

AI Acknowledgement

Example Level 4 Assignment (3000 words)**Fictional Case Study: “The Morgan Family”**

A primary school teacher, Ms Evans, notices that 7-year-old Lily Morgan has become increasingly withdrawn, frequently tired, and often arrives at school without lunch. Lily discloses that she “looks after Dylan”, her 3-year-old brother, because “Mam sleeps a lot”. The teacher also notices bruising on Lily’s arms. When gently asked, Lily says, “Mam’s boyfriend gets angry”. The family recently moved to temporary accommodation after an eviction. The mother, Carys, has a history of depression and alcohol misuse. The boyfriend, Rhys, is not on the tenancy agreement and is known to police for violent behaviour. The nursery has also raised concerns about Dylan’s speech delay and inconsistent attendance.

1. Identifying Safeguarding Concerns and Linking to UK/Welsh Policy (≈750 words)

The Morgan case presents multiple safeguarding concerns that intersect across physical, emotional, and neglect-related domains (ref). This case study will analyse the Morgan Family’s situation, identifying safeguarding concerns, exploring roles and responsibilities of the professionals involved, identifying areas of good practice and challenges of multiagency working and as well as considering any ethical issues involved. It is important not only to identify these concerns but also to analyse how they relate to statutory duties and the wider safeguarding landscape in Wales.

A primary concern is physical harm (ref), indicated by bruising on Lily’s arms and her reference to Rhys “getting angry”. Under the (legislation ref), professionals have a duty to report if a child is at risk of abuse, neglect, or harm. Physical abuse is explicitly defined as.....(ref), the bruising—combined with Lily’s disclosure—meets the threshold for reasonable suspicion. Legislation ref establishes the local authority’s duty to investigate under Section 47 when there is reasonable cause to suspect significant harm (ref). In this case, the bruising cannot be dismissed as accidental, particularly given the presence of a known violent adult in the home, however, keeping an open mind is important (ref).

A second concern is neglect, evidenced by Lily arriving without lunch, appearing tired, and taking on inappropriate caring responsibilities for her younger brother. Neglect is the most common form of child maltreatment in the UK (ref), and the [statutory guidance ref](#) emphasises that unmet basic needs, poor supervision, and young carers' responsibilities can all indicate neglect. Lily's statement that she "looks after Dylan" suggests role reversal, which research identifies as a risk factor for emotional harm and developmental disruption (ref).

The mother's mental health difficulties and alcohol misuse add a further layer of complexity (ref). The [Statutory Guidance ref](#) highlights parental substance misuse and mental ill-health as key indicators requiring early intervention. The combination of depression, alcohol misuse, and unstable housing increases the likelihood of inconsistent parenting and reduced capacity to meet the children's needs (ref). However, it must be kept in mind that safeguarding concerns can happen in any home environment (ref). This aligns with the [framework ref](#), which Wales has embedded into policy and prevention strategies. Exposure to domestic abuse, parental substance misuse, and neglect are all recognised ACEs (ref) that can have long-term impacts on health, behaviour, and educational outcomes (ref).

The presence of Rhys, a non-biological adult with a history of violence, raises concerns about domestic abuse and coercive control (ref). Under the [\(legislation ref\)](#), professionals must recognise the impact of domestic abuse on children as victims in their own right. Lily's fear and withdrawal may reflect emotional harm associated with living in a household where violence is present. The Act also places duties on public bodies to work collaboratively and ensure staff are trained to identify domestic abuse indicators. This further links to [\(legislation ref\)](#) in Wales

Housing instability is another safeguarding factor (ref). The family's recent eviction and temporary accommodation may contribute to stress, disrupted routines, and reduced access to support networks. The [legislation ref](#) emphasises the importance of early intervention to prevent homelessness, and research shows that insecure housing can exacerbate existing vulnerabilities (ref). While housing issues alone do not constitute safeguarding concerns, in combination with the other factors they significantly elevate risk (ref).

Dylan's speech delay and inconsistent nursery attendance raise concerns about developmental neglect (ref). The (ref) stress the importance of early years engagement for speech, language, and social development. Missed nursery sessions may mean missed opportunities for early identification and intervention (ref) and goes against children's rights (ref).

Analytically, the safeguarding concerns in this case are not isolated; they form a cumulative risk profile (ref). The Welsh safeguarding system emphasises the importance of recognising patterns rather than single incidents (ref). When viewed collectively—physical harm, neglect, domestic abuse, parental substance misuse, mental health difficulties, and housing instability—the case meets the threshold for a multi-agency safeguarding response.

2. Roles and Responsibilities of Professionals Involved (≈750 words)

A range of professionals have statutory responsibilities in this case, and analysing their roles helps students understand how safeguarding is enacted in practice.

The Class Teacher (Ms Evans)

Teachers are often the first to notice changes in behaviour or presentation (ref). Under statutory guidance ref , they must record concerns accurately, report them to the Designated Safeguarding Person (DSP), and avoid investigating disclosures themselves (ref). Ms Evans has acted appropriately by noticing patterns (withdrawal, tiredness, lack of lunch) and responding sensitively to Lily's disclosure. Her responsibility is to pass information on, not to determine whether abuse has occurred (ref). She also plays a key role in providing ongoing emotional support and monitoring (ref).

Designated Safeguarding Person (DSP)

The DSP coordinates the school's safeguarding response, ensures concerns are logged, and makes referrals to Children's Services (ref). They must apply thresholds consistently and liaise with external agencies (ref). In this case, the DSP would gather information from the teacher, check previous records, and make a referral

under Section 47 of [legislation ref](#) if significant harm is suspected [\(ref\)](#). They also ensure staff follow confidentiality protocols and that Lily's voice is central to decision-making [\(refs\)](#).

Children's Services Social Worker

Social workers have a statutory duty to assess risk under the [legislation ref](#). They conduct a proportionate assessment, considering the children's developmental needs, parenting capacity, and family environment [\(ref\)](#). They may initiate a Child Protection Conference if the threshold is met [\(ref\)](#). Their responsibilities include coordinating support, ensuring the children's safety, and working with the family to reduce risk [\(ref\)](#). They must balance support with authority, which can create ethical tensions [\(ref\)](#).

Health Visitors and Early Years Practitioners

Health visitors monitor child development, parental wellbeing, and home conditions [\(ref\)](#). They are key in identifying neglect, developmental delay, and parental mental health concerns [\(ref\)](#). In Dylan's case, they would assess speech delay, ensure developmental checks are up to date, and contribute to the multi-agency assessment [\(ref\)](#). Early years practitioners also have a duty to report concerns and support consistent attendance [\(ref\)](#).

Police

Given Rhys's history of violence, the police may conduct background checks, assess risk of domestic abuse, and contribute to strategy discussions [\(ref\)](#). Under the [legislation ref](#), they must consider the impact of domestic abuse on children. They may also enforce protective measures if needed [\(ref\)](#).

Housing Officers

Housing professionals can provide insight into the family's living conditions, tenancy issues, and suitability of accommodation. They may support applications for safer housing or temporary relocation if domestic abuse is present [\(ref\)](#).

Domestic Abuse Support Services

Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVAs) or local Welsh services such as

Live Fear Free can support Carys, offering safety planning, emotional support, and advocacy. Their role is crucial in empowering parents while keeping children's safety central (ref).

Analytically, these roles are interconnected (ref). Each professional holds a piece of the puzzle, and safeguarding depends on effective information-sharing and coordinated action (ref). Failures often occur not because professionals lack concern, but because communication breaks down or assumptions are made about who is responsible (ref).

3. Good Practice and Challenges in Multi-Agency Working (~750 words)

Examples of Good Practice

A strong multi-agency response would include:

Timely information-sharing following the procedures ref, ensuring all agencies have relevant details without breaching confidentiality unnecessarily (ref).

Child-centred practice, ensuring Lily's voice is heard and her lived experience shapes the assessment (ref).

Holistic assessment, considering the interplay between domestic abuse, mental health, substance misuse, and housing (ref).

Use of early help services, such as Team Around the Family (TAF), to provide support before risks escalate (ref).

Clear communication, with professionals attending meetings, sharing updates, and maintaining accurate records (ref).

Strengths-based approaches, recognising Carys's potential protective factors (e.g., willingness to engage, past positive parenting) while addressing risks (ref).

These practices align with the guidance ref principles and reflect the Welsh Government's

And UK emphasis on prevention and partnership (refs).

Challenges in Multi-Agency Working

However, multi-agency work is rarely straightforward (ref). Common challenges include:

Threshold disagreements: One agency may view the concerns as requiring immediate statutory intervention, while another may see them as manageable through early help. This can delay action (ref).

Information silos: Health, education, and police systems often store information separately, leading to fragmented understanding (ref).

Workload pressures: High caseloads can limit the depth of assessment or the frequency of home visits (ref).

Professional hierarchies: Teachers may feel their concerns are minimised by social workers, or police may dominate discussions (ref).

Parental resistance: Carers may fear losing their children and therefore minimise concerns, making engagement difficult (ref).

Domestic abuse dynamics: Coercive control can make it unsafe for Carers to speak openly, complicating assessments (ref).

Housing instability: Frequent moves can disrupt continuity of support and make it harder for professionals to maintain contact (ref).

Analytically, these challenges highlight the tension between policy ideals and practice realities. Multi-agency working is essential, but it requires trust, shared understanding, and consistent communication—conditions that are not always present (ref). The Morgan case illustrates how cumulative risk demands coordinated action, yet systemic pressures can hinder this.

n.b. you are unlikely to cover all of these, chose a few elements and explore

4. Ethical Issues Involved (≈750 words)

Safeguarding practice is inherently ethical, requiring professionals to navigate dilemmas around autonomy, confidentiality, power, and cultural sensitivity (ref).

Confidentiality vs. Information-Sharing

Professionals must balance respecting family privacy with the duty to protect children. Under the [legislation ref](#), information can be shared without consent if a child is at risk [\(ref\)](#). However, ethically, practitioners should still aim to be transparent with families unless doing so increases risk [\(ref\)](#). In this case, informing Carys about the referral may escalate tensions with Rhys, raising questions about safety and timing.

Respect for Parental Autonomy

Carys has the right to be supported rather than judged. Ethical practice requires recognising her struggles with mental health and substance misuse without stigmatising her [\(ref\)](#). However, children's safety must take precedence [\(ref\)](#). This creates a moral tension: how to empower parents while intervening in ways they may perceive as intrusive [\(ref\)](#).

The Child's Voice

Lily's disclosure must be taken seriously, but practitioners must avoid leading questions or placing emotional burden on her [\(ref\)](#). Ethically, children should be heard but not made responsible for adult decisions. Ensuring her voice informs the assessment without retraumatising her is a delicate balance [\(ref\)](#).

Power Dynamics

Professionals hold significant power over families' lives. Ethical practice requires humility, transparency, and respect [\(ref\)](#). Families in poverty or temporary accommodation may feel judged or scrutinised, and practitioners must avoid deficit-based assumptions [\(ref\)](#). Anti-oppressive practice is essential, particularly given the intersection of poverty, mental health, and domestic abuse [\(ref\)](#).

Domestic Abuse and Blame

There is an ethical risk of blaming mothers for "failing to protect" when they are themselves victims of abuse. [Welsh policy ref](#) emphasises that responsibility lies with

the perpetrator, not the non-abusive parent. Practitioners must avoid reinforcing gendered expectations or victim-blaming narratives (ref).

Cultural and Socio-economic Sensitivity

Poverty is not neglect, but it can create conditions that mimic neglect (ref). Ethical practice requires distinguishing between can't and won't. In this case, lack of lunch may reflect financial hardship rather than parental indifference. Practitioners must consider structural inequalities and avoid moralising (ref).

Professional Boundaries

Teachers may feel emotionally invested in Lily's wellbeing, but they must maintain professional boundaries and avoid becoming the child's primary emotional support (ref). Similarly, social workers must avoid over-identification or rescue fantasies (ref).

n.b. again, you won't cover all of these

Analytically, these ethical issues highlight the complexity of safeguarding. Decisions are rarely clear-cut; they involve weighing competing rights, risks, and values (ref). The Morgan case illustrates how ethical practice requires reflexivity, cultural humility, and a commitment to children's rights within a family-centred framework.

Module Number

Student number

Word Count

References