All Wales Induction Framework for Early Years and Childcare: Workbook 4

Safeguarding children

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## Safeguarding children

## Introduction

This workbook will help you explore your role in safeguarding individuals (adults and children) from harm, abuse and neglect. As a new worker you need to understand and be able to recognise the different types of abuse and neglect that can occur. You also need to know what to do if you think abuse or neglect is taking place and how to work in ways which protect individuals from harm. It will be important that you complete this workbook after or alongside awareness training on safeguarding. You can use the completed workbook activities as evidence towards achievement of the *All Wales Induction Framework for Early Years and Childcare*.

In the context of this workbook, the term “individuals” would be children you support and care for in your work and adults you have contact with in your day-to-day work with children, for example, a parent or carer.

If you have already completed your ‘core’ qualification, you will have covered some of the knowledge and understanding in this workbook. Your manager will let you know which parts they want you to complete.

If you have not completed your ‘core’ qualification, this workbook will help you prepare for your assessment.

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## 4.1 Legislative framework for safeguarding

To start, this section will help you show you know what safeguarding means and the different types of harm, abuse and neglect that can take place. It will also help you explore the law and policies in Wales that help safeguard adults and children who are at risk of harm, abuse or neglect, and your role and responsibilities as an early years and childcare worker.

**Learning activity**

In one or two sentences, explain what the following terms mean.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Harm |  |
| Abuse |  |
| Neglect |  |
| Safeguarding |  |

The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 introduces two new terms in relation to safeguarding:

* adult at risk
* child at risk.

Outline what they mean in the space below.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Adult at risk |  |
| Child at risk |  |

|  |
| --- |
| Workbook notes   1. Advocacy is an important tool in safeguarding. Outline what is meant by “advocacy”. 2. You will have learnt about “child-centred practice”. Outline why child-centred practice is important for safeguarding children. |

Remember, safeguarding is preventative, as well as protective. You need to think about who might be at risk and how to act to help them keep safe.

**Learning activity**

Make a list of the main types of abuse and some of the signs or indicators that someone is being harmed, abused or neglected.

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| --- | --- |
| **Types of abuse** | **Signs or indicators** |
| 1. |  |
| 2. |  |
| 3. |  |
| 4. |  |
| 5. |  |

**Learning activity**

The law and policies in Wales help safeguard adults and children who are at risk of harm, abuse or neglect.

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| Workbook notes   1. Choose three pieces of **legislation and national policies** listed in the glossary, and describe:  * how they help safeguard children and/or adults in practice * how they support the rights of children to be protected |

**Learning activity**

Safeguarding is everyone’s business. As an early years and childcare worker, you will have a part to play in preventing and stopping individuals from being harmed, abused or neglected.

As described in [Working Together to Safeguard People Vol 5: Handling Individual Cases to Protect Children at Risk](https://gov.wales/safeguarding-children-risk-abuse-or-neglect), there are different ways in which to protect children at risk of harm, abuse and neglect. In the space below list three examples.

|  |
| --- |
| 1. |
| 2. |
| 3. |

|  |
| --- |
| Workbook notes   1. Give an example of something you do in your practice to safeguard children. |

## 4.2 Safeguarding children from harm, abuse or neglect

This section will help you explore different ways of working that safeguard individuals from harm, abuse or neglect, along with your responsibilities if you have concerns or someone has made an allegation or disclosure.

**Learning activity**

Read the case studies and complete the questions:

Tom is three years old and attends nursery. Tom’s mum is a lone parent but has recently started a new relationship. You have noticed that Tom’s clothes are dirty, his hair has grown and is always unkempt. Tom has started to come to nursery in inappropriate clothing for the weather. You have also noticed his daily communication with parents, and arts and crafts work, has not been removed from his bag in several weeks, which is unusual. Tom has missed a number of days at nursery – when you ask his mother about this, she is defensive and says that it is not her fault. Tom’s mum has sustained injuries to her face over the past few weeks. Tom’s behaviour has also changed during this period. He has become aggressive towards some of the other children – kicking and pushing them, and is tearful if his behaviour is corrected. Today, when Tom arrives at nursery, he tells you that mummy cannot bring him anymore because his new daddy says they have to stay at home. He starts crying.

|  |
| --- |
| Workbook notes   1. What would your concerns be about Tom and his mum? 2. What type of harm, abuse or neglect could be taking place? 3. What sign or symptoms of harm, abuse or neglect could this indicate? 4. What action should you take? 5. Who should you report it to? 6. How would you record and report it? |

Nisha is seven years old. She has been ‘looked after’ by the local authority since she was five years old. She has a mild learning disability and a type of juvenile arthritis, which limits her mobility. She has been making TikTok videos and posting them online to give her something to do in the evenings. She has a following of 150 people.

|  |
| --- |
| Workbook notes   1. What would your concerns be? 2. What actions should you take? 3. How would you make Nisha aware of the risks of using social media so she can keep herself safe? |

**Learning activity**

Developing good relationships with the individuals you support is an important part of the role of an early years and childcare worker.

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| --- |
| Workbook notes   1. Outline why this is important for safeguarding children. 2. Describe how can you promote an environment where children and their families/carers feel safe, secure and able to express their feelings and emotions. |

**Learning activity**

As an early years and childcare worker, you will be responsible for supporting children with different tasks, activities and experiences. It is important that these are carried out in ways that not only keep the child safe, but keep you safe as well.

Read the scenarios below and outline the steps you could take to ensure safe practice.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| You are a childminder and are looking after Gethin who lives with foster carers. You are aware he has experienced sexual abuse in the past. He is very clingy and before his nap he wants you to sit with him until he goes to sleep. |  |
| You are a Foundation Phase practitioner. The children go to the toilet independently. Ella is three and wants you to go into the toilet with her, but lock the door. |  |
| You are a nursery worker working in the baby room. You notice Jack needs his nappy changing so you take him to change his nappy. |  |
| You are working in the afterschool room in a nursery and a 10-year-old girl, Sophie, starts to ask you questions about your personal life, such as if you have a partner. |  |

**Learning activity**

In the space below, give some examples of the ways that you promote and support the safeguarding of children in your day-to-day work. Discuss these with your manager and ask them to add some comments.

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| --- |
| Workbook notes  Manager notes |

## 4.3 Factors, situations and actions that could lead or contribute to harm, abuse or neglect

It is important to be alert to the fact that harm, abuse and neglect can take place anytime and anywhere. However, some **actions, behaviours or situations** **can increase the risk of harm and abuse**. This section will helpyou understand what they are.

**Learning activity**

In the space below, explain:

|  |
| --- |
| Workbook notes   1. Why do you think some children and their families/carers may be more at risk than others? 2. Why do you think incidences of harm, abuse and neglect might not be raised by  * children * workers * families and friends * other professionals |

|  |
| --- |
| Workbook notes   1. The glossary lists “actions, behaviours or situations” that increase the risk of harm or abuse. Outline why this is the case for:  * domestic abuse * adverse childhood experiences * bullying * one other listed factor |

**Learning activity**

Read the case study below and then answer the questions.

**Case study:** Vanessa George – Little Ted’s Day Nursery

This case study is a summary of the serious case review[[1]](#footnote-1) into child abuse at Little Ted’s nursery by Vanessa George.

**Context and background of review**

Vanessa George, a mother of two, was charged with seven offences, including two of sexual assault by penetration and two of sexual assault by touching. She was also charged with making, possessing and distributing indecent images of children.

Mrs George, 39, was arrested after indecent images of children taken at Little Ted’s Day Nursery in Plymouth were found on a computer disc seized by police from a suspected paedophile, Colin Blanchard, in Manchester. Police said the photographs included pictures of children’s torsos taken on a camera phone at the nursery, where Mrs George worked for two years.

**Circumstances**

Vanessa George began to find time alone with children at Little Ted’s, sometimes when she changed their nappies. She sexually assaulted them and used the camera on her mobile phone to record the abuse. She used objects found at the nursery in the assaults, but also smuggled a sex toy in for at least one attack.

Parents of some victims are angry that George was able to get such one-to-one access with children. Some accuse the nursery of poor management and claim that because the workers were good friends, the regime was too slack.

It was feared at one point that more than 300 children may have been abused. This has been narrowed down to 30 by police and George has admitted making 124 images of children between December and June. She targeted younger children, possibly because she knew they would not be able to tell. Their faces were not shown, which has so far made identification impossible.

George would send the images on to Blanchard. Experienced detectives admit having felt physically sick at the content. The pair would also swap sexual images of themselves and share awful, dark, graphic fantasies. The communications steadily grew, and between December 2008 and her arrest in June 2009, there was a frenzy of exchanges – 10,000 contacts via phone, text, email, MSN.

**What happened?**

A married mother with two children, George appeared to be a valued member within her local community and had taken up the post at Little Ted’s nursery three years earlier. At some point in 2008, George began an online relationship with Colin Blanchard (previously convicted of possessing indecent images of children). It was at this time that her colleagues later claimed they noticed a change in her behaviour. George would send Colin Blanchard photos of her abusing children at the nursery and he would forward them to another lady with whom he had an online relationship, Angela Allen.

**Why it happened?**

The nursery was a not-for-profit association ‘owned’ by a committee of trustees. However, the trustees interviewed were unaware of their responsibilities. The manager disputed Ofsted’s claim that she was a trustee, while another trustee was found to be deceased.

No trustee meetings took place nor was there a proper constitution or any supervision of the manager’s practice. Parents believed the manager owned the nursery and, like many of the staff, were unaware of the trustees and unclear about who to approach with concerns or complaints.

The nursery often operated outside staff:child ratios and there was no keyworker system in place. Staff were used in a loose way within the nursery, moving between different sections, as needed. Although the review noted that children were generally ‘happy’, several workers disputed this.

There was no clear recruitment and selection policy and the manager had not attended safer recruitment training. George had been recruited via ‘word of mouth’ through the primary school, where the manager knew her in her school governor capacity. There are no records of an advertisement, formal interview or references for George’s post, though there was a cleared CRB check.

Workers had either not attended safeguarding training or had attended courses a long time ago. There was no evidence to suggest that this training had been integrated into practice. For example, staff did not seem to recognise that early years and childcare workers, including women (and in their case, Vanessa George), could pose a risk to children. George’s conduct and sexualised behaviour in the nursery was not noted as a clear ‘sign’ that they may have a sexual predator in their midst.

There was no supervision framework implemented at the nursery and, the manager modelled blurred, professional boundaries and did ‘just enough’ to stave off too much scrutiny by Ofsted.

**Conclusion**

The serious case review into what happened at Little Ted’s Nursery concluded that it “provided an ideal environment” for George to abuse. The review concluded that a combination of weak management, poor training and a lack of external scrutiny “provided an ideal environment within which George could abuse”. And while it said no-one could have predicted George would be a risk to children, her colleagues failed to raise the alarm when her behaviour and conversations became increasingly sexualised. There were also recommendations to improve communication between those responsible for ensuring the quality of the setting.

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| Workbook notes   1. What are the key things that would have made a difference to prevent and stop the harm and abuse from taking place at Little Ted’s Nursery? 2. What were the barriers for some of the staff working at the nursery in taking action about their concerns? 3. What were the types of perpetrator behaviour shown by Vanessa George? 4. What are the responsibilities of early years and childcare workers where the practice of colleagues or other professionals may be unsafe, abusive or neglectful? 5. What is meant by the term “whistleblowing” and how does it relate to safeguarding children? 6. What should you do if concerns raised are not taken seriously and acted upon? |

## 4.4 Reporting and recording in relation to safeguarding

This section will help you know what you should do if you have concerns about harm, abuse or neglect, or if an individual makes an allegation or disclosure to you.

**Learning activity**

Think back to the scenario with Tom. What do you think are the things “to do and not to do” when he tells you he cannot come to nursery anymore?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Do’s:** | **Don’ts:** |

**Learning activity**

**Recording in relation to safeguarding**

When harm, abuse or neglect has taken place, it needs to be dealt with quickly and effectively. Information about the safety and welfare of a child must be reported in line with your work setting’s safeguarding policy. Concerns may relate to poor practice in the work setting and it is important to know what to do if this is the case.

Good record keeping is an important part of good safeguarding practice. The following scenario demonstrates both good and poor practice in recording:

*Stephen works in a setting in the village where he lives. One of the children who attends the setting is Mair, who is five years old and has been attending the setting since she was a baby. Mair attends the setting before and after school, and full-time during the school holidays. Mair lives with her parents and her older brother, 12-year-old Tim, who is from Mair’s mum’s previous marriage. The family live in the same village as the setting. Mair is very sociable and chatty, she gets on well with the other children and gets involved in all the activities at the setting.*

*After a weekend during the school holidays, Mair’s dad drops her off at the setting, but instead of carrying out her usual routine – taking off her coat and getting involved in the activities that are taking place – Mair does not want to remove her coat, and she says she is cold and her arm hurts. When Stephen asks why it is hurting, she answers that she bumped herself on some furniture when helping to tidy her room at home. She says it was “Tim’s fault”.*

*Mair seems quieter than usual for the rest of the day. Stephen notices that Mair’s right wrist appears swollen and has a greenish tinge. Mair won’t let Stephen look at her arm and keeps her coat on all day. Stephen reports this verbally to the setting manager who agrees that Stephen should speak to Mair’s parents about what happened to her arm.*

*At the end of the day, Mair’s mother and father come to collect her and Stephen asks how Mair hurt herself. They say she is clumsy, and it must have been when she was helping feed the chickens in their garden the day before. Stephen challenges this saying the bruise looks older than that and that Mair had said Tim was responsible. Mair’s parents get defensive and angrily tell Stephen that they are more than capable of looking after their daughter.*

Stephen is now concerned that Mair may have been abused. He writes a report that states:

*On Monday this week, Mair Jones arrived with a badly bruised and swollen arm. I think her brother had been fighting with her again as he can be jealous of the extra attention Mair gets from her parents and he is often in trouble with the police. I spoke to her parents who got defensive and stormed off. They are most likely trying to cover up the fact that they cannot look after Mair properly anymore, but they want to keep the family together and not involve anyone else.*

Here Stephen has made a set of assumptions. He has shown prejudice towards people and is using information about Tim that is not backed up with any source. He has not been objective or factual, and risks being accused of bias, unprofessionalism and even libel as he is making accusations. Stephen is right to be concerned about the injury and the two different accounts about how it occurred, along with Mair’s unusual behaviour and her parents’ response. Stephen acted correctly in not questioning Mair too much and checking with his manager before speaking with her parents.

Stephen was also correct in not sharing his suspicions with anyone but the manager. He recognised the possible signs of abuse and appropriately reported them straight away, following this up with a written record.

His record would have been improved if he had written something like this:

*On Monday this week, Mair Jones attended the setting all day. She was wearing a thick winter coat that she refused to take off, saying her right arm was sore. She did not speak much and did not want to join in with any play activities. This is unusual for her as she usually can’t wait to join in. I could see her right wrist seemed swollen and had a greenish marking, like a bruise. When I asked what had happened, she said she had hurt her arm tidying her room the day before and that it was her brother Tim’s fault.*

*After discussing this with my manager, we agreed that I should speak to Mair’s parents who told me they thought she hurt herself yesterday feeding the chickens in the garden and that she is clumsy. They became defensive and angry, and said they were more than capable of looking after their daughter. They left with Mair and she seemed keen to go home with them. I updated my manager and have referred the incident to our setting’s designated safeguarding officer.*

|  |
| --- |
| Workbook notes   1. Why is it important to report and record concerns in relation to safeguarding? 2. List what you need to record. 3. How would you report and record concerns in line with your setting’s policies and procedures? |

**Learning activity**

It is important that you as a worker feel well supported when you’re dealing with safeguarding situations.

Discuss with your manager where and how you would access personal support, and how you would support others.

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| --- |
| Workbook notes |

**Learning activity**

Reflection is an essential part of early years and childcare practice. In the space below, identify three things you have learned from completing this workbook and how you will put them into practice.

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| --- |
| Workbook notes |

## 4.5 Policies and procedures

All **work settings** willhave **policies and procedures** on safeguarding, and it is important you know what to do if you have concerns or if someone discloses information to you. If you are already working in an early years and childcare setting, ask your manager for a copy of the safeguarding policy to read.

**Learning activity**

To sum up your understanding, answer the following questions:

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| --- |
| Workbook notes   1. What should you do if you have concerns that someone is being harmed, abused or neglected? 2. What would you do if an individual asked you not to share concerns that you have about them being harmed, abused or neglected? 3. Who would you share your concerns with? 4. Who should you not share your concerns with? |

## 4.6 Practice placement reflection

If you are in a work placement talk to the manager or your mentor about how you have put safeguarding children into practice. Write a short reflective account and ask the manager or mentor to record a summary in the space below.

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| --- |
| Workbook notes  Manager feedback |

If evidence from the workbook is being used towards the qualification, use the space below to record any discussions between you and your qualifications assessor.

|  |
| --- |
| Qualification assessor discussion notes |

**If evidence from the workbook is being used towards the qualification, the assessor must complete the declaration below.**

|  |
| --- |
| **Worker declaration**  I confirm that the evidence listed for the workbook is authentic and a true representation of my own work.  Worker signature  Date  **Manager declaration**  I confirm that the worker has achieved all the requirements of the workbook with the evidence submitted.  Manager signature  Date  **Qualification assessor declaration**  I confirm that the learner has achieved all the requirements of the workbook with the evidence submitted. Assessment was conducted under the specified conditions and is valid, authentic, reliable, current and sufficient.  Qualification assessor signature  Date |

1. Plymouth Safeguarding Children Board (2010) *Serious case review overview report executive summary in respect of Nursery Z*. Plymouth: Plymouth Safeguarding Children Board. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)