



**Partnership Protocol between all members of the Wigan Safeguarding Children Partnership including the Local Authority, Wigan Integrated Care Partnership (and provider trusts), Education, Greater Manchester Police and Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service.**

# **Wigan Safeguarding Children Partnership**

## **Resolution Protocol**

**Resolution of professional disagreements in work relating to safeguarding children, young people, and their families.**

Wigan Safeguarding Children Partnership have developed the following Resolution protocol to help professionals achieve positive outcomes for children, adults and families. Partnership working is at the core of the work that we undertake, and professional agreement and challenge is central to our day-to-day practice in Safeguarding. This protocol provides a framework to help partner agencies positively resolve issues or challenges and ensure children and families the support they need at the right time.

If you are the safeguarding leading for your organisation, please ensure that you disseminate and implement this policy throughout your organisation as per the following instructions.

All partner agencies:

- Ensure staff are made aware of the guidance via your internal communication channels
- Make the Local Protocol available via your own websites with a link across to this page
- Update in-house policies and procedures to reflect protocol
- Update in-house training to reflect protocol.

## Introduction

**What is this process?** This process outlines the steps to be taken when there are concerns raised by practitioners from more than one agency in relation the safety and welfare of a child or young person, and / or action being taken to safeguard a child or young person. Concerns raised may be due to a disagreement between agencies or a shared concern.

Within this process the term “family” is used to describe parent / carers and family members such as siblings as well as extended family members.

**Why do we need this process?** When working with practitioners from other agencies there will at times be differences of opinion with regards to how to respond to an identified concern about a child, young person, or family. There may be occasions where practitioners agree there is a concern, but this requires a strategic leadership approach to support safe working outside of standard practice guidelines in the best interest of the child. This process has been designed to guide practitioners in the steps that they should take when concerns arise.

**Who is this aimed at?** This process is aimed at practitioners working with families either regularly or occasionally. These practitioners will come from a wide range of agencies both statutory and non-statutory. The levels within this protocol should be interpreted by all agencies, in a way which allows the

application of relevant roles and job titles in individual agencies within the operational structure of this protocol.

The key contact for comments about this policy is: [wscb@wigan.gov.uk](mailto:wscb@wigan.gov.uk)

## Professional Disagreement and Shared Professional Concern

When having conversations (and working) with practitioners from other agencies there will at times be differences of opinion with regards to how to respond to an identified concern about a child, young person or family.

Disagreements can be a sign of developing thinking, and the value of exchanging ideas from different perspectives should not be under-estimated. When there are disagreements between agencies, this should be recognised as potential for healthy debate. However, disagreements may disadvantage the child or family involved if they are not resolved constructively and in a timely manner. On occasion, disagreements which can't be resolved, may need to be escalated up to first line managers (and beyond if appropriate) who should address any concerns.

There may be occasions where practitioners agree there is a concern, but this requires a strategic leadership approach, where there is a perceived need for a significant amount of additional resource at pace, or to support safe working outside of standard practice guidelines in the best interest of the child. This will require escalation to senior management and the tripartite leaders for oversight, decision making,

In order to support and challenge a clear process needs to be in place to ensure that all practitioners involved in multi-agency work understand the steps they should take when concerns arise. This process should however be measured in its approach to allow practitioners the opportunity to openly discuss their concerns with other practitioners. Throughout our work the safety and wellbeing of the child or young person is the primary concern, and professional disputes must not obstruct this. If you feel that a practitioner or an agency is not acting in the best interests of the child, young person or family, you have a responsibility to respectfully challenge the practitioner or agency. Should you have a concern

that a child is at risk of, or is suffering significant harm, this should be responded to using your own agencies safeguarding procedures.

#### Examples of disagreement

- Differences in the handling of referrals / requests for services between agencies
- Disagreement on attendance at multi-agency meetings (Early Help, Child in Need, Child Protection, Child Looked After)
- Differences in opinion with regards to a child's plan
- Concern about the action or inaction of another professional in relation to the safety and wellbeing of a child or young person
- Information sharing concerns
- Disagreement about the provision of services.

#### Principles of concerns resolution

When trying to resolve disagreements practitioners should work within the following principles:

- The safety and wellbeing of the child or young person is paramount, and should they be considered to be at risk of significant harm Duty and Advice should be contacted or the child's social worker if they have one
- Keeping the child, young person and their family at the centre of all professional discussions
- Quality conversations about which approach should be undertaken
- Ensuring that the right conversations are had with the right people at the right time, taking place face to face where possible
- To resolve disagreement using a restorative approach which includes appropriate challenge
- Resolving disagreements in a timely manner
- Undertaking a solution focus approach
- Concerns, actions, responses and outcomes must be recorded and agreed.

The following **multi-agency working principles** should also be adhered to:

- **Be committed to developing trusted relationships** – this will rely on openness, honesty and high quality communication with each other and with the children, young people and families we work with
- **Aim to understand each other** – we will check out our understanding of each other’s language and meaning when necessary; this can be especially relevant due to use of jargon or service specific terminology. We will also challenge and rethink language that is oppressive, discriminatory or blaming; seeing language as dynamic rather than static
- **Adopt restorative and strengths based approaches** – as practitioners, we will give high support and high challenge to each other to enable strength based, solution focused and restorative approaches to working effectively with children, young people and their families
- **When it gets hard, we will try harder** – instead of withdrawing from each other when situations are complex and hard to navigate, as practitioners and agencies we will try even harder to find common ground, support each other and align ourselves for a coordinated approach
- **Share information about our own roles, agencies and statutory responsibilities** - we are committed to supporting others to understand our particular roles and statutory responsibilities
- **Do what we say we will do** – we will follow up on actions agreed in meetings and provide regular updates so that everyone knows what is going on to help with the coordination of the child’s care and support
- **Model the attitudes and behaviours we hope that children and families experience** - as practitioners, we adopt the principles of playfulness, acceptance, curiosity and empathy.

## Resolving Disagreements and Concerns

### Resolution Process

The following process should be followed by practitioners when raising a concern and/or disagreement. There may be times when concerns should be escalated straight to the Head of Service level dependent on the immediacy / seriousness

of the issue, and therefore in some circumstances it is not always appropriate to apply this process in a linear way.

***Time scales not exceeding 10 working days should be agreed for each stage taking into consideration risk to the child.***

### **Step 1: Practitioner to Practitioner**

- Immediately discuss with colleagues and own agency designated lead for safeguarding to clarify thinking and practice
- Attempt to resolve any disagreements with the practitioner face to face before initiating the full process. This could include using any of the identified ways listed above.
- A clear written record should be kept and shared with everyone involved, this should include a clear evidence-based reason for the disagreement.

Should concerns and/or disagreement be in relation to processes whereby there is a Lead Professional / IRO / Chair of multi-agency meeting they should be informed in writing for information and monitoring.

Where a resolution is reached this should be clearly recorded and shared with everyone involved including the agreed points of resolution and any next steps.

### **Step 2: Line Manager to Line Manager**

If following Step 1 the concern and/or disagreement remains, discuss with your designated lead for safeguarding and immediately refer this to your line manager, for them to discuss with the line manager of the other practitioner.

Line managers may consider utilising any of the identified approaches listed above to facilitate the resolution or the Partnership resolution seeking proforma (appendix 5).

They should do this within an agreed timescale with the practitioner raising the concern, and a timescale for response from the other line manager should also be agreed. Where possible this should not exceed 10 working days between stages and one month for the overall process to be completed.

The principles of recording as outlined in Stage 1 should be followed both during the process and at the point of resolution.

**\*For agencies where there is no line manager (e.g. self-employed, single person organisation etc.) professional bodies, funders, commissioners or trustees should be contacted.**

### **Step 3: Head of Service / Senior Manager to Head of Service / Senior Manager**

If agreement cannot be reached following discussions between first line managers the issue must be referred without delay through the line management structure to the equivalent of Head of Service, **again with agreed timescales for responses.**

**Where possible this should not exceed 10 working days between stages and one month for the overall process to be completed.**

The principles of recording as outlined in Stage 1 should be followed both during the process and at the point of resolution.

### **Director/Assistant Director to Director/Assistant Director**

If professional disagreements remain unresolved, each Head of Service / Senior Manager will raise the disagreement within a further 2 working days at Director / Assistant Director level within their own agency or within health the Designated Nurse for Safeguarding Children.

The Director / Assistant Director (or within health the Designated Nurse for Safeguarding Children) of the complainant agency will then write to the Director / Assistant Director (or within health the Designated Nurse for Safeguarding Children) of the receiving agency and meet to achieve a final resolution.

The principles of recording as outlined in Stage 1 should be followed both during the process and at the point of resolution.

### **Stage 3: Exceptional Circumstances**

If the disagreement cannot be resolved within the 3 step process set out above, this should be referred to the WSCP Business Manager  
(R.Bolton@wigan.gov.uk) using the

A further meeting will be facilitated between the WSCP and the referrer and agencies involved with the purpose of achieving a resolution. If the matter

involves Education settings the Enhanced Service Manager for Education will represent the sector. Where matters remain without resolution at this level the Executive Leads for the Partnership will be informed and their suggestions for a resolution sought.

**If at any stage the process is halted for any reason such as sickness, meetings being cancelled etc the agency with the concern should record why the process has been halted and ensure that the process is resumed as soon as possible, seeking line management support if required. It may be that in cases of sickness a different person needs to take over the process. Every effort should be made by all parties to ensure that the process does not drift.**

## Things for Consideration

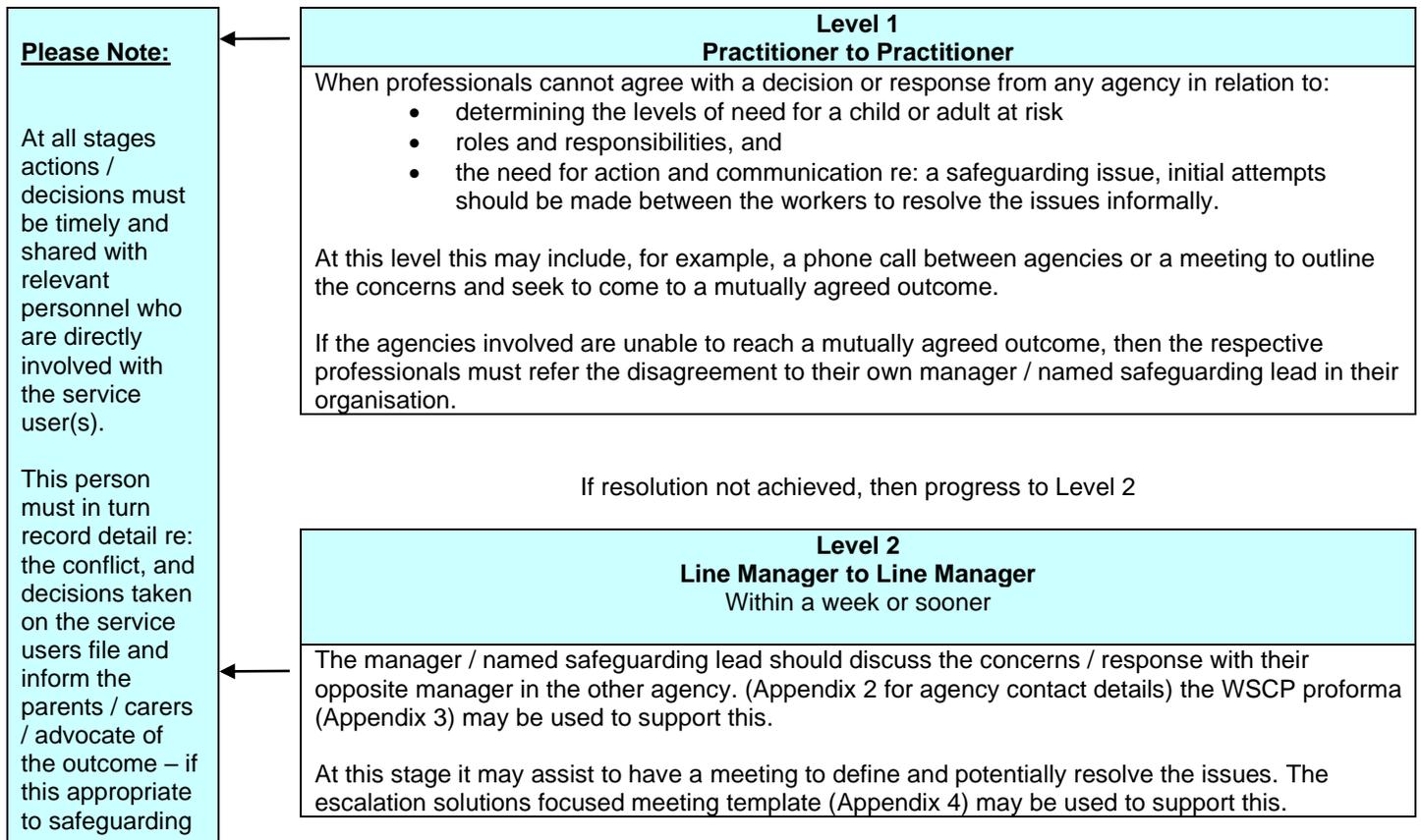
- Appropriate timescales for passing on, and responding to, concerns should be agreed for each stage. These should take into consideration any potential risk to the child and need for provision of services. Any changes or requests for extensions to timescales should be agreed and recorded
- Where a meeting is convened to discuss concerns consideration needs to be given as to whether it is appropriate for families to attend and this should be communicated with all involved. When these meetings are called they remain the responsibility of the agency who calls the meeting to take the lead on inviting appropriate professionals and administrate the meeting
- Clear agreed written records should be kept and shared with everyone at all stages, which must include written confirmation between the parties about agreed resolutions, next steps and the proposed follow-up of any outstanding issues. Feedback should be given at every stage to the practitioner who raised the original concern
- If throughout the process you feel that a child is suffering or at risk of suffering significant harm, you are responsible for communicating your concerns to your immediate line manager and / or your organisation's designated lead for child protection and contacting The Childrens First

Partnership in line with your own agencies safeguarding policies or the child’s social worker if they have one

- Practitioners should continue to use their agency procedures in conjunction with this document
- Practitioners should consider the use of processes such as restorative circles and Rethink Formulation to support this process as appropriate
- The NSPCC Whistleblowing Helpline for practitioners (further details can be found on the NSPCC Website) is not intended to replace existing processes to resolve disputes or the local LADO arrangements.

**Appendices**

**Appendix 1**



the child / young person involved.

**Level 3**  
**Head of Service to Head of Service**  
Within further week or sooner

Where resolution cannot be achieved through line management this should be referred to equivalent heads of service.

If the matter remains unresolved, then the matter must be referred to equivalent directors/assistant directors within 2 working days.

meetings should be arranged to discuss a final resolution.

**Level 4**  
**Exceptional Circumstances**  
Within further week or sooner

If the manager / named safeguarding lead are unable to achieve a resolution, they should refer it to the Wigan Safeguarding Children Partnership Business Manager. This may take the form of a meeting, or phone conversations.

A further meeting will be facilitated between the WSCP and the referrer and agencies involved with the purpose of achieving a resolution.

If the matter involves Education settings the Enhanced Service Manager for Education will represent the sector.

Where matters remain without resolution at this level the Executive Leads for the Partnership will be informed and their suggestions for a resolution sought.

Where concerns remain following escalation to Executive Leaders, the case will be referred to the WSCP Independent Scrutineer

## Appendix 2

### Stage 1 Useful Contacts

<b>Children's Social Care</b>	<b>Contact Numbers</b>
Locality 1	01942 828468
Locality 2	01942 486723
Locality 3	01942 404776
Locality 4	01942 404769
MAST	01942 828300
Specialist Assessment Team A, B, C, D	01942 828451
Leaving Care	01942 487150
Fostering	01942 487200
Adoption	01942 487272
CSE Team	0161 856 5959
Targeted Disability Team	01942 828468
Children In Care Team 1	01942 828468
Children In Care Team 2	01942 404776
Children In Care Team 3	01942 486723

<b>Adult Social Care</b>	<b>Contact Numbers</b>
Adult Duty Team	01942 828777
Wigan Locality Team	01942 489494
Ashton Locality Team	01942 828787
Leigh Locality Team	01942 404523
Hospital Discharge Team	01942 822117
Adult Safeguarding Team	01942 486178
Service Manager	01942 489538
Principal Social Worker	01942 487024

<b>Targeted Services</b>	<b>Contact Numbers</b>
Service Manager Targeted Services	01942 487750
Start Well Locality 1	01942 486097
Start Well Locality 2	01942 487975
Start Well Locality 3	01942 486344

<b>TYSS</b>	<b>Contact Number</b>
TYSS	01942 487100

<b>Early Intervention and Prevention Service Managers</b>	<b>Contact Numbers</b>
Enhanced Service Manager, Integrated Services (Adults)	07867 904691
Service Lead for Integrated Services (Children)	07814 020011

<b>Education Settings</b>	<b>Contact Number</b>
Rachel Clemow Service Manager, Inclusion	07824 475418

<b>Homes</b>	<b>Contact Number</b>
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Safeguarding Lead	01942 486222
<b>Greater Manchester Police, Wigan Division</b>	<b>Contact Number</b>
Response Inspector	0161 856 7221
<b>Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service</b>	<b>Contact Number</b>
Prevention Manager	07734 275762
<b>Wigan, Wrightington and Leigh NHS Foundation Trust (WWL)</b>	<b>Contact Number</b>
Named Nurses for Safeguarding Children & Adults	01942 481161
<b>Wigan ICP Safeguarding Team</b>	<b>Contact Numbers</b>
Colette Lawler Assistant Director Safeguarding Children/ Designated Nurse Safeguarding Children & Children Looked After	07789 857252
Reuben Furlong Assistant Director Safeguarding (Adults)	07795 826153
<b>GMMH</b>	<b>Contact Numbers</b>
Child Safeguarding Lead: Kerrie Ashton	07917 471486
Named Nurse Child Safeguarding: Estella Dunne	01942 631661
Adult Safeguarding Lead: Joanne Glynn	07467 357675
Adult Safeguarding Deputy Lead: Sharon Boardman	07774 817944
<b>Probation (CRC and National Probation Service)</b>	<b>Contact Numbers</b>
Jim Robson, Senior Probation Officer	07526 987549
Mandy Bailey, Senior Probation Officer	07793 631089
<b>Wigan and Leigh Drug and Alcohol Recovery Service</b>	<b>Contact Numbers</b>
<b>We are with you, Wigan and Leigh</b>	
Operations Manager Wigan	01942 827979
Operations Manager Leigh	01942 404299
<b>CAFCASS</b>	<b>Contact Number</b>
CAFCASS	0300 456 400

**Safeguarding Leads and Teams Main Numbers for  
logging/discussion/resolution at Stage 2**

<b>Wigan Safeguarding Children's Partnership</b>	<b>Contact Numbers</b>
Ashley Carrick Learning and Improvement Lead (temp)	01942 489027/ 07917173758
Glynis Williams Service Lead Childrens Safeguarding	07717 424437

<b>Wigan Safeguarding Adults Board</b>	<b>Contact Numbers</b>
Paul Whitemoss, Service Manager	07557 758690

<b>Wigan CCG Safeguarding Team</b>	<b>Contact Numbers</b>
Colette Lawler Assistant Director Safeguarding Children/ Designated Nurse Safeguarding Children & Children Looked After	07789 857252
Reuben Furlong Assistant Director Safeguarding (Adults)	07795 826153

<b>Wigan Council</b>	<b>Contact Numbers</b>
Michelle McNally Service Lead Duty & MAST Children's Social Care	07810 101910
Rebecca Sutton Service Lead Practice Improvement and QA (Children)	07717 424437
Graham Doubleday Service Lead for Integrated Services (Children)	07814 020011
Patricia Darbyshire ICS Service Manager (Adults)	07951 271187
David Gray (Housing, Drugs and Alcohol, Targeted Commissioning)	07760 172265
Rachel Clemow (Education)	07824 475418
Jenny Yates (Service Manager Age Well, Nursing and Residential, Domiciliary Care)	07833 476532

<b>Wrightington, Wigan &amp; Leigh NHS Foundation Trust</b>	<b>Contact Numbers</b>
Safeguarding Team (Children and Adults)	01942 481161 / 01942 778600
Carlene Baines Head of Safeguarding	01942 822320
Anna Svarc Named Nurse Adult Safeguarding	07884 213851 01942 822333
Sarah Rhodes Named Nurse Children Safeguarding / Children in Care	01942 822295

<b>GMMH</b>	<b>Contact Numbers</b>
Child Safeguarding Lead: Kerrie Ashton	07917 471486
Named Nurse Child Safeguarding: Estella Dunne	01942 631661
Adult Safeguarding Lead: Joanne Glynn	07467 357675
Adult Safeguarding Deputy Lead: Sharon Boardman	07774 817944

<b>Greater Manchester Police</b>	<b>Contact Numbers</b>
DCI Michael Montford - Wigan District	07770 642696
DI Nathan Percival Vulnerability Lead Children	0161 856 4179 / 07500 809421
DI Dave Henshall Vulnerability Lead Adults	0161 8567952
PS Trish Cope & PS Janine Smith Domestic Abuse & Vulnerable Adult	0161 856 7960
Sally Layland CMT Lead MARAC	0161 856 7955

DS Claire Harvey MAST/Child Safeguarding	01942 486398 / 07387 095778
DS Jo Little and DS Elle Campbell Child Protection Investigation Unit	0161 8567182

<b>Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service</b>	<b>Contact Number</b>
Derek Dempster, Prevention Manager	07734 275762

<b>Wigan PSR Hub (Adults, Prevent, Domestic Abuse, Anti-Social Behaviour)</b>	<b>Contact Numbers</b>
Sarah Owen, Wigan PSR Hub	07734 731658

<b>Probation / CRC</b>	<b>Contact Numbers</b>
Jim Robson, Senior Probation Officer	07526 987549
Mandy Bailey, Senior Probation Officer	07793 631089

Appendix 3



**Partnership Resolution Seeking Proforma Stage 2 (Service Manager to Service Manager)**

<b>Family Details:</b>			
	<b>Name:</b>	<b>Address:</b>	<b>D.O.B:</b>
Parent 1			
Parent 2			
Child 1			
Child 2			
Child 3			
<b>Services Known to:</b>			
Children's Social Care:		Adults Mental Health:	
CAMHS:		GMP:	
Substance Misuse:		Housing:	
GP:		WWL:	
Other:			
<b>Agency Concerns</b>			
<b>Analysis of concerns identified:</b>			
Reason for seeking resolution			

<b>Child/Young Person Impact Analysis (this is a bottom line and is non-negotiable)</b>	
Child/Young Person Impact Analysis	
<b>Resolution required</b>	
<b>What are we worries about?</b>	
<b>What's working well?</b>	
<b>What needs to change?</b>	
<b>What will be the impact on the Child/family if nothing changes?</b>	

Appendix 4



**Escalation Solution Focused Meeting Template (Service Manager to Service Manager)**

<b>Name:</b>			
Name:		Date of Meeting:	
		Date of next Meeting:	
D.O.B:		Attendees:	
Agency identifiers:			
Agency name:	ID Number:	Apologies:	
Agency name:	ID Number:		
Agency name:	ID Number:	Meeting no:	
<b>Services Known to:</b>			
Children's Social Care:		Adults Mental Health:	
CAMHS:		GMP:	
Substance Misuse:		Housing:	
GP:		WWL:	
Other:			

**Case Summary**

**Analysis of concerns identified:**

## Agenda Items

- Situation
- Case Presentation
- Background
- Pertinent
- Information sharing
- Safeguarding concerns
- Child/young person's voice
- Assessment
- Actions/planning
- Recommendations
- Individual agency actions and timescales
- Contingency planning
- Next meeting date
- Agree summary and or escalation to appropriate external national governance.

## Planned Actions to be taken:

No	Action	Agency and owner	Purpose of action	Deadline (Specified date)
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				

8				
9				



10				
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**Appendix 5**

**Pro-forma for reporting where issues have been resolved**

<b>Unique Identifier from your services records:</b>		
<b>Name of Board Members, Roles and Agencies involved:</b>		
<b>Brief details of issue:</b>		
<b>At what level of the protocol was the issue resolved?</b>		
<b>Does this case give rise to any lessons learned? (please circle)</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>If yes, please detail</b>		

**Do the lessons learned indicate the need for the following:** (please circle Yes or No for each

of issues below)		
<b>A requirement for staff training</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Review of WSCP Protocol or procedure?</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Inform Commissioner of the Service?</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>If yes, which service is this with regard to?</b>		

<b>Date of completion:</b>	
<b>Name:</b>	
<b>Signature:</b>	

Please e-mail your completed form to the WSCP Team at [wscb@wigan.gov.uk](mailto:wscb@wigan.gov.uk)