

E-Safety Information Leaflet

Useful Tips

- Ask your child if anything worries or scares them online.
- Use 'safe search' and parental controls.
- Keep computers in communal areas.
- Help identify trusted adults. (NSPCC, 2020)



Where to go for help and advice

NSPCC Helpline 0800 800 5000
 Childline: 0800 1111
www.thinkuknow.co.uk
www.parentsprotect.co.uk
www.saferinternet.org.uk




Online Safety

Is your child safe?



Thriveglobal (2020)

Be SMART

- S** Stay **SAFE**
- M** Don't **MEET** up
- A** Don't **ACCEPT** Strangers requests
- R** Check information **Is RELIABLE**
- T** **TELL** someone if you feel worried or scared

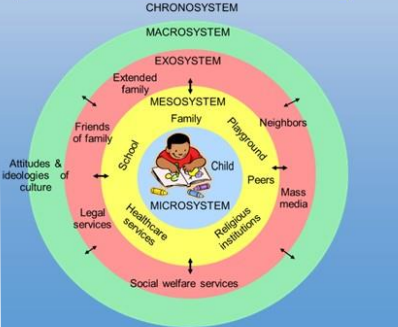
(Prendergast Library 2021)

Did you know...

- 79% of children use the internet without parental supervision. (IWF 2021)
- 70% of children access sexual or violent content online whilst researching homework.
- 60% of school children have considered suicide because of cyber bullying.
- 300,000 people in the UK identified as posing a sexual threat to children online. (Staufenberg, 2020)

Online Safety Bill. Companies will be responsible for the safety of users, all platforms have 'duty of care' to protect children. (Anti Bullying Alliance) 2020)

Bronfenbrenner's 'Social Ecology Model' identifies Education, Community and Media as 'relevant settings that impact on an individuals experience of digital technology. (adolescenthealthandwellbeing 2020)



Leaflet Bibliography: Anti Bullying Alliance (2020) Available at: <http://www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk> (Accessed: March 18th, 2021)

Adolescents and Cyber Bullying (2020) Available at: <http://adolescenthealthandwellbeing.wordpress.com> (Accessed: March 22nd, 2021).

Image: Chegg Study (2021) Available at: <http://Chegg.com/flashcards> (Accessed: March 24th, 2021)

Childline (2021) Available at: <http://www.Childline.org.uk> (Accessed March 22nd, 2021).

Internet Watch Foundation (2021) Available at: <http://www.iwf.org.uk> (Accessed: March 4th, 2021).

Internet matters (2021) Available at: <http://www.Internetmatters.org/hub> (Accessed: March 5th, 2021).

NSPCC Online Harm (2020) Available at: <http://www.nspcc.org.uk> (Accessed March 20th, 2021).

Staufenberg, J. (2020) *Sharp increase in UK child sexual abuse during pandemic*. Available at: <http://www.theguardian.com/society> (Accessed: March 3rd, 2021)

CEOP Available at: <http://www.Thinkuknow.co.uk> (Accessed: March 10th, 2021).

Image: Thrive global (2021) Available at: <http://thriveglobal.com> (Accessed: March 3rd, 2021).

Welsh Government Hwb (2020) Available at: <http://hwb.gov.wales/zones/keeping-safe-online> (Accessed: 15th March 2021).

Rationale:

Protecting children from harm has evolved significantly in terms of the priority attributed to it in both government legislation and professional practice. The adoption of a multi-agency response to safeguarding has moved the focus of responsibility from one placed on police, and social services departments to one shared by all professionals responsible for the care of children including those working in education. Whilst the key objective of protecting children from harm has remained the same, the risks faced by children in the community have changed over time, most significantly the threats and risks arising from access to the internet and the online world.

Increased use of technology and the internet by children and young people can make them more vulnerable to being victims of crime and offenders use of harmful material increases the threat. In this assignment I will explore the importance of 'Promoting Child Welfare' through educating parents and professionals of the risks and how to protect children online. "Safeguarding is the action taken to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm." (NSPCC, 2021) It includes protecting children from harm and neglect, ensuring that health and development are not harmed and that they can achieve the best outcomes in life by growing up in a safe environment.

The abuse of a child occurs "when somebody inflicts harm or fails to act to prevent harm" (AWCPP 2008, p.57) and has a significant and detrimental effect on the wellbeing of the child. Whilst abuse can take many different forms, five statutory categories of Abuse are identified in the Children's Act, which form the basis of statutory intervention and multi-agency work to promote the welfare of children, namely physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, and neglect. The era saw introduction of the first Prevention of Cruelty to Children Acts in 1889, and 1894. The establishment

of Barnardo's Children's home in 1870 and the NSPCC in 1889 embedding the voluntary and charity sector in the vital work to keep children safe.

Whilst e-safety is a relatively new threat, addressing the problem of indecent images was first tackled by the Obscene Publications Act of 1875. Measures taken to protect Children from harm were legislated in a series of Children's Acts, the first in 1908 consolidating existing child protection legislation" whilst the Children's Act of 1948 introduced 'Local Authority Children's Departments' as the foundation for contemporary social service structures. The Children's Act 1989 introduces the "concept of significant harm" as the threshold for statutory intervention. Whilst there is no clear definition of Significant Harm, the 1989 Act defines harm as "the ill-treatment or impairment of health and development" which are key to ensuring the welfare of children. Abuse therefore encompasses a wide range of behaviours which can harm the child.

Developments in contemporary practice that 'promotes children's welfare' has been directly informed by failings identified in the reviews of high-profile cases of child deaths. The Children's Act 2004 established the requirement for a Serious Case Review (SCRs) to be conducted where a child has been neglected, abused, or has died. SCRs could also be undertaken if any case where a Local Safeguarding Children's Board identified areas of learning to improve practice.

The impact of systemic failings in the child protection system were highlighted by the death of Victoria Climbié in 2000. In 2001 the Home Secretary commissioned an Independent statutory Inquiry into her death, conducted by Lord Laming whose condemning report was published in 2003. The inquiry identified that "on 12 occasions over 10 months chances to save Victoria's life were not taken" (Department of Education, 2003, p.11) because of police, health, and social services failings. A total of 108 recommendations were made to improve accountability and "improving cross agency working and communication was a particular concern." (Department of Education, 2003).

The Victoria Climbié Inquiry was a critical turning point in reforming Child Protection Practices resulting in further legislation, policy, and guidance. Most notable amongst these were 'Every Child Matters' which was published in 2003, and the All-Wales Child Protection procedures published in 2008, which continue to document the basis of essential multi-agency practice. In the Forward to Every Child Matters 2003, Prime Minister Tony Blair refers to the case of Victoria Climbié as "a shocking example from a list of children terribly mistreated and abused" (Department of Education, 2003, p.1) In response to the Laming Inquiry, Every Child Matters Report proposed a range of procedures to reorganise and develop children's care.

Further horrifying failings in child protection, and multi-agency working were highlighted however by the death of Peter Connelly in 2007. The SCR into the circumstances of his death identified a "lack of professional curiosity, lack of openness and transparency" between agencies and that "skilled and competent frontline staff, adequate managerial support and professional supervision are crucial elements in child protection" found seriously lacking in this case. (Virtual College, 2019) Findings of the review into the death of Baby P were embedded into the 2010 edition of Working Together to Safeguard Children which "emphasises the need for early intervention in the lives of vulnerable children. (Virtual College, 2019) The Serious Case Review also identifies the importance of multi-agency working in that "everybody working as safeguarders in the safeguarding system, especially those working in the universal services provided by health, education and early years provision" needs to use the authority of their roles to safeguard children. Furthermore, the sharing of vital information and clear instruction of what needs to be done to ensure protection of these vulnerable children should be everyone's priority. "Children are not well protected when roles and responsibilities between agencies are not clear." (Lindon, 2008, p.11)

Every Child Matters reinforces the importance of integrated services that focus on prevention of abuse and early intervention on cases before they escalate. The introduction of a Common Assessment Framework “draws on ecological theory to highlight the role that community level factors, interacting with the characteristics of individuals and families, play in shaping the well-being of children and young people. (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, Jack, 2000). It can be argued however that impact of the Victoria Climbié Review is diminished by its failure to sufficiently consider community.

“The historical exclusion of any meaningful consideration of community level factors in successive public enquiries into cases of fatal child abuse was repeated following the death of Victoria Climbié, with only one of the inquiries 107 recommendations touching on community level factors in any way.”(Jack & Gill, 2010, p.86) As a result, government guidance such as that provided by Working Together to Safeguard Children fails to consider “the role played by community level factors in shaping children’s lives. “Bronfenbrenner ‘Ecological Theory’ identifies the interrelationship between “the internal and external worlds of the child should be a central element of any inclusive strategy designed to safeguard children.” (Belsky, Bronfenbrenner & Jack, 2000). The importance of integrating all aspects of the child’s world is key to ensuring that safeguarding policy is entrenched in local planning, as well as routine practice. As identified by Johnson “the ecological techno-subsystem, includes child interaction with living and non-living things, elements of information and communication in direct environments. The techno-subsystem mediates bidirectional interaction between the child and the microsystem.” (Johnson & Puplampu, 2009, p.5).

The interplay between online and offline environments meaning that children who are vulnerable offline are also vulnerable online. “Internet usage is not an isolated phenomenon and is mediated by a child’s social and cultural environments which shapes their choices and associated effects.” (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The parameters of the child’s external world have been extended significantly by technology and the leaflet that I have created focuses on promoting the online safety of children by raising both professionals and carers awareness and knowledge of online risks, those that result in sexual and emotional abuse. Research by the NSPCC (2020) indicates that during the coronavirus lockdown, children and young people are spending increasingly more time online, school closures have impacted more than 90% of the world’s student population, which has contributed to a substantial rise in activity relating to child sexual abuse and exploitation on the internet. For example, The Internet Watch Foundation received 44,809 reports of child sexual abuse between March, and July 2020, a 50% increase from 29,698 reports in the same period the previous year. Many teachers and parents lack the technical abilities of their children and lack the knowledge to keep them safe online. Education and training in this area and understanding online abuse is crucial to empowering professionals and giving them the professional knowledge and confidence to act when safeguarding concerns arise.

According to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), article 17, the internet is acknowledged as an important resource for “gaining access to vital information.” (Welsh Government, 2021). The Welsh Government has invested 45 million pounds to develop improved connectivity to the internet to ensure all maintained schools in Wales can benefit in delivering a range of ‘digital learning’ such as that delivered through the hwb platform, which is at the heart of the new curriculum being rolled out in 2022. A key aim of the Welsh Government is to develop digital resilience in education in line with UNCRC and to be mindful of the issues that children may encounter online such as sexual exploitation. Children and young people “are drawn into the use of these functions in ways that nurture and scaffold them.” (Vygotsky, 1986, p.7)

A key priority is therefore promoting E-safety and ensuring that staff and parents are aware of the risks posed to children online. The first consideration when designing my ‘E-Safety Information Leaflet’

was to raise adult awareness of the risks that children face online as research by Intel Security in 2017 identified that 40% of British parents 'were totally unaware of their child's online activity.' Also being uninformed on how to help children identify risks, and unaware of organisations that can offer support if assistance is required. The global pandemic has highlighted and accelerated the need for awareness of online safety for young people and children. As of this year all online platforms have a 'duty of care' to help parents and families protect children through the UK governments 'online harms white paper'. Companies such as 'Facebook' will have to act and take accountability for the wellbeing and safety of its users. This regulatory framework will be enshrined in law through the long-awaited online safety bill which will be crucial legislation in the fight against online harm. (Anti-bullying alliance, 2020).

In conclusion the lived experiences of children and any abusive behaviours they experience occur within both the family and wider community setting, both online and offline. Through the Covid 19 global pandemic schools have transferred to online learning, and the parameters of children's community are greatly expanded by the 'on-line' world, allowing access to unlimited information also increases access to potential harm. Most safeguarding referrals in education are the result of personal contact with and disclosure by a child. One result of the Covid 19 restrictions and less personal contact with teachers has been a fall in Safeguarding referrals and the inability to meet in person hinders the safeguarding process. (NSPCC, 2021) As identified by the Department of Education "the action we take to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm is everyone's responsibility." (Department of Education, 2020) Everyone working with young people and children must be vigilant and follow relevant procedures. Staff should constantly be going through vigorous training on safeguarding issues. Parents should be informed on how to identify risks in order to protect their children. As more children and young people turn to the digital world and expected to be digitally competent, schools and all staff have imperative roles to play. The six areas of learning rolled out in the new curriculum which incorporates the "science and technology area of learning and experience contains a new element of computation for those ages three to sixteen in order to meet the needs of a changing twenty-first century culture and economy." (Welsh Government, 2021) How to be competent, and remain safe online will be an essential skill for every child as they navigate through every aspect of life.

Bibliography:

All Wales Child Protection Procedures (2008) Available at: <http://www.awcppp.uk> (Accessed March 12th, 2021).

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979) *The Ecology of Human Development*. United States: Harvard College.

Department of Education (2003) *Every Child Matters Report*. Available at: <http://www.assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/pdf/> (Accessed March 13th, 2021).

Jack, G. & O, Gill. (2010) Child Abuse Review, *The Role of Communities in Safeguarding Children and Young people*, Vol 19: pp.82-96. (Accessed March 5th, 2021) DOI:10.1002/car.1077.

Johnson, G. & K, Puplampu. (2008) Canadian Journal of Learning and Technology. *Internet use during childhood and the ecological techno-subsystem*. Available at: <http://www.researchgate.net/publication/> (Accessed: March 16th, 2021).

Lindon, J. & Webb, J. (2016) 5th Ed. *Safeguarding and Child Protection*. Italy: Hodder Education.

Morris, C. (2008) *Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults*. United Kingdom: Ashford Colour Press Ltd.

NSPCC Online Harm Available at: <http://nspcc.org.uk> (Accessed: March 10th, 2021).

NSPCC How safe are our children? (2020) *The most comprehensive overview of child protection in the UK*. Available at: <http://www.learning.nspcc.org.uk/research-resources> (Accessed: March 2nd, 2021).

Vygotsky, L. (1986) *Thought and Language*. London: MIT Press.

Welsh Government (2015) *Know your rights!* Available at: <http://www.gov.wales/sites> (Accessed: March 9th, 2021).