

Section 1

Early Years Matters (2022) describes a leader to be someone who is seen to be providing direction and exercising influence, having a clear vision and being able to inspire others, some other qualities to being a leader include, thinking creatively, problem-solving and commitment to partnership. An effective leadership encompasses the core qualities which include ensuring all staff feel empowered and involved, excellent communication skills and support their staff team both as a group and individually. Leaders of the setting should have sound knowledge of their setting so that they can guide their colleagues which ensured the business continuously grows and develops (Blossom, 2022). Catalytic leadership is defined to be an agent of change, a leader who wishes to see significant change or action within their organization or setting and advancing their mission while developing their team and other leaders (Catalytic leadership, no date). Practical Preschool Books (2013) describes why leadership matters within the early years describing how good quality education and care impacts on children's lives positively throughout their time at the setting and in further education once the child has left the setting, ensuring the best possible opportunities and experiences are met for every child. Siraj-Blatchford (2007) (cited in Practical Preschool Books, 2013) states that an important element to effective leadership within a setting is providing appropriate training to ensure high quality provision is met. Stone (2019) argues that a catalytic leader differs from other leadership style qualities such as catalytic leaders tend to have genuine interest in their colleagues and meeting them at a level they feel comfortable however also being passionate with the genuine desire to help others, catalysts often inspire people to work towards their goal without gaining any personal gain. Cooperrider (2022) (cited in Vunela, 2022) suggests that anybody can be a catalytic leader, it's a leadership style that is not necessarily meaning a position of power to instigate the change, however for changes to occur there must be a catalyst leader within the setting, transformational leaders are the catalyst for positive change. While leading and managing a childcare setting there are sociological factors to consider such as, religion, ethnicity, family, friendship groups and extracurricular activities which all impact children's development. According to Early Years Careers (2016) there is challenges that come with being a leader or manager at a childcare setting such as, time, paperwork, pay scale and communication to name a few. Department of Education (2017) explain that graduated with specialist Early Years training make a positive impact on Early Years settings and improve the quality on children's outcomes however there is barriers for leaders of the setting when it comes to employment, recruiting the relevant qualifications for childcare settings is becoming increasingly common across the United Kingdom. The Welsh Government (no date b) explain how effective leadership can strengthen family and community engagement, there is strong evidence to suggest that when communication carried out effectively it can improve attendance and learner behaviour at the school. Feedback from a school headteacher suggest that one of the major concerns among modern schools is trying to get the parents of the pupils to engage more with the setting. Effective communication between leaders and parents can also enrich the curriculum and bring valuable resources to the school, partnership require the leaders of the setting to non-judgmental and sensitive. Disadvantaged children

typically gain the most of out home-school partnership which is shown in research via The Welsh Government (no date b). One of the biggest barriers within leading a setting or school is funding to train members of staff, according to the BBC (2017) there are over 20,000 teachers within schools in England without any budget to train, these figures came from research conducted by Teacher Development Trust. Teacher Quality has been highlighted as the key to raising school standards, however over 600 have wiped out their budget for professional development. Further The Guardian (2019) explain how there is a crisis among schools which is becoming a deep concern over the ability to deliver excellence within our education settings, schools leaders plead with the Government to help with funding and pay increases for teaching staff who are falling behind due to the recent cost of living increases.

Section 2

Children's Commissioner Wales (2022) states that children and young people have 42 rights under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), these rights give children and young people the opportunity to grow up happy, healthy, and safely. In 2011 Wales became the first country in the United Kingdom to make the UNCRC part of its domestic law. Children's rights are embedded in Welsh law under Rights of Children and Young Persons (Wales) Measure 2011 which underpins Wales commitment to children's rights and the UNCRC. The Rights of Children and Young Persons (Wales) Measure 2011 places a duty on Welsh Ministers to have responsibility to ensure that people in Wales understand and respect the rights on children and young people which is outlined in Article 42 of the UNCRC. Children's Rights Impact Assessment (CRIA) has been developed to support the Ministers duty in ensuring compliance is met (Welsh Government, no date). The Children's Commissioner in Wales, Sally Holland has been the Children's Commissioner for Wales since April 2015, her job entails ensuring people know the importance of the children's rights in Wales and looking at decisions made by public bodies in Wales including the Welsh Government and how they can affect children and young peoples lives. Part of the Children's Commissioner's role is to support children and young people ensuring they have knowledge on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), listening to children and young people and what is important to them, while advising them and those who care for them if there is thought of the child or young person being treated unfairly. An important attribute to the role of the Children's Commissioner is to speak up and stand up for the children and young people in Wales. The Children's Commissioner works for every child in Wales who is 18 years old and younger, 21 years and younger if they have been in care and 25 and under if they have been in care and are still within the education sector. The Children's Commissioner also has the 'power' to promote positive change for children and young people. The powers and duties of the Commissioner are set out in the Care Standards Act, the Children's Commissioner for Wales Act and the Regulations, and the Children Act 2004 and further strengthened by the Children and Families Act 2014 which provides a legal mandate to promote and protect the rights of children. The 5 main principles of the Children's Rights approach are Embedding children's rights, Equality and Non-discrimination, Empowering children, Participation and Accountability, The Children's Rights Approach is a principled and practical framework for working with children and placing the UNCRC at the heart of children's experience of education, policies and practise, the guidance has been developed for maintained and non-maintained provision settings across the educational sector. (Children's Commissioner for Wales, 2022a). The Children's Commissioner and her team promote and protect children's rights in Wales which includes a three-year review to outline what they will be working on to improve children's lives. The aim of the Children's Commissioner's work in Wales is for children and young people to receive the correct help and support for mental health, the support is to be accessed where and when needed, along with reducing child poverty, children to receive the same protection from

physical punishment as adults, children to learn about their rights within their school setting and prioritising children's rights. As part of their aim to promote children's mental health the Children's Commissioner looks broadly at the mental health and emotional well being of children and young people by working together with multi agency and the Welsh Government to look at issues effecting mental health and then moving forward to provide strategies and programmes that make a difference to the children and young people's lives. Across the educational settings the Children's Commissioner argues that there has been a significant positive step in school-based counselling to pupils in secondary schools which was a recommendation from the inquiry for the Children's Commissioner for Wales (Children's Commissioner for Wales, 2022b). Wales is currently in its fourth and final year of Together for Children and Young People (T4CYP) programme which aims to improve services as well as prevention alongside early help for children and young people who are affected by mental health, the programme has already seen improvements in waiting times and current assessments however it is still unclear if children are receiving the services they need once the assessment is carried out. Moving forward the Commissioner along side the National Assembly's Committee for Children, Young People and Education through their Mind Over Matter report which seen the Government agree to support a 'Whole School Approach' to children and young people's mental health and well-being (Children's Commissioner for Wales, 2022d). During the COVID-19 lockdown the Children's Commissioner for Wales carried out Corona Virus and Me surveys for all children and young people in Wales aged between 7-18, however along with the survey came limitations, the surveys were quick and easy yet only available online which limits it as most families do not have the equipment to access online. This meant that it was not possible to compare the results confidently with the whole population however, the children's commissioner did learn how children and young people were feeling at the time (The Children's Commissioner, 2021). During the COVID-19 lockdown period research showed that children and young people's mental health soared by 50% in comparison to the previous three years meaning a staggering 1 in 6 children now have a mental health condition along with a rise in NHS referral services during Autumn 2020 (Children's Commissioner 2021). Social Care Wales (2022) suggest that there are many positive ways to support a child with a mental health disorder, as an adult these include being consistent in the care and support of the child or young person while also being trustworthy which ensures the child feels safe and a sense of security in your presence. Place2Be (2022) has offered mental health support for children and young people in Wales since 2009 and currently reaches over 2,500 pupils and their families across twelve schools in South Wales, as part of the programme Place2Be offer a whole school approach to supporting children with their mental health, with a variety of different services to meet the school's needs. As part of the service Place2Be builds up children's resilience via communication, creative work and play, the service also supports the parents, and school staff to be mentally healthy. Mentally Healthy Schools (no date) provide information and data on the scale of children who suffer with mental health, however there is limited data on prevalence of mental health problems in children and young people in Wales, so the figures are shown on a United Kingdom scale. It is estimated that three children and young people in every classroom or 1 in 8 overall

has a diagnosable mental health condition. Risks factors for children and young people's mental health specifically in Wales may be economic inequality, according to the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (cited in Mentally Healthy Schools (no date) Wales has the highest level of poverty out of England, Ireland, and Scotland. It is estimated that around 30% of children in Wales are living in poverty. Research conducted by Mental Health Foundation (no date) has shown that children who live in low-income households are more likely to experience mental health conditions. A recommendation made by the Children's Commissioner for Wales was for the Government to encourage and promote while-school approach to mental health, as a result of the recommendation the Government doubled the funding available to local authorities to help with the implementation to a whole school approach to mental health. Health and Wellbeing is a core Area of Learning and Experience (AoLE) within the new Welsh Curriculum which all school must implement by September 2022 (Mentally Healthy Schools, no date).

Section 3

The childhood experiences children have, particularly in early childhood have an impact in how children grow and develop physically and mentally. Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) is described to be traumatic events that occur in childhood, ACE's can include violence, abuse, and growing up in a home where family suffer from mental health or substance misuse (Centres for Disease Control and Prevention, 2019). According to the NSPCC (2021) parental substance misuse is defined as a long-term misuse of drugs and or alcohol by a parent or carer, this includes parents and carers who consume harmful amounts of alcohol and or is dependant on alcohol or drug substances. Parents or carers who misuse alcohol or drugs often are not able to supervise and care for their children (NSPCC, 2018) (cited in NSPCC, 2021). However most parents who drink or use drugs do so in moderation which does not present an increased risk to their children (Cleaver, Unell and Aldgate, 2011) (Cited in NSPCC, 2018). Living in a home where children are exposed to alcohol or drug misuse does not always mean the child will experience abuse, however it does make it more difficult for the parent or carer to provide a safe, loving home environment which can lead to abuse and or neglect. Similarly Cleaver, Unell and Aldgate (2011) (cited in NSPCC, 2021) state that parents who drink alcohol or misuse drugs may lose consciousness which may result in no other adult being present to care for the child ensuring their safety. Research carried out by Research Briefings (2019) state that in Wales nearly 5,000 children in need are registered with the local authority children services due to parental substance misuse, children in need include those who are likely to have their health in danger or unlikely to maintain a reasonable standard of health without the help of local authority children services. Substance misuse is a major health issue and concern within Wales, the Welsh Government are launching a Substance Misuse Delivery Plan 2019-2022, tackling substance misuse remains a priority for the Welsh Government whose focus is significantly on 'A Healthier Wales: Our Plan for Health and Social Care' (Welsh Government 2019a). Shonkoff *et al*, (2019) (cited in NSPCC, 2021) argue that as a result of parental substance misuse children are often neglected and abused which impacts on a child's brain development which is a type of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), this can affect healthy brain development of a child through to adulthood, possible impact includes weakened immune system, problems with learning and memory and impaired cognitive development, for example reduces impulse control. NSPCC (2019) state that there is help and support for children who may be in threat or not receiving the care they need, it is important to share concerns with the appropriate services such as child protection safeguarding policies, the police, the NSPCC helpline, or children protection services. Once the services are aware of the ACEs the practitioners will work closely with the situation to assess the and identify concern and intervene accordingly. Effective assessment will include focusing on the child, listen and record the child's view on the situation, asking open ended questions while considering the environment around them. A multiagency approach such as health professionals, teachers, family will make a plan which they deem best for the child/ren. Throughout the process the NSPCC (2019) argue that it is vital to build a trusting relationship with the children so that they feel comfortable to speak out about what they are

experiencing, it is important that the child is given a voice, which is in line with the United Nations convention on the rights of the child (UNCRC, no date) article 12 and 13. Successful interventions to support children and families should be a holistic approach to improve families, things to consider for intervention would be child-parent relationships, social factors and psychological functioning, Cleaver *et al*, (2013) (cited in NSPCC 2019) state that it can take time for parents to change their behaviour meaning time frames for interventions need to be flexible. Statutory guidance across the while of the United Kingdom highlights the responsibility and duty of care of those within the education sector, and the community to promote and protect children's welfare. The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 came into force in April 2016, the act provides legal framework for social service provision in Wales (NSPCC, 2021). According to Public Health Wales (no date) alcohol related deaths are higher within deprived areas of Wales, for children growing up in families where alcohol or substance misuse is a problem can led to negative impacts which persist long into adulthood. 14% of adults have been exposed to alcohol and drug misuse during childhood (Public Health Wales, no date). Department for Education (DfE) (cited in Welsh Government 2021) statistics on the characteristics of children in need found that parents using drugs was a factor in around 17% of child in need cases, and parental alcohol use was a factor in 16% also the DfE analysed serious case reviews between 2011 and 2014 also found that parental alcohol or drug use was recorded in over a third (36%) of serious case reviews carried out when a child has died or been seriously harmed. The Children Society (2022) suggest that the impact upon children has been widely documented, according to The Children Society (2022) 200,000 children in England live with an alcohol dependant parent, 2.6 million children live with parent who drink to hazardous levels and 1 in 3 children aged between 10-17 experience negative consequences as a result on their parents drinking.

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