



**GRADUATE CERTIFICATE in Consolidation
of Social Work Practice
LEVEL 6 - 60 Credits
BMPF6044**

**LEARNER PORTFOLIO
(PORTH AGORED and UNIVERSITY OF WALES
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Task 4

Safeguarding in an area which is not your main area of work

Guidance:

Social Care Wales require newly qualified social workers to provide evidence of their understanding of safeguarding work with adults and children. The assignment below will enable you to demonstrate this. **N.B.** if your usual area of work is with children please write about adult safeguarding. If you usually work with adults, then write about child safeguarding. Ensure you meet the learning outcomes for this task (see appendix 5 of the handbook).

Question a:

In an area **that is not your main focus of work** (see guidance above), explain the relevant legislation, and the national, local and organisational policies and procedures for safeguarding.

500 words (+/- 10%: include your actual word count at the end of each section).

Safeguarding children is one of the most fundamental responsibilities of public services in Wales, supported by a strong legal framework that encompasses UK-wide laws, Welsh-specific regulations, and various policies and guidelines followed by local authorities and organisations. Understanding how these laws relate to practice is crucial for recognising how children's social services protect vulnerable children across Wales.

At the core of child safeguarding in the UK is the Children Act 1989, the legal basis for child protection and outlines Local Authorities' duties to safeguard children's welfare (UK Government, 1989). The Act establishes that *"the child's welfare shall be the court's paramount consideration"* (Children Act 1989, s1), making the child's best interests the overriding principle in decision-making. The Children Act 2004 took child protection further by promoting cooperation between agencies like health, education, and social services to ensure *"a joined-up approach"* to safeguarding (UK Government, 2004). In Wales, this is strengthened by the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 which encourages *"a more holistic and person-centred approach"* to safeguarding (Welsh Government, 2014). The Act outlines that Local Authorities *"must make arrangements to promote cooperation"* with other agencies to ensure children are kept safe (Welsh Government, 2014). It encourages early intervention to address risks before they escalate into harm, reflecting a shift towards prevention.

Wales has incorporated the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) into its approach to develop children's rights. It was the first UK nation to embed the UNCRC into policymaking, recognising that *"children have a right to protection from all forms of violence, abuse, neglect, and exploitation"* (Welsh Government, 2011). This international convention is fundamental to Welsh legislation, ensuring safeguarding efforts uphold children's rights and dignity.

Policies derived from these laws ensure safeguarding is integrated into practice. The Wales Safeguarding Procedures (2019) principles emphasise that “*safeguarding and protecting is everybody’s responsibility*” (Welsh Government, 2019). These procedures provide guidance through an integrated approach across local authorities, highlighting “*timely and effective sharing of information*” to prevent harm and protect children from serious risk (Welsh Government, 2019)

Collaborative working is also highlighted in *Working Together to Safeguard People: Volume 5 – Handling Individual Cases to Protect Children at Risk* (2019), which provides detailed guidance on managing safeguarding concerns under the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014. It focuses on child-centred practice and encourages a multi-agency approach to child protection, ensuring that professionals understand their responsibility to share information and work in a multidisciplinary way to protect vulnerable children effectively (Welsh Government, 2019).

The National Independent Safeguarding Board Wales (NISBW) exercises functions through Local Authorities under 6 regional boards, Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB). LSCBs bring together representatives from regions to coordinate and oversee safeguarding practices within their communities. These boards work in alignment with national policies and procedures but are tailored to address local needs and resources, including conducting serious case reviews to identify lessons that can be learned from cases where safeguarding has failed.

In summary, safeguarding children in Wales is supported by a comprehensive legal and policy framework that operates at multiple levels. These policies, adapted for local needs, ensure professionals across sectors are equipped to protect vulnerable children. This collaborative, early-intervention-focused system reflects a modern approach designed to keep children safe across Wales.

Word Count 539

Question b:

Reflect on the difference between safeguarding in adults’ and children’s work.

400 words (+/- 10%: include your actual word count at the end of each section).

Safeguarding involves protecting children and adults from abuse, harm, and neglect. While the procedures for safeguarding both groups share similarities, there are key differences, particularly in laws and organisational structures. In Wales, there are separate Safeguarding Boards for adults and children, each responsible for their local areas (Welsh Government, 2013).

The *Wales Safeguarding Procedures* define abuse for both children and adults as physical, sexual, psychological, and emotional harm (Social Care Wales, 2019). However, for adults, financial abuse is also recognised, covering exploitation in someone's home or institutions (Social Care Wales, 2019). While children's safeguarding doesn't specifically address financial exploitation, children can be exploited for financial gain, such as through trafficking.

The Safeguarding Adults Board, outlined by the Welsh Assembly Government (2024), places social services at the forefront of adult protection, organising multi-agency teams to manage abuse cases. Unlike child protection policies, this guidance didn't always have statutory force. The Law Commission (2011) described adult social care law as “*outdated and fragmented*” and needing reform. This inadequacy was highlighted in the Winterbourne View serious case review in 2011, where adults with learning disabilities suffered prolonged abuse in a private hospital, despite whistleblower warnings (South Gloucestershire Safeguarding Adults Board, 2012). This case highlighted significant failures in adult safeguarding which led to public distrust in safeguarding procedures and demanded systemic change. The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 strengthened safeguarding practices, extending duties to more professionals and the public. Section 7 introduced the concept of an “*Adult at Risk*”, putting a legal duty on Local Authorities to investigate suspicions or reports of abuse (Welsh Government, 2014).

Safeguarding often presents ethical dilemmas, especially concerning the right to privacy and family life as stated in Article 8 of the Human Rights Act 1998. Balancing this right against protection from harm is crucial. The Children Act 1989 prioritizes the child's welfare, sometimes overriding Article 8, requiring professionals to intervene if they suspect harm or risk (HM Government, 1989). In contrast, adult safeguarding emphasizes individual autonomy, under the Mental Capacity Act 2005, accepting adults' right to make their own decisions, even if considered “*unwise*” (HM Government, 2005).

In conclusion, safeguarding is a shared responsibility that requires a comprehensive and collaborative effort to protect both children and adults from harm or abuse. While the core principles are the same in both children and adult services, the specific procedures and considerations differ based on age and the legal frameworks for each group.

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