

I am Cath, I am the children's health visitor, I am responsible for assessing and responding to the health needs of both children in line with the Office for Health Improvement & Disparities (2023). I am registered with the Care Quality Commission (CQC) which is a legal requirement as defined by the *Health and Social Care Act 2008*.

Mum is twenty-two, has two children which according to *the Children Act 1989, Section 2 (a)* the mother has the parental responsibility for the children.

Mum lives alone with little support network and no family.

Sophie is a three-year-old little girl, her dad passed away during the pregnancy. Sophie was born full term at a healthy weight. Sophie developed and met her milestones and there have been no developmental concerns to date NHS (2020). I witnessed a good attachment between mum and Sophie (Bowlby, 1997). Emotional warmth and care have been witnessed between mum and Sophie and mum has responded to Sophie when she is upset and hungry (Maslow, 2011). This included recognising when Sophie was feeling unwell or in need of closeness and affection (Howe, 2011).

Sophie is registered with the dentist and there have been no concerns regarding her dental health (NHS 2022a). Sophie is toilet trained and does not wear nappies which meets her developmental milestones in line with NHS (2020). Sophie has usually presented clean and tidy and very chatty on my visits, during my last visit concerns have been raised in relation to Sophie's diet, mum feels the lack of support due to the arrival of a new baby has resulted in giving Sophie quick processed meals and snacks that lack nutrients and vitamins. I shared some

nutritional meal ideas with mum and health snack ideas that were available at a reasonable cost (NHS, 2021a). Also, the local food bank available to her if needed (The Trussell Trust, 2019).

Children have rights under the UNCRC, article 24 UNICEF (no date) to decent quality food, water, and care which I feel are not currently being met.

Sophie presented in dirty clothes and did not look like she had had a bath in days, these are signs of neglect according to NSPCC (2024). I discussed that this is a basic need and mum said she is struggling to get back into routine since the birth of Emily. Sophie was not her usual self either, she was not chatty which raised concerns that there may be signs of emotional abuse, withdrawal and change of behavior according to NSPCC (2024) are indicating signs.

Mum was diagnosed with post-natal depression after Sophies birth and as her health visitor I was able to identify the early signs according to Redshaw & Henderson (2016) and Bayrampour, Hapsari and Pavlovic (2018) and NHS (2022b)

I made a referral to Mind (2019) recommended by NHS (2021b) and NHS Health Education England (2016). Mum engaged well and made satisfactory progress with dealing with the loss of Sophies dad and her own mental health concerns, Mum feels the support from Georgia was supportive and helped her. Working Together to Safeguard Children section (19) claims that Strong multi-agency working is vital in identifying and responding to the needs of children and families (HM Government, 2023).

Emily is 3 months old and was born full term also at a healthy weight, Emily is bottle fed and is making good weight progress. Emily's Dad left mum and there has been no contact since. At Emilys 6–8-week progress assessment in line with NHS (2020) Health and development review I had concerns that the home conditions had deteriorated significantly, and *the Children Act 1989*, Section 17 1 (a) states that I have a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children who are in need (Social Care Wales, no date). There were dishes piled high in the sink, fresh food left out with flies hovering around in the kitchen and piles of clothes everywhere. The standards of living were not adequate for children to be living in, their health and safety are at risk according to NSPCC (2023) also UNCRC article 27 UNICEF (no date). I offered Mum to make a referral for some support with routines and general living needs such as families first suggested by Welsh Government (2017) their aim is to introduce early intervention to improve outcomes for children and families, but Mum refused.

Mum did not seem herself at my last visit, noticeably quiet and withdrawn, again I offered extra support, but she refused. *The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015* aim is making a difference regarding the social, economic, environmental, and cultural well-being of Wales. *The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014* ensures mum will have control over what support she feels she needs. Mum shared no information regarding a new partner, and he was not present during my visits. Due to the information and observations regarding the children's risk to harm and neglect enquires are being initiated under section 47 of the *children Act 1989*.

Reflection

On reflection I felt I had good knowledge of Safeguarding and child protection and how to follow safeguarding protocol according to the procedures in my school setting. I have attended child protection conference and monthly core group meetings, and I am confident working in close communication with staff, parents and outside agencies including sometimes daily communications with social services in order to keep a child safe in my setting.

My knowledge on the history of child protection in the UK going back to 1945 when the first child abuse inquiry took place after the death of Dennis O'Neill, who was killed at the age of 4 was not so good. I have learnt how and why the Acts have been introduced for example *the children Act* 1948 and how over time that act has needed to be updated and changed due to many more cases of child abuse.

As a practitioner I strongly recommend following gut instincts when you feel something does not feel right when you have a concern about a child. Making that referral even if it turns out to be nothing is best practice and is our duty to every child to ensure good outcomes for children it is always best to be safe not sorry.

What I have learnt from this assignment is to put myself in the perspective of other outside agencies as gaining knowledge from another perspective has been interesting. Also, how vitally important collaborative working is to improve outcomes for children and keeping them safe which is the priority of us all.

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