

Presentation child conference

Hi, I am Grace Morton-Parker, and I am Polly's Domestic Abuse Support Worker

My role is to provide confidential and holistic support and advice to women, men and children who are experiencing or have experienced domestic abuse corresponding with welfare of the child part one section 1 of the Children Act 1989 (Legislation Gov no date)

The service supports these vulnerable families within a refuge safe house and in the community or through help lines. Working in partnership with multi-agencies to ensure safeguarding, help and support are given to the clients by setting up support plans and putting processes into place to improve their quality of life (West Wales Domestic abuse service no date)

this falls in line with part 9 of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 to support and improve care and well-being of those who need support and to work in partnership with other professionals to get effective outcomes (Welsh Government 2015)

My first contact with Polly was in May 2021 when she sought refuge in our safe house. working closely with her It was clear she had significant trauma from the mental and physical abuse she had gone through from her partner.

which has scarred her physically and mentally affecting her mental health. When Polly came into the refuge she was in the early stages of pregnancy and keen to protect her unborn child and wanting to engage in ante-natal care and healthily eat.

As a domestic support worker, you must not keep safeguarding concerns about adults at risk to yourself. I explained to Polly that I must pass the concern on to the Safeguarding Lead, as I have a duty of care.

As for the unborn child, they have no right by law but under the Children Act 1989 a section 47 investigation can carry out in line with the Working Together to Safeguard Children guidelines (coram child law advice no date)

Following this guideline and our Safeguarding policy a referral was made to the local authority Safeguarding Team with Polly's consent.

She understands the responsibility and role of statutory agencies in safeguarding adults and children and is required to follow the local safeguarding regulations. Known as MASH (Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub) (CarmDas no date).

Section 3 of the UNCRC states that best interests of the child must be primary concern in all decisions that affect the child(unicef united kingdom no date)

The referral to Children's Services could have resulted in a Child Protection Plan but Polly was encouraged to apply to the family court for a Child Arrangements Order to ensure no contact between her, her baby and the ex-partner would occur.

Under the family law act 1996 section 60CC, the court decides what is in the best interests for the child with 2 main considerations 1. The advantage the child has of a positive relationship with both parents 2. The need to safeguard the child from harm and any type of abuse, neglect, or violence in the home (commonwealth consolidated acts no date)

Following this referral the Social Worker and Midwife were involved in Polly's care we worked closely in partnership and in line with the Data Protection Act 2018 sharing information appropriately (Department for Education 2024)

The council were able to rehouse her, and she was able to leave the refuge prior to the baby's birth. During her stay with us Polly undertook counselling and her mental health improved. Her partner was prevented from having any contact with her through a court order.

Working in partnership with the Social Worker and Health Visitor I maintained contact for Ben's first year and Polly showed good parenting skills had bonded well with her son who was achieving his developmental milestones and thriving.

As far as the service was aware everything was going well, and she coped as a single parent. It was made clear that she could contact me if she needs support again.

Going forward, I will contact Polly and remind her of our help line and services.

Reflection

Before starting this module, I attended regular safeguarding training as part of my role as a room leader in early year setting. I fully understand my safeguarding responsibilities and know who our Designated Safeguarding Person is. I have on one occasion been contacted by social services when they had concerns about a child in my room whom I had no concerns about. I appreciated the need for communication and collaboration with statutory agencies.

This module has highlighted the extensive legislation that is in place and has developed following serious incidents. It has been a refresher of the importance of safeguarding and how to professionally respond and carry out our safeguarding duties. It highlighted how critical multi-agency working is and it was interesting finding out about different professionals' roles that may be involved with a family.

I feel more confident to report any safeguarding concerns and remind me just how important this is. I appreciate how difficult it is when you have a good relationship with parents to then report concerns and that this changes the relationship. In my nursery many of the parents are people I was at school with and grew up with, which makes this even harder. It has been good working as part of a group on this topic. I have found a lot of the information hard to absorb but it has been useful discussing this with others. It saddens me that despite all the legislation and multi-agency protocols there are still cases in the news of the abuse of children and young people. I find this distressing having recently given birth to my 2nd daughter.

Action plan

I will keep up to date with safeguarding legislation and policies and attend safeguarding training as required every 3 years. I will ensure that the staff that work in my room are also up to date with their knowledge and training and are confident to raise any concerns.

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