
Student Name: Janna Saif

Student no:2129742

Module Code: EYEC5011

Word Count: 2200

RECOGNIZING AND RECORDING: A CASE STUDY OF BEN

To protect children's safety and wellbeing, child abuse is a serious problem that needs to be addressed right away and with the right measures (Amin, Rashid, Jan, Jan, & Malla, 2024). Ben, a 6-year-old child in year 1, is the subject of a case study that demonstrates a number of symptoms that might point to possible abuse or neglect. The discussion will focus on identifying these symptoms, the significance of accurately documenting information, and the actions that must be taken to keep children like Ben safe from serious harm.

RECOGNIZING SIGNS OF ABUSE

Any educator must be able to recognize the warning indications of child abuse and neglect (Walsh, Farrell, Schweitzer, & Bridgstock, 2005). Ben's case has several warning signs that point to possible neglect. He regularly shows up at school looking dirty, with unbrushed hair and teeth, and wearing dirty clothes, as evidenced by his conduct and daily appearance over time. This disregard for basic personal cleanliness may be an indication of abuse, meaning that his physical needs are not being satisfied at home.

Ben's actions with eating also give rise to other worries. It appears that he might not be getting enough food at home based on his urge to take more food during snack time and his effort to steal another child's sandwich. His explanation that "mummy didn't go shopping this week" hints at potential neglect, where his basic need for nutrition is not being adequately addressed.

Recognizing these signs is the first step in safeguarding Ben. Educators must be vigilant and sensitive to changes in a child's behavior or appearance, as these can be indicators of underlying issues at home (PennState Extension, n.d.). Observing patterns and changes over time is crucial, rather than assuming a single incident is isolated.

EFFECTIVE RECORDING OF INFORMATION

Accurate recording of observations is essential for building a case if there are suspicions of abuse or neglect (ann craft trust, n.d.). In Ben's situation, each instance of concern should be documented meticulously. This includes the dates, time and details of his appearance, behavior, and any conversations or explanations he provides.

Recording information should be done objectively, without making assumptions. Factual and detailed recording helps in creating a clear picture of the situation, which is crucial for any investigation.

It is also important to use appropriate questioning techniques when speaking with Ben. Asking open-ended questions can encourage him to share more information. This helps in gathering information without leading the child or making assumptions.

REPORTING CONCERNS

Once there is a concern, it is vital to follow the correct procedures for reporting. The teacher should report their concerns to the school's designated safeguarding lead (DSL) or child protection officer. It is essential to report accurately and promptly, ensuring that the information shared is detailed and factual, based on the recorded observations (BetterHealth, n.d.).

The DSL will then assess the situation and decide on the next steps, which may involve contacting social services or other relevant authorities (Ovenstone, 2023). The goal is to ensure that Ben receives the necessary support and protection. It is also crucial to follow up on any actions taken to ensure that Ben's situation improves and that he is safe.

AVOIDING ASSUMPTIONS AND ENSURING OBJECTIVITY

One of the key challenges in dealing with potential cases of child abuse is avoiding assumptions (Walsh, Farrell, Schweitzer, & Bridgstock, 2005). Assumptions can lead to inaccurate conclusions and inappropriate actions. It's critical to keep an open mind and base decision-making on the available information rather than own assumptions. For instance, without enough proof, the teacher shouldn't conclude that Ben's parents are careless. Rather, they ought to concentrate on the visible facts and defer to the appropriate authorities to make any decisions after conducting a comprehensive investigation.

Maintaining a professional approach and prioritizing the child's best interests can be achieved by remaining impartial and nonjudgmental, as stated by Skivenes and Sørstal (2018). Ben needs the continued support and empathy while taking the required precautions to ensure his safety.

Protecting children like Ben requires not only recognizing the warning signs and symptoms of child abuse but also properly documenting and reporting any concerns. Educators have a vital responsibility to play in preventing serious harm to children by vigilant observation, precise documentation, and pertinent reporting (Walsh, Farrell, Schweitzer, & Bridgstock, 2005). Through the implementation of these measures, we guarantee that children have the necessary attention and safeguarding to flourish and mature within a secure and nurturing setting.

REPORTING AND REFERRAL

To protect the child's safety and wellbeing, reporting and referral procedures are essential when abuse is suspected (BetterHealth.). These multi-step procedures are controlled by statutory requirements, ethical frameworks, and policy guidelines. Anybody who works with children must comprehend and abide by these rules.

STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

The legal foundation of the reporting and referral procedure is comprised of statutory requirements. Certain professionals, such as teachers, doctors, and social workers, are required by law in many nations to disclose any suspicions of child abuse (Mathews, 2014). These laws are in place to protect children and ensure that concerns are acted upon promptly.

For instance, in the UK, the Children Act 1989 and 2004 outline the responsibilities of professionals to safeguard children (Foster, 2024). The act requires local authorities to investigate if they suspect that a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm. Similarly, in the US, all states have mandatory reporting laws that require individuals in certain professions to report suspected abuse to child protective services or law enforcement (FindLaw Staff, 2023).

POLICY FRAMEWORKS

Policies within organizations provide detailed procedures for reporting and referring cases of suspected abuse. These policies are designed to ensure that all staff know their roles and responsibilities and act consistently when a concern arises.

A typical policy will include:

- **How to Recognize Signs of Abuse:** Providing training and guidelines on what signs to look out for.

- **Reporting Procedures:** Clear steps on who to report to within the organization, often a designated safeguarding lead (DSL).
- **Documentation:** Guidance on how to document observations accurately and objectively.
- **Confidentiality:** Instructions on maintaining the child's and family's confidentiality throughout the process.
- **Referral Process:** Steps to take if the concern needs to be escalated to external agencies, such as social services or the police.

ETHICAL FRAMEWORKS

Ethical considerations in reporting abuse require balancing child protection with family privacy (Feng, Chen, Fetzer, Feng, & Lin, 2012). Professionals must handle concerns sensitively, maintaining confidentiality but prioritizing the child's safety. Confidentiality can be breached when necessary to protect the child, reflecting the duty to act in the child's best interests. Ethical frameworks guide this process; ensuring information is shared only with those who need to know, fostering trust and upholding the child's dignity and rights (Forsner, Elvhage, Ewalds-Kvist, & Lützén, 2021).

REPORTING PROCESS

The reporting process typically involves several steps (BetterHealth, n.d.):

- **Observation and Documentation:** When a professional notices signs of abuse or neglect, they should document their observations carefully, including dates, times, and details of the behavior or physical signs that caused concern.
- **Initial Reporting:** The professional reports their concerns to the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) or equivalent person in their organization. This initial report should be factual and objective, avoiding assumptions or judgments.
- **Assessment:** After reviewing the material, the DSL determines if there is enough justification to forward the case to other agencies. This action will depend on the nature of the issues and whether there are identifiable risk factors.
- **Referral:** If the DSL decides to refer the matter, they communicate with the right child protection agency or the local government. Essentially, the referral should contain all the supporting documents or any other background that may be relevant.

- **Follow-Up:** However, to ensure that the situation is handled in the right way and the child is safe, the referring professional has the responsibility of following up. They should provide the child with constant support with as much help as the child may need at any given time.

REFERRAL PROCESS

In order to ensure that the child gets the necessary protection and support, the referral process involves sharing information with other agencies (Sheffield Children Safeguarding Partnership, n.d.). This could consist of:

- **Making Contact with Social Services:** As stated by Sheffield Children Safeguarding Partnership (n.d.), very often the social services department of the community is the first to receive the referral. They are responsible for decisions on what to do next, which could involve arranging for an emergency medical appointment or a home visit.
- **Involving the Police:** The police may be required to intervene to pursue alleged incidents such as physical or sexual abuse and to investigate and apprehend the perpetrator.
- **Involving additional Agencies:** To support the child and their family fully, other agencies may include the healthcare givers, mental health care providers, or educators and support workers depending on the situation.

To protect children who may be in a vulnerable situation, reporting and referral systems are compulsory. Adherence to statutory requirements, policy frameworks, and ethical guidelines ensures that matters are addressed appropriately, and children obtain the protection they need. By so doing, the different professionals can help in improving the safety and well-being of children.

SETTING RESPONSIBILITIES

Any educational or childcare establishment has an essential duty to ensure the safety of the children. It calls for a comprehensive approach that attends to the child's psychological, emotional, and physical needs (United Way NCA, 2023). With its emphasis on defending and advancing the rights of all children, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) offers a strong framework for safeguarding initiatives (Congressional Research Service, 2015).

RESPONSIBILITIES OF SETTINGS

Creating a Safe Environment:

Children must feel comfortable and safe in learning environments and childcare facilities. This entails putting in place precise guidelines and protocols for child protection and safety.

Employees should receive training on how to spot abuse symptoms and know how to react.

Securing the physical area with safeguards like supervised activities and restricted entry points is another important aspect of ensuring a secure environment (Keeping Children Safe, 2018.).

Staff Training and Awareness:

All staff must get regular training on safeguarding procedures. It entails understanding several types of abuse, such as sexual, emotional, psychological, and neglect. Employees who receive this training will be better equipped to identify issues and respond appropriately.

Open Communication Channels:

Settings must establish open communication channels that encourage children to speak up if they feel unsafe. Creating an atmosphere where children know they will be listened to and taken seriously is crucial (Keeping Children Safe, n.d.). Regular discussions and check-ins can help children feel more comfortable expressing concerns. Parents should also be encouraged to communicate any worries about their child's well-being.

Partnership with Families and Communities:

Effective safeguarding requires collaboration with families and the community. Settings should work closely with parents to ensure they understand safeguarding policies and feel confident that their children are safe (Keeping Children Safe, n.d.). Engaging with the community can provide additional support networks and reinforce safeguarding measures.

Monitoring and Review:

Regular monitoring and review of safeguarding practices ensure they remain effective and up to date. This involves evaluating policies and making improvements where necessary. Feedback from staff, children, and parents helps identify any gaps or areas for improvement.

IMPACT OF THE UNCRC

The UNCRC has significantly influenced how settings approach safeguarding. This international treaty outlines children's rights and requires countries to protect them (Congressional Research Service, 2015). It states that every child has the right to be protected from any harm, to be educated, and to freedom of expression.

Child-Centered Approach:

The UNCRC supports the child-focused approach to protection based on the principle of the best interest of the child, stating that any decision or measure concerning a child shall take into account his or her best interest. In the broader sense, this involves being attentive to children, respecting what they are saying, and ensuring that they contribute their input towards the next action for any issues that interests them as defined in certain environments.

Right to Protection:

As described in the United Nations Convention on Rights of the Child article 19, children should be protected from any forms of violence, abuse, and neglect (Unicef United Kingdom, n.d.). Settings must ensure that they have effective measures that can protect children and handle any abuse cases as effectively as possible. This makes it even more crucial for the adequate protection measures to be put in place to consider every aspect of a child's personality (Unicef United Kingdom, n.d.).

Right to Education:

According to Article 28, children have the right not to be exploited and abused during education (Unicef United Kingdom, n.d.). Standards must ensure that learning environment is free from harassment and bullying and is safe and encouraging. This is in compliance with the overall goal of protection by promoting a positive learning environment.

Right to Participation:

Another area of focus for the UNCRC is the rights of children to participate in matters affecting them; this is captured under Article 12. Therefore, settings need to be encouraging children to discuss their security and well-being so that their voices can be considered and heard (Unicef United Kingdom, n.d.).

In conclusion, safeguarding requires an effective, transparent, and comprehensive approach. Settings can ensure they promote the rights of the child, protect and promote the wellbeing of children, and ensure that children are protected from harm in their care and learning environments by following the principles of UNCRC.

REFERENCES

- Amin, M., Rashid, B., Jan, R., Jan, R., & Malla, A. (2024). Child Abuse and Neglect. *Indian Journal of Continuing Nursing Education*. 24. 104-109. 10.4103/ijcn.ijcn_40_22 (Accessed: 30 June 2024).
- Ann Craft Trust (2021). *Reporting & Recording Safeguarding Issues*. [online] Ann Craft Trust. Available at: <https://www.anncrafttrust.org/safeguarding-checklist-reporting-recording/>.
- BetterHealth (n.d.). *Child abuse - reporting procedures*. Available at: <https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/healthyliving/child-abuse-reporting-procedures> (Accessed: 2 July 2024).
- Congressional Research Service (2015). *The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child*. Available at: <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/R/R40484/25> (Accessed: 4 July 2024).
- Feng, J.Y., Chen, Y.W., Fetzer, S., Feng M.C., & Lin, C.L. (2012). Ethical and legal challenges of mandated child abuse reporters, *Children and Youth Services Review*, 34(1), 276-280, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2011.10.026> (Accessed: 3 July 2024).
- FindLaw Staff (2023). *Mandatory Reporting Laws: Child Abuse and Neglect*. Available at: <https://www.findlaw.com/criminal/criminal-charges/mandatory-reporting-laws-child-abuse-and-neglect.html> (Accessed: 1 July 2023).
- Forsner, M., Elvhage, G., Ewalds-Kvist, B. M., & Lützén, K. (2021). Moral Challenges When Suspecting Abuse and Neglect in School Children: A Mixed Method Study. *Child & adolescent social work journal : C & A*, 38(6), 599–610. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10560-020-00680-6> (Accessed: 30 June 2024).
- Foster, D. (2024). *An overview of child protection legislation in England*. Available at: <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/sn06787/> (Accessed: 2 July 2024).
- Himes, J.R. (2023). *Implementing the Convention on the Rights of the Child*. Martinus Nijhoff Publishers.

HM Government (2016). *Reporting and acting on child abuse and neglect Government consultation: Supporting annexes*. [online] Available at:
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a7f9dec40f0b62302690935/Reporting_and_acting_on_child_abuse_and_neglect_-_annexes__web_.pdf.

HM Government (2016). *Reporting and acting on child abuse and neglect Government consultation*. [online] Available at:
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/539642/Reporting_and_acting_on_child_abuse_and_neglect_-_consultation_document__web_.pdf.

Keeping Children Safe (n.d.). *Child Safeguarding Standards and how to implement them*. Available at: https://www.icmec.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/KCS-audit-standards_child_protection_kcsc_en.pdf (Accessed: 2 July 2024).

Mathews, B. (2014). Mandatory Reporting Laws and Identification of Child Abuse and Neglect: Consideration of Differential Maltreatment Types, and a Cross-Jurisdictional Analysis of Child Sexual Abuse Reports. *Social Sciences*. 3. 10.3390/socsci3030460 (Accessed: 3 July 2024)

Mathews, B. and Bross, D.C. (2015). *Mandatory Reporting Laws and the Identification of Severe Child Abuse and Neglect*. Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands.

NSPCC (2024). *What is child abuse?* [online] NSPCC. Available at:
<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse/>.

Ovenstone, T. (2023). *Safeguarding Procedures (including Child Protection)*. Available at:
<https://www.dofe.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/11.-Safeguarding-Procedures-including-Child-Protection.pdf> (Accessed: 3 July 2024).

- Sheffield Children Safeguarding Partnership (n.d.). *1.2 Making a Referral following the Identification of Child Safety and Welfare Concerns*. Available at: https://sheffieldscb.proceduresonline.com/p_making_refer.html (Accessed: 3 July 2024).
- Skivenes, M. & Sørstal, L. (2018). *The Child's Best Interest Principle across Child Protection Jurisdictions: Implications for Professional Practice and Policy*. 10.1007/978-3-319-94800-3_4. (Accessed: 4 July 2024).
- Unicef United Kingdom (n.d.). *A summary of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child*. Available at: https://www.unicef.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/UNCRC_summary-1_1.pdf (Accessed: 3 July 2024).
- United Way NCA (2023). *What Is Safeguarding? The Importance Of Child Protection*. Available at: <https://unitedwaynca.org/blog/what-is-safeguarding/#:~:text=Safeguarding%20children%20involves%20parents%2C%20caregivers,fear%20of%20abuse%20or%20neglect>. (Accessed: 4 July 2024).
- Walsh, K., Farrell, A., Schweitzer, R., & Bridgstock, R. (2005). Critical factors in teachers' detecting and reporting child abuse and neglect: Implications for practice. *Final report prepared for the Abused Child Trust*.