

## *No.1 Neglect*

### **What is neglect?**

The definition of neglect from statutory guidance, Working Together to Safeguard Children, 2015 is '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 may 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); or
- Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment'

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

Neglect is characterised by the absence of a relationship of care between the parent/carer and the child and the failure of the parent/carer to prioritise the needs of their child. It can occur at any stage of childhood, including the teenage years.

### **Who does it affect?**

Neglect can affect children of all ages. It tends to affect boys and girls equally.

### **How is it different from other types of abuse?**

Neglect differs from other forms of abuse in that there is rarely a single incident or crisis that draws attention to the family. It is repeated, persistent, neglectful behaviour that causes incremental damage over a period of time.

### **How can school staff spot neglect?**

Staff in education settings are likely to observe a range of signs that a child may be suffering neglect. These could include:

- The child may disclose that they are left 'home alone' or that they witness domestic violence/abuse on regular basis
- A child may be very underweight with no obvious medical cause and may take food from other children
- There may be unexplained changes in the child
- The child may repeatedly miss health appointments
- The child may be persistently absent from school
- You may just have a 'gut feeling'



## What should school staff do?

Think about what you know about the child and what their life might be like. Talk to other professionals to see if they share your concerns.

If the support the school is able to offer is not achieving an acceptable standard of care for the child consider what other agencies or services may be able to support the child (Multi-Agency Early Help). Gloucestershire has developed a Neglect Toolkit which can be used to inform decision-making, assessments and planning. Your Early Help Co-ordinator will be able to advise on this.

However, if the risk escalates a MASH enquiry should be made, including a chronology of what has been tried and to what effect.

## What is the Child Neglect Toolkit?

The Child Neglect Toolkit is designed to assist you in identifying and assessing children who are at risk of neglect. It is to be used when you are concerned that the quality of care of a child you are working with suggests that their needs are being neglected. It will help you to reflect on the child's circumstances and will help you put your concerns into context and identify strengths and resources.

For further information, please see <https://www.gscb.org.uk/i-work-with-children-young-people-and-parents/issues-affecting-children-and-young-people/children-living-with-neglect-neglect-toolkit/>

## Key contacts and links

Front Door for Children's services: ☎ 01452 426565

Professionals will need to make referrals to the Front Door for Children's services by completing a MARF on the new Liquid Logic portal.

Children's Social Care Emergency Duty Team (out of hours):  
☎ 01452 614758

Police (non-emergency): ☎ 101

NSPCC

[www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk)

Abigail Serious Case Review:

<https://www.gscb.org.uk/i-work-with-children-young-people-and-parents/serious-case-reviews-and-learning-from-reviews-and-audits/serious-case-reviews/>

Daniel Pelka Serious Case Review:

<http://www.staffordbc.gov.uk/live/Documents/PolicyAndImprovement/Serious--Case-Review---Daniel-Pelka.pdf>