

**Request**

Please supply all reports in the second half of 2023 that were authored by your Children's Social Care Department for the purpose of sending to your Children's Safeguarding Partnership.

Request

[Please see attached](#)



Complex Safeguarding Background:

Wigan Council and statutory safeguarding partners are committed to ensuring that children and young people are safeguarded and protected from exploitation and perpetrators are brought to justice. Wigan Complex Safeguarding Team is a multi-agency co-located team who are based at Wigan Police Station. Multi-agency working within this team is a key strength. The team is supported by Greater Manchester Police (GMP), specialist safeguarding health input alongside social workers and complex safeguarding workers, parental intervention workers, Targeted Youth Support Services (TYSS) and a trusted relationship forensic psychologist.

There are links to other services including education, Adult Social Care, Spectrum & Sexual Abuse Referral Centre (SARC), recovery workers from With You, housing, Wigan Youth Zone, British Transport Police and CAMHS.

The team complete interventions with children at risk of or subject to all forms of exploitation. The interventions reduce risks posed to the children because of exploitation and practitioners embed trauma informed approaches and the trusted relationship principles.

The complex safeguarding team are part of the wider GM response and as such receives centralised support. The workers in the team are skilled and experienced. There are strong and experienced social care managers who lead the service. As a result of case file audits completed in September 2023, we know that the quality of intervention is good, and systems are robustly in place to ensure we share information with partner agencies on a daily basis so the best possible responses to emerging need or identified risk can be provided. Our daily governance meetings and multi-agency risk assessments support this and resulting action plans are multi agency.

- 1.1** The service is currently in the process of embedding the new WISE (Working to Increase Safety in Exploitation) tool. The WISE assessment tool has been designed to support strength-based and inclusive professional reflections when working with children and young people in the context of child exploitation. The aim of WISE is to support practitioners thinking in terms of increasing safety and stability in young people's lives who are at risk of, or experiencing, Child Exploitation. The WISE assessment has been developed across Greater Manchester. WISE assessments are focused on young people's needs whilst understanding the context of harm and what action is required to disrupt activity.
- 1.2** The Missing from Home Hub is embedded within Wigan Complex Safeguarding Team to ensure a co-ordinated, multi-agency collaborative approach is undertaken in responding to children who are missing from home or care. Wigan Missing from Home Team ensures that children are independently interviewed within 72 hours of notification of their return. Offering Independent Return Home Interviews (RHI) with the child helps to establish support that may be required, as well as preventing repeat incidents. Information gathered from return interviews can be used to inform the identification, referral, and assessment of any child sexual/criminal exploitation concerns. Daily missing meetings also take place with Greater Manchester Police Missing from Home Coordinator to review missing children, so a proactive approach is taken to identify child sexual or criminal exploitation (CSE/CCE).
- 1.3** Trauma informed and Contextual Safeguarding approaches are embedded as part of the response to children who have been missing from home or care, alongside the completion of return home interviews and direct intervention, to provide the opportunity to reflect the voice of the child, and highlight any further support needed.
- 1.4** Wigan Safeguarding Childrens Partnership (WSCP) Complex Safeguarding Training runs quarterly with the Wigan partnership workforce who work with children, including taxi driver training, colleges and foster carers. The aim is to increase awareness and enhance joint working across Wigan. The trainers are health, police, and children's social care staff. 'Think Family' Level 3 Safeguarding training, is delivered on a monthly training session across Wroughtington, Wigan and Leigh NHS Foundation Trust (WWL) which includes training about round CSE.
- 1.5** Health, Social Care and Police continue to utilise a flagging system on the child's electronic record to ensure that all services know when a child is open to Complex Safeguarding Team (CST).
- 1.6** Support starts at the earliest opportunity. STEER (earliest help) group is a support offer for Wigan. STEER is a prevention programme aimed at young people at risk of experiencing youth violence. STEER provide 1-1 mentoring service to young people using a strength-based approach. CST are part of the STEER steering group and attend the monthly meetings. CST have a dedicated experienced parenting worker that offers 1-1 parental intervention, trauma informed parental pack, case consultations and offers training sessions to educational settings and the wider workforce.

1.7 The Wigan team take part in Greater Manchester “weeks of action”, which are always high quality and working directly with the public, and children and young people. This year the Complex Safeguarding Team along with Wigan Youth Zone and our Targeted Youth Support Service Anti -Social Behaviour officer have worked together in pulling together a project aimed at raising awareness of CSE and CCE and the support available in Wigan. This included engaging a group of more than twenty young people in the creation of a song and video that was launched on Friday 24th February 2023. We commissioned Odyssey9 Academy, a creative & social enterprise team who worked alongside Wigan Youth Zone staff with the young people to produce a creative process of song writing, performing, and recording music and video.

2 Quality Assurance.

2.1 In order to assure ourselves of the quality of practice within CST and the work being undertaken, regular audits are completed by the Team Managers on a Monthly basis. Since September the monthly audits have graded the work undertaken as good.

2.2 A thematic Audit of CST was undertaken in September 2023. Whilst this audit focused on the fuller service of CST team, the audit incorporated Missing from Home (MFH) information. This audit highlighted there had been a 60% decrease in the amount of MFH episodes when open to the CST Team. The audit highlighted workers consistency in trying to engage young people in return from home interviews and when these were declined there was often a follow up session by the CST team. Good Management oversight was noted with clear actions being set from the daily MFH meetings. Strategic Monthly Operational Meetings provide additional oversight and scrutiny of data, what’s working well and areas of development. Within this meeting monthly performance reports are collated to provide oversight of children most at risk, missing children and the response to this risk. This monthly operational meeting is led by Complex Safeguarding Service Manager, including representatives from Childrens Social Care, Police, Health, TYSS, Early Intervention Services, Neighbourhood teams, Spectrum sexual health services, Wigan Youth Zone, Education and Colleges. It’s aim is to ensure representatives from key partners are providing their own key data, are kept informed and are taking ownership where required to ensure a holistic and collaborative approach to safeguarding and planned contextual responses.

2.3 Overall Wigan Child Sexual Exploitation figures are slightly higher than GM, and Child Criminal Exploitation cases slightly lower. This is reflective of the joint working in place with our Targeted Youth Support Services and our robust ability to signpost to services, working at the earliest opportunity with children and young people.

2.4 GM Local Authorities take part in a peer review process. This provides the opportunity for scrutiny of processes and practice, review, and audit of work. This challenge ensures that the service can learn from research and development but also that a high-quality service is provided to children and young people. Wigan’s most recent Peer Review in 2022 positively recognised the strength and quality of the daily governance process, creative approaches to establishing trusted relationships, utilising trauma informed principles and trusted relationship model of intervention and management oversight. These were the headlines below.

- Caseloads are manageable.
- There is evidence of a strong partnership within the Complex Safeguarding Team.
- Daily Governance Meetings (DGM) are used effectively to share information and make joint decisions.
- There is evidence of management oversight.
- There is evidence of positive working relationships with locality social workers – clearly defined roles and responsibilities.
- There is evidence of working creatively to develop trusted relationships with young people.
- The CST and locality social workers spoke passionately and positively about the young people.
- There is evidence of relational and reflective practice.
- There is a dedicated parenting offer for the CST (though not always offered to parents when children are not in their care)
- There was an example of good use of CAMHS support.

2.5 Areas for development that have been addressed.

- Improving analytical assessments, ensuring a trauma informed approach and including the wider context for the family.
- Great awareness raising around victim blaming language and Child Criminal Exploitation
- There is a further peer review due to take place in the new year.

2.6 Wigan's response to children at risk of Child Exploitation and Missing from Home/ care was a focus as part of our most recent OFSTED inspection completed in May 2022 and was identified as an area working well.

2.7 'The complex safeguarding team is a well-resourced multi-agency service which provides good-quality support to social workers working with children at risk of sexual and criminal exploitation and those who go missing. There is a thorough multi-agency process for consideration of missing-from-home notifications. Most return home interviews are undertaken by workers in the complex safeguarding team. This offers consistency for children, and an appropriate focus on their push and pull factors and how those relate to children's level of risk. '

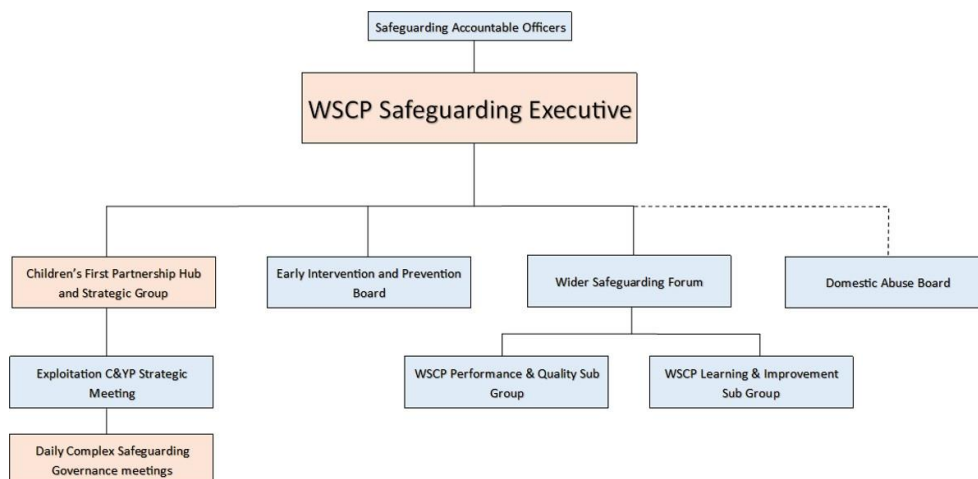
2.8 Feedback from children, young people and their families is routinely sought, a monthly summary of feedback is produced. We know that flexibility and speed of response is important to families, as is the ability to advocate on their behalf.

2.9 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'.

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

3 The Governance arrangements through Wigan Safeguarding Childrens Partnership

3.1 The WSCP Childrens Executive receive quarterly exception reports, with updates about the programme of work, any gaps risk and weakness identified. This then informs the partnership on any resources needed. A high-level partnership report goes to WSCP Accountable Officers meeting every six months.



4 Next Steps

- 4.1** The development of the Greater Manchester Adolescent Safeguarding Framework in September 2022, underpinned by six overarching practice principles, has supported the decision to introduce an integrated Wigan Safeguarding Adolescent Service. This service is known as Reach, a name chosen by Youth Cabinet and has been operational from 1 December 2023. The service represents an alignment of the Targeted Youth Support Service (TYSS) and Complex Safeguarding Team (CST) under a single service structure. It mirrors similar approaches being taken across other GM authorities aimed at achieving greater practice and resource collaboration to more effectively meet the safeguarding needs of children aged 11-18 experiencing harm often in contexts outside of their family home, including exploitation.
- 4.2** The approach will enable practitioners from different professional backgrounds to work more easily and seamlessly across team functions, ensuring that strong, trusted relationships are built with young people and parents/carers through a core group of professionals working to an integrated plan which places the young person at the centre. This will include the development of an **Enhanced Adolescent Support Team** that will seek to provide earlier, intensive support, for those young people with significant indicators of contextual harm that leaves them particularly vulnerable to entering care or remaining in care for too long. This will build on some of the effective work undertaken by the Keeping Families Together Team, but with a dedicated focus on older children. Importantly the new service will include specialist support for parents and carers of older children.
- 4.3** The WSCP Exploitation C&YP Strategic delivery plan has identified three priorities, prevent, protect, and pursue and prosecute those responsible. To deliver on the priorities the plan will focus on:
- 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 delivery model to ensure the service delivery model supported the right children at the right time (The Reach Service).
- 4.4** This meeting 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 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 Hub. 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.
- 4.5** Learning from Reviews and embedding this learning quickly in the whole children's workforce is key to our learning culture.

5 Conclusion

- 5.1** The development of the Reach service and the implementation of Greater Manchester Safeguarding Adolescence Framework based on a trusted relationship approach will enhance the service to young people at risk of exploitation, including those at risk of entry in the criminal justice system or care. The workforce is highly experienced in this area and benefit from opportunities to reflect and continually learn, there is strength in multi-agency working, services are delivered in partnership and are robust and sensitive to children's needs demonstrating effectiveness. The delivery plan as outlined above will drive the implementation of this service and monitor its impact.

November 2023