

Safeguarding Portfolio

Recognising and Recording

As stated by the Early Years Alliance (No Date) it is the responsibility of all Early Years Practitioners to have an indepth knowledge and understanding of signs and symptoms of abuse in children and to act in accordance with setting policies, procedures and government legislation such as The Children's Act 1989 section 47 (Coram, No Date) to take appropriate action when facing safeguarding concerns.

In the case study it states that the child, Joanna, was a "happy, outgoing, confident and independent young girl". The case study continues that there has been significant change in Joanna's behaviour since the Early Years Practitioner in the case study became to know the child. GOV.UK (September 2023) suggests that it is a part of the Early Years Practitioners duty to develop a good relationship with the children in their care and to gain knowledge of them through observations. By doing this, it will ensure the Early Years Practitioner is well knowledgeable on the children which will aid the Early Years Practitioner in observing concerning behaviour within the children.

According to the NSPCC (July 2020), the changes in Joanna's behaviour are all concerning signs and symptoms of Physical Abuse. When an Early Years Practitioner suspects that a child is a victim of abuse it is important that they follow the setting policies and procedures on Reporting Abuse which is guided by The Wales Safeguarding Procedures. The Wales Safeguarding Procedures (No Date) describes that all Practitioners have a "statutory duty to report" if they are concerned over the safety and welfare of a child.

The Anna Craft Trust (No Date) advises practitioners that when they have a concern of suspected harm it is important to record the details of the issue or event which raised the concern in accordance with the government guidance given to settings and GDPR (2018). It is vital that the Early Years Practitioner records the exact details of the concern or event which raised the concern. The Practitioner in the case study should document important details such as what the concern is and if the child in question has spoken regarding the concern. If the child has spoken in regards of the concern, then it is vital that The Early Years Practitioner records exactly what the child has said and

asks no leading questions regarding it. Other Important details that an Early Years Practitioner should record stated by NSPCC Learning (2023) if known, are the name and age of the child concerned and details of what was disclosed to the practitioner as it was disclosed. Additional details that the practitioner in the case study may record could be the time and date of the disclosure. Continuing from this, a record of the practitioner's details and any details that may be given regarding the suspected abuser. Good practice would suggest that the concerns are recorded as soon as possible and in pen, signed and dated by the practitioner. NSPCC Learning (2023) reminds practitioners to remain neutral towards what is being witnessed or disclosed to them yet be compassionate towards the child, giving them a safe and open space to share with them. The Practitioner in the case study should act upon any cause for concern in the appropriate manner. The UNCRC Article 19 (UNICEF, No Date) reminds practitioners that it is the child's right to be protected from abuse and a practitioner's role is vital in adhering to this.

Reporting and Referral

NSPCC Learning (2023) confirms that it is the responsibility of everyone to keep children safe from harm and report any concerns they may have. However, Wales Safeguarding Procedures (No Date) acknowledges some of the barriers which may influence the thoughts and actions of the practitioner. A reason given by the Wales Safeguarding Procedures (No Date) is that the Practitioner may be concerned that their suspicions are wrong, or the Practitioner may be unsure of the setting policies and procedures on this matter. Wales Safeguarding Procedures (No Date) reminds Practitioners that it is their Duty of Care to the children. It is the Practitioners responsibility to make themselves knowledgeable of the Safeguarding Policies within their setting and to seek out the information if it is unknown to them.

Once the required documents have been written and presented to senior staff in accordance with setting policy and procedures, CYSUR (No Date) states that the concern should be reported to the appropriate board, such as the Powys Front Door. A Mult-agency Referral form (MARF) could additionally be filled in. GOV.UK (2015) directs Practitioners to reporting their concerns of abuse as soon as possible. GOV.UK (2015)

further advises Practitioners that if additional evidence of abuse and Neglect is found then the Practitioner should refer to appropriate boards again.

GOV.UK (2015) explains the process once a Practitioner has made a referral. This source explains that once the Early Years Practitioner has made the referral, they may be requested to aid assist in further investigation. If upon further investigation the board discovers or suspects that the child in question is experiencing or is at risk of experiencing abuse, it is their duty of care to arrange further steps taken on this. The multi-agency workers will then arrange a meeting to discuss the child's wellbeing and determine what steps should be taken. If after this meeting the multi-agency workers involved still find a reason for concern, the next step advised to us by GOV.UK (2015) is for a Child Protection Conference to be held on behalf of the welfare of the child/children involved.

The conference will consist of a range of professionals and family members of the child involved. These may include childcare practitioners, health visitors, police and a variety of others. Within the conference the multi-agency workers will discuss and monitor the holistic development and wellbeing of the child/children involved. During the conference, a strategy plan will be planned and implemented by the appropriate professionals involved.

Setting Responsibilities

Early Years Settings have a responsibility to the Practitioners, children and their families to ensure that they are meeting the holistic standards explained in the National Minimum Standards provided to Early Years Settings by the Welsh Government.

GOV.UK (2013) explains that the National Minimum Standards have been created to guide and enforce that the standards of care and the rights of the children portrayed by the UNCRC are holistically being met.

There are a variety of legislations in force to ensure all standards are being met to a suitable standard. There are many ways standards are being met. Estyn (No Date) states that it is their jurisdiction to inspect the quality of education in Early Years Settings within Wales. After their inspections they give detailed reports to the Early Years Setting in ways they are effectively meeting standards and proactive ways in

which they can improve their practice. Similarly to Estyn, NHS Wales (No Date) explains that the Care Inspectorate Wales* (*CIW) plays a responsibility in maintaining Early Years Settings standards. Their Role is to inspect Early Years Settings and support the progress made in maintaining standards and training provided by the Welsh Government and to support any further progress which may need to be made. Another aspect of their role is to ensure Early Years Settings and other care settings are in accordance with the Care Standards Act 2000. The Early Years Setting is responsible for accepting and implementing the support offered to them by these agencies.

An additional responsibility held by Early Years Settings is to ensure that all Early Years Practitioners hold clean criminal records and that they are safe to work amongst children, young adults and vulnerable people. The Queensland Government (2024) explains that the Child Protection Act 1999 first ensured that Early Years Practitioners held CRB checks to ensure no previous crimes against children and vulnerable people had been committed. CRB checks transferred into DBS checks which is a more enhanced version of the CRB check to ensure maximum protection of children in Early Years Settings as per their rights stated by UNCRC Article 19. This change was enforced when The Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 (Disclosure and Barring Service Transfer of Functions) Order 2012 was passed by parliament (Legislation.gov.uk, No Date).

Another responsibility held by Early Years Settings is to ensure that they are meeting the standards of the National Curriculum of Wales in taking a child-centred approach. A quote from NDNA (No Date) explains that ***“it supports holistic development by keeping the developmental needs of our children at the forefront of our practice. All Children in Wales have a right to be valued and well-supported to make progress throughout their learning journey through experiences that are important and meaningful to them”***. By working in compliance with this Early Years Settings and Early Years Practitioners are meeting the right of the child provided to us by the UNCRC in Article 12 stating that children have the right to be listened to (CYPICS, No Date),

An additional primary responsibility of Early Years Settings is to provide appropriate training in Safeguarding and other areas in line with the government guidance. It is an

Early Years Practitioners responsibility and role to know signs and symptoms of the four areas of abuse and to familiarise themselves with the Early Years Settings Safeguarding Policies (PACEY, No Date).

There are many more responsibilities held by Early Years Settings and Early Years Childcare Practitioners, all of which are acted upon and always enforced with the best interests of the children and their holistic development in mind. The Information Commissioners Office (No Date) explains that this helps to keep Early Years Settings working in accordance with The Children's Act 1989 and the UNCRC Article 3. By providing these important aspects of care with an Early Years Setting, Early Years Practitioners can provide the best to start to the lives of the children within the Early Years Setting. This links in with the UNCRC Article 6 stating that the children have the right to grow as a person (CYPSCS, No Date).

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