

Research for learning.

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A literature review.

This research project explores safeguarding. Safeguarding and early years theory are closely connected, as early childhood is a critical stage of development when children are most vulnerable, in accordance with NSPCC (2025). Safeguarding is aimed at protecting the welfare of children and vulnerable adults. Enabling them to live free from harm, such as neglect, emotional abuse, sexual, financial harm and physical harm (Safeguarding in the early years 2024). It involves taking all the necessary steps to avoid harm, working effectively to reduce the risk of abuse or neglect and to prevent them from happening again (Goal, 2020).

According to Cleaver (2009), In 1974 there was a report of a death a young girl called Maira Colwell. This death resulted in the organisation of the formal inter-agency structures developed to prevent harm to children (Department of health and Social Security 1974). Following on from that, thirty years later another death of a child Victoria Climbié of which raised significant concern. Victoria's death Encouraged Lord Laming's inquiry and led to Every Child Matters programme of reforms and the Children Act 2004, which requires local authorities in England and Wales to form local safeguarding boards forming a variety of actions to reform and improve children's care (Garboden,2010). Based on the department for education, GOV.UK (2003) Every Child Matters is a programme that is launched by the UK government. It launched in 2003; the goal was that every child in the country was given the right support and guidance to ensure that the children had a long healthy life. This policy includes a variety of aspects of a child's life such as in their education, health, safety, well- being and to improve the outcomes for all children and young people, as article 37 states that no child shall endure torture or any form of cruelty (UNCRC,1989).

The key purpose of safeguarding is to ensure that all children and adults are protected, this is the reason into why practitioners and other health

organisations use their safeguarding policy as safeguarding is a legislation. All these proposals that are put in place are to ensure the importance to children's health and security and every investigation has brought forward recommendations for change and improvement to the child protection system (Department for Education 2003). As reported by the NSPCC (2019), There are many effective steps to ensure correct safeguarding in a childcare environment, following policies and procedures that have been put in place, and reviewing these every so often. Setting up safeguarding procedures and guidelines for parents and external partners is essential to ensure an effective collaboration in child protection.

Identify roles and responsibilities as many education settings have a designated safeguarding officer to support with further inquiries and the practitioners are expected to have had training in safeguarding to be able to support the issues that may arise to be able to recognise and assess potential risks. According to the NHS (2023), they have a range of measures to support children's care. One of these is the GDPR, data Protection Act 2018 to make surer all professionals sharing important information for Safeguarding is shared properly, ethically, and legally, being open and honest with the individual of who you may be sharing the information to.

Safeguarding can only be effective when professionals and multi agencies work together in partnership. Although each UK nation has its own safeguarding framework there are many similarities in safeguarding practice, however different legislations and local processes (The Royal College of General Practitioners 2018). A multi-agency approach in safeguarding is essential because working collaboratively with other health colleagues, safeguarding partners and agencies to effectively prevent and identify abuse and neglect. This collaborative approach leads to positive, improved outcomes for individuals at risk, as different agencies share information and resources. It leads to a more holistic understanding of the situations enabling faster and more effective, appropriate support for those children in need to keep them protected (Abhay 2023). However, not working correctly with the multi-agency workers, can cause missed signs of abuse or neglect, which

could lead to poor outcomes for the child as having good practice involves professionals from different agencies working effectively, sharing responsibilities to develop effective methods of working together NSPCC Learning (2024).

According to NSPCC (2023), where they talk about the facts that Children and their families will have access to many services throughout a child's life, to support them. It's important to communicate with parents effectively, being clear about what you are sharing and why. If many agencies are working with a family, it might be helpful to have a trusted key adult to liaise with parents to ensure effective communication, always prioritising the children's needs.

Sadly, there are still many issues that continue to arise. As Tony Blair wrote in a report, Every Child Matters (2003), there is no absolute guarantee that a child won't be at risk of abuse or violence from their own family again, but all these practices and policies are in place to make that risk very small. On the other hand, the Chief Secretary states in his report that Since 1997, they have tried to put children first but believes there is still more to do to protect children and ensure each child reaches their full potential, aiming high for all children, whoever they are and wherever they live (Gov.uk 2003). Making surer the children are safe in the society they live in and have access to all opportunities. Furthermore, there was a theorist called Maslow that believed without the basic need of safety, children wouldn't be able to reach their full potential (Drew 2024).

Additionally, in an article by Gov.uk, The children's act (2004) it announces that in September 2003 the government published the green paper which focus on four key themes to enhance the well-being, health and security of all children alongside the act, Every Child Matters. The green paper is to establish clear accountability for children's services and recommends changes in policy and legislation to maximize opportunities and reduce risks for all children and young people, ensuring a better focus on safeguarding.

Since this point there have been more developments. For example, Wales safeguarding procedure (2022), that focuses on multi agency working in more detail, having a consistent approach to safeguarding practice and procedures. It is highlighted that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and the rights of the child and their best interests should always come first. Hartley (2024) at NSPCC states that safeguarding is a major part of a teacher's role. The approach to safeguarding and child protection in schools has changed a lot in the recent years. There's a much stronger awareness of safeguarding with schools as more are taking a child-centred and trauma-informed approach. Schools should be a safe environment for children and young people, and as a role of a teacher, you should make sure they feel secure and supported. It's essential to follow the school's safeguarding policies and procedures, and the statutory guidance for your UK nation (Hartley 2024).

Therefore, this study will consider the changes in practice in safeguarding over the past 25 years, and how professional teachers have experienced these changes, what changes there have been and what changes need to be made.

Methodological considerations.

This study will take place in West Wales. This will include going out to different schools, with teachers that work both within a secondary and primary setting. This interview will conduct with around 5 teaching staff from each school, the choose number of 5 from each school is to work with teaching staff from a variety of ages that have experienced change in safeguarding since being in the practice, asking the questions what changes there have been and what changes need to be done. This study will carry out interviews to gather qualitative data Chan, et al (2024), believes that this method would be more appropriate to gain an in depth understanding of how safeguarding is delivered in different settings to understand the experiences, perceptions, thoughts, and feelings. Gaille (2017), also states that qualitative data is an important resource, as it helps the reasons behind the how and why rather than just the what. This data would support with further understanding of the

reasons why rather than just what they do, being able to ask deeper questions and getting better response from the interviewees. In addition to this primary data will be collected, as this is an effective solution to finding out answers to specific questions and challenge by gathering it directly from the original source, from those directly involved (Costa 2025).

The method I am going to use is structured interviews. Research cites that structured interviews are often linked with job interviews but on the other hand they are widely used in marketing, social sciences, survey research, to get those clear, consistent results George (2024). Structured interviews give the interviewer the ability to look further into the topic by asking detailed, targeted questions, to gather more meaningful information compared to simpler methods like questionnaires or surveys (George and Merkus 2022). Blouin, Day and Pavlov (2011), stated that structured interviews are reported as being more reliable than unstructured interviews. According to George and Merkus (2022), structured interviews mean that all people are asked the same questions and criteria in the same order to collect data on a topic, this strategy ensures a consistent, fair process.

During the interview process on this study there will be open ended questions, these are questions that are not answered by yes or no, but instead encouraging detailed responses using critical thinking, enhancing the depth and quality of the information gathered from the answers (Gordon 2024). This helps you understand topics better, instead of just getting basic answers like you might with closed questions as these types of questions and answers can lead to significant improvement. Ramos (2024) discusses that open ended questions allows individuals to openly share their thoughts, feelings and knowledge without limitations, additionally helping strengthen and develop relationships in a positive way. However, the opposite to open ended questions, is closed ended questions and it is believed that close ended questions don't give people a chance to share extra details, opinions or ideas. Instead, they usually lead to short answers, often just one or two words (Gordon 2024). As a result, close ended questions wouldn't be beneficial in this method of structured interview, as this study aims to gather as much information as possible from the teachers getting more detailed responses to

help strengthen the result whereas close ended questions are more restrict to what participants can say and lead to limit responses (Centre 2025).

However, I will need to value if using open ended questions in a structured interview will be enough to get the information. Therefore, in this methodology the triangulation method will be considered. Hassan (2024) said, methodological triangulation is a research method, that brings together different research methods to address the same research questions while comparing and combining the data collected. While considering different points from the different data collected it reduces biases, minimizes the risk of errors, and ensures the results are more consistent. This approach is a vital approach in research as it means you are not just relying on just one data source.

Furthermore, George and Merkus (2023) also discuss, the benefits to structured interviews where they believe, it reduces the interviews from being bias as when asking the same questions in the same order to all participants involved, it helps minimize the risk of bias. Campion, et al (1997), state that research shows that many prefer structured interviews as they reduce the impact of personal bias.

When doing interviews, the halo effect must be taken into consideration and not prejudice during interviews. The halo effect is a type of cognitive bias, that causes us to make quick judgements, making us focus on just one aspect of a person instead of the true version of the person. Furthermore, Nikolopoulou (2022) says, it's a known fact that our first impressions can lead to poor decision-making, and this is especially true when influenced by the halo effect.

Beaumont-Oates (no date) suggests, when looking at further advantages of structured interviews, it states that it is simple, cost-effective and time-efficient, it doesn't take up a lot more time or effort from the interviewer, so the process is less time-consuming. Kerlinger (1970) cited in Cohen et al (2013) suggests, that it shows that structured interviews can help you investigate

surprising results, double-check what you found using other methods, or get a better understanding of why people answered the way they did. This structure also offers a strong foundation for comparing responses and data collection. An article from, TecnoDigital (2023) states that using structured interviews allows constructive feedback to support areas of improvement and development, as a practitioner or in the childcare setting. Additionally, structured interviews help enhance diversity, leading to fairer and better outcomes (Gurr and Sornik 2024).

However, there are some limitations, the interviewee can only answer to the questions being asked and there is no flexibility in structured interviews (Beaumont nodate). TecnoDigital (2023) said these are the limitations, the design of the questions as setting a set of structured questions can be quite difficult, as they must be related to the research, unbiased and relevant. Another is that the interviewer must have had training, to conduct structured interviews making surer the questions asked are consistent and avoid personal influences (TecnoDigital 2023). Beaumont (nodate) also suggests a disadvantage, where his opinion says structured interviews can come across as more formal which can be off putting for some people. There are many benefits and limitations but the statistics on structured interviews offer several statistical advantages over unstructured ones, research consistently shows that structured interviews are often viewed as a more trustworthy method of interviewing along with studies that show, structured interviews have a predictive validity of 0.51 compared to unstructured interviews that have a validity of 0.38 (Blouin, Day and Pavlov 2011).

To support these structured interviews that will take place in the school, a set of observations in the practise will take place. This will include following those teachers around once or twice a week for at least 6 months. To assess whether they are doing safeguarding effectively. Tes (no date) stated that following the school safeguarding policies and procedures which are in place to prevent incidents happening and to join in on the multi agency meetings to check if they are working as a team and all using the same methods. The benefits of gathering evidence from the observations is to support their

answers from the structured interviews as during the observation you can see how well someone is carrying out the task (HR Glossary - Testlify no date). Alternatively, it is generally considered today that questionnaires are a good method for collecting data as they are less time consuming, making the process faster as one question on a questionnaire can get answers from a large group of people all at once, whereas in an interview each person gets asked individually (Admin 2023). However, in this study questionnaires wouldn't be the right method to use as safeguarding information is sensitive. Caduff and Ranganathan (2023) states that when people are asked sensitive or personal questions in questionnaires, they might not answer honestly. Instead, they may give answers that sound more acceptable, polite to avoid judgment. Additionally, Admin (2023) states that the results we get from questionnaires can be biased or inaccurate, if the questions or answer choices in a questionnaire aren't carefully structured, which then effects the overall results. Since the topic is safeguarding, it's important to consider how participants might feel when completing the questionnaire form.

In conclusion, structured interviews are a useful and an effective way to research the change in safeguarding from over the past 25 years, helping ensure consistency, while making it easier to compare responses across different interviews.

Ethical Considerations

Bhandari (2021) believed that it is important to consider ethics as part of research as ethical considerations helps protect participants, rights and well-being. Ensuring that their involvement is voluntary and carried out in a safe environment. With this in mind Bhandari (2021) also stated types of ethical issues that could arise for example; Voluntary participation where the participants are able to opt in or out of a study at any time. Secondly, Informed consent the participant knows the purpose, benefits, risks before they agree or decline to join the study. Thirdly, Anonymity which is where the identities of the participants is kept anonymous. Alongside this is confidentiality, which involves, keeping information confidential from everyone else who is not involved in the interviews of this study.

Ethics is vital in structured interviews, as ethical conduct supports others understand what is happening and why, being clear about the methods being used alongside building that trust between the interviewer and interviewee. This is very important when handling sensitive information such as safeguarding (Ethics of Interviews 2025). According to Meyer (2024), ethical conduct in interviews helps you ensure fairness and professionalism throughout the process, making surer that candidates of the interview are treated respectfully. Caccavale (2023) believes that, using ethical conduct in interviews supports the risk of legal damage, and mitigate reputational risks by encouraging a strong focus on diversity and inclusion. When it comes to interviewing, the Equality Act 2010 states that employers must treat all candidates with fairness and equality, making surer that no one is disadvantaged or treated differently because of any of these protected characteristics (Gov.UK 2015).

First and foremost, when researching confidentiality, it is one of the key ethical issues. Interviewers are responsible for protecting the identities of their interviewees and making sure that the personal information they share is not disclosed. This means making the data anonymous and any information is stored correctly so that only people authorized can have access (Bhandari 2024). Lee (2021) suggests, keeping confidentiality also builds trust, and promotes confidence, making surer the sensitive information shared is handled carefully and responsible. Confidentiality is typically enforced by asking written agreements and clear rules that legally require them to keep private information secret and not share it without permission (Lee 2021). However, there are many risks to breaching confidentiality in the workplace, it occurs when disclosing personal information without consent, this could also affect the trust in that workplace and the workplace may suffer reputational harm (Complete guide 2025). Another, consequence of a breach of confidentiality could lead to legal action which could lead to damages, injunctions and, in severe cases, criminal charges (Ainley 2023). This study will include gathering consent to be able to access the private information that has been shared about their experiences on safeguarding over the past years. To achieve this, the team will be gaining informed consent. On the other hand, there are circumstances where confidentiality might need to be broken, and information sheets and consent forms should state this. For example, if someone discloses abuse, researchers may be under statutory duty to report information to the appropriate authorities (BERA 2024).

Gov.uk (2018), states when research is being done, it suggests that gaining informed consent is essential as this involves, providing the interviewees with clear information about the purpose of the study. Informed consent also includes informing participants with information about how the interview will be carried out and the types of questions that will be asked in addition to making them aware of any potential risks or benefits (Ethics of Interviews 2025). It is essential to ensure that participants are fully aware of their rights and not feel pressurised, including the right to withdraw at any time and to raise any concerns or complaints, they may have (Gov.uk 2018). The reason for this is to make those interviews more effective. Therefore, in this study a written agreement will confirm that interviewees have given their consent to take part in the study. This study will show openness as everything will be anonymised, as the form it will also include that your name won't be shared or your address. At the bottom, there will be a section for you to sign and date, confirming your agreement to take part in the research. This agreement will also make sure that the private information will not be used or shared, without permission but filed safely and clearly label as confidential information. As well as protecting anonymity by making sure to check the privacy settings for the apps, websites, and social media platforms you may use in this study (Oppido 2025).

In this study we need to consider the risks to the participant. One of the risks for a participant during this interview could be that the sensitive questions being asked about safeguarding, could be triggering or traumatic. Topics that are challenging, need to be carefully planned and will require strategies to be carried out throughout the research process to support the participant (Westland, H. et al. 2024), especially if that person may have gone through it themselves. There may be times when researchers are doing research with vulnerable participants who need a bit of extra care with how you approach the research study (Department of education no date). To mitigate this risk, the research may offer the participant time out to have comfort breaks. Gorvett (2019) at BBC, suggests that comfort breaks should be a short activity that gives your body and mind a rest from something that is mentally draining. Taking these breaks supports the participant to come back to the study project with a better focus. Additionally, to help address this risk the researcher could offer counselling sessions after the interview or give the participant information

leaflets. As counselling sessions help offer a supportive space to explore thoughts and emotions without judgment (Together, no date).

During this study we also need to consider the risks of a researcher. BERA, (2024), guidelines states that “Educational researchers should operate within an ethic of respect for all persons”. As people want to be treated as if they are valued, and heard, as without respect there becomes an increased risk in low self-esteem issues and depression (Krause 2022). Additionally, to support this the Equality Act became law in 2010. Covering everyone in Britain and protects individuals from discrimination, harassment and victimisation (GOV.UK.2015). BERA (2024), also states that researchers should ensure that they do their research to the highest standards and not use an unprofessional manner. There are many risks that may arise for the researcher if it’s not completed to a high standard. One main priority is ensuring that all data are stored securely under lock and key on secure premises and that nothing compromises the agreed confidentiality. ICO (no date) suggests, there are many issues that can occur, if this isn’t done correctly such as others getting hold of the personal information and broadcasting it around the school area could put that person at risk, causing them harm. To minimize this risk and protect the participants, researchers must follow all legal requirements related to storage and use of personal data as outlined in the UK by the Data protection Act 2018. Government Digital Service (2025) states that anyone handling personal data must follow strict rules called data protection principles. This involves considering factors such as risk analysis, organisational policies, and physical and technical measures (ICO no date). It is outlined that undertaking research is an ethical, fair and lawful manner that follows with the requirements for data protection legislation. so, researchers must follow data protection laws from the very beginning of a project (The University of Edinburgh 2023).

Since this research project is on behalf of the university, there are certain rules that must be abide by in the university when conducting research, such as maintaining the highest ethical standards that is expected of UWTSD and its researchers alongside fostering those values of honesty, openness, rigour, respect and care (University of Wales 2022). The University of Wales (2022) also states that to make

surer the highest ethical standard is kept up to date, the university will support the development of the researchers by offering suitable learning, training, and mentoring opportunities. If the highest ethical standards are not followed through, it needs to be taken into consideration that risks, may occur. Such as people making complaints, about the way we are conducting our research and upsetting people which then could leave a bad name on the University. Falcon editing (2023) states to reduce this risk, all educational researchers should be transparent and honest with the participants letting them know what the research will be used for beforehand and giving them opportunities to drop out at any time and withdraw their statements during the interviews. Alongside showing care and respect within the questions that the research may ask to ensure that highest standards are being maintained.

Furthermore, taking into consideration during this study that it is the researcher's responsibility to gather and store data in line with GDPR 2018 The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) sets out detailed guidelines for data protection and privacy, emphasize on the rights of individuals and the responsibilities of organizations handling personal data Participation, E. (no date) and DP act 2018 where it states, "Everyone responsible for using personal data has to follow strict rules called data protection principles" (GOV.UK 2018). In addition to this research should be stored securely, where access is only possible for the researcher. It should be ensured that all the collected data is kept anonymous so that a third party is not able to identify the participants through the data (Bera 2024).

In reflection, this study has shown a literature review regarding safeguarding and how the study will conduct through using methodological considerations while taking into considerations how important ethical considerations are during a research study, alongside the importance of following the GDPR guidelines and the General Data Protection Regulation.

Appendix

I haven't used AI to help support me, with this assignment.

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