

Safeguarding Portfolio (Case Study 1)

In case study 1, Joanna has been identified as a child who has no previous issues in terms of well-being, confidence and independence until she became very reluctant to remove her jumper when the weather was hot. It was also noticed that when reaching for a glue stick, bruising was noticed on her body, near her ribs. In line with section 2 of Social Care Wales (n.d.) and section 130 of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014, practitioners have a duty to report anything that could be suspected as a risk of harm to children. Following these procedures, the practitioner has to follow specific steps to ensure the child's safety and well-being. When dealing with a case such as this one, it is important to keep in mind statistics such as 300 million children, which is roughly 3 out of 4 of them, between the ages of 2 and 4 experience physical abuse and/or psychological abuse on a regular basis at the hands of their parents or other carers (World Health Organization, 2022).

According to the NSPCC (2012a), the most frequent harm sustained by a child who has experienced physical abuse is bruises. As stated by UNICEF (2017), in article 19 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), children have the right of protection from abuse and neglect. The UNCRC (1990) states that all should take all necessary administrative, social, legislative, and educational actions to safeguard the child from any kind of abuse or injury, whether it be physical or mental, neglect or careless treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while the child is under the custody of parent(s), legal guardian(s), or any other person who is responsible for their care.

Part 7 of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act (2014) specifically pays attention to the duties to record concerns and identifies a child at risk as a child who is suffering from abuse, neglect, or other forms of harm, or is in danger of it. Working Together to Safeguard People (Welsh Government) is statutory guidance which accompanies the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act (2014) and it states that is important that the practitioner has up-to-date training and knowledge in order to confidently spot signs and symptoms of the different types of neglect. According to NSPCC (2023b), practitioners who work with children should have the knowledge to be able to recognise the signs of abuse and know what the next steps are to take.

To begin, the practitioner should pay close attention to the bruises and record them, noting their size, location, colour, and pattern. The information provided ought to be accurate and factual, free of subjective statements. Also, according to the Social Care Institute for Excellence (2023) suggests that Joanna's change in behaviour could be a warning sign of potential abuse. If Joanna was to disclose any further information, in line with Social Care Wales (n.d.) procedures, the practitioner would be expected to pay close attention and reassure the child including remaining composed and pay close attention to the child's words without interjecting. The practitioner should also tell the child that telling someone has shown to be the right thing to do, so reassurance should be given. If further information is required from the child, open-ended questions should be asked rather than ones with predetermined answers. It is also important that privacy is not guaranteed and instead, Joanna should be told that someone that can help will be informed. When it comes to recording a disclosure or any observation, the British Council (2021), it is important that the practitioner takes a few quick notes at the present time and put them into detailed writing as soon as possible. It is also suggested that original notes should be kept in case the court requests them if it leads to that. British Council (2021) also says to make a detailed note of the child's appearance, words used, date, time, and location. The precise words that were used, including any slang or swearing should be noted. It is also stated that notes should be kept factual by recording only statements and observations, not any opinions or presumptions. According to Johnson (2019), any notes taken during observations or disclosures should be made in pen and should be dated and signed so they cannot be edited if needed further down the line. In accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), documenting a child safety concern entails making sure that personal data is handled lawfully, fairly, and openly, with children's safety as the first priority. According to Social Care Wales (n.d.) all reports should be recorded following the safeguarding procedures in their setting.

The practitioner's next steps would be to report and refer the safeguarding issue. This should be the same day that the disclosure or observations were made. It should be ensured that the information is shared on a need-to-know basis, maintaining the child's confidentiality as much as possible. This includes not discussing the matter with colleagues or other children. As a teaching assistant,

following procedures from section 2 of Wales Safeguarding Procedures (2024), their duty is to report the designated safeguarding person (DSP). In an organisation, the designated safeguarding person serves as the first point of contact for anyone with concerns regarding a child. In addition, the role is in charge of training and development as well as policies and processes related to safeguarding. In addition to receiving concerns regarding a child, the DSP is in charge of reporting, keeping, and updating child protection records in accordance with the organisation's policies and procedures (NSPCC, 2022).

The DSP will get in touch with Children's Services at the local authority if a referral is required. This decision is based on guidance from the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014, which outlines the duty to report if there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child is at risk. All necessary information, including any prior events, observations, and documented concerns, should be included in this referral. In situations when there is an immediate threat, the DSP may also call the police who has legal authority to look into allegations of abuse or neglect promptly (Social Care Wales, 2024). The DSP will choose the best method of getting in touch with Joanna's parents or other carers while striking a balance between the requirement for openness and safety considerations. Joanna's safety should always come first in all communications.

In this case, the referral would come under section 3 of Social Care Wales (n.d.b) of significant harm which was first introduced in the Children Act 1989. In this case, a section 47 enquiry of the Children Act would be initiated to investigate and establish whether the harm is significant. Here, a number of agencies would be involved including the teaching assistant, the DSP, social worker and whoever else may have links to the family.

It is imperative that Joanna is continued to be supported after a referral has been. This entails keeping an eye on her behaviour and general wellbeing, giving her comfort, and making sure she feels secure and supported in the classroom. According to the All Wales Child Protection Procedures (2008), it is expected that the DSP will collaborate with Children's Services and other appropriate organisations to execute a support strategy for Joanna. Under the direction of the DSP and other

professionals, the teaching assistant might be involved in continuing monitoring and support for Joanna.

The statutory basis for child protection in Wales is provided by the Social Services and Well-Being (Wales) Act 2014. It highlights the need for professionals to take action when they believe a child is in danger and describes the steps involved in reporting and handling safeguarding issues. The extensive guidelines provided by the All Wales Child Protection Procedures provide a uniform and efficient handling of safeguarding matters, including identification, documentation, and reporting of abuse. The Welsh Government's Working Together to Safeguard People guidance, which emphasises the significance of accurate and timely reporting, supports the Act's implementation. The teaching assistant can help make sure that they address safeguarding issues in a way that is effective, compliant with Welsh legislation and best practices, and prioritises the safety and well-being of the child by following these steps.

Establishing thorough policies and procedures that address every aspect of child safety is necessary for an establishment such as a school or nursery to guarantee that safeguarding is given high priority. According to Social Care Wales (n.d.), a thorough safeguarding policy that is regularly reviewed and updated should be in place in the setting. This policy needs to be in line with the most recent laws and professional standards, like the All Wales Child Protection Procedures and the Social Services and Well-Being (Wales) Act 2014. Settings should provide precise guidelines for identifying, documenting, and reporting safeguarding issues. All employees should have easy access to these processes, which clearly specify what to do in the event of a concern.

According to The Safeguarding Company (n.d.), for the purpose of assisting them in protecting pupils from harm, educational staff must possess current, dependable safeguarding training. Annual safeguarding updates should be given to other school employees, and safeguarding leads are mandated to update this training every two years. This will remind practitioners on how to identify signs of abuse and neglect, how to respond to disclosures, and the procedures for reporting concerns.

It is also important that children are learning in a safe environment. This includes settings ensuring staff have extensive checks through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). According to Robinson (2022), “DBS checks in education are an essential safeguarding tool, improving the safety and wellbeing of children and young people.” For school employees, DBS checks are essential since they contribute to the security and welfare of the children. The Disclosure and Barring Service conducts these checks, which make public any criminal record that might prevent an individual from working with children. As a result, those with a history of potentially dangerous behaviour are not permitted to work in educational settings. This is essential to preserving a secure atmosphere in which children can develop safely. Furthermore, by reassuring parents and the community that the school takes child protection seriously, DBS checks help to foster confidence. Additionally, they support the school's legal responsibilities under safeguarding laws, such as the Social Services and Well-Being (Wales) Act 2014, which sets strict guidelines for preventing child abuse and neglect. Setting's dedication to fostering a safe and encouraging learning environment is reinforced by the regular DBS checks that are conducted on all staff members, including volunteers. This helps to spot any new concerns and ensures that constant supervision is maintained. In order to protect children and to uphold the school's duty to put student safety first, DBS checks are an essential component of any complete safeguarding policy.

In maintained settings, according to Estyn (2022), every child in Wales has the right to feel safe, to receive appropriate care, and to have a voice in their own future. Estyn is fully committed to providing for these rights. With a greater emphasis on safeguarding arrangements, they started testing a new inspection procedure in 2022. The culture of safety and well-being at a provider—including whether students are taking part in classes on-site, online, off-site, or both—will be closely examined.

A setting's obligation to provide for the safety of children is greatly influenced by the rights of the child as stated in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). Children have the right to be protected from all types of abuse, neglect, and exploitation, according to article 19 of the UNCRC (1989). The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014, which requires that the welfare of children be given top priority in all decisions affecting them, incorporates these rights

in Wales. The legislation requires educational institutions to put strong safeguards in place and guarantees that all employees receive training on how to spot and handle such misuse.

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