Wales safeguarding procedures

Guidance setting out roles and responsibilities for anyone working with children in Wales.

December 2019

Background to the new guidance

The Wales safeguarding procedures replace the All Wales child protection procedures 2008.

The Wales safeguarding procedures help practitioners to apply part 7 of the Social Services and Well-Being (Wales) Act 2014 and relevant volumes of the statutory guidance Working together to safeguard people. They update, strengthen and clarify the procedures everyone must follow, with the aim of standardising safeguarding practice across Wales and between agencies.

There are hyperlinks to relevant legislation and guidance throughout the procedures as well as a glossary to ensure that every practitioner is using the same term in the same way. Pointers for practice in working with children are also included providing information on how to complete tasks.

The procedures were developed by talking and listening to partners and stakeholder groups from across Wales. This process was led by the Wales Safeguarding Procedures Project Board, who will regularly update the procedures.

The procedures need to be adopted by each of the Regional Safeguarding Boards in Wales – it is anticipated that implementation will be completed by April 2020.

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Key topics covered by the guidance

There are six sections relating to safeguarding procedures for children and young people at risk of harm in Wales.

Section 1: Safeguarding principles and effective practice: children

This section covers:

- information on safeguarding practice principles underpinning legislation, guidance and procedures
- the principles that lead to an effective safeguarding system
- key definitions relevant to safeguarding children as outlined in the Social Services and Well-being Act (Wales) 2014
- an overview of the safeguarding process describing the different ways practitioners can protect children at risk from harm, abuse and neglect as well as their responsibilities to identify, assess and intervene
- early help and prevention to address any emerging concerns about abuse, neglect and harm outlining the roles and responsibilities of the practitioner.

Section 2: The duty to report a child at risk of abuse, neglect and/ or harm

This section explains what practitioners must do if they have concerns about a child at risk of harm, abuse and/or neglect including:

- what the statutory duty to report is and what it means for practitioners
- how practitioners should respond in specific situations, for example when there are concerns about an unborn child
- the responsibilities practitioners should bear in mind when reporting a concern.

Section 3 (part 1): Responding to a report of a child at risk of harm, abuse and/or neglect

This section covers procedures relating to practitioner roles and responsibilities following receipt of a report by social services about a child at risk of harm, abuse or neglect including:

- what is meant by significant harm
- what to do following a report
- who to involve and how to keep them informed
- how to progress concerns.

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Section 3 (part 2): Decision making and initial child protection conferences

This section outlines the decision-making process for concluding s47 enquiries.

- what the statutory duty to report is and what it means for practitioners
- how practitioners should respond in specific situations, for example when there are concerns about an unborn child
- the responsibilities practitioners should bear in mind when completing a duty to report
- who to involve in the initial conference and how to prepare for it.
- the decision-making process and tasks involved in an initial conference
- procedures required to add a child to the Child Protection Register and develop a care and support protection plan
- actions to be taken after the conference.

Section 4: Planning and intervention for children on the child protection register

This section includes the procedures relating to planning for a child on the register. It covers:

- aims and contents of care and support protection plans
- engaging the parents/carers in the plan
- child participation
- moves by children on the child protection register
- missing children on the child protection register.

Section 5: Safeguarding allegations/ concerns about practitioners and those in positions of trust

This section sets out arrangements for responding to safeguarding concerns about those whose work, either in a paid or voluntary capacity, which brings them into contact with children or adults at risk. It also includes individuals who have caring responsibilities for children or adults in need of care and support and those whose employment or voluntary work brings them into contact with children or adults at risk. The procedures cover:

- when to use these procedures and overarching principles
- the professional strategy meeting
- cross boundary issues
- confidentiality and record of the professional strategy meeting.

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Section 6. All Wales Practice Guides

The procedures include 10 practice guides on specific issues for practitioners working with children and young people.

- Safeguarding children from Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)
- Safeguarding children from abuse related to cultural and religious beliefs
- Safeguarding children who may be trafficked
- Safeguarding children affected by domestic abuse
- Safeguarding children from neglect
- Safeguarding children from online abuse
- Safeguarding children where there are concerns about harmful sexual behaviour
- Safeguarding children who are home educated
- Safeguarding children who go missing from home or care
- Safeguarding children from child sexual exploitation (CSE).

Read the Wales Safeguarding Procedures

Wales Safeguarding Procedures Project Board (2019) **Wales Safeguarding Procedures**. [Cardiff]: Wales Safeguarding Procedures Project Board

References

Children in Wales (2008) **All Wales child protection procedures**. [Cardiff]: Children in Wales.

Social Services and Well-Being (Wales) Act 2014, part 7 Safeguarding

Welsh Government (2019) **Working Together to Safeguard People**. [Cardiff]: Welsh Government.

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