Wigan Safeguarding Adults Board Newsletter

Welcome to the Summer 2026 addition of the Wigan Safeguarding Adults Board Newsletter. We hope you find this newsletter useful and we welcome any feedback which you can send to us by emailing **wsab@wigan.gov.uk**

What'sUp Champions Update

The What'sUp Champion project continues to grow and we have begun promoting it by attending Care Provider Forums. In March, we held our first What'sUp Champion Network Meeting of 2026.

During the meeting, we:

- Recapped the role of a What'sUp Champion
- Shared an update on the Pride of Adults Safeguarding Awards evening, which took place in January
- A colleague delivered a presentation on Assistive Technology
- Explored ways to refresh how we record examples of the What'sUp Champion role in practice
- Closed the session with a "get moving" exercise

As part of our commitment to continuously improving how we capture the views and experiences of people with lived experience, the Safeguarding Team also held a small focus group with some Champions. This provided valuable feedback and suggestions on the 'Making Safeguarding Personal' section of the adult safeguarding referral process.

Changes to the Adult Safeguarding Front Door

Improving the Adult Social Care Safeguarding Online Front Door

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, and Adult Social Care in Wigan, working with the Wigan Safeguarding Adults Board (WSAB), has redesigned the online safeguarding referral process. This change aims to improve the quality of referrals, support timely and proportionate responses, and strengthen our commitment to Making Safeguarding Personal.

Why the Change?

Current data shows that only around 30% of safeguarding referrals progress to a Section 42 enquiry. Many referrals do not meet safeguarding thresholds and could be better managed through alternative routes. This places unnecessary pressure on safeguarding teams, limiting their ability to focus on those most at risk.

What's New?

The single referral route has been replaced with three clearer pathways:

- Professional referrals
- Self-referrals
- Referrals on behalf of someone else (e.g. family member, friend, neighbour)

Each pathway includes tailored questions to help users provide the right information, improve understanding of thresholds, and support early risk identification.

What This Will Achieve

The new system will:

- Improve the quality and appropriateness of referrals
- Reduce time spent seeking missing information
- Enable quicker, better-informed decisions
- Allow safeguarding teams to focus their expertise where it is most needed
- Support timely and effective safeguarding for adults at risk

The Result

✓ Better-quality referrals

✓ More timely decision-making

✓ Reduced avoidable demand

✓ Stronger, more joined-up safeguarding

✓ Improved outcomes for adults

Developed with partners and people with lived experience, the new Safeguarding Online Referral system is ready to go live.

Go live date: Monday 13th July 2026

Thank you for your continued support. By working together, we can ensure adults at risk in Wigan are protected quickly and effectively.

New Statutory Offence of Cuckooing

The New Statutory Offence of Cuckooing: What It Means for Safeguarding Adults

The Crime and Policing Act 2026 introduces, for the first time, a specific criminal offence of cuckooing (home takeover). This marks a significant step in recognising and addressing the exploitation of vulnerable adults, with important implications for safeguarding partnerships.

What is Changing in Law?
Previously, cuckooing was prosecuted using a range of existing offences (e.g. drug supply, modern slavery, antisocial behaviour), which did not always reflect the full nature of exploitation. The new offence applies where someone takes control of another person's home without consent for criminal activity, including drug supply, fraud, sexual exploitation and organised crime. It carries a maximum penalty of up to five years' imprisonment, a fine, or both.

The Crime and Policing Bill received Royal Assent on 29 April 2026 and is now the Crime and Policing Act 2026. The commencement date for the cuckooing offence is expected later in 2026, pending statutory guidance.

Why This Matters
The legislation places victims at the centre, recognising cuckooing as exploitation rather than criminal behaviour by the victim. It highlights the coercion, control and vulnerability often present and aims to ensure more consistent and proportionate justice outcomes.

Implications for Safeguarding Partnerships

The new offence reinforces the importance of:

- Early identification of risk
- Confident information sharing
- Strong multi-agency working

Effective responses rely on joint working across police, Adult Social Care, housing, health, probation and the voluntary sector, alongside improved recording, clear thresholds and robust governance.

Tackling Cuckooing in Wigan: A Partnership Approach

Cuckooing often affects adults with care and support needs, including those experiencing substance misuse, mental ill health, isolation or trauma. Victims may not recognise their exploitation, making professional awareness critical.

In January 2025, Greater Manchester Police and partners reviewed local responses and identified gaps, including inconsistent understanding, thresholds, documentation and information sharing. In response, Wigan developed a district-wide multi-agency pilot.

What Has Changed Locally?

- A shared approach between police, Adult Social Care, housing, health and community partners
- Centralised intelligence review using a Red/Amber/Green risk triage system
- Monthly multi-agency meetings to assess risk, plan interventions and allocate actions
- A single tracking system to support accountability and audit

Interventions range from safeguarding plans and welfare visits to tenancy enforcement, closure orders and offender disruption.

The **Cuckooing Car Initiative** supports this work through joint enforcement and safeguarding patrols, alongside community engagement and awareness raising.

Case Study: Protecting James
James, a 79-year-old man, was exploited by individuals who took over his home, accessed his finances and facilitated drug activity. Concerns raised by his social worker triggered a coordinated response involving police, Adult Social Care and housing. A Partial Closure Order was secured, offenders were arrested, and James was supported to relocate safely with family.

Let's be Blunt Campaign

Wigan Council have adopted the 'Let's Be Blunt' Campaign as part of its community safety initiatives to address knife crime. The campaign was founded by Leanne Lucas, a survivor of the 2024 Southport attack and focuses on reducing knife-related harm through safer knife design, better disposal options, and increased public awareness.

As part of this initiative there are now eight knife disposal bins across the Wigan Borough, where you can safely dispose of a knife, blade or tool. If you need to carry a knife to put it in a bin, first wrap it in several layers of cardboard or paper and secure it with plenty of sticky tape so that the blade is completely protected.

To support this initiative Viners have designed a new and innovative kitchen knife blade, replacing the pointed end tip with a rounded tip to maximise safe use in and around homes. For households considered at risk, the council is offering a knife replacement scheme, enabling residents to exchange pointed knives for these safer alternatives.

For more information about the Let's be Blunt campaign and the work that is taking place in Wigan visit: Anti-knife crime work in Wigan

Digital Support for Carers – Mobilise App

Wigan Council have partnered with Mobilise to provide free online carer support for carers in Wigan, that is available 24 hours a day. If you're looking after a family member, friend or neighbour, there is lots of support available through the mobilise app including:

- An online network of people in similar situations
- Access to free support from a dedicated carers coach
- Online support sessions with other carers
- Simple, easy to use online tools to help you at each stage of your caring journey
- Access to a complete A-Z guide spanning practical, medical, and emotional topics
- Online cuppas, including occasional Saturday for working carers

To find out more and for details on how to sign up visit: Support for unpaid carers in Wigan

Pride of Adult Safeguarding Awards

The Pride of Adult Safeguarding Awards will be returning following a successful awards evening in January. We've listened to feedback from nominees and partners and have made a few adjustments to improve the process.

What you need to know:

- The Special Recognition Award has been removed, while the six core annual awards will remain.
- The nomination period will run for three months, opening on 1st September 2026 and closing on 30th November 2026.
- The awards evening will take place in March 2027.
- A new nomination template has been developed, outlining the questions included in the nomination form to help guide you when submitting an entry.
- The Pride of Adult Safeguarding Awards information pack has been updated to reflect these changes and now includes details on how nominations are scored during the shortlisting process which you can view here: Pride of Adult Safeguarding Awards 2026

Keep an eye out for further communications over the coming months!

THE PRIDE OF ADULT SAFEGUARDING **AWARDS**

Sexual Exploitation Guidance

Wigan Safeguarding Adults Board has published Sexual Exploitation guidance on the back of local learning indicating the need to raise awareness amongst partner agencies.

The guidance provides advice and information to support multi-agency working with adults who are experiencing or at risk of experiencing Adult Sexual Exploitation (ASE). It is acknowledged that ASE can occur at the same time as Criminal Exploitation and other forms of abuse. The guidance should be read in conjunction with the WSAB multi-agency safeguarding policy and procedure.

You can view the sexual exploitation guidance on the WSAB website here: Sexual Exploitation

Safeguarding Adults Week 2026 – Dates for your diary

Planning is under way for this year's Safeguarding Adults Week which is taking place between the 16th and 19th November 2026. This is an annual campaign designed to raise awareness of safeguarding issues and promote safer cultures across communities and organisations and is coordinated by the Ann Craft Trust.

The 2026 theme is **"Every Voice. Every Choice."** Emphasising the importance of co-production in safeguarding. This approach aligns with the Care Act 2014, focusing on empowerment, prevention, and making safeguarding personal. The campaign highlights giving individuals a voice in decisions about their safety and ensuring that safeguarding measures reflect their choices and outcomes.

There will be many ways that you can get involved so watch out for some exciting events happening across the borough. This will include engagement with our residents and partners and lots of opportunities for our workforce, and voluntary and community sector to come together to share knowledge and learn new skills. The WSAB Business Unit will be sending out further information in the coming weeks.

EVERY VOICE EVERY CHOICE

Safeguarding Adults Week 2026
16 – 22 November

A New Legal Landscape - The Supreme Court Decision – DOLS

The recent UK Supreme Court's 2026 decision in A Reference by the Attorney General for Northern Ireland fundamentally changes the position established in Cheshire West by removing the rigid "acid test" and replacing it with a more nuanced, holistic approach. The Court held that the previous test; 'continuous supervision and control and not being free to leave' was too simplistic and inconsistent with European human rights law and therefore should no longer be used as the sole determinant of a deprivation of liberty.

Instead, practitioners must now carry out a multifactorial assessment, considering the person's whole situation, including the type, duration, purpose and effects of restrictions, with no single factor being decisive. Crucially, the ruling also reintroduces the importance of the individual's wishes, feelings and potential to give "valid consent", meaning that a person may not be considered deprived of their liberty if they are content with their care arrangements, even if they lack formal mental capacity. As a result, the scope of what counts as a deprivation of liberty is expected to narrow significantly, likely reducing the number of cases requiring DoLS authorisation, but placing greater responsibility on professionals to evidence decision-making and ensure that individuals' rights and safeguards are still properly protected.

Further guidance will be released in the coming months.