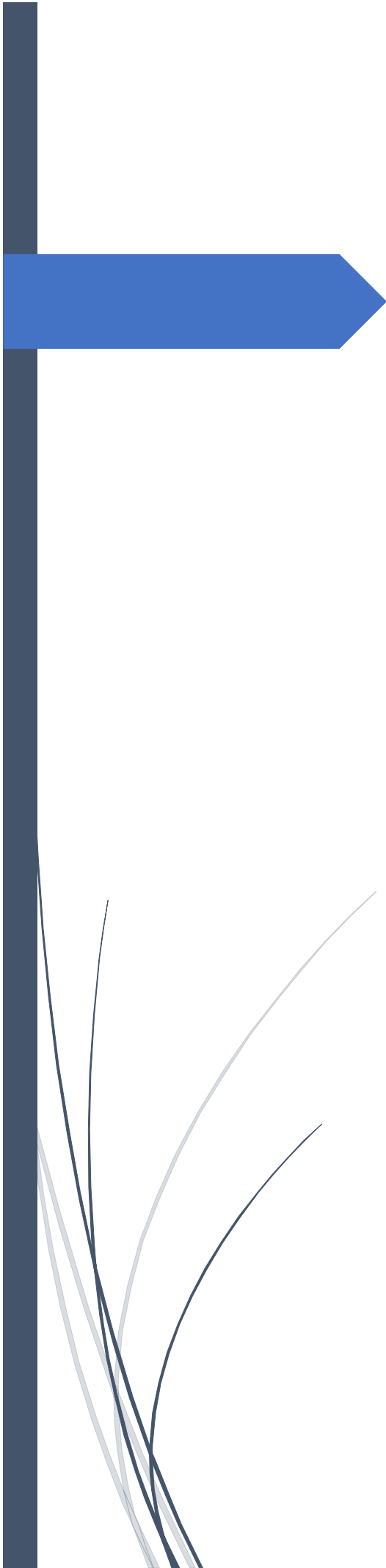




EAEE5011

Safeguarding in the Early Years

Sarah Jones (1706410)
UWTSD

Contents

Reflective Paper	2
The Experience	2
Feelings	3
Evaluation of Experience	4
Analysis of Experience	5
Conclusion	6
References for Task One	8
References for Task Two	10

Reflective Paper

On the evening of Monday 22nd October 2018, I took part in a 15-minute group discussion, a theoretical Initial Child Protection Conference (I.C.P.C), alongside two other students. The area of safeguarding and child protection is a highly emotive and important one. From a practitioners' perspective having an increased understanding of abuse and neglect is essential, as the impact for a child can be lifelong if action is not taken to address the issues so that the abuse stops. In this essay, I shall reflect upon my experiences and consider the affect it has had upon the development of my professional skills whilst acknowledging the changes that I will make to my future practice with children. To assist me in my process of reflection I have used Gibbs' Reflective Cycle (1988).

The Experience

As part of our Safeguarding in the Early Years assessment, our year group was given a safeguarding and child protection scenario in respect of a three-year-old child. In groups of three, we were then asked to analyse the scenario and plan a theoretical I.C.P.C lasting for 15 minutes. To complete the task, we each chose a professional role based upon those individuals who were likely to attend. My primary role was that of a nursery-setting manager, with the two other members of my group assuming the roles of a health visitor and a social worker.

As part of my preparation, I firstly conducted my own research and reading of materials relating to the legislative basis, my role and its responsibilities and the protocols and procedures for safeguarding and protecting the welfare of children (Welsh Government, 2018). Then by combining my existing and newly gained knowledge with the information from the scenario, I completed the Multi-agency Child Protection Report form (Swansea Social Service, no date). Once completed I met with my other group members to discuss, plan and decide upon how best to deal with and reach a decision upon the outcome presented in the scenario in accordance with the child's rights and well-being prior to our theoretical I.C.P.C.

During our theoretical I.C.P.C, within my theoretical role of the nursery-setting manager I presented my observations and concerns in respect of the child before going on to state my recommended course of action. The other two members of my

group did likewise before we concluded with a group decision as to the remedial course of action to be taken in order to safeguard and promote the children's welfare in the future.

Feelings

During the preparation, planning and delivery of the theoretical I.C.P.C I remember experiencing a mixture of feelings from those of relief, happiness, confidence, frustration, doubt, confusion, incompetence and anxiousness. I felt relief at the outset of this task as I already had some knowledge and training in safeguarding and child protection and was looking forward to developing my knowledge further as I felt that this was an important area of learning for prospective practitioners.

I was happy to be working alongside two other students who shared a similar work ethic to myself and was looking forward to engaging with them in sustained shared thinking during the preparation and planning stages. I felt confident that I could positively contribute to the task and by working alongside them achieve a favourable outcome for not only our group but myself also. However, the reality of group working was frustrating as we all had different schedules and commitments, which led to difficulties in the communication and planning processes. It resulted in me feeling anxious as I wanted to ensure that the best outcome was achieved for the theoretical child, my group and myself.

On investigating the legislative basis for the task, I began to feel confused at the lack of clarity and up to date information regarding the English and Welsh legislative framework and the difference in the definitions of neglect. I struggled and had to put a great deal of work into firstly finding the correct information and then secondly, gaining an understanding of it. At this stage, I began to doubt my capability and felt that my lack of operational experience and understanding of the safeguarding system was hindering me when it came to making decisions. It left me feeling incompetent and anxious, as I had nothing to base my decisions upon except my theoretical knowledge.

I found that as my anxiety increased my focus slipped from that of providing the observations and facts about the welfare of the child in the scenario and moved to creating a fictitious story about the family background as a distraction. Not having the

actual experience of the scenario or the opportunity to ask questions to gain clarity on the information given meant that I was unable to use any visual cues from which to use my intuition or my gut reactions. I decided that I would resolve my feelings of incompetence by asking for help from those whose experience was greater than mine and so I spoke with my colleagues at Evolve, Swansea Youth Service.

Evaluation of Experience

Overall, upon reflection, the experience and knowledge that I have gained from preparing, planning and participating in the theoretical I.C.P.C has been, and will be, beneficial. The preparation process has resulted in an increase in my knowledge with the planning process and participation in the theoretical I.C.P.C itself having provided me with theoretical operation experience and knowledge and illustrated the issues and challenges that can be faced when working as part of a group.

Researching the legislative framework was a positive experience overall. The module lectures were informative and by reviewing the reading list, I was able to identify a source, which clearly explained the up to date framework. This in turn enabled me to use other sources to make sense of not only the legislative framework but also its relevance in relation to statutory guidance, guidance, policy, procedures and practice.

I found the All Wales Child Protection Procedures 2008 particularly valuable as it provided clear information regarding definitions of abuse, neglect and harm and a coherent framework, which I followed and could in fact follow in the future if I suspected or had detected signs that a child was being abused or neglected. I also referred to the What to do if You're Worried a Child is being Abused, Advice for Practitioners non-statutory guidance from the Department of Education (Department of Education, 2015) as the language and guidance was clear.

From my perspective, the planning process for my role as a nursery setting manager was the least positive. I was able to draw upon the theoretical knowledge of the legislation and guidance that I had gained and follow the guidelines for referral and the procedure for the initial Child Protection Conference using the AWCPP 2008 and What to do if You're Worried a Child is being Abused, Advice for Practitioners (Department of Education (2015)). However, I started to experience uncertainty when compiling the information to be presented as I felt that I lacked the operational

experience and knowledge upon which to do so and make a professional judgement. I reflected and decided that it would be best to ask for help from those who had operational experience and understanding in this area. A discussion with my colleagues in Evolve, Swansea Youth Service, enabled me to gain perspective and confidence so enabling me to complete the information for my theoretical role in the theoretical I.C.P.C.

It was at this point that the group work element of the planning process became essential but due to different work and personal schedules and commitments, communication became difficult and the preparation stalled. I started to become anxious but rather than communicating my fears and frustrations in fear of coming across as officious I shied away and proceeded to carry out the remaining group tasks on my own so that I could ensure that they had been completed in preparation for the theoretical I.C.P.C. As a result, the final summing up of the theoretical I.C.P.C was left to the last minute and this resulted in confusion and mistakes being made.

Analysis of Experience

Reflecting upon my overall experience of this module would indicate to me that there are a number of important factors to consider, have knowledge of, and understand when it comes to safeguarding and child protection.

The legislative framework is of primary importance. Child protection is still in its infancy (Lindon, 2012) and has developed as a result of a combination of an increase in economic wealth and an emerging awareness of morality and justice (Powell and Uppal, 2012). During its period of development, it would appear that a number of significant cases relating to safeguarding of children have shaped both legislation and practice not only in the western world but also on a global basis with the introduction of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1989. Article 19 states that all governments must do all that they can to ensure that children are protected from all forms of violence, abuse, neglect and bad treatment by their parents or anyone else who cares for them (UNICEF, no date).

Here in the UK the Children Act 1989 has determined the basis of the legislative framework and resulting guidance, policy and procedures for safeguarding and child

protection. However, here in Wales since 2011 children's rights have been included in all policy making decisions with the Rights of Children and Young Persons (Wales) Measure making the UNCRC part of the countries domestic law. At present, it is the only country in the UK to do so.

Given the importance of safeguarding and child protection I was concerned to find that none of the text books currently in print have information upon this but being aware that it can take a number of years for books to be updated and re-printed I knew that an alternative source of information need to be found. I turned to the Welsh Government website but found it very confusing and was unable to find any clear information. Consequently, I looked for an alternative source and found the NSPCC website provided clear, concise and up to date information I required. I discovered that in April 2016 the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 came into force and now provides the legal framework for social service provision here in Wales. It has amended repealed and replaced a number of sections of the Children Act 2004 and also a number of guidance documents and codes of practice concerning safeguarding and social services for all people including children (NSPCC, 2018).

With the changes brought about by the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 I was relieved to find out that the Welsh Government has made funding available so that the AWCPP 2008 can be updated (NSPCC, 2018). In my opinion, this is of upmost importance as it is a highly beneficial working document as it provides a great deal of clear and concise information and procedures for all professionals and agencies to follow who work with children. As I have discovered group working without guidance and rules, can lead to confusion and mistakes being made and in an area, which deals with the welfare of children, where loss of life may result this, is not a risk that should be taken.

Conclusion

I have drawn three conclusions from my reflection upon this experience.

Firstly, through experiencing difficulty with gaining up to date information following legislative changes for safeguarding and child protection here in Wales I am now aware that the process of learning and development needs to be continuous and requires vigilance and attention on a regular basis. By subscribing to the NSPCC

safeguarding and child protection newsletter, I shall receive weekly updates that will ensure that I keep up to date with new research and amendments and developments in practice and policy (NSPCC, 2018).

Secondly, I now recognise that practical operational experience is also required alongside that of a sound theoretical knowledge and understanding. In its absence, I found that being resourceful and asking for help from other professionals who were already experienced and knowledgeable was invaluable. In their guiding principles the Department of Education (2015) clearly state, that it is important to be aware of who to approach if you have concerns and are in need of help. Having done so during this experience I shall continue to do so in the future and will familiarise myself with the relevant professionals in my area.

Thirdly, I have reflected and drawn comparison between my experience of group working and that of multi-agency working. From this experience, I have discovered that it is crucial that communication and plans are clearly set out from the start so to avoid confusion, uncertainty and mistakes. Both the Laming (2003) and Munro (2011) review stress the importance of good communication and the need for agencies to work well together so that the best outcome is achieved. In the future I shall endeavour to clearly communicate and plan a schedule of works when engaging in group work and discovering how utilise information technology so that participation in group FaceTime or Skype can enable face to face communication to take place even if a group meeting in one location cannot.

References for Task One

Department of Education. (2018) 'Working Together to Safeguard Children: A Guide to Inter-Agency Working to Safeguard and Promote the Welfare of Children' https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/729914/Working_Together_to_Safeguard_Children-2018.pdf

[Accessed: 2nd October 2018].

Great Britain. Children Act 2004: Elizabeth II. Chapter 31. (2004) London: The Stationary Office

Hobart, C. and Frankel, J. (2009) *Safeguarding Children*. (3rd Ed.) Cheltenham: Nelson Thornes.

Laming, H. (2003) *The Victoria Climbié Inquiry*. London: HMSO.

Lindon, J. (2012) *Safeguarding and Child Protection 0 – 8 Years*. (4th Ed.) London: Hodder Education.

Local Safeguarding Children Boards in Wales. (2008) 'All Wales Child Protection Procedures' <http://www.childreninwales.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/All-Wales-Child-Protection-Procedures-2008.pdf> [Accessed: 2nd October 2018].

Munro, E. (2011) 'The Munro Review of Child Protection: Final Report. A Child Centred System' https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/175391/Munro-Review.pdf [Accessed 12th October 2018].

NICE (2016) *Domestic violence and abuse: multi-agency working*. [On-line] Available at: <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ph50> [Accessed 28/10/18]

NSPCC. (September 2018) 'Child Protection System in Wales' <https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/child-protection-system/wales/> [Accessed: 2nd October 2018].

Powell, J. and Uppal, E.L. (2012) *Safeguarding Babies and Young Children. A Guide for Early Years Professionals*. Berkshire: Open University Press.

Swansea Council. (2018) 'Team Around the Family in Swansea' <https://www.swansea.gov.uk/taf> [Accessed: 20th October 2018].

UNICEF (2018) *A summary of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. [On-line]*
Available at:

https://www.unicef.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2010/05/UNCRC_summary.pdf

Welsh Assembly Government. (2006) 'Safeguarding Children: Working Together
Under the Children Act 2004'
<https://gov.wales/pubs/circulars/2007/nafwc1207en.pdf?lang=en> [Accessed: 7th
October 2018].

References for Task Two

Department of Education. (2018) 'Working Together to Safeguard Children: A Guide to Inter-Agency Working to Safeguard and Promote the Welfare of Children' https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/729914/Working_Together_to_Safeguard_Children-2018.pdf

[Accessed: 2nd October 2018].

Department for Education. (2015) 'What to Do If You're Worried a Child is Being Abused'

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/419604/What_to_do_if_you_re_worried_a_child_is_being_abused.pdf

[Accessed: 24th October 2014].

Great Britain. Children Act 2004: Elizabeth II. Chapter 31. (2004) London: The Stationary Office.

Great Britain. Children Act 1989: Elizabeth II. Chapter 41. (1989) London: The Stationary Office.

Hobart, C. and Frankel, J. (2009) *Safeguarding Children*. (3rd Ed.) Cheltenham: Nelson Thornes.

Laming (2003) 'The Victoria Climbié Inquiry' https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/273183/5730.pdf [Accessed: 3rd October 2018].

Lindon, J. (2012) *Safeguarding and Child Protection 0 – 8 Years*. (4th Ed.) London: Hodder Education.

Local Safeguarding Children Boards in Wales. (2008) 'All Wales Child Protection Procedures' <http://www.childreninwales.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/All-Wales-Child-Protection-Procedures-2008.pdf> [Accessed: 2nd October 2018].

Munro, E. (2011) 'The Munro Review of Child Protection: Final Report. A Child Centred System'

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/175391/Munro-Review.pdf [Accessed 12th October 2018].

NSPCC. (September 2018) 'Child Protection System in Wales' <https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/child-protection-system/wales/> [Accessed: 2nd October 2018].

NSPCC. (2017) 'How Safe Are Our Children? 2017' <https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/media/1358/how-safe-children-2017-report.pdf> [Accessed: 20th October 2018].

Powell, J. and Uppal, E.L. (2012) *Safeguarding Babies and Young Children. A Guide for Early Years Professionals*. Berkshire: Open University Press.

Swansea Council. (2018) 'Team Around the Family in Swansea' <https://www.swansea.gov.uk/taf> [Accessed: 20th October 2018].

Swansea Social Services. (no date) *Multi-agency Child Protection Report, For Child Protection Conference*. Swansea: City and County of Swansea.

UNICEF. (no date) 'FACT SHEET: A summary of the rights under the Convention on the Rights of the Child' https://www.unicef.org/crc/files/Rights_overview.pdf [Accessed: 1st November 2018].

Welsh Assembly Government. (2006) 'Safeguarding Children: Working Together Under the Children Act 2004' <https://gov.wales/pubs/circulars/2007/nafwc1207en.pdf?lang=en> [Accessed: 7th October 2018].

Welsh Government. (2018) 'Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014. Working Together to Safeguard People, Volume 5 – Handling Individual Cases to Protect Children at Risk' <https://gov.wales/docs/dhss/publications/180511childrenatrisk/en.pdf> [Accessed: 18th October 2018].