



## **Wigan Safeguarding Children Board**

### **Annual Report**

**2010 – 2011**

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## **Introduction**

This is the second Annual Report of Wigan's Safeguarding Children Board (WSCB).

The Government expects every Local Safeguarding Children Board to describe what it has done each year to keep children and young people safe. This is one way in which politicians, the public, and young people can judge for themselves whether the Local Safeguarding Children Board has been doing all that it can to make a difference to keeping children safer.

This report is also an opportunity for WSCB to be open and honest about what is going well for children in the Borough of Wigan and what might be more worrying. And very importantly, this report is sent to senior professionals and volunteers in the Borough, so that they can study it and use the information in it to improve the efforts of their own organisations to keep children and young people safe. Local councillors also need to read this report, as they have such an important role to play in protecting all citizens in the Borough – including children and young people.

This has been a challenging year for everyone in Wigan who is striving to protect the Borough's children and young people. The massive changes in the way public services and the NHS are organised, in response to cuts in public spending, are bound to have an impact on the resources and energy available to keep our children and young people safe.

And it's not just organisations and agencies which are experiencing less money and fewer resources. Families all over the Borough will be looking carefully at how they make ends meet in the difficult financial climate. And what we know is that families who are under a lot of stress can sometimes find it harder to put their children first as they are distracted by so many worries. This is a time when children can slip through the net and suffer harm.

But it's not all bad news! Agencies and organisations in Wigan Borough have put a lot of effort into finding new ways of keeping essential services running well. And they have often listened to children and young people to get their ideas about this too.

One thing hasn't changed. Keeping our children safe is everyone's business. Wigan's Safeguarding Children Board will always rely on the strong communities in the Borough to look out for their children and to work in partnership with local politicians, professionals, volunteers and families to protect our children and young people.

Sue —

## **Sue Woolmore**

Independent Chair, Wigan Safeguarding Children Board

## **Executive Summary**

Wigan's Safeguarding Children Board (WSCB) has been operating in a challenging context over the last year, as the public sector and NHS have undergone deep seated review and dramatic shifts in political expectations and funding. The introduction of free schools and academies has also changed the landscape of Wigan's education provision. WSCB can therefore be satisfied that it has been able to maintain a steady course and hold on to the progress made last year, in the prevailing climate of radical changes and uncertainty about the shape of public services and the role of the voluntary sector.

The Coalition Government has also given a lot of attention to the child protection system in England this year, by commissioning a review of the system by Professor Eileen Munro. The key messages which came out of this review are: the child protection system has become too bureaucratic and procedurally driven; the focus on the child too often gets lost; and professionals are not given enough scope to exercise their professional judgement when responding to families and children. These messages must also be taken seriously in Wigan as we plan our services and listen to children and young people.

### **Priorities in the Business Plan for 2009 – 2011**

- Developing a safe children's workforce.
- Reinforcing safeguarding policies, procedures and joint working protocols.
- Measuring the effectiveness of WSCB.
- Identifying critical cases and embedding lessons learned.
- Ensuring provision of safeguarding training.
- Hearing the views of children and young people.

### **Achievements in 2010 – 2011**

- Strong ethos for sharing responsibility for safeguarding children has matured on WSCB
- Policies for the most vulnerable young people have been strengthened e.g. children missing from home, young people at risk of sexual exploitation, responding to fabricated and induced illness in children
- WSCB is part of a pioneering scheme for reviewing critical cases, using a new methodology developed by the Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE)
- Sharing a joint project with the Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs) in Bolton and Salford to raise awareness about safe sleeping arrangements for babies
- WSCB has appointed two Lay Members who provide a vital link between the Board and the wider community
- Working relationships with neighbouring LSCBs have been strengthened with regard to protecting the non - Wigan boys living in HMPYOI Hindley

- A number of local cases in the Borough have been examined in great detail by the WSCB, to discover any lessons which can be learnt to make us better at protecting children, and particularly babies, in the future
- All agencies have maintained their existing level of financial support for the WSCB
- WSCB members are providing regular 'impact statements' to the Board about the effects of the public spending cuts on their capacity to protect children

### **Challenges facing WSCB**

- Despite efforts to protect essential services, there are diminishing resources available to member agencies to safeguard children and young people
- The six month absence of WSCB's skilled Business Development Manager, due to maternity leave, has not been fully backfilled.
- Many experienced staff are leaving the children's workforce through early retirement and organisational re-structures
- Many senior staff have been given substantial extra responsibilities, including services for adults as well as children.
- The community and voluntary sector has experienced a significant impact from the changes to allocation of grants and funding to grassroots services..
- The provision and take up of Level 3 training, provided by WSCB, has been inconsistent.
- Ensuring that the lessons learned from local case reviews and case file audits become embedded in local practice and services
- WSCB is still uncertain about the kinds of conversations it wants to have with children and young people about setting priorities for keeping them safe

### **Highest Priorities**

- WSCB must develop a programme of learning events, over and above basic training, to share the lessons learned from local critical cases and case file audits with the children's workforce
- Awareness raising about the significance of bruising and injury to non mobile infants must be undertaken across the children's workforce, along with clear guidelines on how to respond to this.
- All member agencies must make sure that they enable their staff to facilitate and attend training offered by WSCB
- Members of WSCB's main Board must model the kind of leadership which encourages professionals to exercise their professional judgement. This will be underpinned by a set of agreed WSCB principles against which to measure practice at both the frontline and strategic levels
- Development of WSCB's new Business Plan for 2012 – 2014

## **Messages from WSCB to Wigan Borough**

### Messages for local politicians

- Local politicians represent the vulnerable children and young people in their wards, as well as adults. Councillor Loudon, the Lead Member, is the route by which individual councillors can make sure the voices of children and young people are heard by WSCB.
- Community and Voluntary Services in the Borough are having to review and restructure their resources in the light of changes to funding streams. Local councillors must pay close attention to any impact of this on the well being of children and young people in their ward and report this to the WSCB.
- When councillors scrutinise any plans for Wigan Borough, they must keep the protection of children as the paramount consideration, asking questions about how any plans will affect children and young people.

### Messages for Chief Executives and Directors

- Senior officers must ensure that their workforce is able to contribute to the provision of WSCB safeguarding training and to attend training courses and learning events
- Every agency's contribution to the work of WSCB must be categorised as the highest priority in the allocation of time and resources
- The WSCB needs to understand the impact of any organisational restructures on the capacity to safeguard children and young people in Wigan Borough. Through their membership of WSCB, senior officers need to provide timely impact statements to the Board.

### Messages for non-executive directors

- Non-executive directors (NEDs) have a key role in scrutinising the governance and planning across a range of organisations
- NEDs are therefore well placed to examine each organisation's consideration of children and young people in their planning, ensuring this receives appropriate priority.
- NEDs can also provide valuable feedback to the WSCB about safeguarding in the wider community. This can be directed through the Lead Member

### Messages for children's workforce

- All members of the children's workforce, from all agencies and the voluntary sector, should access all safeguarding courses and learning events required by WSCB for their role
- All members of the children's workforce, both paid and volunteers, should familiarise themselves with, and use when necessary, WSCB's Escalation Policy to ensure an appropriate response to children and families
- Practitioners and volunteers should make sure the voices of children and young people are heard, through their representative on WSCB.

#### Messages for the community

- Members of the public are in the best place to look out for children and young people and to raise the alarm if something is going wrong for them
- We all share responsibility for protecting children. If anyone is worried about a child, they should do something (See Appendix B for advice)
- Children and young people – your voices are the most important of all.

#### Messages for the local media

- Communicating the message that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility is crucial to the WSCB and the local press and media is ideally positioned to help do this
- The work of WSCB will be of great interest to readers and listeners of local media
- The contribution of the local media to safeguarding children and young people in Wigan, through public awareness raising campaigns, is potentially very significant

## Section 1 – Structure, governance and accountability

### What exactly is a Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB)?

LSCBs were established in law by the Children Act 2004 (section 13). There are two essential responsibilities for LSCBs:

- to co-ordinate what everyone does to keep children safe and to promote their welfare.
- to make sure that what everyone does is effective and actually makes a difference.

Wigan established its Local Safeguarding Children Board in 2006 and called it Wigan Safeguarding Children Board.

The government has also produced detailed guidance about how LSCBs should set themselves up and work. The guidance is called *Working Together to Safeguard Children 2010* and LSCBs are expected to follow this guidance very closely. This guidance can be found on the government's Department of Education website:

<http://publications.education.gov.uk/default.aspx?PageFunction=productdetails&PageMode=publications&ProductId=DCSF-00305-2010>

Chapter 3 of this guidance focuses specifically on LSCBs.

### Roles for Wigan Safeguarding Children Board

The roles for WSCB are set out in the *Working Together* guidance and include:

- Thresholds, policies and procedures
- Monitoring and evaluation
- Participating in planning and commissioning
- Communicating and raising awareness
- Child death overview
- Serious case reviews

Each of these roles is described in more detail in Appendix A

## Membership and structure of Wigan's Safeguarding Children Board

Having explained what WSCB needs to achieve, there is now detail about who is involved and how the Board organises itself.

WSCB has a:

- Main Board
- Executive Board
- Sub-groups

The **main Board** is made up of the most senior representatives of the member agencies. These representatives all hold positions of seniority within their own organisations which mean they can speak confidently on behalf of their agency, can sign up to agreements on behalf of their agency and make sure that members of their agency abide by the policies, procedures and recommendations of WSCB.

These are the members of the main Board:

Sue Woolmore	Independent Chair, WSCB
Kara Haskayne	WSCB Business Development Manager (maternity leave)
Kath Vereycken	Acting WSCB Business Development Manager (part time)
Nick Hudson	Corporate Director, People Directorate – adult, children and families
Anne Goldsmith	Director for Specialist and Targeted Services, People Directorate, Adults and Families
Marlyn Banham	Head of Service for Children's Care, People Directorate, Adults and Families
Sue Elliott	Head of Service Preventative and Targeted Pathways
Councillor Susan Loudon	Lead Elected Member for Children and Young People
Paul Whitemoss	Building Stronger Communities Partnership
Helen Mackenzie	Headteacher, Shevington High School
Jill Hyde	Headteacher, Ince C of E School
Ann-Marie Arnold	Head of Safeguards, HMPYOI, Hindley
Supt Andrea Jones	Greater Manchester Police, Wigan Division
DI Jeremy Pidd	Greater Manchester Police, Wigan Division
Angie Buckley	Assistant Chief Executive, Greater Manchester Probation Service
Joanne Hiley	Designated Nurse, Ashton, Leigh & Wigan PCT
Dr David T Valentine	Medical Director for ALW and Lead Safeguarding for Children and Adults NHS ALW
Michelle Lee	Divisional Director, Bridgewater Community Healthcare
Dr Umesh Prabhu	Medical Director, Wrightington, Wigan & Leigh (WWL) NHS Trust
Dr Elham Abbas	Designated Doctor

Linda Kellie	Assistant Director for the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service, 5 Boroughs Partnership
Mike Grimes	Director of Housing Needs, Wigan & Leigh Housing
Kay Bardgett	Director, Wigan Leisure & Culture Trust
Pamela Ball	Chief Officer, Wigan and Leigh Council for Voluntary Service
Rachel Fairhurst	Lay Member
John Mason	Lay Member
Steven Sheridan	Wigan Borough Commander, Greater Manchester Fire Service
WSCB Legal Advisor	
Joanna Robinson	Senior Solicitor, Wigan Council

Attendance at Board is monitored by the WSCB Business Development Manager. Any lack of agency attendance is addressed directly by the Independent Chair. There is also an agreement between members about WSCB's expectations of them. This can be found on the WSCB website on this link: <http://www.wiganlscb.com./boardmembers.asp>

The **Executive Board** is chaired by Sue Elliott (details above) and is made up of the Chairs of the sub groups and others who can provide expertise and advice. It's the role of the Executive Board to make sure that the work of the sub groups is focused and remains 'on track'. This is the driver behind the business of the WSCB as a whole and it refers crucial business to the main Board, for its consideration.

There are 8 **subgroups**, each one focusing on a crucial aspect of WSCB's business. The groups are:

- Safeguarding in health setting
- Safeguarding in education settings
- Safeguarding in secure settings (i.e. HMYOI Hindley)
- Training
- Best practice and Audit
- Lessons Learned
- Vulnerable Young people
- E-safety

A structural diagram of WSCB can be found in the Appendix C.

### **Key roles on WSCB**

There are some key roles on WSCB which are laid down in the *Working Together* guidance. These are:

#### Independent Chair

It's expected that all LSCBs appoint an Independent Chair who can bring expertise and a clear guiding hand to the Board, to make sure that the LSCB fulfils its roles effectively. Wigan Safeguarding Children Board welcomed this role, as having an Independent Chair frees up all the members to participate on an equal footing, without any single agency having the added influence of chairing the Board.

Sue Woolmore currently holds this position and she is employed by WSCB for 3 days a month. The Chair is subject to an annual appraisal, to ensure the role is undertaken competently and that the post holder retains the confidence of the WSCB members.

#### Director of Children's Services

The Director of Children's Services (now known in Wigan as the Corporate Director, People Directorate) is required to sit on the main Board of WSCB as this is a pivotal role in the provision of education and children's social care in Wigan Borough. This post is held by Nick Hudson. The Director of Children's Services has a responsibility to make sure that the WSCB functions effectively. Whilst Nick Hudson stood down as Chair of WSCB to allow an Independent Chair to be appointed, he remains responsible for the proper functioning of the Board and therefore liaises closely with the Independent Chair who keeps him updated on progress.

### Local Authority Chief Executive Officer

The ultimate responsibility for the effectiveness of the WSCB rests with the Chief Executive of Wigan Borough, Joyce Redfearn. The Director of Children's Services is answerable to the Chief Executive, who forms the final link in this chain of accountability.

### Lead member

The elected councillor who has responsibility for children and young people is known as the Lead Member and this role is held by Councillor Susan Loudon. Councillor Loudon sits on WSCB as a 'participating observer'. This means that Councillor Loudon observes all that happens and can contribute to discussion, although she does not participate in any voting. This allows Councillor Loudon to scrutinise WSCB and challenge it if necessary from her political position, as a representative of the elected members and Wigan communities. These are some of Councillor Loudon's thoughts about the work of WSCB:

:

#### **Where does safeguarding children fit with your role as a local councillor?**

Safeguarding of young people in our community has to be the aim of all local councillors.

A local councillor needs to understand their responsibility in safeguarding children. They should know that there is a corporate strategy and who has the lead role in safeguarding.

As Lead Member I need to know how the strategies work, who the partners in safeguarding are and who has the lead within those organisations. What does the authority contribute to the partnership and how it is monitored?

#### **How do you feel WSCB contributes to keeping children in the Borough safer?**

The Wigan Safeguarding Children Board (WSCB) has a major role to play in ensuring that children and young people in Wigan are kept safe and that all agencies do what they can to promote their welfare.

#### **What do you think are the greatest challenges to WSCB in the year ahead?**

There are a number of challenges for the Board this year.

Budget cuts for all the partners will bring problems mostly to do with long experienced officers moving on and their knowledge goes with them.

Local people are becoming more aware of safeguarding and their expectations have been raised. They expect that action will always take place therefore issues will escalate even if, when investigated, there is no foundation to those concerns.

#### **What have young people told you, as a councillor, about their experiences of feeling safe, or unsafe, in the Borough?**

Young people in the Wigan Borough, on the whole, feel safe. They have raised with me in the past, concerns about knife crime and antisocial behaviour. They sometimes feel targeted as a group - they feel that they are seen as the miscreants or troublemakers within the community. This was particularly obvious when I was with a group of young people the evening the riots were on the news. Straight away these young people said that they knew they would be blamed for what was happening, and yet they were themselves very scared about

what was happening and didn't want anything to do with it. Some of them were even seeing messages in the internet, encouraging them to get involved, but they wanted none of it.

### **If you could change two things about WSCB, what would they be?**

First, that we had more resources to enable us to raise awareness within our local communities of issues of safeguarding.

Secondly, that our role was seen as a more positive – i.e. supporting and rewarding services for good ideas and actions, already taken, rather than constantly feeling we are trying to sort out, or checking up on, the problems.

### Lay Members

A new role has been introduced to all LSCBs. This is the role of Lay Member and each LSCB needs to appoint two such people from their local community. WSCB has appointed Rachel Fairhurst and John Mason to these roles. They have already made their presence known by asking key questions at Board meetings, which ensure the WSCB keeps the wider community in focus and makes its discussions and decisions accessible to the wider population.

These posts will soon be supported by a group for all Lay Members from across Greater Manchester. This group will support and empower LSCB Lay Members to fulfil their role with confidence.

Rachel and John have shared some of their thoughts about their role in Section 3 of this report.

### Support staff for WSCB

It would be impossible to take forward the business of the Board without the skilled and dedicated support of key staff. These are:

- Business Development Manager – full time. This post is held by Kara Haskayne who has a strong background in safeguarding, across different professional disciplines. Kara ensures that the business of WSCB is driven forward by facilitating the smooth functioning of the various elements of the Board's structure, providing information and guidance to WSCB members and bringing innovation to the methods used by the Board to fulfil its duties.  
Kara has been on maternity leave for a significant period of the last year and WSCB has felt her absence keenly. However, the 'business critical' elements of her role have been undertaken by Kath Vereycken, who has given very welcome commitment to WSCB.
- Administrative Officer – full time. This role is held by Sue Murphy who has considerable experience in providing administrative support within the local authority. The WSCB relies on detailed minutes of all the meetings held within its structure and also detailed follow up of all actions agreed by its members.
- Training Administrative Support Officer – full time. This role is held by Sarah Fletcher who provides invaluable support to the work of WSCB and the training strategy in particular.

## **Key relationships:**

### **Wigan's Children's Trust**

As described in the section about "Participating in planning and commissioning", the WSCB has close links with Wigan's Children's Trust. There has been an expectation from Government that all LSCBs challenge to scrutinise and question, if necessary, the plans of the Children's Trust. However, the Coalition Government has taken a different view on the necessity of the Children's Trust, in contrast to its predecessor. This structure has now become 'optional' for local authorities, along with the Children and Young People's Plan which has been produced by the Children's Trust in the past.

Discussions in Wigan have concluded that the work of the Children's Trust has been helpful and should not be abandoned. A detailed review of what the most useful structures to help local planning would look like is underway.

### **Health and Wellbeing Board**

The Health and Wellbeing Board is a new structure which has been introduced by the Coalition Government. This Board will be concerned with services for both adults and children and will be responsible for co-ordinating the efforts of the local authority and the NHS for the whole population.

At this stage it's not clear what the relationship will be between the WSCB and the new Health and Wellbeing Board (HWB), but it is certain that there will need to be a clear and well defined relationship.

As the HWB will be interested in the services to the whole population, WSCB will need to make sure that the needs of vulnerable children are not overwhelmed by the wider issues for adults and the elderly.

### **Member agencies' management Boards**

As members of the main WSCB Board are senior officers within their own agencies, there are therefore direct links between WSCB and the management Boards of these agencies. As local agencies have been restructuring – including the health service and the police – these lines of communication have sometimes changed. It's essential that the management Boards of each statutory agency in the Borough cements a close connection with the Safeguarding Children Board and invests in its work. This will be closely monitored by the WSCB in the coming year as the landscape of statutory services changes under the direction of central government.

## Financial arrangements

### WSCB Budget 2011 - 2012

#### SPEND

##### Staffing costs

WSCB Independent Chair S Woolmore	3 days/month	£500/day + mileage	19,700
WSCB Business Development Manager - K Haskayne (*maternity cover *)	100%	G 12 (inc 20% on costs)	52597
LSCB Admin - S Murphy	100%	Grade 5 (inc on 20% costs)	23525
GI WSCB Training Support Officer - S Fletcher	100%	G1	15361
<b>Total projected staffing cost</b>			<b>111,184</b>

##### Other projected costs

Serious Case Reviews & dissemination			15,000
Externally commissioned training (5K E Academy+ 7K for SCR/LCR learning)			12,000
Induction & Training Budget - WSCB members			500
WSCB Development Day			2,000
Mobile telephone Business Manager			250
Communication and awareness raising			2,500
Stationery & postage			2,000
Venues and refreshments			2,500
Conference(s)			2,500
Annual WSCB Seminar x 2 (2010-2011 & 2011-2012)			10,000
Lay member expenses			500
Domestic Abuse Training on behalf of violent crime group (E Academy)			12,000
<b>Other projected costs total</b>			<b>61,750</b>

<b>TOTAL PROJECTED SPEND</b>			<b>172,934</b>
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## INCOME

### Current Agency WSCB Contributions

Combined health economy			50,000.00
GM Police			15,100.00
Hindley prison			10,000.00
CAFCASS			550.00
Greater Manchester Probation Service			1,094.00
5 Boroughs Partnership			3,060.00
Wigan and Leigh Housing			2,000.00
Environmental Services (for Domestic Violence work)			17,000
Wigan and Leigh College			1,500
<b>CYPS - Ongoing contributions</b>			
ED661/EY114 - Central Education & Social Care			41,820.00
Social Care EY011			11,501.00
EB518 Learning Support			11,315.00
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>			<b>164,940.00</b>

*Potential additional school income re: training delivery to schools will be offset against potential added e learning licence costs*

<b>Projected Balance</b>			<b>-7,994.00</b>
<b>Projected underspend 2010-11 carried over * £5K allocated in this year spend to 2010-2011 Annual Conference</b>			<b>43,945.72</b>
<b>Final Balance (including 2010-2011 underspend)</b>			<b>35,951.72</b>

WSCB remains financially viable because of an under spend in the budget in 2010 -2011.

This can be accounted for by the monies which had been set aside for the costs of any Serious Case Reviews which may have been required. As these were not commissioned, money could be transferred into the current financial year. This will not remain unspent. The current participation of WSCB in the SCIE (Social Care Institute of Excellence) case review project has already cost £17,200 and a high priority of WSCB is to develop a programme of learning events to embed lessons learned from local case reviews.

In addition to the local contributions to WSCB's budget, the Department for Education has also made a contribution of £21,953.50, from central government funds. This money is intended specifically to assist WSCB in co-ordinating the effective implementation of the recommendations of the Munro Review into the child protection system in England, through workforce training and development.

WSCB is planning to collaborate with other LSCBs in Greater Manchester to see if we can pool some of this funding to make the very best use of it. This is a link to the final report of the Munro Review:

[http://www.education.gov.uk/munroreview/downloads/8875\\_DfE\\_Munro\\_Report\\_TAGGED.pdf](http://www.education.gov.uk/munroreview/downloads/8875_DfE_Munro_Report_TAGGED.pdf)

## Section 2 – How safe are our children and young people in Wigan Borough?

### How many children and young people are there in Wigan Borough?

There are 306,800 people altogether in Wigan Borough, so this means that the children and young people add up to just over 21% of the population.

It's impossible to provide a total picture of how safe are our children and young people in the Borough because some abuse or neglect may be hidden, despite every best effort of workers and volunteers to identify which children need their attention. Sadly, some families may deliberately conceal their children's need for protection and neighbours may turn a blind eye to their concerns too. Keeping children safe really is everyone's business.

But what might be helpful, is to look at how many children and young people in Wigan Borough have got child protection plans (CPP).

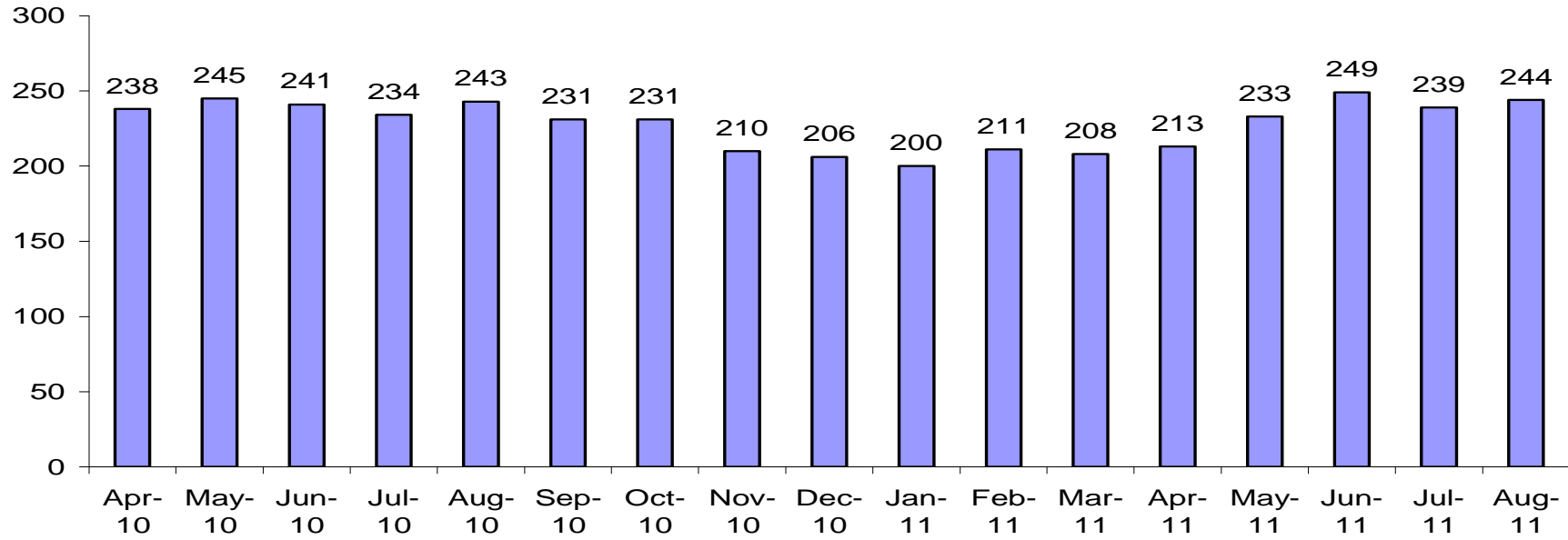
Children who have a child protection plan have been discussed at a child protection conference (with their parents or carers there too) and it's been agreed that the child needs protection from harm. This includes protection from physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse and neglect. The plan will explain why people are worried about the child, what action will be taken to reduce those concerns, how the child will be kept safe, and how we will know when progress is being made.

Wigan's children's services keep a list of children who have a child protection plan. Each child protection plan is reviewed regularly, to make sure that the plan really is helping to protect the child. Only when the concerns about the child's safety have been properly dealt with can the plan come to an end (but this doesn't mean that professionals and/or volunteers don't carry on providing help and support to a family).

The number of children who are "Looked After" by the local authority also shows us how much effort has been given to keeping children and young people safe, in the most difficult circumstances. Only when every possibility of keeping a child at home safely, will the local authority go to court to ask for a decision about whether a child or young person should live away from their birth family. Some families also agree that this is the best thing for their children. In the past we referred to these children as "being in care" but now it is known as being 'looked after'.

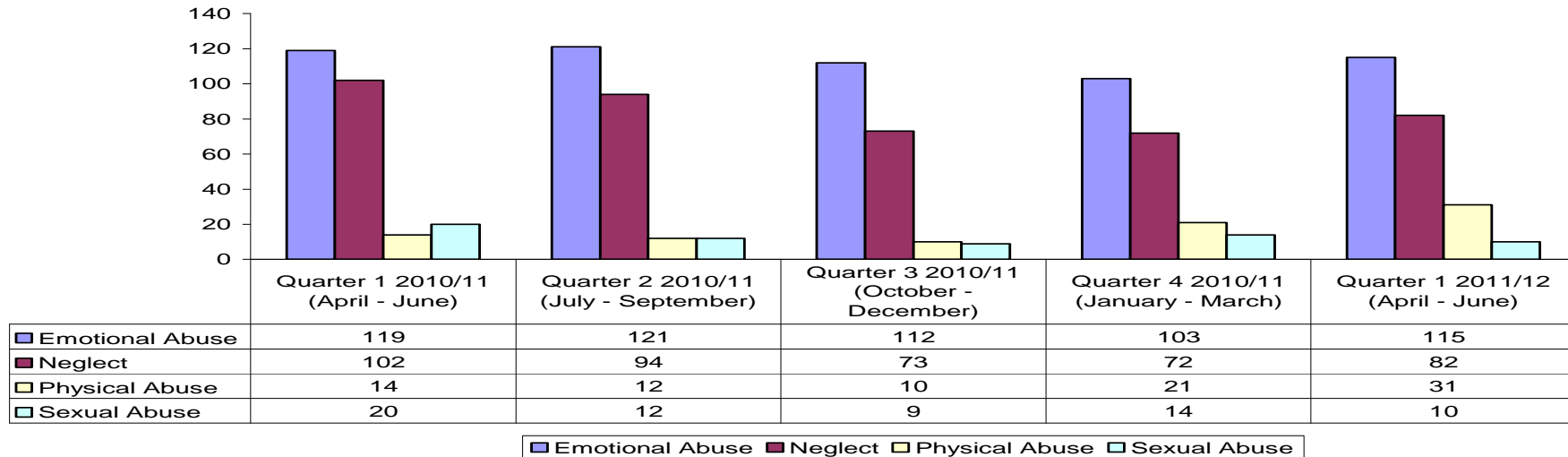
Here are recent figures in Wigan Borough:

**Number Of Children Subject To A Child Protection Plan (Per Calendar Month)  
April 2010 - August 2011**



The number of children subject to a plan decreased throughout Quarter 3 2010/11 and Quarter 4 2010/11. However in comparing January 2011 with August 2011 it is evident that there has been an increase of approximately 20% in the number of children subject to a plan.

**Abuse Category Per Quarter**



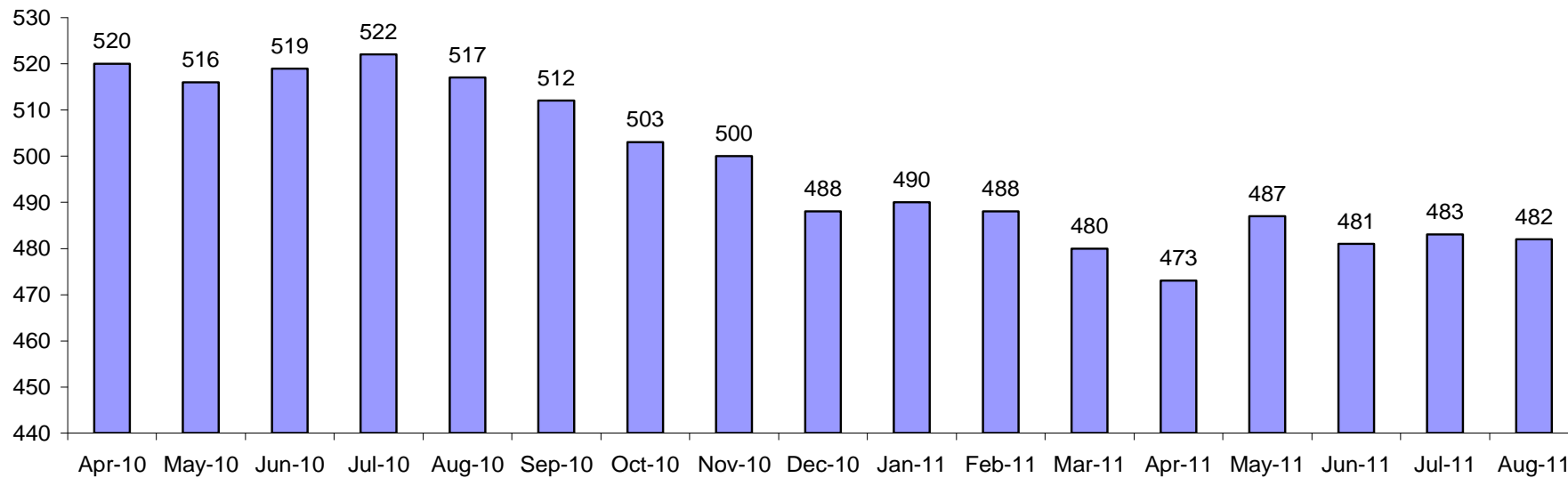
The most prominent abuse category is Emotional Abuse with 50% of children/young people being subject to a protection plan as a result of this type of abuse. This is an increase of 9% in comparison with the 2009/10 figure wherein 41% of children subject to a protection plan were as a result of Emotional Abuse

Neglect is the second most recorded abuse category between April 10 and August 2011 with 37% of children subject to a protection plan as a result of Emotional Abuse. This is a decrease of 4% on 2009/10

8% children/young people were made subject to a protection plan as a result of physical abuse this is equivalent to the figure for 2009/10.

Sexual Abuse continues to be the least recorded abuse category for April 2010 – August 2011 with 5% of children and young people subject to a protection plan as a result of this type of abuse this is an decrease of 2% on the 2009/10 figure.

**Total LAC Per Calendar Month**



The number of Looked After Children per calendar month has decreased throughout the reporting period. Comparing April 2010 and April 2011, the figures show that there has been a decrease of approximately 9% in the number of Looked After Children. There was a slight increase in May 2011 of 3% in the number of Looked After Children.

## Section 3 – Review of 2010/11 Activity & Achievement

### Achievements in 2010 – 2011

Wigan's Safeguarding Children Board can describe a significant number of achievements over the last year, the most important of which is that it has held its own in the middle of so much change and uncertainty in the public and voluntary sectors.

#### Strong ethos for sharing responsibility for safeguarding children has been matured on WSCB

Over the last 3 years the members of WSCB have been developing a stronger sense of shared responsibility for keeping children safe. In the past, most professionals saw this as the main responsibility of 'social services' (now known as children's social care). This meant that most professionals thought all they needed to do was make a referral to social care if they were worried about a child and then their job was done - their back felt 'covered' if anything went wrong.

We have moved a long way from here. There is now an enduring belief that all the agencies are in this together. This was demonstrated very well in a recent discussion at a Board meeting. Children's social care gave a presentation about the particular challenges it faces in making sure that the most vulnerable children get the attention they need. This led to a spontaneous response from representatives from other agencies, who described how important it is that social workers don't always get the blame for difficult situations and that all professionals should work together in these cases. A paediatrician in this meeting also described how difficult it can be for doctors to make diagnoses of child abuse. They can suffer a great deal of criticism and interrogation about their clinical expertise, which may lead to a reluctance from some doctors to become involved in child protection work. However, this doctor explained that the collaborative ethos on the Board gave him more confidence that he would be supported by other agencies in exercising his professional judgement.

#### Policies for the most vulnerable young people have been strengthened e.g. children missing from home, young people at risk of sexual exploitation

Research and practice experience into very specific forms of child abuse have led to a greater awareness on WSCB of the needs of particularly vulnerable young people - for example, those at risk of being sexually exploited, those who are missing from home and those at risk of being 'radicalised' for violent extremism. In the past, each of these groups was considered separately by the Board, which last year drew together clear expectations about how agencies in the Borough will respond to these young people.

A further development of this has been the establishment of a single sub group for the Board which pulls together all of this work, taking advantage of where they overlap and can serve each other.

WSCB is part of a pioneering scheme for reviewing critical cases, using a new methodology developed by the Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE)

Serious Case Reviews (SCRs) have received a lot of attention from politicians, the media and the public in recent years, particularly since the tragic death of baby Peter Connelly in Haringey. One of the consequences of this is that the original intention of these reviews (to learn lessons from specific cases) has become confused with a search for a professional to blame – and also punish – for the tragic death of child. This has not been good for the child protection system and, following the Munro Review, the government also understands this. WSCB has a responsibility to undertake SCRs when the criteria is met. Thankfully, these circumstances are rare. But there are other cases which come close to the ‘threshold’ for a SCR and could be reviewed in this way, if WSCB wishes. The final decision for commissioning a SCR is made by WSCB’s Independent Chair.

Over the last year, the Independent Chair has recognised that a small number of cases have been close to the threshold for SCR, but have not required one. However, the Chair’s commitment to helping WSCB learn lessons where it can has not been compromised by this. Rather than holding a SCR, the Board has therefore commissioned a small number of local case reviews. The most recent of these has been undertaken under the close supervision and training of the Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) and with the support of the Department for Education. This review is using a new style of review which was recommended by the Munro Review and which the government is considering as one of the possible alternatives to how SCRs are currently carried out. This is pioneering work for WSCB and will increase not only local expertise, but will contribute to national learning about this style of case review.

Sharing a joint project with the Local Safeguarding Children Boards in Bolton and Salford to raise awareness about safe sleeping arrangements for babies

As described in last year’s WSCB Annual Report, the Child Death Overview Panel which WSCB shares with Salford and Bolton, has identified that there have been a number of potentially avoidable deaths of babies in the three boroughs. These little ones died when they has been placed in sleeping arrangements and positions which contributed to them suffocating or dying from other related causes. It was therefore agreed that the three boroughs would pool some resources – and more importantly, ideas – to raise the public’s awareness again about how to keep their babies safe when they are put down to sleep. This resulted in a very imaginative campaign which will extend over three years and involve professionals, parents and the wider public. The intention is to fix this advice firmly in the minds of all families, so that no babies are put at avoidable risk.

WSCB has appointed two Lay Members who provide a vital link between the Board and the wider community

WSCB now benefits from the insight and scrutiny of two Lay Members. Rachel Fairhurst and John Mason bring a wealth of local knowledge and commitment to the safeguarding of children onto the Board. Here are some of their first impressions of being part of WSCB:

### **Why did you want to become a Lay Member on WSCB?**

**Rachel:** As a training officer delivering training for a Housing Association nationally ,and as a mum of 2 teenage boys, spare time is hard to come by and I really wanted to volunteer and give back something to the local community which wasn't a weekly commitment. All my previous voluntary roles have involved working with children and because of this and as a local Mum I saw this as an important local issue. In addition my job role includes safeguarding issues and I feel quite passionate about it.

**John:** As Chair of Governors of a school for children with profound and multiple learning difficulties and also severe learning difficulties I am involved with some of the most vulnerable children. I wanted to become a lay member on WSCB because I felt that my previous life experiences suited me to the role, and I wanted the opportunity to both contribute to, and learn more about safeguarding issues.

### **What has been the most interesting part of the role so far?**

**Rachel:** The diversity of areas that the safeguarding teams have to consider and follow up. The amount of local agencies involved and the amount of working groups delivering fantastic results to keep the children of Wigan safe.

**John:** The most interesting part of the role has been the proactive search for solutions to issues which could become problematical. The role of reactive enquiry into past errors, though obviously essential is insufficient. The maxim 'prevention is better than cure' appears to be the overriding desired outcome.

### **What has surprised you most about safeguarding children in Wigan?**

**Rachel:** That WSCB has responsibility for HMYOI Hindley and the amount of children in the institution and the complex issues that they have and must be taken into consideration

**John:** I have been surprised by the desire of the various authorities to work together proactively in order to assess and address failings in agencies in the safeguarding of children, rather than to remain insular and defensively maintain their own positions by attempting to deflect potential culpability. This has been demonstrated by their willingness to open up documentation to external audit by other representative agencies on the Board, and to co-operate with those other agencies to attempt to achieve a reduction in the risk of harm to children.

### **If you could change something (without being given extra money) to improve safeguarding children in Wigan, what would it be?**

**Rachel:** To educate the public about the excellent work the Board does and for them to understand the many strands the Board has to cover .For the public to realise that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Also to ensure that voluntary organisations realise their safeguarding responsibilities with regard to children

**John:** I would suggest pre-implementation consultation with partner agencies and also with parents or carers, etc., about the possible unforeseen effect of policy changes in general, or alteration in the manner of accomplishing mundane tasks in particular, which may inadvertently impact detrimentally on the welfare of vulnerable children.

### **Is there anything the communities in the Borough need to know, to help them protect children themselves?**

**Rachel:** Some facts and figures of what happens in Wigan, to make it real .That it does happen in their borough, and is not just an issue somewhere else in the country - such as sexual exploitation /grooming issues.

**John:** Simply that safeguarding children is the responsibility of each member of the community and not 'someone else's job'.

Working relationships with neighbouring LSCBs have been strengthened with regard to protecting the non - Wigan boys living in HMPYOI Hindley

HM YOI Hindley (Her Majesty's Young Offenders Institution at Hindley) is a large establishment, in fact it's the largest of its kind in Western Europe.

Every year 8,000 children and young people go through custodial settings. Many of these young people are likely to do badly in their later lives, without proper support now. Early experiences of disadvantage often mean that it's not until they are in secure placements, like HMYOI Hindley, that the young people's complex and challenging needs are noticed. These include high levels of emotional and mental health problems, behavioural and learning difficulties, and poor physical health.

Some people, including, unfortunately, a number of national politicians, talk about young offenders in very derogatory terms. Whilst they must be held to account for their crimes, WSCB and the staff in HMYOI Hindley also realise that the time they spend locked up in HMYOI Hindley presents a vital window of opportunity to help them address their difficulties and improve their lives. It is necessary to give this support, not only for the sake of the young people themselves, but also for the good of their communities when they are released.

The vast majority of the boys in HMYOI Hindley don't come from Wigan. They come from across the North West and even much further afield.

WSCB has therefore worked hard with HMYOI Hindley to remind and encourage the local authorities where the boys come from, to take responsibility for the services and support they should be giving to the boys whilst they are in HMYOI Hindley.

Unfortunately, there are too many stories of boys not receiving proper support from their own local authorities, particularly when they are about to be released from HMYOI Hindley into homelessness and deprivation. It's not difficult to anticipate the kind of difficulties and temptations this lack of support will take these boys into.

The good practice which has been developed between WSCB and HMYOI Hindley has recently been recognised in a national publication by Ofsted. This is the link and the reference to Wigan is on page 31:

<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/good-practice-local-safeguarding-children-boards>

A number of local cases in the Borough have been examined in great detail by the WSCB, to discover any lessons which can be learnt to make us better at protecting children, and particularly babies, in the future

A small number of detailed local case reviews have been undertaken, seeking lessons which can be learnt about what has worked well and what needs development. These cases have focused on young babies and have highlighted a number of issues. A common theme in these cases has been the injury or bruising to young babies who were not yet mobile. Whilst these injuries did not cause death, it has highlighted the need for all members of the children's workforce to deepen their understanding of the significance of bruising and injury to such vulnerable children. A consistent approach to responding to these is also needed.

On a positive note, it is through WSCB's determined and detailed scrutiny of these cases and the willingness of agencies to look carefully at their own practice, that this issue has emerged.

This, and other lessons learnt through these reviews, can now strengthen practice in the Borough so that all children are better protected into the future.

All agencies have maintained their existing level of financial support for the WSCB

Despite all the cuts in public spending and huge pressure on local budgets, members of WSCB have been able to maintain their financial contribution to the work of the Board. It is now incumbent on WSCB to use this wisely and to make sure that it properly funds its priority activities.

WSCB members are providing regular 'impact statements' to the Board about the effects of the public spending cuts on their capacity to protect children

WSCB has been proactive in its response to the huge changes to the public sector and the NHS. Rather than wait to find out how these will affect our ability to safeguard children, the Board has created a regular space in its meetings for member agencies to share the most recent proposals for change in their organisation. This enables other members to challenge and scrutinise the likely impact of these on their own agency's capacity to protect children, as well as the difference it will make to the sharing of responsibility for safeguarding children across the whole Board.

Some members are willing to be open and frank about challenging impact of the changes in their organisation's safeguarding activity, whilst others are either more optimistic or more cautious. These are worrying times for all those dedicated to protecting children and nobody wants to see a reduction in our ability to keep children safe.

The regular discussion of 'impact statements' is a positive way to anticipate any serious concerns and to take action to minimize risks.

## Challenges facing WSCB

### Diminishing resources available to member agencies to safeguard children and young people

Whilst the financial resources for the work of WSCB have been maintained, the human resources have become more pressed. This isn't just in terms of numbers of staff available to carry out their roles, but the time they have to dedicate to it. This has been demonstrated in the difficulties some representatives have had finding the time to attend meetings to take forward the work of WSCB. This has included the main Board meetings themselves and also a number of the sub groups.

Inevitably, this slows the momentum of WSCB's business and creates a sense of diminished significance being given to the work of WSCB.

### The six month absence of WSCB's skilled Business Development Manager, due to maternity leave, has not been fully backfilled.

The intention behind not backfilling this post was to save money at a time when maternity leave cover was also not available for other posts in the local authority. It was also hoped that a period without a full time post would encourage WSCB members to exercise greater self reliance in their contribution to the Board's business, rather than leaning heavily on the Business Manager to facilitate the work.

However, this has compromised the Board's capacity to meet its own timescales for achieving its priorities. Not only has the absence of the skills and dedicated time of the Business Manager created a deficit in the capacity of the Board, but this has also coincided with the additional responsibilities and workload pressures felt by members in their 'day jobs'.

The 'business critical' aspects of the Business Manager's post WSCB have been maintained by an officer from the local authority's safeguarding unit and she has been committed and given her best, as she has combined this with her other responsibilities.

This period without a full time Business Manager, at a time of great change in the child protection landscape, has demonstrated the crucial role this post has to play in ensuring WSCB meets its objectives.

### Many experienced staff are leaving the children's workforce through early retirement and organisational re-structures

It has become increasingly apparent that WSCB members have lost significant elements of 'organisational memory' and insight from within their own agencies, as the public sector changes take effect. As experienced staff leave the children's workforce, their roles, if filled at all, are often redeployed to colleagues who have limited expertise in this area of activity.

This has an indirect impact on the work of the Board as its members have reduced 'intelligence' to call upon from within their own agency, to inform the work of WSCB.

Many senior staff have been given substantial extra responsibilities, including services for adults as well as children.

A comparison between the job titles of WSCB members in last year's Annual Report and this one tells a clear story about the enormous expectations now placed on key staff to assume new responsibilities for vast swathes of services to both children and adults. These same people were working extremely hard before they took on these new roles, so it is inevitable that they will have to take some of their attention away from children and young people in order to fulfil their new responsibilities for adults also.

In her review of the child protection system, Professor Munro expressed her concern that Directors for Children's Services in particular should not have their roles 'weakened' or 'diluted', with additional duties being placed upon them.

Additional duties have already been given to Wigan's Director for Children's Services, who is now the Corporate Director for the People's Directorate. Time will tell whether this will compromise the availability of this crucial role in strategic leadership for children and WSCB will need to monitor this carefully.

The community and voluntary sector has been effected very significantly by the spending cuts.

The change in the allocation of grants and funding to the voluntary and community sector in Wigan Borough has had a significant effect on its infrastructure for providing grassroots services. Particular concern has been expressed on the Board for the loss of provision for teenagers and young people.

This is significant. Members of the Board have been encouraged to consider how their agencies may be able to support the voluntary sector, but as this comes at a time of cuts and reforms across the whole sector, such collaborative working is under greater pressure.

The provision and take up of Level 3 training, provided by WSCB, has been inconsistent.

This is due to a combination of staff not being released from the 'day job' because of workload pressures, either to help deliver the Level 3 training, or to attend the training as a participant

The significance of this challenge is very clear. If the workforce, already under considerable pressure to deliver 'more for less', cannot access the very training designed to develop its expertise and confidence, the quality of service and resilience of the workforce itself will diminish.

The challenge of trying to deliver WSCB's training strategy has been increased by the absence of the full time Business Manager over a six month period, to drive this forward.

The expectation on LSCBs to increase their impact on local training delivery and effectiveness has been increased significantly by the recommendations of the Munro Review. WSCB needs to act on this as a high priority.

Ensuring that the lessons learned from local case reviews and case file audits become embedded in local practice and services

This is particularly challenging when the workforce has so many changes to deal with and is often being re-organised into new teams and locations. As WSCB seeks to encourage a culture of learning and the exercise of professional judgement, in keeping with the recommendations of the Munro Review, there needs to be a more intentional process of disseminating the lessons learned from case reviews, beyond the creation of new procedures.

WSCB is still uncertain about the kinds of conversations it wants to have with children and young people about setting priorities for keeping them safe

Whilst individual member agencies of WSCB have become more adept at listening to the voices of children and young people in their own areas of work, WSCB has struggled to discern for itself how it wants to engage directly with children and young people. The Board is uncertain about what kind of insights it needs from children and young people, over and above any existing conversations in the Borough, to enhance the work and effectiveness of WSCB. A small task group is presently exploring this.

## Some real life examples

Rather than simply give an overview of the work of WSCB, here are some concrete examples from some of its members of real difference they have made to keeping children and young people safe in Wigan, as a result of being part of WSCB.

### **How has being a member of WSCB assisted your agency in better protecting children in the Borough over the last year?**

- The audit and review of specific cases has enabled us to identify both good practice and areas for improvement which are system wide as well as relevant to our own agency – *People Directorate*
- Being a member of the Board has allowed me access to specific and pertinent information concerning child protection issues that I have cascaded to relevant staff within our organisation to ensure that we fulfil our commitment to this service. At the same time, I have worked directly on the pending Ofsted inspection of looked after children ensuring that our staff are fully briefed on the process and their role both within the inspection and to child protection issues in general, as well as the Safer Sleeping campaign. My commitment to the Board is reflected in my 100% attendance since I joined almost two years ago – *Mike Grimes, Wigan and Leigh Housing*
- It has enabled us to better engage with the local voluntary and community service regarding safeguarding and ensured we could share with the sector the latest information and policy. It has also enabled us to engage in safeguarding training at a more strategic level that will benefit sector - *Pamela Ball, Community and Voluntary Sector*
- Through the provision of the e-learning package for staff – *Angie Buckley, Greater Manchester Probation Service*
- Since a local case review we have made some very important changes to how we respond to emergency referrals and work more closely with children's services. Also, our assessments of children and young people are in the process of being tailored to allow the child to be able to express themselves without fear of any reprisal. There is evidence of children being reviewed, at their request, on their own – *Linda Kellie, 5 Boroughs Partnership*
- Ensure messages from local case reviews and high level actions are cascaded through the health workforce – *Jo Hiley, Designated Nurse*
- One area I would wish to promote is our work within health creating a virtual children's safeguarding team across the whole health economy, and the development of the system leaders within that team by a programme of one to one coaching and team development sessions – *Dr David Valentine, Medical Director for ALW and Lead Safeguarding for Children and Adults NHS ALW.*
- In answer to the first and second questions I think being a member of WSCB has greatly increased our awareness of safeguarding issues and through lessons learned we have completely redesigned our safeguarding services into a safeguarding unit, reporting directly to an ALW (Ashton, Leigh and Wigan division) Senior Advisor for Nursing and then to Divisional Director (DD). This has really helped to raise the profile of safeguarding, removing it from line management structure and giving direct reporting line to the Divisional Director. In turn the unique separate safeguarding unit will enable the ALW division to respond more easily to the "virtual" safeguarding team principle within Wigan. The final benefit is that we have been able to merge staff and resources into one unit, and whilst all staff continue to focus upon their dedicated portfolio's it has enhanced peer support within the team - *Michelle Lee, Divisional Director, Ashton, Leigh and Wigan Division of Bridgewater Community Healthcare NHS Trust*

**How has your agency strengthened WSCB, through its specific contribution, over the last year?**

- The agency has continued to give leadership and support to all aspects of the WSCB infrastructure and contributed to the development of both the strategic and operational aspects of improving safeguarding in the Borough
  - *People Directorate*
- As an active partner, we have been involved in various projects including the Safer Sleeping campaign, the Section 11 Audit (which resulted in a much improved outcome for our agency compared to the last inspection), continued staff training, the Child Death Overview Panel review and raised awareness of the problems of child trafficking in the borough. All of these areas of work have contributed to strengthened child protection within the borough – *Mike Grimes, Wigan and Leigh Housing*
- Contributed to the development of public participation and raised awareness of sector issues – *Pamela Ball, Community and Voluntary Sector*
- Through our MAPPA co-ordination role (People who have been convicted of some sexual or violent offences are monitored by a number of agencies within the community. This work is known as the Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements or MAPPA) – *Angie Buckley, Greater Manchester Probation service*
- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services have also participated in the multi agency case file audits to improve working together arrangements – *Linda Kellie, 5 Boroughs Partnership*
- Through financial investment, including £5,000 to implement training in the wider health economy. And also being an active member in all sub group activities– *Jo Hiley, Designated Nurse*

**What are the two most significant challenges to your agency in the coming year, with regard to safeguarding children?**

- Continuing to develop and improve practice at the frontline and responding to the changes in policy and guidance
  - *People Directorate*
- Pressure to reduce our financial costs is the key issue that will impact upon all our services and not just child protection. In reviewing our approach to service delivery, we have done our best to protect front line resources involved in child protection but our ability to respond within specific deadlines or attend all relevant meetings is under increasing pressure from other priorities. We will therefore have to review this to ensure that we can remain focused on the most important issues – *Mike Grimes, Wigan and Leigh Housing*
- Our ability to engage in safeguarding training may be compromised due to funding restraints . We also need to negotiate with the children's services staff for a clear path to engagement with the voluntary and community sector regarding safeguarding – *Pamela Ball, Community and Voluntary Sector*
- I think there are many new initiatives developing around Community Budgets and complex families across the Greater Manchester area which will provide creative ways of working with families who are known to many agencies and are costly in terms of resources. These will require us to work in a different way by integrating service delivery rather than simply collaboration with others – *Angie Buckley, Greater Manchester Probation Service*

- Managing organisational change and structure and also ensuring we have a highly trained skilled workforce who are able to recognise and respond to safeguarding .- *Jo Hiley, Designated Nurse*
- Multi agency training is our biggest challenge in the year ahead - *Michelle Lee, Divisional Director, Ashton, Leigh and Wigan Division of Bridgewater Community Healthcare NHS Trust*

## Section 4 – Child Death Overview Panel

Wigan Safeguarding Children Board has joined with Salford and Bolton Safeguarding Children Boards to form a shared or ‘tripartite’ Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP). Every LSCB is required by law to establish a CDOP, in order that the causes of all child deaths can be pulled together into a wider picture. This includes deaths from any cause, which might include among other things: disease, disorder at birth, accident or maltreatment.

Bolton, Salford and Wigan LSCBs agreed to set up one Panel to review the deaths of children resident in the three areas because they decided that this was a more efficient use of resources. It also means that the Panel is looking at a greater number of deaths and can, therefore, more easily identify trends in the circumstances leading to the deaths.

The Panel gathers and reviews data on the deaths of all children and young people from birth (excluding those babies who are stillborn) up to the age of 18 years who are normally resident within Bolton, Salford or Wigan. This includes neonatal deaths (babies up to four weeks of age) and expected and unexpected deaths of infants, older children and young people.

The table below provides a picture of the number of deaths in the three neighbouring boroughs

**Table 1. No. of childhood deaths in each area by year**

	2008/9	2009/10	2010/11	Total
Bolton	38	28	26	92
Salford	33	29	26	88
Wigan	29	19	21	69
Total	100	76	73	249

The CDOP looks for any themes or characteristics in the causes of death which might suggest action could be taken to reduce the number of similar deaths in the future. As reported in last year’s WSCB Annual Report, making sure that the arrangements for babies’ sleeping are safe was identified as an important issue. As a result of this, there has been a local campaign to raise awareness of this.

The three-year Safe Sleeping Campaign, agreed and planned over the last year, was launched in the last week of June 2011. It aims to change this situation by informing the general public and parents and staff who work with them, in particular, about safe sleeping practice and the risks of not following such advice. It is being co-ordinated by the Safe Sleeping Project Group, under the auspices of CDOP, with a locally developed plan in each area. It includes four key elements:

- *Safe Sleeping Guidance for key staff/services*: the guidance explains the risk and protective factors for Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) , and includes practice guidelines for a wide range of service providers in contact with families
- *A training strategy*: to ensure clear and consistent messages from all practitioners
- *Local branding and production of campaign resources, including promotional and training materials*: this includes the production of Safe Sleeping Assessment forms to ensure records of an initial risk assessment and safe sleeping plan are kept both by the parent and advising practitioner.
- *A public marketing strategy*: to include use of a wide range of media channels ensuring high-profile coverage to promote the messages to both general and high-risk audiences. The aim is to sustain the message over a prolonged period. Examples of activities being undertaken within local marketing strategies in each area include:
  - Stalls at local supermarkets and community events;
  - Workshops with teenage and vulnerable families to include safe sleeping;
  - Messages displayed at football grounds;
  - Pod casts and radio interviews;
  - Police, Housing and Fire Service staff to raise safe sleeping issues during routine home visits;
  - Partnership with local pram shops and businesses.

Over the next year, the Panel will give consideration to sustaining the campaign messages in the future and evaluating its impact.

Making sure that bereaved families receive the right kind of support, at just the right time is also a high priority for the CDOP. The Chair of the CDOP is keen that WSCB is made aware of feedback about the bereavement services in Wigan, so that these can respond thoughtfully to the experiences of local families.

## **Conclusion**

Following the detailed review of the achievements and challenges of WSCB during 2010 – 2011, a number of key priorities have emerged. These will be woven into the development of the Business Plan 2012 – 2014.

It has been acknowledged by Ofsted, through its inspection of LSCBs, that those which are most effective have a small number of locally determined priorities.

### **Highest Priorities**

- WSCB must develop a programme of learning events, over and above basic training, to share the lessons learned from local critical cases and case file audits with the children's workforce
- Awareness raising about the significance of bruising and injury to non mobile infants must be undertaken across the children's workforce, along with clear guidelines on how to respond to this.
- All member agencies must make sure that they enable their staff to facilitate and attend training offered by WSCB
- Members of WSCB's main Board must model the kind of leadership which encourages professionals to exercise their professional judgement. This will be underpinned by a set of agreed WSCB principles against which to measure practice at both the frontline and strategic level
- Development of WSCB's new Business Plan for 2012 – 2014

In concluding this report, WSCB has key messages to share with communities and networks within the Borough, in order to strengthen those partnerships which are necessary for us to share the responsibility for keeping our children and young people safe.

### **Messages for local politicians**

- You can be the eyes and ears of vulnerable children and families in your Ward. Councillor Loudon, the Lead Member, is your route to making sure their voices are heard by WSCB.
- The Community and Voluntary Services in the Borough are taking deep cuts to their resources. It's very likely that the services for children, young people and families in your Ward will be taking a big blow. This may have a knock on effect on the well being of the most vulnerable children and young people in your Ward too.
- When you scrutinise any plans for Wigan Borough, keep the protection of children at the front of your mind. Ask questions about how any plans will affect children and young people.

### **Messages for non-executive directors**

- Non-executive directors (NEDs) have a key role in scrutinising the governance and planning across a range of organisations
- NEDs are therefore well placed to examine each organisation's consideration of children and young people in their planning, ensuring this receives appropriate priority.

- NEDs can also provide valuable feedback to the WSCB about safeguarding in the wider community. This can be directed through the Lead Member

#### **Messages for Chief Executives and Directors**

- Ensure your workforce is able to contribute to the provision of WSCB safeguarding training and to attend training courses and learning events
- Your agency's contribution to the work of WSCB must be categorised as of the highest priority
- The WSCB needs to understand the impact of any organisational restructures on your capacity to safeguard children and young people in Wigan Borough. You need to provide timely impact statements to WSCB through your membership of the Board

#### **Messages for children's workforce**

- Ensure you are booked onto, and attend, all safeguarding courses and learning events required by WSCB for your role
- Be familiar with, and use when necessary, WSCB's Escalation Policy to ensure an appropriate response to children and families
- Use your representative on WSCB to make sure the voices of children and young people are heard by the Board

#### **Messages for the community**

- You are in the best place to look out for children and young people and to raise the alarm if something is going wrong for them
- We all share responsibility for protecting children. If you are worried about a child, do something \*
- Children and young people -

#### **Messages for the local media**

- Communicating the message that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility is crucial to the WSCB and you are ideally positioned to help do this
- The work of WSCB will be of great interest to your readers and listeners
- Your contribution to safeguarding children and young people in Wigan, through public awareness raising campaigns, is potentially very significant

## Appendix A

### ❖ **Thresholds, policies and procedures**

This role requires WSCB to agree what kind of circumstances (thresholds) might require a response from agencies and organisations in the Borough, to keep individual or groups of children and young people safe. For example, WSCB has agreed that children who run away from home are vulnerable, as are children who live with domestic violence. There are other examples, these are just two of them.

WSCB has therefore agreed a set of policies and procedures which describe how professionals and organisations should respond to these thresholds. These are available on the WSCB website on: <http://www.wiganlscb.com./professionals.asp>

### ❖ **Monitoring and evaluation**

Having agreed the thresholds, policies and procedures, the WSCB has high expectations that all of its members follow these. The policies and procedures are only of any value if they are used consistently and effectively. The WSCB therefore monitors how well they are used and changes them to make them stronger, if better ways of protecting children are found.

One of the ways WSCB does this is by scrutinising sets of files from different agencies, to examine how they are working with the policies and procedures and also to see how each organisation is working with other agencies.

Another important way of measuring how well WSCB's members are fulfilling their responsibilities for safeguarding children is to check that they are meeting the requirements of section 11 of the Children Act 2004. Section 11 describes the arrangements agencies must have in place to safeguard children effectively. There's a list of what these arrangements should include such as: having a robust child protection policy; having clear lines of accountability for 'where the buck stops' for safeguarding in the organisation; safe systems for recruiting staff who will have contact with children; and appropriate safeguarding training for staff.

### ❖ **Participating in planning and commissioning**

As the whole focus of the Safeguarding Children Board is to keep children safe and to promote their well being, it's not surprising that the Board has a great deal of expertise in this area of work. This expertise needs to be shared with other structures in Wigan Borough which are responsible for making plans and designing services which will affect children and young people, to make sure that all of their activities take safeguarding children into account.

In particular, the Safeguarding Board has worked closely with Wigan's Children's Trust to make sure that the Children and Young People's Plan for Wigan Borough includes all the necessary ingredients to keep children and young people safe. The *Working Together* guidance has a lot to say about this and has high expectations that LSCBs challenge Children's Trusts if necessary.

#### ❖ **Communicating and raising awareness**

WSCB needs to make sure that everyone in Wigan Borough understands that safeguarding children is everyone's business. Citizens, professionals, volunteers and local politicians need to understand the specific contribution they can make to keeping children safe and WSCB has a responsibility to communicate this.

It also needs to raise awareness about the work of the Safeguarding Children Board itself. The Annual Report is one of the ways of doing just that.

There is also a very strong expectation that WSCB listens specifically to children, young people and their families about what they need to feel safe and to be protected from harm.

#### ❖ **Child death overview**

At the same time that legislation introduced LSCBs, the same law (Children Act 2004) introduced Child Death Overview Panels. The role of these panels is to gather information about the deaths of any child from birth to age 18 in each local authority area. The death of any child or young person is a complete tragedy and heartbreaking for all who are close to them. The work of Child Death Overview Panels is to make sure that families get the sensitive support they need during these painful experiences, whilst also pulling together a wider picture of the circumstances of any deaths of local children. This wider picture can then be used to find ways of preventing any deaths which might be avoidable, including, for example, giving new advice to parents and carers; developing the way services are provided; or reviewing plans and designs for local areas.

Wigan Safeguarding Children Board has joined together with the Safeguarding Children Boards in Salford and Bolton to share one Child Death Overview Panel. By doing this we can share the learning across the three local authorities and also share the costs of fulfilling this role.

## ❖ Serious Case Reviews

Serious case reviews are different from the child death overview processes. Serious case reviews examine specific cases in great detail, whereas child death overview processes consider the deaths of all children in less detail. Serious case reviews are undertaken when there has been a death of a child which suggests there might have been abuse or neglect involved. There are other circumstances too, such as the death of a child in custody or a child killed by a parent with mental illness, which would require a serious case review.

There is clear guidance in *Working Together* about what a serious case review is, and what it isn't. A serious case review is not about finding out the cause of a child's death, or who may have caused it. Those are the responsibilities of the Coroner and the criminal courts. Neither are serious case reviews intended as a way of disciplining any professionals who may not have fulfilled their duties properly. That would need to be undertaken through the specific staff disciplinary processes of the agency involved. Serious case reviews are all about learning any lessons which might help to prevent similar deaths in the future. It's also about improving local services and support for children and young people, if this is recommended by the final report of the review, to prevent future tragedies. The Safeguarding Children Board has to make the decision about when a serious case review should be considered and it is the role of the Independent Chair to make to final decision about whether to call a review.

## Appendix B

### What to do if you're worried about a child

If you are concerned that a child or young person is being abused please refer your concerns to Wigan Children's Duty Team.

If you are a member of the community please telephone **01942 828300**. Outside office hours please contact **0161 834 2436**.

If you are a professional working with the child / family, complete the Professional Referral Form, which can be downloaded from the left hand navigation button entitled 'Professional Referral Form'. Please then add the consent form and if completed, a CAF, together with any other assessments completed, and either fax to 01942 828320, or send by post to Ince Annexe, Ince Town Hall, Ince, Wigan.

### REFERRAL TO CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE SERVICES

**(A) Child in Need Referral** – the referral form must include the written consent of the person with parental responsibility for the child/ren for the sharing of information with other agencies.

**(B) Child Protection Referral** – All child protection referrals must be discussed with the Duty Officer, at the time the concerns come to light. The referral form must be completed subsequently and sent to the Duty Officer within 48 hours of the verbal referral having been made. It is good practice to seek the consent of parents / carers before making a referral unless to do so would increase the risk of immediate harm to the child. If consent is refused the referrer should discuss this with the Duty Officer at the point of referral. The exceptions to seeking consent will be any referral where Sexual Abuse or Fabricated and Induced Illness is suspected, in this instance there should be no discussion with family prior to referral to Duty Officer.

### What is a child protection Referral?

Section 47(1) of the Children act 1989 states that: Where a local authority have reasonable cause to suspect that a child who lives, or is found, in their area is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm, the authority shall make, or cause to be made, such enquiries as they consider necessary to enable them to decide whether they should take any action to safeguard or promote the child's welfare.

If you are working with a child or young person for whom a CAF assessment (Common Assessment Framework) has already been fully completed, you can attach the completed CAF.

It is your responsibility to ensure that all of the basic information required is included as part of your referral, either on this form or in the completed CAF. Failure to do so will cause delay for the family.

## Appendix C - Structural diagram of Wigan's Safeguarding Children Board

