

My name is Samantha Morgan, and I am the family's health visitor. I have been their health visitor for 3 years now and visit regular. I am here today to also share my concerns relating to Leo aged 3 and his younger sister Jess aged 1 who I have been monitoring as part of my ongoing health visiting responsibilities. Leo is a happy boy, who always welcomes me on my visits and is very talkative however as the setting leader has discussed there has been concerns around the care and wellbeing of Leo. During a recent home visit, Leo seemed distant and withdrawn. I observed several indicators of potential neglect including the house being unclean and unhygienic, Leo being in dirty clothing, Jess being left in a dirty nappy for a concerning duration and the lack of appropriate nourishing food in the house. This presents significant safeguarding risks especially in a household with young vulnerable children who are limited in their ability to seek help. My observations are consistent with neglect in line with Wales Safeguarding procedures (2019) and the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 which states failure to provide children with the appropriate care including basic, physical, emotional and educational needs is likely to impact a child's health and development.

Another cause for concern is the unknown male that has recently been present on home visits, as confirmed by the setting leader a smell of alcohol on the male is raising alarm bells. I have not witnessed any alcohol at the home on my visits but have been aware of the strong smell of alcohol on him. When questioning mam regarding this unfamiliar male mam has been hesitant to give any information or details to provide clarity regarding his presence and their relationship. This is strange behaviour for mam as before she was happy to chat. The NSPCC (2023) states alcohol misuse can seriously impact a child's emotional and physical wellbeing. Children are at risk of physical harm, trauma from experiencing traumatic situations and being in hostile environments. I have been keeping notes from my recent visits with mam being withdrawn and unlike her usual self in line with Article 19 of the UNCRC that states children have the right to be protected from all forms of harm, that being physical harm, mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect, maltreatment or exploitation. I have also spoken with mam's GP regarding a decline in her mental health, the GP agrees there has been a significant decline in her mental state and is offering her support with this via support groups.

According to the UNCRC, children have the right to the best health and education along with the right to a standard of living that is adequate for their physical, emotional and mental development, I believe these rights currently are not being upheld for both young children at home with the uncleanliness, the lack of appropriate food and the children lacking in hygiene. Along with this the unknown male could be a cause for concern especially with the suspected alcohol misuse. These concerns are echoed by all professionals here today all reporting similar concerns. It is crucial we take the next steps to support the family and reduce the risk of harm for the children. HM Government (2023) states early help is more effective to the child and their family; early help can also reduce the risk of further problems arising. However, on recent visits the mother has shown minimal

engagement with most professional's and health services and denies any help offers. This is cause for concern as it is a significant barrier to safeguarding the children's well-being and is out of character. It is my duty to report all of this in line with Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 that states professionals have a duty to report when a child is at risk of abuse, neglect or any kind of harm and parents/carers non-engagement is a risk factor especially when there are other concerns too.

From my findings and the reports of the other professionals it is evident to see these children are living in circumstances that currently fail to meet the standards they have the right to. Resulting in a failure to meet their most basic rights and developmental needs. My recommendations for considerations going forward to support the family would be to put a care and support plan together and meet again in a few weeks' time to see if any improvements have been made.

Reflection

As i reflect on my safeguarding knowledge after partaking in this assignment, I acknowledge that the 5 R's: Recognise, Respond, Report, Record, Refer are key steps in a process for safeguarding the individuals in your care. These steps ensure a structured and consistent approach is followed by everyone. Recognising is having the relevant knowledge and training to be able to notice the signs and symptoms of abuse or harm. Responding in an appropriate way once a concern is recognised, this means acting calmly, not making promises you cannot keep, and reassuring the individual. Next is report; after responding it is important to report the concern to a designated safeguarding lead or appropriate agency. Record an accurate detailed record using only factual information with the time, date and actions taken. Always ensure documents are stored securely. Lastly is refer; if the concern meets the guidelines for further action, it must be referred. The National Safeguarding Procedures for Wales (2020) provides a framework for making referrals and outlines the criteria for taking concerns further. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, and it is of upmost importance that everyone knows that.

Before this assignment I had sufficient knowledge of the importance of safeguarding children, I have completed a couple safeguarding courses and am up to date. In my setting I am aware of who my safeguarding lead and deputy are. Along with the safeguarding Wales app that I have on my phone if ever needed, our setting also has our own Padlet which is filled with all the information for safeguarding and the procedures and policies and how to implement this into practice. I understand that safeguarding is also about creating a safe environment where the children feel welcome, loved and safe. Following the guidance from the All Wales Child Protection Procedures, I understand that I must always act quickly and appropriately ensuring to never ignore a concern.

From this module I now feel more confident when talking about the topic safeguarding and having to work in a group to present a child protection conference has allowed me to gain a deeper understanding of multi-agency work and how each agency works. From my opinion this module is very beneficial to practitioners and expanding their knowledge of safeguarding in order to influence their practice in settings and schools which is fundamental to the children in their care alongside their family/carers. By following all the relevant steps and procedures ensures the children are at the centre of their care. As a professional it is important to remain vigilant, informed and proactive in applying the principles and procedures as this ensures everyone is treated fairly and safeguarded effectively. Thank you for listening.

References

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