

Reflective paper

To commence my research for my role within the structure of the case conference, I researched the guidelines according to The All Wales Child protection Procedures (2008), on who would routinely attend the initial child protection conference. I found that senior officers such as chief inspectors or higher ranks attend the conference.

For the initial child protection conference scenario, I undertook the role of the Police Chief inspector, I have not had any prior knowledge or involvement with this type of role before and it was a new experience. When researching the role of the chief inspector, through my findings I found the chief inspector's attendance to have a detached analytical approach to the conference and kept a professional distance.

For example, in the scenario, although the chief inspector wants what is best for the children, there are concerns from a police angle regarding the children, as they are on the child protection register, due to the father's criminal record and the incident at the child's nursery. The chief inspector has not met the family, only having read the information through reports.

In contrast, during the conference the health visitor and nursery manager, spoke eagerly about the children and starting to develop a positive relationship with the family. The chief inspector only had the information through reports and did not know the family beforehand.

While undertaking my research for my role, I discovered the Mid and West Wales safeguarding board website called CYSUR (2016), which is the Mid and West Wales Regional Safeguarding Children Board and CWMPAS the Mid and West Wales Regional Safeguarding Adults Board. The website is accessible to professionals and all members of the public including children, it is an information sharing porthole. It is current and valuable and up to date tool, sharing information on safeguarding issues, training, news and has relevant links and contacts.

The website was endorsed in 2016 by Rebecca Evans, the then Minister for Social Services and Public Health, who proposed it would help aid, improved communication, information sharing and alert awareness of signs and indicators of abuse and neglect for everyone, therefore encouraging everyone is responsible for safeguarding

children. This is reinforced by Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 in which it is a requirement (Great Britain, Department of Health 2004). These were developed to improve good practice and effective multiagency communication within the local and regional areas, ensuring the protection of young children and adults.

I found CYSUR very interesting website called and is easily accessible to everyone including children. I have explored the website and it is extensive including contacts if there is concern for a child's welfare and advise if you suspect abuse and not knowing what to do next thus reinforcing safeguarding is everyone's business. Another motivating part of the website is within it is the access to the Junior Regional Safeguarding Children Board CADW (Children taking Action Differently in Wales). It was established in 2014 and young people from Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion, Pembrokeshire and Powys sit on the board and discuss improvements in safeguarding issues. In my opinion this is an inspiring website and promotes Every child matters (2003) giving the child a voice, valuing their opinion and adhering to the Children's Commissioner for Wales's aims, ethos and objectives for children to be listened and heard Commissioner for Wales (2015).

For the child protection conference, I wanted to look at past child abuse cases to better prepare myself and to see if there was a pattern in which I could compare or link it to and have a better understanding of the case scenario. During my research into some of the more severe historic child abuse cases chronicled by Batty, (2003), I found some of the child abuse cases had similarities and links.

These included, children known or under the care of the social services, the child involved was not spoken to or listened to and if the child would have been interviewed separately from their parents, the Child's voice would have been heard and appropriate action would have been taken (Munro 2011). According to Ofsted (2010) reports on failures and errors in many serious case reviews on child protection cases included the child was not listened too or involved, hence not implementing and adhering to the UNCRC (1989).

My research found that in some instances, it was reported in past cases that members of the public including neighbours and family members suspected abuse but did not report it, as they were either afraid of the family or thought someone else would report it. As stated by Cooper, (2016) safeguarding is everyone's responsibility in keeping

children safe from harm and if everyone comes forward and reports suspected incidents, more children will be kept safe and protected.

I found repeating patterns presented evidence of the lack of effective communication within the multiagency and multidisciplinary bodies, such as ineffective training, inexperienced and in some cases overwhelmed workloads on social workers and other multiagency staff. For example, when there was negligence and mistakes of the social services staff on safeguarding, it was stated by BBC (2001) in particular the case of Chelsea Brown, who was taken to hospital with unexplained bruising and marks on her body, this should have activated police involvement and a multi-agency case conference in child abuse procedures. (Batty,2013).

It is worth considering, some of the past cases that should be taken into consideration that social workers are overloaded and inundated with caseloads of varying complexities with very little help or support, therefore, having a detrimental effect on their judgment and their performance. When they voice their concerns about their workloads, this can have an adverse effect and be opposed with senior management. This is where someone needs to make a stand if they are put under pressure into doing something they are not satisfied or disagree with, which can be known as whistle-blowers (Gov.uk. 2017).

While we were working and preparing together for the group discussion, some of the members of my group have experience in sure start professions and conversed on how effective and speedy the multiagency team work within the setting, once a referral or concern has been recorded and documented. Blatchford et al (2017) supports Every Child Matters (2003) view of multiagency working together, supporting children and their families for early intervention enabling prevention. Sure start children centres are one of these initiatives and regards its legislation under the guidelines of the children Act 2006 (Department of Education 2013).

Drawing on my experience, working in a school setting, we all compared the difference on the sure start scheme and school provision. I was intrigued on how sure start can provide early intervention on improving outcomes for children and their families, in particular socially and economically challenged areas. For instance, in respect to speech and language referrals, the waiting time for sure start settings can be a prompt process as opposed to sometimes a lengthy procedure within Schools. In the case of

the child in the scenario, Alfie, he is in a sure start setting and has some developmental problems. As there is early intervention and support his outcomes of overcoming these developmental problems are significantly higher when these procedures are in place at an earlier stage than if he was in a school setting. It was refreshing to hear such positive opinions on a scheme that offer help and support not only to the child but also the family, favouring and encouraging prevention, supporting the all-round wellbeing and holistic approach to the child (Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014).

It is an interesting concept to see how the theory of Bronfenbrenner believing a child's development can be influenced by their environment, (Bronfenbrenner,1975) could be adapted to the scenario within a real-life circumstance. Following Bronfenbrenner's theory, it is in my opinion that some people underestimate the effects of a child's environment they grow up in, can, potentially, have an adverse effect on their life whether it is short or long term.

According to NHS Wales (2016) Adverse childhood experiences (ACES) could also have an impact on the children in the scenario. Although, as early intervention has taken place this potentially could halt further developments and influence anymore ACES.

ACES will have an effect on the children, but it will be governed by continued childhood experiences, this depending if exposed to anymore adverse experiences in their future life. The issues they faced as a family has had a detrimental effect but could possibly have resulted in a series of damaging events, if there had not been intervention at this early stage. But, as constructive and supportive involvement was given, and procedure was put in place in the child protection conference and its main objective was to achieve the best positive outcomes on what is best for the children and the family. Although, as both children are on the child protection register due to the decision of being in significant harm because of the father's criminal record and concerns of the father's alcohol abuse, though, he is continuing to be on the rehabilitation programme (Great Britain, Department of Health,2014), this is all taken into consideration resulting in the decision of the child protection conference case.

I feel that when preparing for the child protection conference it has given me some insight into safeguarding, although, there is a vast amount I want to find out and keep up to date on. Consequently, I have subscribed to a weekly email through the NSPCC

called CASPAR: current awareness service for practice, policy (NSPCC 2018) it is a very informative and it alerts you to current and up to date information. Subsequently I have shared this site with all the staff in my school.

It is in my opinion that ALL staff who have contact and interaction with the children at school should have more regular training on safeguarding and to be aware and alert to signs and indicators of abuse. The safeguarding training needs to be in the first instance formal provided by professionals but subsequently could be informal within the school setting, but it needs to be consistent and frequent to develop a professional understanding. One example, for instance, of informal training, could involve a mock scenario within various school activities and it could be as simple as asking the staff questions on procedure in a particular situation. In my view this informal training would be advantageous as it is relevant and could continue to heighten awareness for ALL staff.

My research included looking at the roles of the professionals of the multi-agency and disciplinary teams. I did find that on most of the severe cases of abuse the common factor was the lack of communication and information sharing procedures was flagged up numerous times, thus, pointing out that this has clearly not been achieved and is an ongoing concern and process.

Within my research a common factor was that multi agencies, point out the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR 2018) can be overruled as child protection should and would be a priority over it, if a child or children were in danger as children's safety and wellbeing is paramount. Although, this is still an ongoing concern as the procedure for children who are under sixteen years a parent's consent is needed for children's personal data to be shared and in if a child's circumstances are difficult and their wellbeing is threatened and in danger it is sometimes not in best practice the parents have this right for consent.

When I researched for the role for the child protection case conference and safeguarding structure, I found it interesting, informative, thought provoking and at times concerning as there is an enormous amount of information available to absorb and digest. When I think of child protection and safeguarding I automatically think from a child's perspective. Although, it is necessary to take in to consideration that I as a member of staff, working with young children need to be vigilant, that I do not place

myself in a compromising or unguarded position and must always take this into account of safeguarding myself and to make other members of staff aware of this factor when dealing with young children.

I would like to develop my knowledge and attend an in-depth safeguarding training programme that would benefit my professional development., perhaps one that caters and aims at young children in an early year's settings. This would develop my skills on safeguarding and I want research to help develop and create an age appropriate, child user-friendly resource programme and activity for the children within an early years setting in the school.

I have implemented my safeguarding awareness in school and have enquired if any members of staff have experiences of child protection conferences and listened to their experiences of them. I have also been more vigilant on looking and observing for the signs and indicators not just as my role in school but within my environment.

Although this can be at times a difficult subject due to its sensitive nature to address, safeguarding is a necessity and should become ideally, second nature.

Every child should be kept safe from harm.

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