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Introduction

The aim of this assignment is to critically examine the case study of the Bradford family and identify the important elements of adversities and vulnerability within it. A critical evaluation of the effectiveness of the health and social care agencies involved in the family's case study will be discussed along with relevant legislation, national policies and local systems relating to safeguarding will be applied.

The meaning of vulnerability is being put in a poor state making you feel like you are in a weak condition and exposing you to high risk factors in comparison to peers (Shah, *et al.*, 2015).

Presentation of the Case Study

The Bradford Family

The Bradford family consists of Julie, a single mother, her six children, and due to the mother being periodically absent, the primary carer is Sonia, who is the children's aunt. As Julie is involved in criminal behaviour and prostitution, to fund her heroin habit the family is facing adversities. This case study identifies examples of vulnerability that children, young people and families face. The main factors are parental substance misuse has led to neglect towards the family. The eldest son has become involved in high-level criminal behaviour and consequently receiving help from the youth offending team. With this surrounding environment and neglect, the younger siblings are also involved in anti-social activities and criminal behaviours within the local community; robberies, shoplifting, criminal damages, rowdy behaviour, begging and substance misuse. Three of the children have been expelled from school and none of the children attends school or nursery regularly. As the local community have become so fed up with the family's anti-social behaviour, they have smashed their windows in protest of having them removed from the estate. The family are also not able to be rehoused since they are involved in these criminal activities.

Family Facing Adversity- The Risk Factors of Vulnerability

Children, young people and families facing adversity are recognised to need help from health and social care services as they may be going through difficult times and expose themselves to a high risk of harm compared to their peers. The Bradford family are in a weak condition of 'vulnerability' and show signs of resilience to becoming completely helpless (Shah, *et al.*, 2015). Due to the certain lifestyle the children are being exposed to, they are at higher risk of vulnerability, in terms of being neglected due to lack of parental care and therefore deprived from healthy food, education, good hygienic conditions, medical care and parental nurturing. The family are being exploited to obscene behaviours of sexual/abusive nature and may be exposed to HIV infections due to the main vulnerable factors of exposure to parental drug misuses and prostitution within the home.

Parental drug misuse is when a parent or carer is dependent on drugs, use them regularly or excessively to the point they are addicted and are unable to supervise or fulfil their children's needs, due to high levels of intoxication and resulting in risking harm to the children, due to leading unstable lifestyles (NSPCC, 2021). The more of these factors that families facing adversity experience, the more risk the children and young people are at (Cleaver, Unell and Aldgate, 2011).

The Impact of these Factors on the Children's Health and Wellbeing

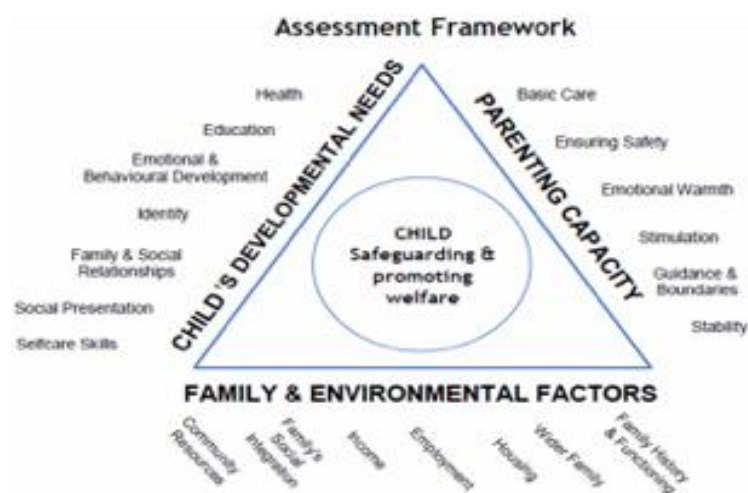
A child growing up with adversity can have a long-term negative impact on their life (Public Health Wales, 2018). These adversity issues put the children into the category of being 'children in need'. The Children's Act 1989 was introduced to ensure children are best taken care of within their own families once they have been recognised as a child in need, this is someone who would not be able to lead a good quality life without the intervention of social services (Gov.UK, 1989).

In England, statistics show at least one fifth of children are identified as children in need due to exposure to substance misuse (Department for Education, 2017). In Scotland and Wales, approximately two fifths of children are also recorded on the child protection register (Scottish Government, 2017; Welsh Government, 2017). As Julie is a substance abuser, she is likely to suffer from mental health issues herself, as most people turn to substance misuse

due to a poor lifestyle, causing depression and putting her children at higher risk of vulnerability. In the UK about one in four people will suffer from a mental health issue each year (McManus, *et al.*, 2009). Statistics show over two million children are living with parents suffering from mental health conditions (Manning, *et al.*, 2009).

This case study presents multiple neglectful and abusive factors through parental substance misuse on children, young people and families by being exposed to vulnerability. They can lead to mental health issues, poor cognitive development, problems with learning and memory functioning skills, illnesses due to weakened immune systems (Shonkoff, *et al.*, 2011; Shonkoff, *et al.*, 2014) and poor lifestyle choices, which could continue to leave an everlasting effect throughout their lives as these types of exposure are traumatic (Nervard, *et al.*, 2020).

The Process of Intervention by Relevant Health and Social Care Agencies



(Trix, 2017)

The process of intervention begins with a referral according to the policy of 'The Assessment Framework'. This is a systematic process devised by the practitioners to be able to help establish the best safeguarding approaches to promote the welfare of the children and their family. According to this case study, the children became subjected to assessment as they were considered children in need, according to the Children's Act 1989, as it was recognised that until the intervention of social services, the children's quality of life could not be improved. The practitioner's duty is to ask questions; according to the Children's Act 1989,

Section 17, 'Is this a Child in Need?' 'Is there reasonable cause to suspect that this child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, Significant Harm?' (Section 47 Children Act 1989); 'Is this a child in need of accommodation?' (Section 20 or Section 31A Children Act 1989).

According to this case study, all these questions led to answers with high cause for concern. The assessment framework was based on parental capacity being poor due to the children's basic needs not being fulfilled, lack of life stability and lack of safety within their homes. The children's developmental needs were also poor due to the children's educational needs not being met due to poor school attendance and their health needs not being met as the youngest child was behind on immunisations, neither their family nor social relationships were being maintained as they were displaying high levels of anti-social behaviour within the local community. According to the family environmental factors, their housing needs were not being met either, as their family home was going to be demolished. Hence the local authority put them on the new social housing register, which was also flagged up by social services. The family were kept together according to the Children's Act 1989.

The Legislation Related to this Case Study and the Work of the Agencies Involved

In rapport to the case study, the roles of multi-disciplinary agencies became involved and worked together to help support, protect the family and improve their lifestyle. According to The Children's Act 1989 & 2004, the younger children were allowed to stay with the family if they accepted support from a key worker from the children's services (private and public) to help improve their situation, by protecting them from harm, neglect and abuse as the agencies have a duty to safeguard the children.

The interventions put into place according to the Equality Act 2010, were through the local authority offering a new social housing tenancy without any type of discrimination, on the condition the family continued to engage with the services.

Due to Julie's substance misuse problem Julie was referred to a local drugs support group, according to the Drugs Act 2005, and the 1971 Misuse of Drugs Act. According to the Education Act 2002, Julie completed an educational course in basic literacy, and attending parenting classes, stopping her criminal behaviour.

According to the Human Rights Act 1998, Sonia (Aunt) worked with the Family Links Nurturing Programme to improve parenting and relationship skills, including managing financial budgeting.

According to the Education Act 2002 and Children's Act 1989 the children's school attendance improved to over 90%, where Sonia took an active role in their education.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) Act is a form of protection for the children's education, safety and protection and was applied to support the children in need.

Evaluation

The interventions applied to the Bradford families case appeared to be effective and helped the family achieve positive results. Maslow's hierarchy of needs, a motivational psychological theory, comprising of five tiers of human needs can be achieved through the interventions applied through the multi-agency's involvement.

Vulnerable children become vulnerable adults; therefore, it is important they get the support from a young age so they can change their paths and come out of the state of vulnerability they can stay stuck in which goes on to affect their children in the future as well.

It is extremely important to develop public policies and intervention models to help support families and strengthen the services. These policies help aim to develop families economically, educationally, and ensure they are socially protected, stimulate their potential, and help them to learn how to strengthen bonds with the community (Oliveira et al., 2021).

Recommendations

In 1970, Bronfenbrenner introduced an ecological framework for human development using an eco-sociological approach by describing how environmental factors influence children and understand their surrounding environment within society. With the support from multi-agency's the family learnt to apply the strategies taught according to Bronfenbrenner to bond better with their immediate family, interact better with the local community and form kinship. They were able to attend school and able to improve their behaviour in this environment. Within their broader environment they were able to live within their new housing association in a more social and interactive manner without disturbing the local community (University of Strathclyde, n.d.).

To be able to improve their lifestyles further, the family could benefit from family therapy to eradicate the hardships and suffering they have endured and learn to communicate with one another better through forming stronger bonds and understanding one another.

It is apparent the family had been in this situation for some time, it would have been much better if the multi-agency services were involved sooner to prevent this ongoing neglectful

behaviour. It is vital interventions from social services act faster and schools recognise neglectful behaviour sooner (Children's Commissioner for England, 2019).

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Appendix

Case Study of The Bradford Family

Bradford

The family

- Julie, is a single mother of four boys and two girls: Tom, Ricky, Leo, Charley, Kia and Donna
- Sonia is the children's aunt.

The family had been known to a number of services for many years. Julie was periodically absent from the family home and was involved in criminal behaviour and suspected prostitution to fund her heroin habit.

Sonia was in effect the primary carer of the four boys and two girls. The eldest child, Tom, was involved with the youth offending team due to his criminal behaviour.

None of the children were attending school on a regular basis, and three of the boys were permanently excluded and supposed to be attending alternative provision.

The youngest child was attending nursery only 3 per cent of the time, and was behind with immunisations.

There were concerns about general neglect of the children.

The family was living on an estate earmarked for demolition, but housing providers experienced difficulty rehousing the family due to high levels of anti-social and criminal behaviour, including convictions for robbery, shoplifting, criminal damage, rowdy behaviour, begging, and substance misuse.

The local community had had enough of problems caused by the family, and some local people had taken matters into their own hands, trying to push the family out of the area by smashing windows in the property.

Activity with the family

Julie and Sonia were very mistrustful of agency involvement and were worried that the intervention of the local authority would lead to the children being taken into care.

Serious consideration was given to removal into care of the younger children. It was agreed with the family that this would be deferred on the condition that they engaged with a key worker and worked intensively on a number of agreed actions to improve the situation.

The offer of a new social housing tenancy was made conditional on the family's engagement with services. Failure to do so would result in them being evicted from their current home and classed as intentionally homeless.

The family was given a short-term tenancy, and compliance with the family intervention plan was written into the tenancy requirements. Once the family moved into their new home, the key worker helped them to get the home in decent order. The family responded well to their new surroundings and everyone started to take pride in the home.

Julie was referred to and stuck with a local drugs support project and went on to complete an educational course in basic literacy. She stopped her criminal behaviour and the number of unsuitable visitors to the family home decreased as a direct result.

Sonia worked with the Family Links Nurturing Programme run by the intervention project to improve parenting and relationship skills, and the key worker also worked intensively with her on budgeting, debt advice and implementing routines for the children.

The children's school attendance improved to over 90 per cent and Sonia began to take a more active role and attended parents' evenings.

Tom completed his youth offending team order successfully, although he was still involved with anti-social behaviour and eventually left the household to live in another city with his father. His departure had a positive impact upon his brothers as they were no longer involved in anti-social behaviour themselves.

The key worker worked intensively with the family and other agencies for a full year. The exit strategy included stepping down the level of intensive intervention, and the housing association has taken on lead agency role to monitor the family. The tenancy was made permanent, secure and fully assured, providing long-term stability for the family.

□



Assessment 1

Presentation of Case Study "The Bradford Family"

Module: Children, Young People and Families

Module Code: BMHP5004_LON

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Lecturer: Bianca Sanfilippo

Presentation Date: 11th April 2022

1

Introduction

- "Vulnerability" is when any person is found to be in a weak condition and is exposed to an increased risk compared to their peers. (Shah et al., 2015)
- It is a state where a person can show signs of resilience to becoming completely helpless (Shah et al., 2015).
- Due to certain lifestyles children and young people are at a higher risk of vulnerability (Nevard, et al., 2020).

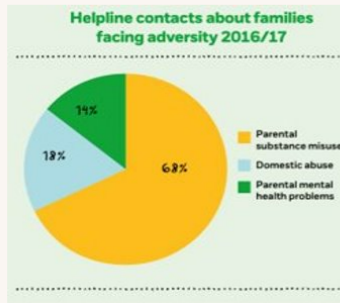
Vulnerable People are Deprived from:	A Vulnerable Person can be:
Food	Exploited
Education	Abused (Physically, emotionally, and sexually)
Parental Care	Suffer from illnesses
Good Hygienic Conditions	Become infected with HIV
Medical Care	

(Shah et al., 2015)

- These factors can lead to mental health issues, illnesses, and poor lifestyle choices that could continue throughout their lives (Nevard, et al., 2020).

2

Vulnerability and Family facing Adversity



(NSPCC, 2018)

In the UK a young person and a child is anyone up to the age of 19, they are supported by services until this age.

"Families facing adversity" are families who are going through difficult times which increase the risk of harm to children and young people:

Parents suffering from domestic abuse

Substance misuse (Drugs and/or alcohol)

Parents suffering from mental health issues (NSPCC, 2018)

3

Case Study- The Bradford Family

Key Family Adversity Facts

Julie is a **single parent** of six children

Sonia is the children's aunt and was the primary carer

The family is known to different services

Julie was a periodically absent mother involved in; **criminal behaviour, prostitution** to help pay for her **substance misuse addiction**

Eldest involved in **criminal behaviour**

No children attending school or nursery regularly, 3 boys had been expelled

Youngest child behind in immunisation programme

Neglected children

At high risk of becoming **homeless** (lived on an estate)

Children involved in **anti-social, criminal behaviour; robbery, shoplifting, criminal damage, rowdy behaviour, begging and substance misuse**

Local community were fed up of the family

"I am becoming increasingly concerned about my neighbours' ability to care for their children. Just the other day I saw them arguing and screaming hurtful things at each other directly in front of their children. They weren't paying any attention to what their child was doing and the child almost walked into a busy road."

Neighbour

(NSPCC, 2018)

4

Parental Substance Misuse



"Parental substance misuse" is the term used to describe a parent misusing drugs and/or alcohol in excessive amounts over a long period of time (NSPCC, 2021).

Children become at risk of harm if parents excessively misuse substances due to intoxication (Cleaver, Unell and Aldgate, 2011).

Parents who misuse substances behaviour patterns will be unstable and unpredictable and not able to put their children's needs first (NSPCC, 2021).

Substance misuse can lead to mental and physical health issues, criminal behaviours, emotional and domestic abuse, serious neglect, social issues and legal problems (NSPCC Learning, 2022).

5

The Impact of Factors of Vulnerabilities on the Bradford Family's Children's Health and Wellbeing

- The Bradford family's children are all at high risk of social and behavioural issues due to neglect and emotional abuse, and not attending school.
- The impact of all these factors could have an effect on their brain development and long-term wellbeing and stretch into their adult lives.
- They could develop poor learning and memory functioning skills.
- Due to neglect, they could also develop a weak immune system.
- Due to the factors the children have been exposed to, they are likely to develop the same lifestyle habits.
- The impact of the factors could lead to depression and effect their mental health.

(NSPCC Learning, 2022)



Children's Act 1989

The Children's Act 1989 was introduced to ensure children are best taken care of within their own families.

It is preferred the child's welfare is at heart by being supported within their familiar environment.

The child's best wishes and choices are the biggest priority to be taken into consideration.

It was introduced to ensure the children have the right to feel safe.

The local authority ensures they investigate any suspected issues, and provide services to help support the family and children in need.

(GOV.UK, 1989)

7

The Process of Intervention by Relevant Health and Social Care Agencies and Results

- The process of intervention begins with a referral according to the Policies:
- With the children's poor school attendance, the education welfare officer of the local authority was informed: due to lack of communication Social services were contacted.
- As the family's home was to be demolished the local authority put them on the new social housing register, this was also flagged to Social Services.
- **Results:** According to 'The Assessment Framework' a systematic approach was devised by the practitioners to help establish the best safeguarding approaches to support the children and their family and they were kept together according to the Children's Act 1989.



(Assessment Framework: Department of Health, 2013)

8

The Policies and Legislation Related to the Bradford Family Case

According	According	According	According	According	According
According to The Children's Act 1989 & 2004, the younger children were allowed to stay with the family if they accepted support from a key worker to help improve their situation.	According to the Equality Act 2010, the local authority offered a new social housing tenancy on the condition they continued to engage with the services.	According to the Drugs Act 2005, and the 1971 Misuse of Drugs Act, Julie was referred on a local drugs support group.	According to the Education Act 2002, Julie completed an educational course in basic literacy; stopping her criminal behaviour.	According to the Human Rights Act 1998, Sonia (Aunt) worked with the Family Links Nurturing Programme to improve parenting and relationship skills, including managing financial budgeting.	According to the Education Act 2002 and Children's Act 1989 the children's school attendance improved to over 90%, where Sonia took an active role in their education.

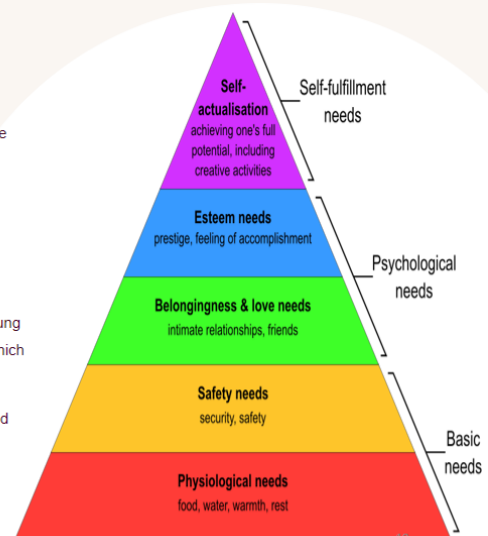
(GOV.UK, 2019)

9

Conclusion

- Maslow's hierarchy of needs is a motivational psychological theory which is made up of a five-tiered model pyramid of human needs.
- From the bottom of the model to the top, the needs are: physiological (food and clothing), safety (job security), love and belonging needs (friendship), esteem, and self-actualisation.
- The model of needs towards the bottom must be fulfilled before the rest of an individual's needs can be achieved.
- With all the interventions of the key worker and other agencies according to the policies, and legislation put into action for the Bradford family, the family's needs according to Maslow's Hierarchy of needs should be achieved.
- Vulnerable children become vulnerable adults, therefore it is important they get the support from a young age so they can change their paths and come out of the state of vulnerability they can stay stuck in which goes on to affect their children in the future as well.
- It is extremely important to develop public policies and intervention models to help support families and strengthen the services. These policies help aim to develop families economically, educationally, and ensure they are socially protected, stimulate their potential, and help them to learn how to strengthen bonds with the community (Oliveira et al., 2021).

(McLeod, 2020)



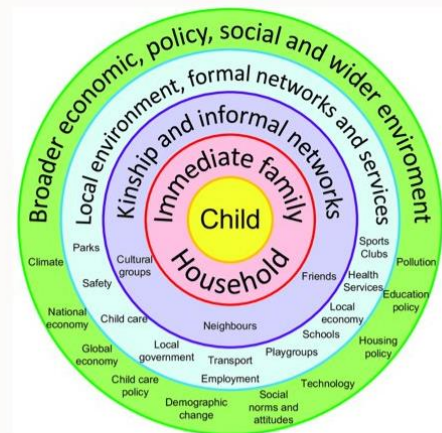
Recommendations

Urie Bronfenbrenner introduced his ecological systems theory, or ecological framework for human development, in the 1970s.

Using the sociological approach, Bronfenbrenner described the influences of environmental factors on children, explaining to understand the child's surrounding environment within society.

Through the support from the key worker the family learnt strategies to interact with the local community and form kinships

(University of Strathclyde, n.d.)



(Scott, 2016)

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