

Recognising and recording

According to Ward and Davies (2012) and NSPCC (2024) as a practitioner the action you take to advance children's welfare and protect them from harm is known as safeguarding. Safeguarding includes protecting children from mistreatment and abuse, avoiding damage to the growth and health of children, and ensuring children receive safe and effective care as they grow up, ideally within their family supporting children's needs when issues arise and taking action to ensure the best outcomes for all children.

Safeguarding children from danger and helping as soon as problems emerge are key components of child welfare. The guidelines provided by social care Wales (no date) and NSPCC (2024) for productive collaboration between local safeguarding partners. It also emphasises how crucial family networks are to promoting the welfare of children.

There are 4 categories of abuse they are neglect, emotional, physical, and sexual abuse and practitioners need to be aware of the signs and symptoms according to social care Wales (no date) and observing for any signs is a duty of care.

Child neglect occurs according to NSPCC learning (2023) when parents or carer fail to provide the necessary parenting to meet the basic needs of a child's developmental needs. Maslow's (2011) hierarchy of needs highlight basic needs required by a child for healthy development.

Ben in case study 2 is a six-year-old boy who is presenting with signs of neglect, Ben has been presenting in dirty clothes for some time, unwashed with unbrushed hair and teeth which according to NSPCC learning (2023) is a sign of child neglect. The parents have a responsibility to meet these basic needs of a child according to UNICEF (no date) section 18 which says parents have responsibilities to care for their children, to bring them up well and consider what is best for their child, moreover section 19 says children should be protected from neglect and abuse.

When issues arise that have an impact on a child's health then there is cause for concern according to the *social services and wellbeing Act 2014* and social care Wales (no date). Ben has been observed to be noticeably hungry, taking more fruit

at snack time and will steal from other children's lunch box to satisfy his hunger which again is a sign of neglect according to BHSCP (2022). When a parent disregards a child's diet, and does not provide enough nutrients to thrive, is known as nutritional neglect (Lindon, 2012).

It is important to distinguish between neglect and poverty since neglect can happen even when there are adequate resources available to allow the caregiver to fulfil their parental responsibilities to a satisfactory degree according to Brown, Westlake and Ward (2012). Even while neglect is usually continuous and results in accumulated harm, occasional instances and episodic neglect can nevertheless have an impact on a child's growth and health (McCarthy, 2015).

Ben has an older brother therefore collaborative working would be for the practitioner to get the views and observations from the older brothers Teacher to establish if there has been a decline in his presentation and has there been any changes in behaviour with him, this will build a bigger picture of the situation and the current environment the children are living in. Discussing discloses or concerns with other staff members other than the safeguarding officer and deputy is not good practice and should not be done, this is in line with the settings policy on confidentiality policy, however gaining further information to understand the home situations would be putting the best interests of the children in mind UNICEF article 3 (no date). With both teachers' observations a better understanding is established. The safeguarding officer may already have records of other concerns that are unknown to the teachers, but once the concerns are passed on the pieces fit together giving a holistic view to the DSO.

Depending on the severity of the concern in case study 2 - Ben and his family could benefit from being offered early intervention to support the children and family recognised by Welsh Government (2017). Teachers usually see parents regular, and the practitioner should be professional and confident enough to question Bens parents about the situation regarding the lunch box. The reaction from a parent can give an insight also to the situation, Mum or Dad will either appreciate the support or get very defensive about the situation. Parents on the defensive side again is a

cause for concern. All information obtained must be passed on to the DSO of the setting or school (social care Wales, no date).

The physical, cognitive, emotional, and social development of children can be harmed by abuse and neglect according to Brown, Westlake, and Ward (2012).

A number of problems, including behavioural disorders, emotional disturbances, criminal activity, addiction, and suicide, are associated with them.

The consequences according to Ace Hub Wales (2022) may persist into adulthood and result in adverse health outcomes, ACES and restricted opportunities for employment, discrimination in society, domestic violence, and abusive parenting claims BHSCP (2022).

Victoria Climbié's tragic story involved substantial elements of emotional abuse and neglect. Even when they engage with the child, professionals frequently found it difficult to assess the severity of abuse according to Laming' (2003) report.

Reporting and Referral

The process through which children begin to talk to others about their experiences with abuse is known as disclosure stated by NSPCC (2024). This can take time rather than a single act or action; hence it may take place over an extended period. Some children may come clean either directly by telling you what has happened or what is wrong, or it may be an indirectly, changes in behaviour suggesting something is wrong claims Social Care Wales (no date). Other children may occasionally begin disclosing facts of abuse before they are mature enough to organise their feelings and ideas according to Social Care Wales (no date).

Ben in this case study was caught going into another child's lunch box, which resulted in being upset and defensive towards his mum . Due to the observations in his appearance that is a notable change in the past month and the indication that he is regularly hungry and prepared to steal food is of big concern to a practitioner NSPCC (2024).

All disclosures should be treated seriously, even though not all of them may result in a formal report of abuse, a case being filed, or a case going to court suggested by Social Care Wales (no date).

Children may find it difficult to discuss their experiences of abuse or neglect for a variety of reasons according to BHSCP (2022) they may be reluctant to ask for help because they believe they have no one else to rely on.

Children can feel ashamed or guilty, Ben appeared ashamed of stealing food from another child. Some children blame themselves for the abuse and some children fear the responses from professionals or fear they will not be taken seriously NSPCC (2024). Unfortunately, some children may be unaware of the support resources that are available to them, or are unable to access these services, and lack of trust in the people around them, especially their parents, and the services that are supposed to help them according to social care Wales (no date).

It is imperative that the individuals they choose to disclose to pay attention, comprehend, and act appropriately to ensure the child receives the assistance, protection, and support they require immediately maintains NSPCC (2024).

Social Care Wales (no date) maintains that during a disclose the child needs your full focus, the practitioners need to maintain an open mind and give supportive body language to demonstrate your concern and assist them in opening up. The practitioner needs to reassure them that their feelings are significant and show them you are sympathetic and understanding. It is helpful to use statements like "you've been so brave today." The child has the right according to UNCRC (no date) section 12 to have their views respected and to be taken seriously and listened to . The practitioner should go slowly and take their time, letting the child go at their own pace and respect their pauses. They should not be interrupt according to BHSCP (2022) observing their body language and reacting appropriately. Additionally, keeping in mind that it can take them several talks to open up about talk about it.

According to NSPCC (2024) reassure a child who makes a disclosure, the child needs to know that telling you is the right thing to do and to make sure that they understand that abuse is never their fault. It is important that a practitioner never promises a child that things will remain private. It is important to tell children that in order to keep them safe, you might need to disclose information to someone else.

This information is passed on to only those to whom you are required by your organization's safeguarding procedures to report it pointed out by BHSCP (2022).

Every setting or school should have been explicit and comprehensive protocols in place claims Care Wales (no date) for reporting child protection. All staff have a responsibility to follow policies and procedures of the school/ setting safeguarding policy in line with *Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014*.

At every setting or school according to Social Care Wales (no date) there needs to be a qualified designated safeguarding officer (DSO). Any concerns you have about child protection and safeguarding should be reported to the designated officer or their deputy, they have a duty to and will then forward the information to the relevant authorities. UNCRC (no date) section 19 expresses the right of a child to protection from violence, abuse, harm, and section 3 which requires practitioners and DSOs (Designated Safeguarding Officer) to have the best interest of the child in mind.

Thorough and precise records of any worries practitioners have regarding a child and disclosures made must be recorded promptly. Safeguarding company (2024) is used by settings and schools to record disclosures or concerns related to children called through the My concern app. According to Social Care Wales (no date) the child's name, age, and address, anything the child said or did that worried you, if the child disclosed something verbally, record what they said exactly word for word how the child said it and any details the child has provided you. Accurate details are required, states McCarthy (2015) if a child tells you several pieces of information, it is sometimes difficult to record every detail, but the concern and the key information must be recorded. If there are other people present make sure that is added to the notes, the notes should include the name of the person recording the disclosure and the date and time of the disclosure suggests the NSPCC (2024).

This information electronically is passed to the designated safeguarding officer and deputy officer immediately. If both are unavailable practitioners should follow setting policy suggested by Social Care Wales (no date) that is in place and report to the child protection lead directly which in the case of a school setting it would be the Local Authority.

Setting Responsibilities

The Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) control the collection and use of personal data, the disclosures that may include drawings by children or written disclosures from a child including any notes a practitioner writes on paper needs to be stored in a locked cupboard and stored in line with the guidelines set by GDPR claims HM Government (2018).

If a practitioner feels that the relevant DSO does not deal with the concern the way they feel it should be dealt with, or if the disclosure was related to the DSO themselves the practitioner can pass the information on to the settings child protection governing body or follow the procedure mentioned in the absence of both designated and deputy and referring directly to the Local Authority, practitioners are the advocates for children and their concerns must be listened to UNICEF article 12 (no date) and Social Care Wales (no date).

Practitioners that are unsure about a concern or disclosure must pass on the information also, a concern must never be left for any period according to McCarthy (2015).

The social services and wellbeing Act 2014 s 130 specifies the duty placed on practitioners and teachers to report any concerns that puts a child at risk of significant harm or danger must be reported immediately, if it is late in the day or a Friday afternoon and the child has made a disclosure that puts them at risk by going home a report to the police is required immediately. It is then the discussion of social services whether a section 47 of the *children Act 1989* is required.

Children Act 1989, which requires local authorities to protect and promote the welfare of children in need, is one of the laws related to children's welfare protection and promotion.

In conclusion, *the social services and wellbeing Act 2014* s 162 requires effective collaboration between agencies and professionals is crucial in recognising and addressing the requirements of children and their families as stated by NSPCC (2024) also. Strategic leaders, and senior managers, and direct practitioners are expected to work together, share knowledge, collaborate on resources, be inclusive, and take on shared challenges. To identify needs early and ensure children's safety, agencies and practitioners must effectively share information. Multi agency safeguarding Hubs (MASH) are establishing in certain areas to prevent any children slipping through the net when it comes to safeguarding HM Government (2014).

Safeguarding is the responsibility of everyone!!

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