

This essay will be based on the existing Social Services and Well – Being Act (Wales) 2014, in comparison to the prior Social Services guidelines that the current act replaces; concentrating on parts that effect young children.

A psychosocial theorist carried out a concept concentrating on attachment. He was named Eric Erikson, his work explored a person's sense of 'identity' His work was separated into eight stages, separated by ages; his research started from 'infancy' (0 – 18 months) and ending at 'adulthood' (65 +) (Learning Theories, 2017). In 1965 Erik Erikson covered four stages that relate to children, the subheadings are infancy, toddler, preschool and school age. (Learning Theories, 2017) From birth until approximately twelve years of age, it is known to a vulnerable time as the child can be labelled as 'defenceless'. After receiving support from their family, parents or guardians of the child, they will grow physically and mentally. Action for Children is an organisation that protects vulnerable children, in the previous year (2016) the establishment helped around 13,000 of both children and early adults. (Action for Children, 2017) they also say that childhood is very important because it is the base of mental health, for example, self-esteem. Erik Erikson's theory shows that the development of self – esteem occurs in the second stage, the age ranges from 18 months to 3 years. It is an important stage as the child will start to explore new skills, low self – esteem will directly affect their development. (Learning Theories, 2017)

'Social Services have a statutory obligation to safeguard and promote the welfare of vulnerable children and adults and can provide a wide range of services to children and their parents, usually within the own home environment and coordinated by a social worker.' (Family Lives, n.d)

In theory, the definition of 'social services' given family lives (n.d) is stating social services original ideas when designing the service. It is difficult to comment on the changeover from theory, to putting the thoughts into action. In practice, it is almost impossible to guess what issues a social worker will face, or how a person will react, there are many features that make it unknown. Legislation is constantly improving when the local councils become aware of gaps between their design of the social service structure.

Before the social services act (Wales) 2014, paperwork was overwhelming the relationship between a person and a social worker. A consequence of this is the needs of the person is not being met by the social care system dismissing the caring bond and becoming a name on a case file. Here is a quote that shows the importance of human connections. 'Children and families praise their social workers, it is usually because they've been caring, understanding, compassionate and relatable.' (Community Care, 2017). The values mentioned in the quote above is what the new social services and well-being act promote.

The NSPCC (National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children) say that in 2016 nearly 3,000 children in Wales required safeguarding from abuse, additionally, they state that 5,600 children have a corporate parent, even more so a massive 19,000 children received a form of care from the local authority. (NSPCC, 2018)

Despite the provision of services offered by the government, the term 'social services' is followed by a negative stigma, for example, the case of Baby P in 2007. This case went national after hearing the horrific details of a baby boy named Peter, he was abused by his mother and her partner and the social services had failed the rights of his protection, along with many partnerships, for example, the NHS and the Police. It is reported that baby P suffered from more than 50 injuries, within 8 months. The family received over 60 visits from professionals; this included multiple social workers, health visitors and police. Even with all this support, the system fails to notice any signs that he was in a troubled household even with being on the at-risk register. (ITV News, 2013). Nevres Kemal previously known as a social worker, in Haringey, sent a letter to the department of health concerning the flaws in the Child Protection System. (Social Services) The division of Children, Schools and Families responded to her claim and stated that 'proper procedures were to be followed.' (BBC, 2008). Although the correct measures were followed, the lack of communication, put up barriers between the social worker and the well-being of a child.

After these reports the concept of the 'social services and well-being (Wales)' was introduced as a bill in 2013, it was accepted as an act in the next year and then was put in place in 2016. (Social Care Wales, 2017) The Welsh Government has stated that well-being is not limited to a person's overall happiness. They say well-being as having 8 stages;

'Making sure you have your rights, being physically, mentally and emotionally happy, you are protected from abuse, harm and neglect, having education, training, sports and play, positive relationships with family and friends, being part of the community, having a social life and enough money to live a happy life, and having a good home.' (Welsh Government, 2015)

So, going back to the case of little Baby Peter, it is clearly seen as a failure of the social service system and their procedures. After these errors in judgement, a new piece of legislation was made. The differences between this new act and the current one is that it is more focused on the "well-being" of the individual.

'We must act in ways that strengthen our voice; that allows us to have the maximum control over our lives; that build on our strengths.' (Gov.wales, no date)

The act's intention is to simplify, and engage in a person-centred system, for social services in Wales. (Social Care Wales, 2017). The act also puts emphasis on equal cooperation and the use of partnership of service, for example, local authorities and social services. (Cardiff Council, 2017)

‘Local authorities and health boards will need to work closely so health and social care are better integrated. Together, they will assess the care and support requirements in their local area and then to identify and provide what services are needed.’ (Cardiff Council, 2017)

Additionally, the act introduces a new thought regarding the well-being of individual being cared for and the carer for that person. The act updates the social work area, it puts attention on the well-being of the individual and government has shown this by applying procedures, they state the four principles of the act are; Wellbeing, Control, Prevention and Co-Production. (Social Care Wales, 2017). For example, a social worker is concerned for the well-being of a child, they have the right to request an examination if they deem it necessary. However, this is where the new principles of the act come in; if the parent refuses the check, the child has the right to ask for it despite the parent’s refusal. (Welsh Government, 2015, p.4).

Safeguarding and the partnership of services can be treated as one part of the act as you can not have one, without the other. Safeguarding is situated under part 7 under the act, it holds the power to guarantee that children, young people, adults’ well-being are protected from conditions for example, negligence. The current act ensures this by introducing a national independent board for safeguarding. (Welsh Government, 2014, p.5) However, the term safeguarding is not limited to intervening when abuse has started, social services in Wales are working towards preventive services; the Welsh government define safeguarding as educating others on how to identify the warning signs as they express safeguarding is everyone’s responsibility. The social services and well-being act introduced a brand-new approach for Wales; the Welsh government has formed a board named ‘National independent Safeguarding Board’ their role is to work closely with local safeguarding board to monitor the effectiveness of the provision, they are also responsible for reporting back any concerns and recommendations to the Welsh ministers to ensure the best distribution of care. (The Welsh Government, n.d. p.7) Integration of primary services, will only benefit society. These include; ‘local authorities, health boards, and the NHS trusts must work closely to ensure better integration of health and social care.’ (Welsh Government, n.d. p.6), The Welsh government say that resources will be distributed efficiently, to effectively meet the needs of those with a priority. These include; people with learning difficulties and carers (there are no age restrictions) elderly people and children who live with long term conditions for example, disabilities.

In society, we are taught from a young age how to develop essential skills as individuals, how to express our personalities and build healthy relationships and behave in a good manner for example knowing the difference between what is right and what is wrong. Referring back to the development theory carried out by Eric Erickson (1965) he talked about how the different stages were branded ‘essentials’ (Gibson, A., and Gibson, 2016, p.19-20). They follow as: Infancy (0 to 18 months), toddler (18 months to 3 years), preschool (3 years to 5 years), school age (6 years to 12 years),

Adolescent (12 years to 18 years), young adult (18 years to 35 years), middle-aged adult (35 years to 65 years) and lastly late aged adult (65+) (Learning Theories, 2017)

Eric Erikson's theory covered ages starting from birth until death, there were 4 stages that linked largely on children development, and attachment. He identified 4 key stages firstly, he spoke about Infancy (birth-18months) (Learning Theories, 2017) from a sociological standpoint, a child is born with a blank slate, children learn from their surroundings, the repetitive nature of a child's experience is when 'norms' are developed. In the initial stages of life, when a bond is formed successfully the child will become secure and trusting. However, this is not always the case as there is many factors that can affect the bond between parent and child, from Erikson's perspective if the child develops a mistrust in the early stages of life, the broken attachments will continue throughout later stages. For example, the adolescent, young adult, middle-aged adult and later adulthood steps. (Gibson A and Gibson N, 2016, p 27) Secondly, he spoke about the toddler stage, this is when the emotional and physical development stages take place. The awareness of their muscles, learning to communicate with speech and play. Thirdly, Erikson (1965) goes on discuss the pre-school stage, at this age, a child becomes more aware of their actions and surroundings, especially with whom they are closest to and are caring for them for example, being influenced by their role models, from the way they talk, their body language and their overall behaviour. Finally, he speaks about the school age, when reaching this stage, the child had previously failed, practice and successful development a essential skill for example, referring back to the first stage called infancy, the child had gain motor skills, as they grew older, the child had progress to gross motor skills. (Very Well, 2017)

We were all born as equals, it is the way we are raised and the way we socialised, the way we are socialised is how we form our beliefs, values and behaviour. The concepts of (Eric Erikson, 1965) acts as the groundwork for the delivery of social services we are aware with. He identified key milestones in the human life cycle, he highlights the need for support in the form of services. For example, social services provide a range of facilities to support both, families and individuals get back on the track of essential development. In the main body, references were made to the downfalls of the social service system. It is important to remember the failures, because we can then appreciate the impact of history and fortunate we are to receive legislation that concentrates on our well – being rather than the government focusing their attention on money.

References:

- Family Lives (no date) *Social services and your family*. Available at: <http://www.familylives.org.uk/advice/your-family/social-services-and-your-family/social-services-and-your-family/> (Accessed on: 8th of January 2018)
- BBC (2013) *Timeline of baby P case*. Available at: www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-11626806 (Accessed on: 8th of January 2018)
- Community Care 2017 '*I didn't become a social worker to feed reports into computers*'. Available at: www.comunitycare.co.uk/2016/08/17/didnt-become-social-worker-feed-reports-computers/ (Accessed on: 8th January 2018)
- ITV News (2013) *Baby P had more than fifty injuries*. Available at: www.itv.com/news/london/update/2013-10-08/baby-p-had-more-than-50-injuries/ (Accessed on: 8th January 2018)
- Social Care Wales (2017) *Social Services and Well – being (Wales) act 2014*. Available at: <https://socialcare.wales/hub/sswbact> (Accessed on: 8th January 2018)
- Welsh Government (2015) *Social Services and Well – being (Wales) Act 2014*. Available at: www.anglesey.gov.uk/journals/r/u/s/The-Act---Essentials.pdf (Accessed on: 8th January 2018)
- Action for Children (2014) *Helping the most vulnerable young people to build stable homes after leaving care*. Available at: <http://www.actionforchildren.org.uk/media/3339/too-much-too-young-wales.pdf> (Accessed on: 8th January 2018)
- Welsh Government (2014) *Social services and well – being (wales) Act 2014*. Available at: gov.wales/docs/dhss/publication/151218part2en.pdf (Accessed on: 8th January 2018)
- Gibson and Gibson N 2016) *human growth, behaviour and development: essential theory and application in social work*. Los Angeles: sage
- Learning theories (2017) *Eric Erickson's stages of development*. Available at: <https://www.learning-theories.com/eric-erickson-stages-of-development.html> (Accessed 8th January 2018)

Cardiff Council (2017) *frequently asked questions* Available at:
<https://www.cardiff.gov.uk/ENG/resident/Social-Services-and-Wellbeing/Social-services-and-wellbeing-act-2014/Social-Services-and-Well-being-Act-2014-FAQs/Pages/default.aspx> (Accessed: 8th January 2018)

Very well (2017) *learn about gross motor skills development*. Available at/
<https://www.verywell.com/what-are-gross-motor-skills-2162137> (Accessed: 8th January 2017)

Gov.wales (n.d) *sustainable social services for wales: a framework for action*. Available at:
<http://gov.wales/docs/dhss/publications/110217wpapersummaryen.pdf> (Accessed: 8th January 2017)

The Welsh Government (n.d) *National independent safeguarding board for wales*. Available at:
<https://publicappointments.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/Information-for-Candidates-Member-English.pdf> (Accessed: 8th of January 2017)

NSPCC (2018) *Child protection in wales statistics*. Available at:
<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/child-protection-system/wales/statistics/>