

Script

My name is Hannah Headon and I am the health visitor involved with the family who have been asked to contribute to today's conference. I completely comply with this request in accordance with NHS Wales' 2023 safeguarding policy.

I have been involved with this family since the child's birth. While working in partnership with the midwife during mums pregnancy, mum would often state that her pregnancy was quite unexpected and that she had a negative view on the child. Adhering with the children's act 1989, this act states that once a child is born, the child's welfare is paramount. This links to the human rights act 1998 as this act protects individuals' autonomy and it does not allow parents to abandon children without consequence. Children have the right to a private and family life (article 8, UNCRC)

Once the child was born, I went to visit the home when they were around ten days old. The first thing I had noticed while at the house was that the house had a distinct smell and was very untidy. The child was placed in a dirty cot, crying and mum told me that the child is always like this. There seemed to be no bond between mum and the child. The children and families act 2014 promotes early intervention and support for families that are struggling to parent effectively. While at the house, mum seemed quite private and didn't seem herself. I gave mum some advice on safe sleeping, how to feed the baby correctly and also the baby's development.

Mum went to her GP examination at six weeks, as well as a growth check and the baby's vaccinations at eight, twelve and sixteen weeks. a weaning evaluation after six months, a family resilience evaluation, and a growth and development check after fifteen months. Mum and the child went to all of these appointments, and the child was doing well. However, throughout the check-ups, Mum did appear a little overwhelmed and despondent. I suggested that Mum visited her GP to talk about how she was feeling and to receive some more help. This was carried out in accordance with the principles of the Social Services and Wellbeing Act of 2014, as outlined by the Care Council for Wales in 2017. These principles include the importance of early intervention for well-being and the need for health care services to empower individuals to take charge of their own health.

The children's language, communication, and social development did appear to be delayed when I went back to complete the child's 27-month growth and development check. According to NSPCC 2020, this may indicate neglect, but it also notes that this isn't always the case and that there may be other causes, such as the fact that the mother had another child. With mum's permission, I referred him to speech and language therapy (SLT) for evaluation in accordance with the Social Services and Wellbeing Act and the necessity of early intervention. Mum also talked about how she has struggled to maintain stability in one relationship and has been in and out of others.

I was made aware that on a few occasions, the nearby neighbours had contacted the police for a welfare check. As the child's health visitor, I and his social worker attended the house to ensure that the children were safe. When arriving at the house, mum opened the door partially to see who was at the door. Mum allowed us in but started questioning me on why I was there and started to get very defensive. There was no sighting of the children and mum said they were up stairs in their bedroom. Mum seemed quite vacant and there was a strong smell of alcohol coming from her breath. the children's bedroom was very empty and was clear that they had nothing to play or interact with. Section 1 under the children and young persons act 1933 states that it makes it an offence if a child is abandoned or neglected in a manner likely to cause unnecessary suffering.

NHS Wales 2011 says a multidisciplinary approach ensures professionals share information and knowledge in order to achieve best outcomes for our most vulnerable members of society. This approach enabled us to know that the father of the children was not around, although a new man was seen bringing the child to school which the school was unaware of.

I used a family resilience assessment tool (FRAIT) to determine any needs or safeguarding issues as part of the child's review and the healthy child's program. According to Unicef, the Healthy Child Wales Programme supports the 1989 UNCRC articles on children's rights, specifically Article 6: Every child has the right to life and the opportunity to reach their full potential, Article 24: Every child has the right to the best possible health, and Article 39: Children who have been neglected receive assistance to help them regain their health. I informed my manager and safeguarding officer of my findings and concerns, and they contacted social services for guidance. I also documented my findings on the NHS Wales 2018 child at risk process DATIX incident form.

Based on what I understand, the child's school had also made a referral by this point. Therefore, in accordance with safeguarding Wales 2019, I propose that decisions regarding both siblings to be taken into account, and that the local authority and the various agencies involved collaborate to safeguard the welfare of both children, as stated in HM government's 2018 working together statutory document. In light of the Victoria Climbié inquiry's 2003 findings, this communication is crucial to ensuring that, as professionals, we safeguard children in accordance with the 2003 Every Child Matters Green Paper. This brings my report to the conference to an end.

I will now pass you over to the child's teacher who is also involved in this case.

After hearing all of the agencies involved reports on this case today, I feel that children are both at risk of neglect

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Critical reflection

Prior to completing this module, I had an understanding of what safeguarding children meant however, working in practice every day and completing this module has definitely deepened my understanding. I have always known that the child's welfare is paramount and what to do in certain situations and I now feel a lot more confident because of this module.

In my setting we follow protocols to ensure that children are always safe. My role of a teaching assistant plays an acting role in this. I know that if a child discloses any information to us as staff, then we have the duty to care and the right to ensure that the disclosure is reported and recorded. Throughout our setting, this is done on a platform called Provision maps where we would select the chosen child, the date and time it happened, the area of concern and lastly, who we were that they disclosed it too. I would also speak to my manager, who is also the designated safeguarding officer in my setting.

Whilst being a teaching assistant, I have had a few safeguarding experiences. One of them being when a child in my class would often come into school late, the child would then struggle with routine because they come into school late most days. The child

would often be wearing clothes which are not school uniform and if they were school uniform then they would likely be dirty or ripped. Most days this child would come into school feeling hungry and would never have breakfast. As this was an ongoing concern, I would always report and record my concerns that I had recognised. From being able to report and record my concerns effectively it meant that we were able to offer the mum some support.

A helpful and organised method of remembering what to do in the event of a safeguarding concern is to use the Five R's of safeguarding. These guidelines help to ensure that the welfare of a child is paramount (Prospero learning, 2023).

During this safeguarding module, I have gained a better knowledge on the legislation and working in partnership to ensure child safety. The mock Child Protection Conference has provided me, as a teaching assistant who raises concerns, with insight into how multiple agencies collaborate to determine the child's risk and best course of action.

In future practice, i will take on board that protecting children is everyone's responsibility. I will continue to report and record my concerns about children to ensure that they are safe.