKFORCE IN THE ROLE OF LEAD PROFESSIONALS**

- 8.6.5 Organisations of the Children, Young People and their Families Strategic Partnership and Safeguarding Children Board will regularly audit their existing arrangements for the supervision of casework of their staff taking on the role of lead professionals/change co-ordinators.
  - 8.6.6 Arrangements for supervising the casework of staff in their agency taking on the role of lead professional will need to be integrated into the organisation's current policy, procedures and practice for supervision of casework
- 8.7 Consistent support across the Children's Workforce for staff who take on this potentially challenging role could involve:
- 8.7.1 Modifying the frequency of casework supervision for the duration of an member of staff's involvement in the role of lead professional,
  - 8.7.2 Ensuring flexible arrangements are in place to enable the lead professional to request additional casework supervision if there are specific issues or demands in a particular case,
  - 8.7.3 Developing models for dual supervision where:
    - The lead professional aspect of their work is overseen by an identified manager for lead professionals/change co-ordinators, or area co-ordinator for lead professionals/change co-ordinators
    - The practice aspect of their work is overseen by their usual line management and supervision arrangements

### **ALLOCATION OF LEAD PROFESSIONAL ROLE IN SPECIFIC CASES**

- 8.7.4 Lead professionals will be identified from amongst the practitioners who are involved with the child, young person or their parent/ caregiver. It is expected that in most cases the lead professional would be chosen through a process of discussion and agreement within that group of practitioners
  - 8.7.5 If agreement cannot be reached, workers must inform their line managers immediately, and within 2 working days of the discussions taking place (see Section 12 of this procedure).
- 8.8 Factors relevant to an allocation of a lead professional include:
- 8.8.1 What is the principle need of the child, young person or their parent/caregiver?
  - 8.8.2 Which agency has principle responsibility for addressing the needs of the child, young person or their parent/caregiver - including any statutory responsibility for providing services to meet the principle need?
  - 8.8.3 Does any member of the network of practitioners have a previous or ongoing relationship with the child, young person or their parent/ caregiver?
  - 8.8.4 Does any member of the network of practitioners have an ongoing responsibility to carry out an advocacy role for the child, young person or their parent/caregiver?
  - 8.8.5 Which member of the network of practitioners has the skills and knowledge to provide a leadership and co-ordination role in relation to other practitioners involved with the child, young person or their parent/caregiver?
  - 8.8.6 Does any member of the network of practitioners have the ability to draw in, and influence, universal and specialist services?
  - 8.8.7 Does any member of the network of practitioners have an understanding of the support systems which are available to manage and sustain this?

- 8.8.8 Which member of the network of practitioners has the capacity to take on the role?

### **CHANGES IN LEAD PROFESSIONAL & CROSS BORDER WORKING**

Detailed procedures are underdevelopment/are required in the following areas of practice

- 8.8.9 Child/young person at point of transition (e.g. from early years to primary; primary to secondary and secondary to education, training and employment)
- 8.8.10 Current Lead Professional on long-term sick
- 8.8.11 Current Lead Professional leaving their substantive post
- 8.8.12 Lead Professional where a child/young person who is ordinarily resident in Wigan Borough is accessing services in another local authority area
- 8.8.13 Lead Professional where a child/young person who is ordinarily resident in another local authority area is accessing services that are based in Wigan Borough

### **ARBITRATION/MEDIATION IN THE CASE OF DISAGREEMENT BETWEEN AGENCIES ABOUT TAKING ON THE ROLE OF LEAD PROFESSIONAL**

- 8.8.14 Members of the Children's Workforce are neither expected nor required to individually resolve complex, difficult inter-agency issues – including, for example
- 8.8.14.1 The nomination of a lead professional in cases where there are disagreements between agencies,
- 8.8.14.2 A practitioner not being able or willing to deliver their 'part' of the services deemed necessary to support the well being of the child/young person.
- 8.8.14.3 There are differences in approaches to working with the child, young person or family that cannot be resolved through discussion.
- 8.8.15 Responsibility for resolving any disagreement about any of these (or other) issues remains with the line managers of the workers involved in the particular case.
- 8.8.16 If line managers cannot reach agreement in resolving such issues, they must promptly involve the Change for Children and Young People Co-ordinator in reaching a decision.
- 8.8.17 In exceptional circumstances, if a line manager (or agency) disagrees with the decision reached with the Change for Children and Young People Co-ordinator, they can lodge an appeal with the Executive Group of the Children, Young People and their Families Strategic Partnership.
- 8.8.17.1 The decision of the Executive Group will be binding on all organisations involved.

## **9 RESPONSIBILITIES**

- 9.1 **Director of Children and Young People's Services and the Lead Member for Children's Services**
- 9.1.1 To work with the Change for Children and Young People Co-ordinator to ensure the implementation and monitoring of this procedure.
- 9.2 **Chief Officers of the organisations of the Children, Young People and their Families Strategic Partnership**

- 9.2.1 To identify the Senior Managers in their organisation who will identify members of their operational teams to take on the role of lead professional.
- 9.2.2 To ensure information about the lead professional role is actively disseminated within their organisation
- 9.2.3 To promptly address issues raised by feedback about their organisation's implementation of the role of lead professional.

### 9.3 **Senior Managers**

- 9.3.1 To require managers of operational teams within their span of control to identify members staff to receive training to take on the lead professional/ change co-ordinator role
- 9.3.2 To ensure managers of operational teams within their span of control have put in place effective arrangements (aligned and integrated with existing policy, procedures and practice) for the management support and supervision of staff taking on the role of lead professional. This includes ensuring access to training and ongoing support for such staff; workload monitoring, and the quality assurance of practice.

### 9.4 **Team Managers**

- 9.4.1 To identify members of their team who will take on the role of lead professional.
- 9.4.2 To put in place effective arrangements for the management, support and supervision of members of their team taking on the role of lead professional. This includes:
  - Identifying staff with the skills and experience to access training and ongoing support to undertake the role
  - Actively monitoring the workloads of team members taking on the role
  - Ensuring arrangements for support and supervision that are flexible to meet the need of staff taking on the role
  - Ensuring arrangements are in place to quality assure interagency practice by staff taking on the role.

### 9.5 **Members of the Children's Workforce**

- 9.5.1 To attend training and ongoing support to take on the role of lead professional.
- 9.5.2 To report promptly any issues or difficulties that impact on their role as lead professional.

## 10 **MONITORING**

The Change for Children and Young People Co-ordinator will monitor the implementation of the role of Lead professional in Wigan - as described in this procedure - by the organisations of the Children, Young People and their Families Strategic Partnership and Safeguarding Children Board.

## 11 **EVALUATION**

The Change for Children and Young People Co-ordinator will commission regular audits to explore and report on the compliance of the organisations of the Children, Young People and their Families Strategic Partnership and Safeguarding Children Board with this procedure, and use that information to identify areas for service development and improvement.

## **12 REVIEW**

A review (and where necessary, revision) of this procedure will take place at least annually by the Children, Young People and their Families Executive Group at a designated meeting. The Director of Children and Young People's Services and Lead Member for Children's Services will work closely with the Change for Children and Young People Co-ordinator to authorise and implement changes intended to improve practice in the area of work covered by this procedure.

## **13 CHANGES TO THIS PROCEDURE**

- 13.1 Members of the Children's Workforce should contact the named author to suggest modifications to this procedure.

**Wigan Children, Young People & their Families Strategic Partnership & Wigan  
Safeguarding Children Board**

**Quality Feedback Sheet**

This form should be used to alert the Change for Children and Young People Co-ordinator that this procedure may need to be modified. This could be as an outcome of:

- a) new developments (external)
- b) changes or developments (internal)
- c) having identified a different way of doing things which might be quicker, more effective and/or more efficient

Please use this form to report your suggestion for improvements/amendments and send it to the Change for Children and Young People Co-ordinator who will respond within five working days.

<b>Name:</b>	<b>Office:</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>Doc No:</b>
<b>Document Title:</b>	
<b>Feedback Comments:</b>	
<b>Action Taken by Change for Children and Young People Co-ordinator:</b>	