

Social Services News

Information Bulletin from the Social Services Department

● Volume 23 – April 2005 ●

Consultation about Adult Services



The Department of Health has finally launched its consultation report about the future of adult services, called '*Independence, Well-being and Choice*'. It's the long-awaited Adult Services Green Paper.

- New Directors of Adult Social Services will provide strategic leadership, not just in social care but across all adult services.
- Greater streamlining of assessments between agencies, including local authorities and across government.
- Engaging the whole of local government to make sure all services are assessable for those with the greatest need and encourage a shift to more preventative services.

Its key recommendations include:

- Individual budgets. Care brokers' would help people assess their needs, manage their own budget and could act as 'care navigators'.
- The development of new responsive models of care, including extra housing and telecare.
- Strengthening arrangements for greater co-operation and collaboration between the NHS and the voluntary and community sectors.

The implications of this potentially radical reform of social care for adults will be considered by Wigan Social Services Department over the next few weeks, and will play a significant part in how the new Adult Services Department will operate in the future.

Watch this space!

Enquiries to:

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Deputy Director of Adults Services
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Strange sightings at Haigh Hall...

Next time you're walking through the woodlands at Haigh Hall, don't be surprised to see a touch of the American West.

High winds over Christmas uprooted a mature tree, which has been cleverly carved and re-erected as Haigh's very first totem pole. And even though it's not yet finished, it's already a major attraction for people visiting Haigh Hall.



The idea was the brainchild of Derek Lomas, a reparation officer from our Youth Offending Team, and Ian Sturzaker, deputy manager at Haigh Hall. The top of the pole is shaped into a wolf's head, and Derek took his inspiration for carving it from the native American belief in animal spirits. When the carving is finished, it will also include a leaping deer!

Derek and the rest of the reparation team have been working with young offenders on the woodland management scheme at Haigh Hall for quite some time now. The scheme helps them get back on the right track through worthwhile work in the community.

For the young people on the scheme it's a chance to 'right their wrongs' in an educational way. And judging by the many messages of support and praise from staff and visitors at Haigh Hall, it's much appreciated.

Enquiries to:

Cath Lomas
Reparation Co-ordinator, Youth
Offending Team
Phone: 487100
E-mail: c.lomas@wiganmbc.gov.uk

Combating violence towards staff

Staff within Social Services have recently been given a handy pocket-size leaflet, which looks at how to address violence from people who use our services.



It's been produced following recommendations from our departmental Violence Working Group, who meet every six weeks to look at how we tackle violence and challenging behaviour from our customers.

The leaflet looks at:

- recognising a potentially violent situation
- how to stay safe in places such as: in reception and interview rooms, and in visits to people's homes
- reporting and recording incidents of violence
- lines of support, and
- when to involve the Police.

The leaflet is also supported by a range of other initiatives including posters, training and violence warning procedures.

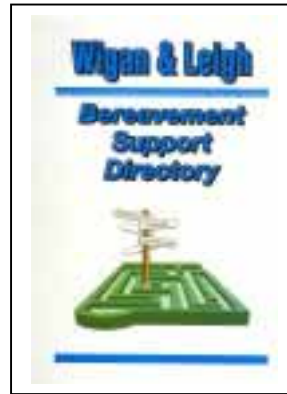
Further information:

John Ronan
Health and Safety Officer
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Supporting the bereaved

Do you know of any new groups or services which offer support to people who are experiencing bereavement...?

If so, please get in touch with us, as we're currently updating Wigan and Leigh Bereavement Support Directory.



The updated version will be more than just a directory full of phone numbers. It will include practical information for friends and families of bereaved people, or those who are expecting to be bereaved in the

near future. It will include information about who needs to be contacted following a death, how to register a death, types of funerals, the grief process and practical ways friends and family can help.

The directory and all listings within it are free, and it will be available from doctors' surgeries, clinics, social services offices, hospital wards, churches, Wigan and Leigh Carers Centres and libraries.

Enquiries to:

Louise Ezzatvar
Carers Resource Team
Phone: 705968
E-mail: l.ezzatvar@wiganmbc.gov.uk

Wigan and Leigh Bereavement Support Network Annual Conference 2005

A conference for people who support, or who are interested in supporting, bereaved children.

Date: Friday, 20 May 2005
Time: 9.45am to 3pm
Venue: Wigan Cricket Club
Contact: Jan Betts, Wigan & Leigh Hospice – phone 525566

New Act for carers



The government recently undertook consultation on draft policy guidance relating to the Carers (Equal Opportunities) Act 2004, which came into effect on 1 April 2005.

The policy guidance will supersede the Carers and Disabled Children's Act 2000 Policy Guidance.

The Carers (Equal Opportunities) Act builds on existing carers legislation, namely the Carers and Disabled Children Act 2000 and the Carers Recognition and Services Act. It will ensure that carers are able to take up opportunities, which those without caring responsibilities take for, granted. In summary, the main provisions of the Act will be to:

- ensure all carers are told about their right to an assessment of their needs
- place a duty on councils to make sure that carers' assessments include proper consideration of whether carers work or wish to work, and whether or not they are undertaking or wanting to undertake any education, training or leisure activities
- promote better joint working between councils and the health service, to make sure that services and support to carers (and the people they care for) is delivered in a coherent and co-operative way.

Everyone involved in providing support to carers needs to be aware of the new legislation. Carers themselves are being informed through meetings, newsletters and events such as the forthcoming Carers Day at Wigan Investment Centre on 7 June.

Enquiries to:

Bridget Whittell
Performance and Planning Officer
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Government website for carers:
www.carers.gov.uk

Department of Health consultation site:
www.dh.gov.uk/Consultations/LiveConsultations/fs/en

Prevention Service is a *Starting Point*

Starting Point was launched by Age Concern (Wigan Borough) on 1 April 2005. It's a telephone helpline for people over 50 who want information about services that promote independence, for example: cleaning services, shopping, preparing meals and 'handymen'.

The helpline is open from 10am to 4pm on Monday to Friday as a non-emergency

service. As well as taking referrals from older people, the helpline takes referrals from Social Services' staff. One of the aims of the service is to help those people who don't qualify for help from Social Services to get the support they need from other support providers in the borough.

Although the service is primarily for the over 50s, the helpline also takes calls people under 50 who have disabilities.

Within the first two weeks of opening, the helpline received well over 100 calls from older people across the borough, who have been offered practical support. It's a service that older people have kept asking for time and time again, and now it's finally a reality.

Enquiries to:

Stuart Murray
Chief Officer, Age Concern
Phone: 241972
E-mail: acwiganborough@ukf.net

'Friends' reunited!

After a gap of over two years, our Family Placement Team have finally been reunited.

Following reorganisation of our Children and Families Division in 2002, social workers from the original team were dispersed across the borough into other

teams. But now they've been brought back together under one roof and are based with colleagues from the Placement Support Team at their new home at Hesketh Meadow in Lowton. This enables a complete integration of all staff who work with foster carers and adopters.

The move is intended to strengthen and develop the fostering service, with all staff working hard to assess, train and support foster carers in looking after young people.

So far it seems to be working. Since coming back together, the new team has received very positive feedback from the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) following a fostering inspection last year. And the team has also been able to recruit qualified and experienced staff to new social work posts.

Now social workers and support workers will be working even more closely together to support the 70 sets of recruited, and 80 sets of family and friends foster carers that we currently have, as well as recruiting more carers.

Further information:

Paula Jones
Family Placement Team Manager
Phone: 487210
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If you know of someone who is interested in becoming a foster carer, please visit our website for further information at:

www.wiganmbc.gov.uk/pub/socs/fosterng.htm

or e-mail: fostering@wiganmbc.gov.uk

Children Act

On 15 November, the Children Act 2004 received Royal Assent. The legislation provides the foundation for the programme of reform of children's services, which is set out in *Every Child Matters: Change for Children* which is in turn set to radically reform how children's services are delivered.

The Act establishes:

- A children's commissioner to champion the views and interests of young people.
- A duty on local authorities to make arrangements to promote co-operation between agencies in order to improve children's well-being, and a duty on key partners to take part in the co-operation arrangements. This 'well-being' is defined in terms of five outcomes contained within *Every Child Matters*.
- A duty on key agencies to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- A duty on local authorities to set up Local Safeguarding Children Boards and on key partners to take part.
- Provision for indexes or databases containing basic information about children and young people, to enable better information sharing.
- A requirement for a single Children and Young People's Plan to be drawn up by each local authority.
- A requirement on local authorities to appoint a Director of Children's Services and designate a Lead Member.
- The creation of an integrated inspection framework and the conduct of Joint Area Reviews to assess local areas' progress in improving outcomes.

- Provisions relating to foster care, private fostering and the education of children in care.

There has been much work taking place within Wigan involving all agencies to address this wide-ranging agenda – from the consultation and participation in relation to the Children, Young People and Families (CYPF) project, the 'shadow' Safeguarding Board, and the impending integration of the Social Services and Education Departments.

The five key outcomes by which success will be measured are:

- **Being healthy:** enjoying good physical and mental health and living a healthy lifestyle.
- **Staying safe:** being protected from harm and neglect.
- **Enjoying and achieving:** getting the most out of life and developing the skills for adulthood.
- **Making a positive contribution:** being involved with the community and society and not engaging in anti-social or offending behaviour.
- **Economic well-being:** not being prevented by economic disadvantage from achieving their full potential in life.

We all need to embrace this brave new future and the opportunities it gives us for new ways of working within a more integrated service.

Enquiries to:

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Every Child Matters website:

www.everychildmatters.gov.uk

Social Care Panel – Adults

The Adult Services Panel met on 15 March 2005 and major items discussed included:

- Aspirations of older people through the Innovations Forum work.
- Fair Access to Care and Prevention Service.
- Adult Services' budget.
- Performance.
- Visits to establishments.
- Probable estimates 2004/05 and Revenue Budget 2005/06

The next meeting will be on 31 May 2005. Agendas are available from the Council's website at www.wiganmbc.gov.uk/pub/council/agendas/

Social Care Panel – Children's

The Children's Services Panel met on 10 March 2005 and major items discussed included:

- Elected Member representation on the Adoption and Fostering Panels.

- Managing school emergencies.
- Admission arrangements 2006/07.
- Education Capital Programme.
- MCCS Best Value Improvement Plan – proposed changes.
- Reporting of racist incidents involving pupils in schools.
- Best Value Review of the Education Department's Premises Team.
- School loans 2004/05.
- Proposals for the Children's and Adult Services Departments 2005/06.
- Draft Inclusion Statement and Draft Action Plan for the Moderate Learning Difficulties and Severe Learning Difficulties Implementation Process and Physical Difficulties Implementation Process.
- Appointment of LEA representative governors.
- Probable Estimate 2004/05 and Revenue Budget.

The next meeting will be on 26 May 2005. Agendas are available from the Council's website at www.wiganmbc.gov.uk/pub/council/agendas/