

Disguised Compliance

Part A: Trainer Notes (Full Detail)

1 Exploring the Victim's Voice

- Evie (18 months) cannot verbalise needs – her “voice” is shown through injuries, health, behaviour, and delays.
- Signs: bruises, headbutting, head lice, delayed hospital presentation.
- Sophie minimises concerns (“bruises easily,” “another child did it”).
- Professionals must interpret Evie’s lived experience, not just Sophie’s words.

Trainer prompts / discussion

- How do we capture a child’s voice when they cannot speak?
- What was Evie communicating through her behaviour/injuries?

Activity

Speaking as Evie: participants describe her life from her perspective.

4 Professional Reflections

- Professionals relieved by surface cooperation.
- Compliance overshadowed Evie’s voice (health, behaviour).
- Drift risk: positives (housing) accepted without testing outcomes.
- Reflection: disguised compliance is powerful; must be challenged.

Trainer prompts / discussion

- What made Sophie’s compliance convincing?
- What blind spots may have affected professional judgment?

Activity

Personal reflection: recall a time cooperation reassured you – was it real change?

2 Impact on the Vulnerable Person

- Physical harm: unexplained injuries, untreated health needs.
- Emotional harm: disrupted attachment, distress behaviours.
- Developmental harm: unstable care, unsafe environment, neglect.
- Long-term risk: chronic emotional trauma, poor development.

Trainer prompts / discussion

- What are long-term effects of repeated neglect?
- What hidden harm does delayed hospital attendance reveal?

Activity

Risk matrix: physical, emotional, developmental categories.

5 Ethical & Emotional Dilemmas

- Empathy for Sophie’s vulnerabilities (PND, housing issues) vs Evie’s safety.
- Workers may feel hope at cooperation → optimism bias.
- Emotional toll: frustration, guilt, self-doubt.

Trainer prompts / discussion

- How do we avoid being over-reassured by parental compliance?
- What emotions arise managing such cases, and how to manage them?

Activity

Debate: should Evie have been returned to Sophie after first Section 76 placement?

National Safeguarding Service

NHS Safeguarding for a Safer Wales

3 Safeguarding and Duty of Care

- GP referral delayed; health visitor escalated concerns.
- Section 47 enquiry; police and social services involved; Section 76 foster placement.
- CP plan: visits, parenting support, smoking cessation, housing changes.
- Sophie complied superficially but risks escalated (dog reintroduced, delays in care).

Trainer prompts / discussion

- Where did agencies intervene well?
- How should drift/delay have been avoided?
- How do we test whether compliance = change?

Activity / role-play

Core group meeting: decide if Evie can return home or remain separated.

6 Practical Learning Points

- Disguised compliance = surface cooperation, not change.
- Always prioritise the child’s lived experience over parental narrative.
- Avoid drift: review rigorously, set clear timescales, escalate when needed.
- Positives must be tested against child outcomes.
- Multi-agency vigilance is essential.

Trainer prompts / discussion

- How can we guard against compliance bias?
- What practical steps ensure focus on the child?

Activity / role-play

Scenario: hospital discharge decision – weigh Sophie’s story vs Evie’s risk indicators.

Wales: Key Law & Policy

- **Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014** – Part 7 safeguarding; Section 76 accommodation (in place of s.20 in Wales).
- **Wales Safeguarding Procedures (2019)** – core groups, review conferences, under-2 practice.
- **Children Act 1989 (applies in Wales)** – s.47 enquiries.
- **Public Law Outline (Wales)** – escalation to court where necessary.
- **Learning from Baby P and Welsh CPRs** – dangers of disguised compliance.

Disguised Compliance

Part B: Handout

Aim

Recognise disguised compliance; avoid drift; keep focus on the child's lived experience.

Exploring the Victim's Voice

- Evie cannot speak – voice shown through injuries, behaviour, health.
- Don't accept parental minimisation.

Impact on the Vulnerable Person

- Repeated injuries, untreated health, emotional harm, developmental delays.
- Long-term harm if neglect continues.

Safeguarding & Duty of Care

- Section 47 enquiry; foster care under Section 76.
- CP plan must be tested against outcomes for Evie.
- Compliance ≠ safety.

Professional Reflection

- Professionals reassured by surface positives.
- Must reflect on optimism bias and drift.

Ethical & Emotional Dilemmas

- Parent's trauma vs child's safety.
- Workers' emotional toll: hope, guilt, frustration.

Practical Learning Flow

1. Identify disguised compliance.
2. Prioritise child's lived experience.
3. Avoid drift with clear timescales.
4. Escalate when risks persist.
5. Multi-agency vigilance essential.

Wales: Key Law

- SSWBA 2014 (s.76); Wales Safeguarding Procedures 2019; Children Act 1989; Public Law Outline.