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- Safeguarding Children Level 2 -

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Aims of this course:

By the conclusion of this course, participants will be able to:

- Grasp the concept of safeguarding, including e-safety, and comprehend the significance of learning about safeguarding children.
- Acquire knowledge about prevailing legislation, guidelines, and policies.
- Understand their responsibilities within and beyond the workplace.
- Familiarise themselves with the roles played by various agencies in safeguarding children.
- Identify potential signs of abuse and warning signals.
- Demonstrate the appropriate response when a child confides in them about abuse.
- Gain an understanding of confidentiality principles.
- Recognise the importance of reporting concerns, even if they involve colleagues, to other professionals.
- Acknowledge the necessity of accurately documenting concerns in writing.

Introduction

Gaining knowledge about safeguarding children holds significance for individuals of all professions and levels of interaction with children and their families. By enrolling in this training program, you're taking strides towards establishing a more secure environment for children and augmenting your personal understanding. The intention of this course is to enhance your comprehension of safeguarding principles and your capacity to identify indicators of abuse. In the event of encountering a situation, you will possess the assurance to report concerns effectively, contributing to the safeguarding of children.

There exists an obligation for early years settings to 'develop and implement a policy and procedures to safeguard'. This course introduces the concept of safeguarding children, offering a fundamental grasp of its significance and relevance.

Guiding Framework for Safeguarding and Child Protection

Statutory guidance issued by the UK government pertains to the safeguarding of children. The intention is to establish a shared grasp of the concepts of safeguarding children and child protection, as well as their application to each person, regardless of their location or workplace. Definitions of safeguarding and Child protection are as follow:

Safeguarding:

- Ensuring the protection of children from maltreatment
- Preventing any harm to children's health and well-being

- Securing an environment where children's upbringing aligns with the provision of safe and effective care.
- Taking proactive measures to enable the best possible outcomes for all children.

Child Protection: Child protection is an integral aspect of safeguarding children and advancing their well-being. It pertains to the measures implemented to safeguard particular children who are undergoing, or are at risk of undergoing, substantial harm.

Balancing Beliefs with Effective Child Safeguarding

Usually, we hold our own preconceived notions about what safeguarding and child abuse entail. These ideas can shape our viewpoints and attitudes towards how safeguarding should be handled.

However, it is vital that we put aside our individual opinions and instead, adhere to the legislation, frameworks, guidelines, and training that are in place for us. This way, we considerably lower the risk of a child facing harm and bypassing the protective system designed to safeguard them.

Case Study

In 2001, an eight-year-old named Victoria Climbié lost her life due to sustained abuse. She had endured unspeakable acts of cruelty and physical maltreatment. The pathologist's findings attributed her death to hypothermia, resulting from malnourishment, a damp environment, and restricted movement. Furthermore, a total of 128 separate injuries were identified on Victoria's body.

An inquiry was launched after Victoria's death which highlighted several key safeguarding issues.

An Absence of Adequate Procedure

Victoria's situation was entirely unique. Victoria was not kept hidden. It is profoundly unsettling that in the days and months that ensued after her initial interaction with 'Ealing Housing Department's Homeless Persons' Unit', Victoria was recognised by at least two additional housing authorities, four social services departments, two child protection teams within the 'Metropolitan Police Service' (MPS), a specialised facility overseen by the NSPCC, and she was admitted to two separate hospitals due to suspected intentional harm. The distressing truth was that these services possessed scant or negligible additional information about Victoria at the culmination of this process compared to what they knew when she was originally referred to 'Ealing Social Services by the Homeless Persons' Unit in April 1999. The ultimate irony was that 'Haringey Social Services' officially closed Victoria's case on the very day of her demise. The degree of the failure to shield Victoria was profoundly regrettable. Tragically, all that was necessary was to implement fundamental best practices, a step that was regrettably never taken.

A Severe Systemic Breakdown

None of the organisations mandated by Parliament to safeguard children in circumstances akin to Victoria's - funded through public finances - emerge from this Inquiry with substantial commendation. The pain and fatality of Victoria's case were a glaring failure of the system, and such negligence is indefensible. It is evident to me that the bodies tasked with Victoria's protection gave minimal importance to the duty of safeguarding children. They were operating with insufficient funding, inadequate staffing, and weak leadership. Despite these challenges, there was an abundance of evidence indicating that the limited resources were not being utilised effectively. Poor practices can incur significant costs. For instance, had there been an appropriate response to Victoria's needs when she was initially referred to Ealing Social Services, it is plausible that the risks to her life might have been recognised, leading to preventive actions that could have obviated the subsequent involvement of other agencies.

Pervasive Organisational Dysfunction

It appears that the fundamental protocol of medical assessment, encompassing obtaining medical history, conducting examinations, formulating a differential diagnosis, and monitoring outcomes, was not implemented in Victoria's situation. I acknowledge the testimony of Dr. Peter Lachman, Clinical Director for the Women and Children Services, Directorate of North West London Hospitals NHS Trust, who emphasised the high level of training paediatric doctors and nurses receive to aid in the recovery of ill children. However, as he stated, 'child abuse is one of the most intricate areas of paediatrics and child health', I found it challenging to comprehend why established and effective medical procedures, which undoubtedly would have assisted in untangling the intricacies of Victoria's case, were disregarded on the paediatric wards at both the Central Middlesex Hospital and North Middlesex Hospital.

Issues in Organisational Leadership

The primary focus of my criticism for the sequence of events leading to Victoria's tragic demise is not aimed at the handful of unfortunate, yet occasionally inexperienced, front-line workers. Although the quality of work executed by those in direct contact with her was generally subpar, the most significant failure lies with the managers and senior figures within the authorities responsible for ensuring that services for children, including Victoria, received adequate funding, staffing, and were capable of delivering high-quality support to children and families. It is noteworthy that while several junior staff members at Haringey Social Services were suspended and confronted with disciplinary measures following Victoria's passing, some of their senior executives were being appointed to other, presumably more lucrative, positions. This is not a demonstration of managerial responsibility that particularly impresses me.

Victoria Climbié Tragedy and 'Every Child Matters' Initiative

The dreadful agony and eventual demise of Victoria Climbié underscore the indispensability of safeguarding as a vital measure to shield children. In response to Lord Laming's report, the UK government introduced legally binding guidance termed 'Every Child Matters' (ECM). This initiative

held significance as it aimed to promote collaborative efforts among services to ensure children's safety, and emphasised the significance of multi-agency cooperation, all under the banner of 'Every child matters'. Key points include:

Being Healthy - Children should experience sound physical and mental well-being while leading a wholesome way of life.

Staying safe - Children should be protected from harm and neglect.

Enjoying and achieving - Children should receive support to maximise their life experiences and cultivate the competencies necessary for adulthood.

Making a positive Contribution - Children should actively participate in the community and society, refraining from engaging in anti-social or delinquent activities.

Economic Well Being - Economic disadvantage must not hinder children from reaching their full potential in life.

The Children Act 2004

'Every Child Matters' outlined modifications to be implemented in UK legislation, leading to the creation and enactment of the 'Children Act 2004'. The Children Act 2004 does not supplant the 'Children Act 1989' but enhances the foundation and modifies various sections. It delineates how Social Services and other entities should collaborate, adopting a multi-agency approach to safeguard children.

The act established a children's commissioner with the role of advocating for children's needs, perspectives, and services. It establishes a structure of responsibilities for all children's services, encompassing:

- Techniques for early intervention
- Accountability and coordination, evaluated by OFSTED
- A workforce strategy to elevate care quality and promote professionalism
- Enhanced parental support, with enforceability if challenges remain unaddressed.

Key Legal Frameworks for Child Protection and Well-being

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989

The 'Children Act of 1989' and the 'United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989' are both documents that hold importance in safeguarding the rights of children. The 'United Nations Convention' comprises of 54 articles outlining children's rights on a global scale. It establishes a child-focused structure that serves as guidance for legislation and children's services, aiming to ensure the protection of children and their rights.

The Children Act of 1989

One of the significant legal reforms regarding children was initiated in response to the UNCRC, consolidating numerous pre-existing laws. Under Section 17, the local authority is obligated to offer an array of services for children in need, encompassing childcare for those under 8 and assistance for children who have endured abuse. Section 47 necessitates the local authority to initiate an investigation if they have reason to believe that a child is undergoing or might experience substantial harm.

This law underscores that, when making any decisions pertaining to a child's upbringing, the child's welfare is of utmost importance.

The Childcare Act 2006

This act states that local authorities must improve the outcomes for all young children, reduce inequalities and ensure that early years provision and childcare are high quality and integrated with other services. Information, advice and assistance for parents must be simplified and accessible. The numerous existing regulatory frameworks were brought together to produce the 'Early Years Foundation Stage' (EYFS) which sets out detailed guidance on how to deliver high quality, integrated early years education.

Section 40 places a duty on Early Years' providers to comply with the welfare requirements of the EYFS. It provides a legal framework for inspecting and regulating childcare provision, regulated by OFSTED.

Every Child Matters 2004

The initial report that highlighted the significant modifications required to safeguard children from harm, underlining the necessity for collaboration and accountability among children's services and agencies.

The Children Act 2004

Written to provide the legislative changes outlined in the 'Every Child Matters' preliminary report, it emphasises the need for children's services and agencies to work together and be accountable for their actions. Section 11 places a responsibility on key agencies to safeguard children and promote their welfare, sharing early concerns and ensuring preventative action is taken before a crisis develops.

The Education Act of 2002

This act specifies the responsibilities of schools concerning safeguarding and promoting the well-being of children. It delineates the requirement to impart unbiased and equitable education with

regards to political and religious subjects. Revisions to this act now encompass shielding children from extremism and radicalisation, known as the Prevent duty:

Under Section 26 of the 'Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015', a responsibility is imposed on childcare providers and registered early years providers to consider the necessity of preventing individuals from being influenced towards terrorism. For more insights, refer to the provided guidance that assists schools and childcare providers in deliberating strategies to shield children from the risk of radicalisation.

The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006

The introduction of the 'Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act in 2006' was prompted by an investigation into the tragic murder of two schoolgirls by a school caretaker. This incident highlighted the necessity for enhancing the background checks conducted during the recruitment of individuals working with children. This Act establishes the legal structure for a modernised vetting and barring system. As a result, the 'Criminal Records Bureau' (CRB) was amalgamated with the Independent 'Safeguarding Board' (ISB), leading to the establishment of the 'Disclosure and Barring Service' (DBS).

The Protection of Children Act 1999

The enactment of the 'Protection of Children Act in 1999' rendered it unlawful for individuals deemed unsuitable to work with children to seek employment involving vulnerable adults or children. A record of adults deemed unsuitable for working with children was established and maintained within the 'Criminal Records Bureau' (CRB).

Working together to safeguard children 2018

This framework undergoes regular assessments and updates. Its objectives are to establish an approach that centres around children and is well-coordinated in safeguarding them. It acknowledges that every individual working with children holds a responsibility to ensure their safety, and that a complete understanding of a child's situation and requirements is not solely within the domain of a single professional. Therefore, to ensure that children and families receive appropriate assistance in a timely manner, every professional interacting with them should unite to identify concerns, share information, and take swift action. The framework outlines the prerequisites for evaluating children's needs and delivering assistance at the earliest possibility, delineates the responsibilities of organisations, and defines the role of the three Safeguarding Partners. Furthermore, it reviews instances of reportable incidents, grave cases, and child fatalities, with the aim of learning from them and refining the framework.

Keeping Children Safe in Education

This document serves as obligatory guidance that educational institutions in England are required to consider when fulfilling their responsibilities to protect and enhance the well-being of children. It is expected that all school and college personnel read at least the initial section of the guidance.

The Three Safeguarding Partners

Referring to the former 'Local Safeguarding Children Boards', they are now termed Safeguarding Partners.

These three Safeguarding Partners comprise of Local Authorities, Chief Officers of Police, and Clinical Commissioning Groups. These entities are expected to collaborate and coordinate efforts with relevant agencies. Supporting the Safeguarding Partners is a Local Safeguarding Arrangement.

All individuals engaged in working with children or families should possess an understanding of safeguarding children and its implementation. Awareness of the local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements within your locality is essential. Every workplace is required to have a Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy in position.

To ensure compliance, each workplace must designate an individual responsible for safeguarding, known as a 'Designated Safeguarding Lead' (DSL). Their primary responsibility is to address safeguarding concerns, decide on subsequent steps, and determine whether reporting concerns to the local authority children's social care is necessary.

For matters of utmost gravity, the 'Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel' now assumes jurisdiction.

Coordinated Child Safeguarding: 'Working Together' Guidance

Working Together to Safeguard Children is the most important and current legislative advice for safeguarding in the UK. This text is often updated and revised. Its primary focus is on core legal requirements, allowing professionals and organisations to work effectively together to protect children. This requires being aware of their individual tasks and duties in order to ensure efficient coordination. The paper describes regional safeguarding policies and the key duties delegated to particular organisations.

Working Together in Safeguarding Children

Different services for safeguarding children include:

Prison Service: The foremost duty of the Prison Service is to identify incarcerated individuals who may present a risk to children. Their obligation extends to notifying the local police and children's social care agencies upon the release or transfer of such individuals within their jurisdiction. Furthermore, they are required to share information with the police regarding the current residential location of released prisoners.

Probation Services: While primarily focused on adult offenders, probation services may also encounter situations involving children due to the parental roles of some adult offenders. Given that certain adults may have prior convictions related to offences against children, a careful equilibrium must be struck between facilitating family connections and managing potential risks.

Young Offenders Institutions: The onus lies with local authorities to ensure that children and young individuals detained or questioned by the police are accompanied by an appropriate adult who safeguards their welfare. The collaborative efforts of Youth Offending Teams, comprised of various agencies, are aimed at addressing the needs of children ensnared in criminal circumstances.

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS): Individuals occupying roles entailing interactions with children are mandated to provide comprehensive information for background vetting and barring checks. This robust process aligns with a safer recruitment protocol, assuring the suitability of individuals working with children.

Child Exploitation and On-line Protection (CEOP): A national crime agency (NCA), CEOP collaborates with child protection partners both within the country and abroad to identify threats to children. Their leadership extends to operations aimed at nullifying these threats and ensuring perpetrators are brought to justice. Safeguarding children, be it in the digital realm or the physical world, is a collaborative endeavour involving partnerships with local and global agencies.

Role of Teachers and Education Professionals in Maintaining Child Safety

In the realm of early childhood, staff often engage with a diverse array of educational experts, tailored to each child's distinct requirements. These professionals span from educational psychologists and behaviour support teams to special educational needs assistants and speech and language therapists. Furthermore, a strong alliance with educational institutions assists in preparing children for the shift from early years settings to the school environment. The designated primary caregiver will delve into discussions concerning the child's developmental progress, enriched by pertinent background insights and any potential concerns.

Those entrusted with providing early years' care and education bear several essential obligations:

- Adherence to the prescribed welfare norms as stipulated in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).
- Crafting robust protocols to ensure children's safety and preclude potential harm.
- Offering comprehensive staff training to enable them to discern telltale signs of potential abuse or neglect.
- Designating a lead practitioner with the responsibility of child safety, fostering harmonious ties with local authority children's social care and allied children's services agencies.

- Imposing a stringent recruitment policy necessitating fresh recruits to undergo rigorous screening through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).

These standards extend universally across all educational institutions:

- Crafting intricate procedures designed to safeguard children from potential harm.
- Equipping staff with comprehensive training to empower them in identifying markers that might indicate potential abuse or neglect.
- Appointing a lead practitioner solely dedicated to child safety, fostering robust collaboration with local authority children's social care and pertinent children's services agencies.
- Enforcing a resolute recruitment policy, ensuring all new personnel undergo the thorough scrutiny of a DBS check.

Role of Health Professionals in Safeguarding Children's Well-Being

Regrettably, when a child is displaying indicators of abuse or neglect, it often manifests as a decline in their overall health. Health visitors play a pivotal role within an inter-agency collaboration, partnering with early years' professionals to vigilantly oversee the child's progress once care transitions from the midwife. These visitors conduct home visits and engage with the child's childcare environment, addressing concerns and providing health guidance to families.

All health practitioners are obligated to:

- Maintain an approachable stance towards children and families.
- Extend assistance to children regarding safety and welfare matters.
- Foster close cooperation with the three Safeguarding Partners.
- Appoint a specialist expert responsible for ensuring children's safety from harm, offering counsel and backing to fellow health professionals.
- Guarantee that their staff members are adequately trained in safeguarding children availing their services from potential harm.

They are mandated to report concerns to local authority children's social care or the police in instances where they observe:

- Injuries in a child that cannot be reasonably attributed to an accident.
- A child's growth not aligning with the anticipated rate.
- Inadequate care provision for a child's needs.
- A child engaging in self-harm, possibly indicating they are undergoing abuse.
- Indications of domestic violence or abuse within the home environment.
- A parent consistently bringing a child to a medical facility to seek attention for themselves.

Further Collaborative Safeguarding Efforts

Children's domestic environment and family circumstances can become a source of concern due to various factors. If a child is in a precarious situation, it's likely that they are already familiar to different social care services, contingent on their specific situation. Examples include:

Safeguarding Partners: These entities formulate and implement safeguarding policies and protocols. Additionally, they oversee collaborative efforts among agencies, ensuring adherence to established procedures and evaluating their efficacy.

Child social care services: Social workers play a central role in addressing child safeguarding issues. They hold the legal responsibility for a child's welfare and determine appropriate courses of action. They orchestrate inter-agency meetings and sustain vigilance over child protection strategies.

Adult social care services: Professionals within adult social care must account for the needs of children within families where mental health concerns, substance abuse, or domestic violence are prevalent. Some children assume caregiving roles within their families, a situation that can deprive them of their childhood and neglect their own requirements.

Housing services: Housing authorities are obligated to acknowledge how inadequate housing can jeopardise children's well-being. Their role extends to safeguarding vulnerable young individuals and ensuring their safety.

'Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service' (Cafcass)

The role of the 'Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service' (Cafcass) encompasses safeguarding the wellbeing of children in cases involving care or family matters that come under the jurisdiction of the courts. Their responsibility entails providing impartial guidance to the court, with a focus on determining the optimal course for the child's welfare.

Cafcass possesses the authority to access social care and related records maintained by local authorities. Additionally, they are entitled to participation in meetings aimed at devising plans for the child's care and safeguarding.

The police have an obligation to prioritise the safeguarding of children and the promotion of their wellbeing by acting in the best interests of the child.

Instances of mistreatment and disregard may involve offences against children, demanding sensitive handling. The police collaborate with various bodies, including children's social care, when probing such incidents. They possess valuable insights into children at risk of harm, which other organisations must exchange with them. Their ranks comprise officers specially trained in child protection, skilled

at uncovering the intricacies surrounding children and offering the requisite assistance and protection they necessitate.

The British Transport Police often confront scenarios where children have absconded from their homes, schools, or care facilities to escape potential harm.

The police possess the authority to address any apprehensions regarding the welfare and security of children. They are equally compelled to notify local authority children's social care if:

- They suspect parents to be inadequate caregivers due to issues related to substances or alcohol.
- Children are left to fend for themselves.
- A child is eloping and jeopardising their safety.
- Children are embroiled in unruly behaviour.
- Adults, gangs, or older juveniles are exploiting children for criminal purposes.
- Domestic discord or maltreatment is prevalent within the household.
- Children are exposed to explicit or developmentally inappropriate content of a sexual nature.

Various charities, churches, and faith-based groups offer an array of activities for children, playing a significant part in ensuring the safety of children and offering assistance to families. The NSPCC, Childline, and Winston's Wish furnish resources, guidance, counselling, and support services. Similar to other entities engaging with children, they must establish suitable measures to ensure the protection and advancement of children's welfare.

Translating Awareness into Action: Your Role in Child Safeguarding

Participation in safeguarding children is a collective responsibility. Child abuse or neglect can occur not only through causing harm but also by failing to prevent it. Keep in mind Safeguarding is everyone's duty. You could be the vital support a child needs. A child might rely on someone like you to notice when things are wrong. You can help out by:

- Completing the safeguarding education.
- Considering yourself properly trained in child safety.
- Learning the child safety regulations and procedures at your place of employment.
- The EYFS's standards for wellbeing must be met.
- Knowing the Working Together document well.
- Knowing the multi-agency safeguarding arrangements in place locally.
- Staying vigilant, attentive, and able to identify concerns related to child safety or indications of possible mistreatment and negligence. Observe any alterations in a child's conduct or appearance.
- Handling the sharing of information, accusations, or indications of possible abuse with empathy and professionalism.

- Fostering an environment that prioritises attentive listening to children and ensures their wellbeing is of utmost importance.
- Collaborating with your supervisor.
- Recognising when information has to be shared and with whom it should be shared, but also understanding confidentiality.
- It is your responsibility to take action if you have any concerns by bringing them up with your line manager, the designated safeguarding lead, or in their absence, their deputy.
- Identifying that individual.
- Always keep an eye on any information you've reported to see whether anything has come of it.
- Keeping a detailed log of your worries. Take notes on what you observed and heard. Take notes of what the youngster says, not yours, in their own words.
- Do not nag or scold the youngster. Keep an eye on your actions and, if required, monitor the development of your referral.
- Dating and signing your documents.
- If you are needed to, participate in any plans or choices about the child's protection.
- Challenging dangerous or bad working practices.
- To ensure that services for children are keeping them safe, be explicit about who does what.

Recognising Child Abuse: Indicators and Importance of Reporting

Sometimes a child may exhibit various indicators of abuse, showing clearly that something is wrong, whereas other times there may be almost no warning signs at all.

Having an understanding of what to look out for is therefore essential. You need to trust your instincts and report any concerns you have. Your actions could save a child's life.

Defining Child Abuse

In simple words, child abuse encompasses any form of mistreatment directed at a child. Children can potentially encounter abuse in various settings, either from individuals they know or even from unfamiliar persons.

Child abuse can arise from purposeful harm or from the neglect of preventing harm. Parents or trusted individuals might be implicated in the abuse of children. Perpetrators could comprise a lone adult engaging in repeated abuse, numerous adults, another child, or even a collective of children.

Child abuse is often divided into four primary categories:

- Physical abuse
- Neglect
- Emotional abuse
- Sexual abuse

Understanding Physical Abuse

Physical abuse entails causing tangible physical harm to a child. This might also encompass purposefully making a child unwell.

Examples of physical abuse encompass:

- Striking or gripping
- Inflicting burns or scalds
- Hurling objects at a child
- Administering poison
- Drowning or suffocating
- Shoving or tugging
- Kicking

Understanding Sexual Abuse

Compelling a child or adolescent to engage in sexual activities is considered sexual abuse.

Sexual abuse might encompass:

- Physical interaction
- Kissing or touching
- Rubbing or fondling
- Penetrative or non-penetrative acts of assault

Similarly, these situations could also occur online:

- Children being exposed to explicit images or videos.
- Encouraging inappropriate sexual conduct in children
- Persuading a child to participate in improper sexual actions.
- Manipulating a child as a prelude to abuse

Understanding Emotional Abuse

Consistently subjecting a child to emotional mistreatment that significantly impacts their emotional growth is known as emotional abuse.

Emotional abuse could encompass:

- Undermining a child's sense of self-worth, love, and competence
- Ridiculing a child

- Repeatedly belittling a child
- Silencing a child's voice
- Yelling or using offensive language towards a child
- Name-calling or bullying
- Impeding normal social interactions
- Preventing a child from witnessing or hearing the mistreatment of others
- Persistently causing fear in a child
- Exploiting or corrupting a child emotionally

Understanding Neglect

Neglect entails consistent disregard for a child's fundamental physiological and/or psychological necessities, which can have severe repercussions on a child's well-being and growth.

Neglect could encompass:

- Substance misuse during pregnancy

Failing to provide a child with:

- Essential nutritious food and beverages
- Opportunities for proper personal hygiene practices
- Sufficient clothing
- A clean and secure living environment
- Adequate warmth
- Care and affection
- Shielding
- Oversight
- Access to essential medical and dental attention

Peer-on-Peer Abuse: Children's Potential for Harm

Children have the potential to mistreat their peers, a situation referred to as child-to-child or peer-on-peer abuse. Such behaviour is possible at various ages and could involve either an individual child or a group.

Child-to-child or peer-on-peer abuse may encompass:

- Acts of bullying
- Participation in cyberbullying
- Instances of sexual violence
- Involvement in cases of sexual harassment

- Display of physical aggression, including actions like hitting, biting, shaking, hair pulling, and kicking
- Engagement in sexting

It's crucial to pay close attention to the perspectives of all children and extend suitable assistance whenever needed.

Beyond Family Boundaries: Extra-Familial Harm to Children

Children may encounter abuse not just within their family circles, but also beyond those boundaries, in various alternative contexts. This phenomenon is termed extra-familial harm.

Numerous dangers lurk, such as:

- Instances of sexual and criminal exploitation
- Engagement with gangs
- Exposure to online hazards
- Susceptibility to extremism

Factors Amplifying Vulnerability to Child Abuse

Children are susceptible to abuse as they might lack the capacity to oppose or elude it. Specific children could be at increased vulnerability due to:

- Challenges with speech, language, or communication
- Disabilities
- Backgrounds marked by violence, substance abuse, alcoholism, or mental health issues.
- Social isolation
- Diverse factors like race, religion, culture, and language
- Consistent non-attendance at school
- School-related difficulties
- Recent or frequent changes of residence
- Absence of a secure home environment

Interlinking Mental Health and Safeguarding

Mental health challenges might signal that a child has undergone or is in danger of experiencing abuse, neglect, or exploitation.

Personnel must carefully monitor children on a daily basis and take note of those displaying behaviours that could indicate the presence of a mental health issue or vulnerability to one.

Being conscious of how a child's encounters with abuse and neglect impact their mental health, education, and conduct is crucial for staff.

Staff members should assess when mental health matters intersect with safeguarding concerns.

Understanding 'County Lines': Illicit Drug Distribution Networks

The term 'county lines' refers to the operations of gangs and organised criminal networks that illicitly distribute drugs across various regions within the UK. This is facilitated through dedicated phone lines or other channels known as 'deal lines.'

Exploitation forms a central part of county lines activities, with the involvement of children and vulnerable adults in the movement and storage of drugs and monetary proceeds.

To ensure compliance, those involved employ tactics such as:

- Intimidation
- Acts of violence
- Manipulation
- Utilisation of weapons

Young individuals may be coerced into transporting drugs and money between different locations, often employing methods like 'plugging' to conceal drugs within their bodies.

Impact of Domestic Violence on Children

Domestic violence can have severe repercussions on the physical and mental well-being of children and young people.

Possible signs that a child has witnessed domestic violence include:

- Bedwetting
- Acts of aggression
- The emergence of eating disorders
- Frequent tantrums

Understanding Honour-Based Violence/Abuse

Honour-Based Violence/Abuse encompasses:

- Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)
- Coerced Marriage

- Acts such as Breast Ironing

Understanding Female Genital Mutilation (FGM): A Harmful Practice

'Female Genital Mutilation' (FGM) pertains to any actions that involve the partial or complete removal of the external female genitalia or causing harm to the female genital organs.

It is unlawful within the UK and constitutes a type of child abuse with enduring adverse effects.

Teachers in England and Wales are legally obligated to inform the police if they become aware that FGM has been performed on a girl under 18 years old.

Forced Marriage Laws in England and Wales

Compelling an individual into marriage is considered a criminal act within the jurisdiction of England and Wales. A forced marriage materialises when one or both parties enter into matrimony without their complete and willing agreement, and when coercion, violence, intimidation, or any form of duress is employed to induce their participation in the marriage.

These forms of intimidation can encompass physical, emotional, or psychological tactics.

Understanding Breast Ironing: Harmful Practice

Breast Ironing is a form of bodily harm. This practice involves the use of heated or hard objects to press or manipulate the breasts of a pubescent girl, often with the aim of inhibiting their growth or making them disappear.

Understanding 'Child Sexual Exploitation' (CSE) and 'Child Criminal Exploitation' (CCE)

CSE and CCE encompass abusive actions whereby an individual or collectives exploits a power disparity to manipulate, deceive, or coerce a child into participating in sexual or criminal actions. The basis of this power imbalance is not solely age but can also arise from diverse factors like:

- gender
- sexual orientation
- cognitive capacity
- physical prowess
- social position
- access to resources

In specific instances, the victim might be compelled to engage in these actions in return for something they need or desire. This can lead to financial gain or an enhanced status for the perpetrator or facilitator. The perpetration of this abuse can originate from both males and females,

individuals and groups, adults and children alike. It is important to note that exploitation can manifest through physical means, facilitated scenarios, or online avenues.

Protecting Children from Extremist Influences and Radicalisation

Children are at risk of being influenced by extremist ideologies and radicalisation. Their vulnerability highlights the need for safeguarding measures to shield them from this danger, just as they are safeguarded from other forms of harm.

Preventing children and adults from being drawn into acts of terrorism is a vital aspect of safeguarding obligations. This commitment underscores the broader effort to ensure the welfare of individuals.

To provide clarity, the following definitions are presented:

Extremism: Extremism encompasses actively opposing fundamental values such as democracy, the rule of law, individual liberties, and the mutual respect for diverse faiths and beliefs. This may extend to advocating for harm against armed forces members.

Radicalisation: Radicalisation refers to the process by which an individual develops support for terrorism and the extremist ideologies linked with terrorist groups.

Terrorism: Terrorism involves actions that jeopardise or cause serious violence against individuals, result in significant property damage, or disrupt electronic systems on a significant scale. The intent or threat is aimed at influencing the government or intimidating the public, driven by a political, religious, or ideological cause.

Recognising Child Development and Signs of Abuse

You'll likely be acquainted with the developmental milestones, which outline the anticipated progression of growth and advancement during specific phases of children's lives.

Child abuse often results in detrimental effects on a child's development, causing harmful outcomes. However, it's important to recognise that children follow diverse paths of development, and signs of abuse can manifest quite differently in each child. These indicators hinge on factors such as age and developmental stage.

In your capacity as an early years professional, you occupy a unique position that allows you to closely monitor a child's journey of development. This empowers you to spot any unusual shifts in their behaviour, appearance, or progress. Through your observations of their play and developmental patterns, you might encounter or become aware of troubling elements.

Some of these observations may include:

- Worn or poorly fitting clothes emanating an unwashed or stale urine odour.
- Consistently lacking proper personal hygiene and access to basic healthcare, including dental care
- Delays in achieving developmental milestones, like speech or walking, without valid medical reasons.
- Changes in behaviour, such as becoming withdrawn, clingy, tearful, anxious, fearful, overly fatigued or hungry, struggling to focus, showing disruptive tendencies, or displaying aggression.
- Recoiling or reacting fearfully to sudden movements or touch
- Persistent hunger, potentially involving food theft, excessive consumption, or secret hoarding.
- Resistance to changing clothes in front of others.
- Frequent unexplained injuries, marks, burns, bruises, cuts, or scratches
- Unwillingness to participate in physical activities.
- Avoidance of specific individuals
- Physical or sexual health issues, evidenced by discomfort or itching in genital and anal areas.
- Inclusion of inappropriate themes in conversations, pretend play, or drawings
- Exposure to adult topics like sex or drugs
- Comprehending violence beyond their age's norm
- Irregular school attendance or punctuality
- Parents displaying indifference, abruptness, or aggression.
- Parents frequently demeaning, fault-finding, or shaming their child.
- Parents appearing intoxicated or under the influence of substances.
- Increasingly strained parent-child relationship

Assessing Potential Indicators of Physical Abuse

While evaluating physical injuries in children, certain red flags warrant attention:

- **Unclear Origin:** Neither the child nor their guardian can provide a clear explanation for the injury.
- **Unusual Location:** The injury occurs in an atypical or unexpected part of the body.
- **Discrepancy in Explanation:** The given explanation doesn't match the nature of the injury, leading to doubts.
- **Suspicious Nature:** The injury raises suspicions of being intentionally inflicted.
- **Repeated Injuries:** The child sustains multiple injuries over time, without a reasonable explanation.

It's vital to note that not all physical injuries indicate abuse. Children's innate curiosity and propensity for accidents are factors to consider. However, a recurring pattern of accidental injuries might signal inadequate supervision or other concerns.

Navigating Sensitive Conversations: Balancing Openness and Caution

Addressing most concerns can be achieved through an open yet sensitive conversation. Transient challenges at home, like strained relationships, job-related stress, financial constraints, mourning the loss of a family member, or signs of illness, as well as sibling rivalries, might contribute to the situation.

Engaging in a brief dialogue with parents might offer a straightforward explanation, dispel misunderstandings, and provide logical reasons for the concerns. While recording these issues and notifying your superior is essential, certain situations warrant refraining from discussing concerns with parents, potentially exposing the child to higher risks.

Determining whether to communicate in such cases can be intricate, and it's recommended to always consult your supervisor or the 'Designated Safeguarding Lead' (DSL) before proceeding.

Online Safety (E-safety)

Leveraging digital media to enhance children's learning and expand their exposure to the world is encouraged and highly valued. Nevertheless, the internet presents a significant potential threat to children's safety.

There's a risk of them encountering inappropriate content, their images being misused online, and their private or sensitive information falling into the wrong hands. It's crucial to shield children from the potential hazards of online technology and the improper use of electronic devices.

An effective e-safety policy must be established, extending its reach to staff, parents, children, visitors, and contractors who utilise technological devices, access the internet, or interact with the site. Age-appropriate filters should be implemented, and staff should assess content prior to introducing it to the children.

Designating an individual responsible for e-safety, encompassing all aspects of policy and procedures, is paramount for safeguarding the well-being of children. Additionally, supervising and overseeing the use of phones and mobile devices is essential to ensure that confidential information, including photos, videos, and security footage, is securely stored.

NSPCC

The NSPCC, also known as the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, functions as an independent entity that depends on public funding. Its mission revolves around advocating for children, striving to enhance legal frameworks, and implementing measures for their improved protection.

The organisation actively engages with prominent corporations, urging them to enhance their safeguarding protocols, especially in the digital realm. Collaborations with law enforcement agencies, including the police and the 'National Crime Agency', are integral to its efforts in combating online child abuse.

Through a variety of initiatives, the NSPCC offers extensive guidance and assistance to parents, children, individuals, and institutions involved in child welfare. It also collaborates with Members of Parliament to conduct research and enhance existing legislation.

Collectively, the NSPCC emphasises the shared responsibility of safeguarding childhood and preventing any form of abuse, echoing the sentiment that everyone should strive to ensure children's safety and well-being. Numerous instances of abuse often evade detection or go unreported in the UK. This makes it exceedingly difficult to provide an exact count of the children who are currently enduring abuse within the country.

It is worth noting that many children do not possess a comprehensive understanding of what constitutes abuse, and some are constrained from reporting due to a mixture of fear and shame. The NSPCC presents the following statistical insights:

- Currently, there are approximately 50,000 children identified as requiring protection from abuse within the UK.
- In the year 2015, over 29,000 children and adolescents reached out to Childline to discuss incidents of abuse.
- Our estimate suggests that for every child identified as needing protection from abuse, there may be around 8 others who are undergoing similar experiences.

Instances of sexual offences against children have shown a significant upsurge, and there is a noticeable escalation in the number of children being included in the child protection system.

Statistics

- Around 1 in 14 children have experienced physical abuse, with disabled children being more than three times as likely to face abuse compared to their non-disabled peers.
- Approximately 1 in 10 children have encountered neglect, which is a factor in 60% of serious case reviews. Neglect is also the most frequent cause for taking child protection measures.
- About 1 in 14 children have faced emotional abuse from a parent or guardian. Emotional abuse ranks as the second most prevalent cause for children requiring safeguarding against abuse.
- Around 1 in 20 children in the UK have encountered sexual abuse. Notably, 1 in 3 children who experienced sexual abuse from an adult did not disclose it to anyone. Additionally, over 90% of sexually abused children were victimised by individuals known to them.

Your Response

You might have noticed behaviours that suggest a child is experiencing abuse or neglect. Regularly interacting with children places you in a position where you can recognise indications of concern.

Additionally, it establishes a sense of trust with the child, potentially making them comfortable sharing information with you.

Instances of a child revealing such information are infrequent, but should this occur, you are obligated to take necessary steps in the child's best interest. Your prompt response will facilitate the implementation of early assistance. We will now discuss the most effective approaches for addressing a disclosure.

What does disclosure constitute?

Disclosure is when an individual asserts that an instance of abuse has transpired or is presently occurring. Such revelations can occur in various ways. For example:

Direct disclosure – This encompasses scenarios such as:

- A child explicitly stating that they are experiencing abuse or neglect.
- A child providing descriptions of abusive or neglectful situations.
- A child expressing willingness to share information about abuse, contingent on certain conditions being fulfilled.
- A child simulating that another child is undergoing abuse.

Indirect disclosure – this may encompass:

- Verbal suggestions alluding to abuse.
- Written implications regarding abuse.
- Visual implications, such as drawings or artwork, that hint at abusive situations.

Third-party disclosure – This includes instances such as:

- A child revealing abuse occurring to another child.
- Indirect disclosure.
- An adult expressing apprehensions regarding a child they believe is in a vulnerable situation.
- An adult raising concerns about the behaviour of either an adult or a child that could potentially jeopardise a child's safety.

Instances illustrating how disclosure might occur include:

- A parent, professional, or another adult might communicate their apprehensions by discussing their own concerns.
- You could potentially catch wind of another conversation where concerns are being deliberated.

- A child might personally confide in you, openly stating that they are undergoing or have encountered abuse.
- A child might inadvertently recount a situation that raises serious concerns.
- A child could unintentionally utter something unusual or peculiar that contains indicators of abuse.
- You might unintentionally come across a situation where a child confides in another child, or a child might confide in you regarding another child.

Addressing a Disclosure

If a child unveils to you a situation that should never have occurred, there are certain steps you must take. Receiving a disclosure from a child is undeniably challenging, but you must maintain your professionalism, prioritising the well-being of the child and managing your own emotions. In said circumstances, you should:

- Remain composed.
- Attentively listen to their words.
- Mentally record all the details they provide and, when possible, jot them down promptly.
- React with empathy and kindness.
- If they become distressed, offer your support.
- Assure them that confiding in you was the correct choice.
- Express your concern for their well-being.
- Promptly and gently encourage them to share more if they're comfortable.
- Allow them to speak at their own rhythm.
- Clarify your commitment to ensuring their safety.
- Outline your intended actions and the individuals you plan to consult with.

Inappropriate Responses to a Disclosure

Keeping in mind that the child has selected you as a confidant, your reaction must be suitable, providing the child with the reassurance that their disclosure was commendable, and they can continue sharing with you. You should:

- Demonstrate care, but avoid displaying shock, anger, distress, or intense emotions.
- Refrain from posing leading or closed questions.
- Steer clear of forming assumptions or accusations.
- Avoid providing suggestions or imposing thoughts on them.
- Refrain from asking an excessive number of personal questions.
- Do not commit to keeping their disclosure a secret.
- Refrain from making pledges you can't fulfil. Ensure they don't perceive doubt from you.

Grasping the Significance of Confidentiality Principles

When someone confides in you, it doesn't entail a vow of absolute secrecy. Confidentiality entails sharing information solely with those who require that knowledge. You must explicitly convey to the child that you cannot keep their disclosure entirely confidential, and you're obliged to inform individuals who can offer assistance. Failure to relay the information and subsequent ongoing abuse of the child can lead to legal consequences. More critically, the child might suffer severe harm, and in extreme cases death.

Reasons Behind Children's Reluctance to Disclose

The act of disclosing information doesn't come naturally for most children. Numerous children may choose never to share their experiences. This may be because:

- The child might grapple with feelings of guilt, believing the abuse is warranted or earned.
- Their attachment to the abuser might make them reluctant to speak out.
- They could lack comprehension of being in an abusive situation altogether.
- Fear might deter them from disclosing.
- They might not identify anyone trustworthy to confide in.
- The child might perceive the abuse as a normal occurrence.
- They might be hoping the abuse will cease without intervention.
- Emotions of embarrassment or shame could deter disclosure.
- Concerns about not being believed or taken seriously might arise.
- A potential disability could hinder their ability to disclose.
- Their age might render them too young to communicate such matters.

Why Adults Hesitate to Intervene

The reluctance to share information isn't exclusive to children. At times, adults might refrain from responding to a disclosure. Undoubtedly, sharing information is crucial for safeguarding children through services. Some excuses why adults may refrain from passing on a concern include:

- Concerns about tarnishing their personal or organisational reputation.
- Doubts regarding the effectiveness of social care or police intervention.
- Apprehensions about the responses of involved close friends and family.
- Possessing a personal relationship with the abuser.
- Fears of lodging an incorrect accusation.
- Distrust in the truthfulness of the child's account.
- Confusion about the appropriate course of action.
- Belief that addressing the situation rests with someone else.

Engaging with the Child's Parents

Prioritise reporting to the DSL (Designated Safeguarding Lead) before conversing with parents. The DSL might then consult the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) to determine the next steps. You should NOT speak to the child's parent first.

The Ramifications of Failing to React

Recognising that we are handling individuals' lives and acknowledging that responding to a disclosure can evoke stress and apprehension is entirely reasonable.

There's a possibility of it being a mistaken concern with a straightforward explanation. Nonetheless, in the event of a genuine issue, the potential repercussions of not responding could far surpass those of taking appropriate action. Failure to respond not only leaves you susceptible to legal consequences and potential exclusion from working with children but also poses a significant threat to the child's safety, potentially exposing them to further abuse or neglect.

Neglecting to act might grant the abuser the opportunity to persist, potentially leading to grave harm inflicted upon the child. In the most severe instances, it could tragically culminate in the loss of a child's life. Choosing not to act might also enable the abuser to victimise other children, potentially more than one.

If you find yourself uncertain about whether action is warranted, the optimal course of action is to discuss your concerns with the right individual. This individual could be your line manager, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), or children's social care. Sharing your concerns serves the purpose of safeguarding a child against continued abuse and ensuring that the responsible party is dealt with in accordance with the law.

Assistance and counsel are readily accessible from your Safeguarding Partners, as well as from government guidance materials available on 'gov.uk', particularly the 'Working together to safeguard children' statutory guidance document.

Your Obligations

Upon encountering a safeguarding matter that has been revealed to you or has raised concerns, it is imperative to report it. Timely reporting is crucial, as it enables the relevant authorities to promptly implement early support and collaborate to ensure the safety of children.

Practitioners must grasp the significance of providing early assistance for a child who:

- Acts as a young carer.

- Faces risks related to radicalisation, exploitation, slavery, or trafficking.
- Resides in an environment influenced by drug and alcohol abuse.
- Experiences disabilities or additional requirements.
- Repeatedly goes missing.
- Returns to their family after being in care.
- Is susceptible to involvement in criminal or antisocial activities.
- Has special educational needs (with or without an Education, Health, and Care Plan).
- Is impacted by familial circumstances, such as mental health issues or domestic violence.
- Is in a private foster care arrangement.

The Role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

Every organisation is required to designate a person as the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). This is the individual to whom you should communicate your concerns.

The DSL's responsibilities encompass:

- Staying updated on legislation and participating in child protection training.
- Organising safeguarding training for staff.
- Raising awareness about signs of child abuse.
- Ensuring the implementation of safeguarding policies and adherence to procedures.
- Regularly reviewing safeguarding policies and procedures.
- Making decisions regarding appropriate actions in response to concerns.
- Referring reports to children's social care or law enforcement.
- Collaborating with various agencies for safeguarding matters and child protection plans.

Subsequent Actions

You are required to inform your DSL about a disclosure within 24 hours. The DSL will then determine the appropriate steps to take based on your concern. Depending on the severity and urgency of the situation, potential actions could involve:

- Contacting OFSTED.
- Reaching out to your DSL, or their deputy in their absence.
- Engaging with parents to seek clarification and address misunderstandings.
- Observing the situation and documenting concerns.
- Communicating with the three Safeguarding Partners to engage an officer in a discussion (referred to as a referral).
- Contacting the police.

In the event that you are unable to reach your DSL or if the concern is not related to your workplace, the most suitable course of action is to directly contact children's social care or the police.

Your local authority will assess the situation and determine the necessary steps to take within 24 hours. You might receive information about their decision, or you can initiate contact to inquire. However, owing to confidentiality, the information shared will be based on a need-to-know basis.

Dealing with Concerns Involving a Professional

Addressing concerns related to another professional, especially a colleague, can be challenging. Your apprehension might revolve around procedural lapses, insufficient actions, or even mistreatment of children.

Nonetheless, the process of reporting a concern remains unchanged – it should be done urgently. OFSTED has developed a policy outlining safeguarding procedures and steps to take if you have suspicions of misconduct.

 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/whistleblowing-about-childrens-social-care-services-to-ofsted>

Fearing your concerns are being dismissed

DSLs are trained to address child welfare reports and determine appropriate actions. However, if you firmly believe your concerns are valid, but your DSL isn't taking them seriously and you sense your report is being disregarded, you have the option to directly contact children's social care to discuss the matter.

Additionally, seeking guidance from the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) is advisable. Ensuring your report reaches the correct authorities is vital. You shouldn't assume that another individual is handling a concern you've identified.

Seeking Advice

Reflecting on past concerns and the outcomes of your actions can aid in comprehending current situations.

Consult your DSL to determine if the family has prior involvement with social care. They can review the child's records for any past concerns. Your DSL can also collaborate with the Safeguarding Partners, within confidentiality limits, for more insight.

Your Local Authority's website is a valuable resource for information when submitting a report.

Every organisation possesses a child protection or safeguarding policy. Familiarise yourself with the whereabouts of your workplace's child protection/safeguarding policy and its contents regarding reporting concerns. This policy will outline the procedures to adhere to. Additionally, there's likely a form for documenting incidents or concerns.

Documenting your concerns

Following your report to your organisation's DSL, your initial focus should be on promptly jotting down all the details you provided. You should compose the written account during your conversation with the child, and if the basis for your concern is a child's disclosure to you, try to document their precise words. The primary objective of your written record is to ensure accurate information is documented, as it could prove essential in the future.

Your report will play a pivotal role in shaping decisions undertaken by the DSL and local authority concerning the child's well-being. The DSL will maintain a confidential copy of the report on file and should another adult have concerns about the same child in the future, they could refer to the records and find your report beneficial. Further reasons for documenting your concerns immediately include:

- If social care determines the need for a deeper inquiry, your documented account could prove highly valuable.
- Should police intervention be required, your report might serve as a reference.
- Your report might also serve as evidence in legal proceedings.
- Possessing your own record will aid in recalling precisely what was communicated.
- You could potentially contribute significantly to any care plan devised for the child.
- Even if your concerns don't lead to further action, it remains crucial to ensure meticulous documentation.

Ensuring your report is factual

To the best of your ability, you should try to ensure that the report you document is as factual as possible and avoid interrupting or interjecting during a disclosure to gather as much voluntarily given information as possible. This helps avoid interference with events. You should exclude any speculations or personal opinions, taking into account only what is being said. Compose the report as an impartial and accurate portrayal of an incident or occurrence.

When documenting a disclosure, you should:

- Incorporate how the concern was brought to your awareness, your immediate response, and provide a comprehensive account of all actions undertaken thus far.
- Not base your record on opinions, rather keep it factual and accurate
- Strive for a concise yet detailed account; focus on the essential points and key details.
- Utilise clear and straightforward language
- Record quotes exactly as the child says them
- Limit the disclosure of this information solely to the DSL.

Safe-Guarding Forms

Your organisation should provide a designated form for you to complete. Refer to your child protection/safeguarding policy for guidance if you encounter confusion.

This form may request that you provide information regarding the child in accordance with:

- Child's name, address, age, gender, and ethnicity
- Existence of any disabilities
- Names, contact information, and relationship details of family members or cohabitants
- Name and contact information of the child's doctor or health visitor
- Any additional pertinent information concerning the child

Including information that helps provide a comprehensive understanding of the situation, such as:

- Date, time, and location of the incident or disclosure.
- The nature of the concerns.
- Specific details of when and where you observed indicators of abuse or received the disclosure.
- Elaboration on any injuries or instances of abuse.
- A thorough account of what you witnessed or heard, including the activities before, during, and after the concern arose.
- Exact verbatim statements made and by whom.
- Names and particulars of all individuals involved.
- If known, the name and address of the alleged abuser.

You'll also need to incorporate the following information:

- Your name and role within the organisation.
- An account of your actions and communication.
- Identification of who received the concern, their name, and position.
- People you have conversed with regarding the child or incident.
- Date, time, and location of the report submission.
- An explanation of any initial actions taken.
- Incorporating these aspects ensures a comprehensive and accurate report.

The Sequence of Events

After you've reported your concerns to the DSL, they will initiate contact with the local authority's referral assessment team within children's social care, setting in motion an investigation of the concerns. In certain regions, this may be termed the 'Single Point of Access' (SPA) for children's social care. The referral assessment team will then make a determination based on whether the child is at immediate risk of harm. This process might involve:

- Reviewing existing social care records.
- Engaging with other professionals involved with the family.
- Conversing with the family.
- Speaking with the child.
- Arranging a medical examination for the child.
- Collaborating with the police if a potential criminal offense is involved.

A coordinated meeting could take place, involving essential professionals associated with the child. The purpose is to exchange information and formulate strategies for safeguarding the child, culminating in the creation of a child protection plan.

You or your DSL might be anticipated to participate, assuming a pivotal role in enforcing and evaluating the plan's effectiveness.

Absence of Subsequent Communication

If, following the passage of a day since your report was forwarded, neither you nor your DSL have received feedback from social care, it's advisable to reach out and inquire about the situation.

Social care might determine that your involvement isn't required. In such instances, they will still offer guidance on how to address the raised concerns. Your manager or DSL should have received training on procedures for such circumstances, as well as guidance if you do not agree with the concluding decision.

Post-referral, it's crucial to remember that your engagement doesn't cease entirely. You should continue observing the child, maintaining an inventory of your perturbation, and keeping the DSL well-enlightened to any new concerns.

Explore your Local Authority's website for additional information and resources