



To be discussed at team meetings as a contribution to the required safeguarding updates

Briefing: Neglect Strategy

To prevent children and young people from experiencing neglect and to intervene at the earliest possible stage to tackle its causes and reduce the impact on children when it happens.

INTRODUCTION

Neglect has been identified as a priority area of focus by the Safeguarding Children's Partnership through local practice reviews and Line of Sight evidence. We know from national research, as well as local evidence, the far-ranging disruption and harm of neglect causes to children is likely to have a lasting effect on their adult life. The strategy aims to improve multi agency early identification and response to neglect in North East Lincolnshire, prevent escalation of neglect cases and overall reduction in chronic neglect in the borough ultimately improving the life chances of children in North East Lincolnshire.

WHY DOES IT MATTER?

Local practice reviews and Line of Sight themes:

- Neglect was a factor in 80% of local reviews
- The voice of the child was not given weight or sought
- Lack of understanding of roles between agencies
- Inconsistent application of tools and thresholds
- Reactive practice
- Frequent injuries viewed in isolation
- Dental decay
- Missed health appointments
- Lack of training

Our professional survey results noted the feeling of a lack of professional confidence in responding to neglect as well as a lack of training resource.

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) are now better understood and should be considered by professionals working with families. Children who grow-up with neglect are likely to experience the consequences of this harm throughout their life course.

When children experience neglect, it is likely they will also experience:

-cognitive developmental delay which impacts on educational achievement and life chances. Diminished emotional wellbeing and increased behavioural difficulties. Difficulty in making and keeping relationships. Limitations on parenting skills that perpetuates inter-generational cycles of neglect.

Link: [Adverse Childhood Experiences \(ACEs\) \(youtube.com\)](#)

Link: [Childhood Trauma: The Lives of the Neglected Children \(youtube.com\)](#)

DEFINING NEGLECT

Neglect is defined as:

"The persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and / or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect can occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse.

Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- Provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment).
- Protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger.
- Ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care givers, such as older siblings who are children themselves).
- Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs".

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR US IN NORTH EAST LINCOLNSHIRE?

Tackling neglect is **everyone's responsibility** and we will ensure this ethos, culture and challenge is promoted in our county. We value input from all agencies and organisations and always welcome additional participation in how this strategy can be delivered.

Currently we are in the process of developing training and a practical toolkit to support practitioners to identify and respond to neglect. This will support the ongoing Early Help and Team Around the Family strategy.

IDENTIFYING NEGLECT

It is important to understand that in recognising neglect, there is likely multiple signs or possibly the same concern becomes more frequent. Problems can build up but these are all indications that a child/ren or carer may need support.

Sometimes neglect can be hard to spot, but indicators generally fall under these categories:

Physical – A child's basic needs, such as food, clothing, or shelter, are not met or they aren't properly supervised or kept safe.

Educational – A parent does not ensure their child is given an education.

Emotional – A child does not get the nurture and stimulation they need, either through ignoring, humiliating, intimidating, or isolating them.

Medical – A child is not given proper health care, including dental care, and refusing or ignoring medical recommendations.

When a child's needs are unmet because the parents/carers lack knowledge or skill the first choice for intervention should generally be the provision of Early Help services such as information, training and support services. To explore concerns of neglect a Team around the family (TAF) meeting could also take place, which should include all professionals that are currently working with the family and a collaborative approach must be applied throughout. This includes capturing the voice of the child and those with parental responsibility. The completion of an [Early Help Assessment](#), serves as a [conversation tool](#) that will help identify the right support at the right time.

If there is no progress, and the assessment by professionals is that progress is unlikely without more proactive intervention a referral to Children's Services in line with the [Referrals Procedure](#) should be considered with a chronology to support your concerns.

For any significant **CHILD** safeguarding concerns, call NELC Children's Integrated Front Door on (01472) 326292 Option 2.

If you have concerns about an **ADULT**, please call 01472 256256 and/or [Contact FOCUS to report concerns about an adult](#)

RESPONDING TO NEGLECT

When working with children where neglect is identified as a concern, consider the questions below to inform your assessment:

- What type of neglect is it? Has it been broken down? Are there multiple types? How do they interact?
- What is causing the neglect of the child/ren? What are the barriers to improving that child's life? What were the caregivers experiences when growing up? Consider ACE's.
- What is the impact on the child/ren in their current situation? Gain the voice of the child through conversation and observation. Consider the long term impact as well as short term. Eg. Missed health appointments, school attendance, lack of emotional availability of the caregiver.
- What are we asking of the carer/s? Is this reasonable with SMART objectives? Do they understand what you are asking of them and what it means to the child? Consider relationship building and your language in practice. This should not be punitive. What does engagement look like from the caregiver? Is engagement passive or active?
- How long has this been going on? What has been done to improve the situation for the child/ren? If a deterioration following improvement what was the trigger? What is the cumulative effect of risk over time? Consider the dangers of over optimism and case drift.
- What other kind of abuse is this enabling? We know that there is a strong link between neglect enabling other forms of abuse, particularly sexual harm.

Always seek regular supervision and support within your organisation when responding to neglect

LINKS

[Neglect Procedures Trix](#)
[Neglect Strategy](#)
[SaferNEL | Neglect - SaferNEL](#)
[Neglect: learning from case reviews](#)
[NSPCC Neglect Page](#)
[NSPCC Podcast](#)

Jenny Swann
Deputy Designated Nurse Safeguarding Adults and Children, HNY ICB
Chair of the Neglect Strategic Delivery Group
Jenny.swann2@nhs.net