

Safeguarding: practice, legislation and the multi-disciplinary team. ECEY5011

Cover sheet

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AI Acknowledgement

I acknowledge the use of Grammarly (<https://www.grammarly.com/>) on 6 July 2025 to check my work using the prompts:

1. Check the text for readability, grammar, and syntax.

I acknowledge the use of Microsoft Copilot (<https://www.microsoftcopilot.com/>) on 29 June 2025 using prompts:

1. Find me academic journal articles surrounding the 5 Rs of safeguarding.

I confirm that I have not presented any AI generated text as my own work. I confirm I have copies of my drafts, notes and other resources I used before, and after the use of AI tools which I may be asked to provide as evidence.

Section 1: The 5 Rs in safeguarding.

The 5 Rs provide a structured, evidence-based approach to identifying and addressing harm in the contexts of child safeguarding (Online DBS Checks, 2024; Prospero Learning, 2024). However, instead of simply following steps, the 5 Rs are grounded in research and policymaking (HM Government, 2023; Welsh Government, 2014a).

Firstly, we must recognise and identify the earliest signs of harm. This could be physical, emotional, sexual or neglect. Professionals must be trauma-informed and vigilant for signs of harm (Firmin and Lloyd, 2023; Welsh Government, 2014b).

Next, we respond. How we act in the moment is essential. Remaining calm, listening carefully, without judgement and avoiding any leading questions. Instead, create a safe space for the child to speak openly and empower their voice (Owens *et al.*, 2024; Welsh Government, 2014).

Following this, we report. Reporting involves promptly passing concerns or disclosures to the designated safeguarding lead. Dixon *et al.* (2022) note that multi-agency safeguarding can falter when information sharing is delayed and unclear, leading to the child being exposed to continued risk. *Working together to safeguard children* (HM Government, 2023) reinforces this with updated guidance on the importance of timeliness and shared responsibility.

The fourth step is to record. This involves factual and accurate documentation of what was seen, heard or disclosed. Records need to be concise and with the use of the child's own words. This is essential in protecting both child and practitioner (Firmin *et al.*, 2023). The *Wales Safeguarding Procedures* support this by offering "Pointer for Practice" that places an emphasis on trauma-informed recording (Social Care Wales, 2019).

Finally, we refer. When the threshold for intervention is met, referrals to other services, such as social care, must be made. This activates a wider safeguarding system that aligns with the duties set out in the *Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014*, which mandates early intervention with multiple agencies to

protect the child at risk. Section 47 enquiries of the *Children Act* 1989 and *Children Act* 2004 also provide statutory backing when harm is suspected.

Section 2: Personal critical reflection.

Prior to starting this assignment, my knowledge and understanding of safeguarding, child protection, and the laws and guidance surrounding them were more personal than professional in nature, as I had not been in the sector for very long

A few years ago, a very close family member of mine went through an initial child protection conference. Although, at that time, I did not fully understand what the process entailed or the legal frameworks behind it. I just saw it as an emotional, stressful and scary time for the people involved. Watching the process unfold gave me a first-hand look into the realities behind a safeguarding concern and the policies behind it. However, I did not have the knowledge to fully understand the purpose or the complexities of the whole process.

I, as a 3-year-old child, was also subject to an initial child protection conference that resulted in me being placed on a child protection plan and thereafter placed in the care of my grandmother. Despite having no recollection of the experience, the personal connection made the assignment more engaging and encouraged me to learn as much as I could.

As I worked through the assignment and learned in more depth about the relevant acts and statutory guidance, I began to understand why certain decisions were made both in my own case and in those I have witnessed. I started to recognise safeguarding as a complex balancing act between legalities and emotional realities. During the module, I found it difficult not to allow my own emotions to steer my judgement on certain areas. However, I was starting to clearly connect the dots between my own experiences and the frameworks I was learning about. I often found myself reflecting on my own experience, sometimes with an understanding, other times with feelings of anger. Probably for the child in me who wished people saw her sooner, or for the adult in me who hoped she saw things in her family sooner. It pushed me to confront my own emotions and assumptions about safeguarding, which, although uncomfortable, was necessary. They also deepened my

appreciation of how difficult it can be for professionals to remain non-judgemental and unbiased in emotionally charged situations.

However, after completing the assignment, I feel much more comfortable with my professional knowledge of rules, laws, and procedures, as well as their real-life, real-time application. I think my personal experiences, combined with my academic learning, have given me not only a compassionate perspective but also a non-judgemental, level-headed, and professional perspective on child protection and how best to apply it if ever I unfortunately found myself in a situation again that required me to advocate for a child or adult alike.

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