

Social worker script

Good afternoon. My name is Anna, and I am the social worker for Daniel, aged 3, and his sister Emily, aged 9 months. Also present today are Louise, Daniel's keyworker at the nursery; Caitlin, the family's health visitor; and Sam, the police officer involved in a recent domestic incident at the children's home.

We are here today to hold an Initial Child Protection Conference following growing concerns regarding the children's well-being. These include significant changes in Daniel's behaviour, poor hygiene, the condition of the home, and the presence of a new adult in the household who is known to services. We have a duty to ensure that any risk of harm is assessed thoroughly, and that a clear plan is made to safeguard both children.

This meeting is being held in accordance with Section 47 of the Children Act 1989 (HM Government, 1989), which mandates an investigation when there is reasonable cause to suspect harm.. It also aligns with our responsibilities under the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014, which places a duty on us to protect and promote the well-being of all children (Welsh Government, 2014).

It is important that we conduct this meeting professionally, with transparency and respect. Throughout our discussion, we will continue to safeguard the children by maintaining confidentiality and ensuring that any information shared is handled in line with the UK General Data Protection Regulation and the Data Protection Act 2018 (ICO, 2023). All contributions today are valuable, and our shared goal is to decide the most appropriate next steps in the best interests of Daniel and Emily.

I'd like to start by explaining my role here today and within this family's current situation. As a social worker, my responsibility is to safeguard children and support families, ensuring children's needs are being met and their voices heard—even when they're too young to express them directly. My role involves assessing risk, coordinating multi-agency support, and working in partnership with families to bring about positive change in line with the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 (Welsh Government, 2014).

Since taking on this case, I have maintained close contact with the family and the professionals involved. I have met with the children's mother, visited the family home, and liaised with Daniel's nursery, health services, and the police. This collaborative approach is essential under the All Wales Child Protection Procedures (2023), which guide our actions in safeguarding children effectively across agencies (Welsh Government, 2023).

Concerns were first brought to my attention by nursery staff, including Louise, Daniel's keyworker. Daniel had become noticeably withdrawn, quieter than usual, and less engaged in activities he used to enjoy. His hygiene had deteriorated, and he was arriving at nursery in consistently dirty clothing. As part of my duty to assess these concerns, I visited the setting to observe Daniel directly and speak with staff. It was clear that Daniel's presentation reflected potential emotional neglect and disrupted care at home. These concerns align with NSPCC guidance (2023) on identifying cumulative harm in young children.

I approached the family with these concerns. When I first met with Daniel's mother, she appeared closed off. She denied any significant changes at home and showed limited insight into the concerns raised. Despite my efforts to build rapport, there was resistance to accepting support. However, I maintained regular contact and took steps to assess the home environment.

During a home visit, conducted under the Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act 2016 (Welsh Government, 2016), I observed a home that was disorganised and lacked a sense of routine or child-focused care. Although there were no immediate safety hazards, the home was unclean, and there were multiple empty alcohol bottles in outside recycling. Emily, the baby, was present and appeared healthy, but there was no clear evidence of a safe sleep area or regular feeding routine. I found the atmosphere tense, with little warmth or interaction between mother and child. These environmental factors, combined with the children's presentation, indicated a lack of consistent parenting and emotional availability—key elements of neglect as defined under Working Together to Safeguard People guidance (Welsh Government, 2022).

Shortly after this visit, Daniel was brought to nursery by a man unknown to staff. He appeared untidy and smelt strongly of alcohol. Daniel's reaction was striking—he became clingy, silent, and visibly anxious. Following this, I conducted further background checks and identified the man as the mother's new partner. Multi-agency information sharing revealed a known history of domestic abuse, including previous police involvement and a restraining order. This raised serious safeguarding concerns.

Soon after, Sam, the attending officer, was called to the property following reports of shouting and arguing late at night. Police confirmed both adults were under the influence of alcohol during the visit. This incident reflects a household marked by instability, conflict, and substance misuse—conditions that put young children at significant emotional and physical risk.

Emily's health visitor, Caitlin, has also raised concerns. Although Emily is meeting her physical milestones, the family has missed several appointments, and engagement has been inconsistent. This is particularly concerning given her age. As a social worker, I understand that infants are highly vulnerable, and missed

developmental checks can mean emerging needs go unnoticed (Davies and Ward, 2012).

Throughout my involvement, I have remained focused on building a clear, evidence-based understanding of the risks and strengths within this family. I have made efforts to engage the mother respectfully, and I continue to offer support, including parenting services and health visitor involvement. However, there remains limited acknowledgement of the issues raised, and resistance to open engagement with professionals.

From a rights-based perspective, the current situation is in clear breach of the Rights of Children and Young Persons (Wales) Measure 2011, which embeds the UNCRC (1989) in Welsh law and states that all children have a right to be safe, protected from harm, and supported to develop in nurturing environments (Welsh Government, 2011; UNCRC, 1989). Daniel and Emily are not currently receiving this standard of care.

This case also needs to be considered in light of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, which recognises children who witness or live with abuse as victims in their own right—even where they are not physically harmed (UK Government, 2021). Daniel's emotional responses and the family's home environment raise serious concerns about the long-term emotional impact on both children.

In line with the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, we must also take a long-term, preventative approach. It is not enough to respond to crisis; we must act now to prevent further harm, break cycles of neglect, and offer meaningful intervention to support change (Welsh Government, 2015).

I would like us to consider whether placing Daniel and Emily on the Child Protection Register under the category of neglect is appropriate. This would allow us to implement a multi-agency child protection plan with clear, focused support. Targeted support could be offered around substance misuse if necessary, alongside strategies to help establish and maintain safe routines, emotional warmth, and strong attachments within the home. While I remain open to supporting the family to make positive changes, I am also conscious of our duty to act in the children's best interests. I welcome the views of the wider team as we make a shared professional judgement on the most appropriate way forward.

Conclusion

Thank you all for sharing. Taking all of this into account—the change in Daniel's behaviour, the mother's lack of engagement, the unsuitable home environment, the involvement of a partner with a violent history, and the impact on both children- we have decided that Daniel and Emily are placed on the Child Protection Register under the category of neglect. This decision is in line with the All Wales Child

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Protection Procedures (2023), which guide our responsibilities in protecting children at risk of significant harm (Welsh Government, 2023).

Being placed on the register will allow a clear Child Protection Plan to be created. This will include regular home visits, parenting support, closer monitoring from the health visitor, and detailed risk assessments, especially in relation to the partner's contact with the children. A full parenting capacity assessment will also be required. If these concerns continue or increase, we may need to consider legal action under the Public Law Outline to ensure the long-term safety of both children (Ministry of Justice, 2014).

In summary, we are here today because two very young children are living in circumstances where their safety, development, and well-being are at serious risk. We must act now to protect them and provide the family with clear steps for change. Thank you

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