



Cheshire East Local
Safeguarding Children Board

"I feel worthless, unwanted
no matter what I do."

CHESHIRE EAST
NEGLECT
STRATEGY
2017- 2019

NEGLECT AFFECTS 1 IN 10 YOUNG PEOPLE

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Foreword, Independent Chair of the LSCB

I am pleased to present the Cheshire East Neglect Strategy 2017-19. This important multi-agency strategy has been developed by Cheshire East Safeguarding Children's Board, in consultation with the Children and Young People's Trust, and applies to all agencies working within Cheshire East. It is expected that emerging or refreshed relevant agency policies and procedures will take into account the strategic priorities identified within this document.

I urge all agencies and professionals, along with the wider voluntary sector and community, to read the strategy, to sign up to it and to think about how you can make a purposeful contribution to its implementation.

Whilst complex safeguarding i.e. child sexual exploitation, radicalisation etc are dominating the media, we must not lose sight of neglect. Neglect remains the most common form of child abuse across the UK and is usually the most common reason for a child being subject to a child protection plan. Numbers of recorded cruelty and neglect offences in England and Northern Ireland are now the highest they have been for a decade.

The impact of neglect on children and young people is enormous. Neglect causes great distress to children, leading to poor health, educational and social outcomes and is potentially fatal. Lives are destroyed, children's abilities to make secure

attachments are affected and their ability to attend and attain at school is reduced. Their emotional health and well-being is often compromised and this impacts on their success in adulthood and their ability to parent in the future.

This refreshed strategy builds on the achievements of the 2014-17 strategy and further demonstrates the commitment and ambition of all partners in Cheshire East to maintain our focus to better identify children experiencing neglect and to more effectively join up the support offered to families in order to improve the outcomes for our children and young people.

GFrame

**Gill Frame
Independent Chair,
Cheshire East LSCB**



Definition of Neglect

Neglect¹ 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 born, neglect may involve a parent/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.

Young Person's Definition

A key part of our strategy is to work with young people, particularly around adolescent neglect. We have gathered the experiences and thoughts of those young people who have experienced neglect (their quotes are scattered throughout this document). We have also talked to their peers, to better understand how they could help. Through our safeguarding surveys with young people they have told us that they do not understand the term 'neglect' and would not know how to spot the signs or how to support a friend who was experiencing neglect. Our campaign is based on what young people have told us would have most impact.

Young people told us neglect to them means....

"Not being fed."

"Not properly looked after."

"Not having a proper house."

"Not having proper food."

"Parents not looking after themselves."

"Not having a proper bath."

Cheshire East's Vision and Principles

In Cheshire East we are committed to making a difference to the lives of children and young people in our communities. We want Cheshire East to be a great place to be young, where all children and young people thrive and feel safe from harm and neglect. Our Neglect Strategy is aligned with our improvement plan and will focus on the key things we think will make the most difference to improving the lives of our children and young people:

We always put children and young people first

We take action to make positive change a reality

We understand the impact the situation is having on the child or young person

We work with families to achieve long lasting change



Why we need a neglect strategy

There is considerable national research and local evidence which demonstrates the damage done to children and young people living in situations of neglect. Whilst the harm resulting from neglect can be especially damaging in the first 18 months of life, it has a cumulative impact across childhood and into adolescence and so affects all of our children and young people. Sadly, for some children the consequences of neglect are fatal.

Neglect is the most common reason for a child to be the subject of a child protection plan (45% in Cheshire East).

Neglect is the form of maltreatment more likely to be repeated.

Neglect exposes children to other forms of abuse, eg, child sexual exploitation, increasing vulnerability.

Neglect can be difficult to identify, making it hard for professionals to take action to protect a child.

Neglect is an area where there can be drift and delay; professionals can become de-sensitised to children's living conditions and experiences of poor parenting.

What we want from our new strategy

We want our strategy to.....

- More robustly tackle the 'neglect challenge',
- More effectively mitigate the impact this form of child abuse has on children and young people.
- Be able to identify neglect much sooner when it happens and earlier in children's lives.
- Reduce the number of children that suffer neglect and reduce the impact and time they suffer.
- Elevate child and adolescent neglect to the highest level of awareness and priority that this single most prevalent form of child abuse merits.
- Deliver a well trained workforce confident in tackling neglect and a public that recognises and reports neglect.

"Mum and dad have not been able to look after me properly but this has improved dramatically since social workers' involvement".



'From experience sometimes when neglected it is hard to accept why people get concerned as they are not used to people caring for them.'

What we've achieved so far

This is our second Neglect Strategy, having first developed a comprehensive strategy in 2013. So far we have:

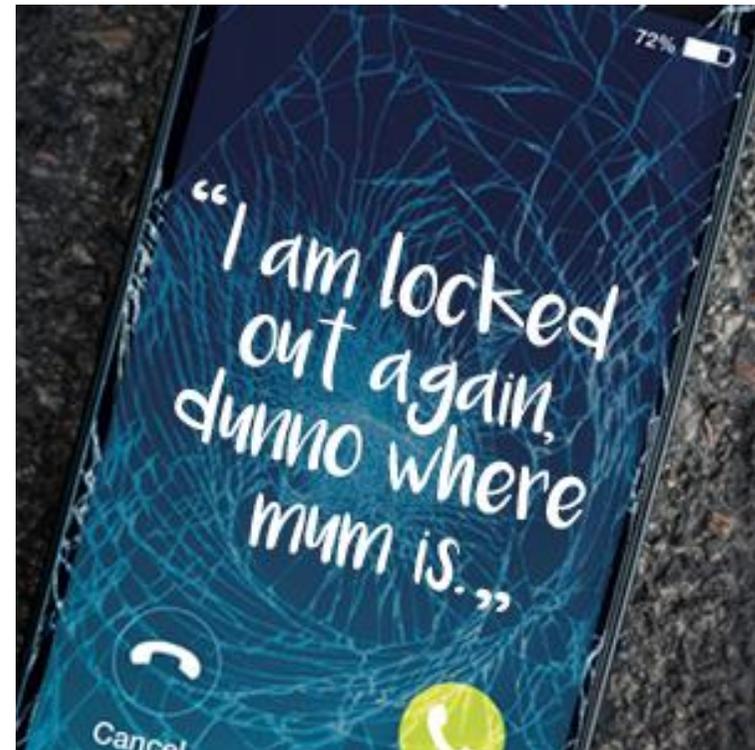
- **Raised the awareness of neglect;** it is now a key LSCB priority and has its own sub group.
- **Launched a number of tools to identify neglect.**
- **Adopted the new Neglect Graded Care Profile 2 (GCP2)**
- **Launched a new training programme to support GCP2 use.**
- **Developed a quality assurance framework** to enable the LSCB and others to understand and scrutinise performance around neglect, including a neglect **scorecard** and **multi-agency practice audits** of neglect.
- **Spoken with young people who have been neglected** to better understand their experiences.
- **Consulted young people** from Cheshire East Youth Council and Eaton Bank Academy to inform our new neglect campaign, which will focus on adolescent neglect.
- **Recruited neglect champions** from partner agencies across the partnership.
- **Introduced a new child protection model.**
- **Taken part in the recent DfE national campaign** to encourage the public to report neglect and child abuse.
- **Implemented a new child record system** across the levels of need so we can identify and report on the prevalence of neglect at the point of contact, referral and assessment.

Neglect as a National Issue

The **Department for Education (DfE)** is responsible for child protection in England. It sets out policy, legislation and statutory guidance on how the child protection system should work. In 2016 the DfE consulted on the introduction of mandatory reporting of child abuse and neglect, which could see an increase in referrals for neglect.

At a local level, it is the responsibility of the **Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB)** to co-ordinate and ensure the effectiveness of work to protect and promote the welfare of children, including setting local policy, procedure and guidance. The main statutory guidance is *Working Together 2015*.

The role of **Ofsted** is to inspect the effectiveness of local arrangements and to make recommendations for improvement. *'In the child's time: Professional Responses to Neglect'*, Ofsted's thematic audit in 2014, found the quality of professional practice around neglect was too variable overall, with the result that some children are left in situations of neglect for too long. The report set out a number of findings to be addressed by LSCBs and local authorities that are embedded within our strategy. Ofsted has announced that neglect will be the focus of its joint targeted inspections from April 2017.



Risk Factors

A number of factors increase the likelihood of neglect in some families. Vulnerable families may have a combination of the following risk factors:

Child risk factors

- Disability
- Behavioural problems
- Chronic ill health

Parental risk factors

- Poor mental health, especially maternal mental health difficulties
- Drug and alcohol (substance misuse)
- Domestic abuse
- Parents' own exposure to maltreatment
- Lack of experience of positive parenting in childhood

Wider Risk Factors

- Poverty
- Unemployment
- Poor social support

Categories of neglect

Physical

- This is failing to provide for a child's basic needs such as food, clothing or shelter. Failing to adequately supervise a child, or provide for their safety.

Educational

- This is failing to ensure a child receives an education.

Emotional/psychological

- Often the most difficult to prove, this is failing to meet a child's needs for nurture and stimulation, perhaps by ignoring, humiliating, intimidating or isolating them.

Medical

- This is failing to provide appropriate health care, including dental care and refusal of care or ignoring medical recommendations.

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Neglect in Cheshire East

The percentage of child protection (CP) plans for neglect in Cheshire East is broadly in line with the national level. As at the end of March 2016 46% of CP plans in Cheshire East were due to neglect, compared to the England average of 45% and Northwest average was 42%. Our statistical neighbours ranged from 23% to 65%. As at 31st December 2016 this remains in line with the England average at 45%. The number and percentage of plans for neglect in Cheshire East over recent years are set out below:

Number of children & young people on CP plans

As at end of March	No. on CP Plan	No. due to Neglect	% due to Neglect
2012	207	123	59
2013	161	101	63
2014	202	99	49
2015	312	136	44
2016	279	129	46

A large proportion of these plans are in the 0-5 age range, with increases in the first year of life and around 4 and 5 years. This is possibly because of greater involvement by Midwives and Health Visitors in the earlier age group, and then childcare and

primary school in the second. Work is needed to ensure better identification to bridge this gap and provide early help to children and families.



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Many children subject to child protection plans for neglect are in sibling groups. A concern or referral in relation to one child may result in all the children of that family becoming subject to a plan. Neglect is also localised, within specific areas of the Borough.

A large proportion of children subject to child protection plans for neglect live in deprived areas. In Cheshire East, this is largely in the areas of Crewe and Macclesfield.

The attached 'heat map' at Appendix 1 shows the distribution of neglect across Cheshire East as at March 2016.

Neglect continues to be an area of priority and focus in Cheshire East. The neglect graded care profile was introduced in March 2012 as a tool for practitioners and relaunched and promoted as part of our previous strategy in January 2014.

Early help also has a key role to play in supporting parents and preventing children becoming at risk from neglect or abuse. Cheshire East offers a wide range of parenting programmes and open access groups through children's centres, and commissions a number of parenting support services, such as one to one support in the home establishing a routine for caring and interacting with children, parenting courses and family counselling sessions as part of our early help offer. Commissioned services are targeted to the areas of the greatest need and should result in a reduction in future demand to Children's Social Care.

What Frontline Practitioners Think

The LSCB collects views from frontline practitioners through a number of ways, including frontline visits, audits and feedback collected through training. Some of the feedback from frontline practitioners is set out below.

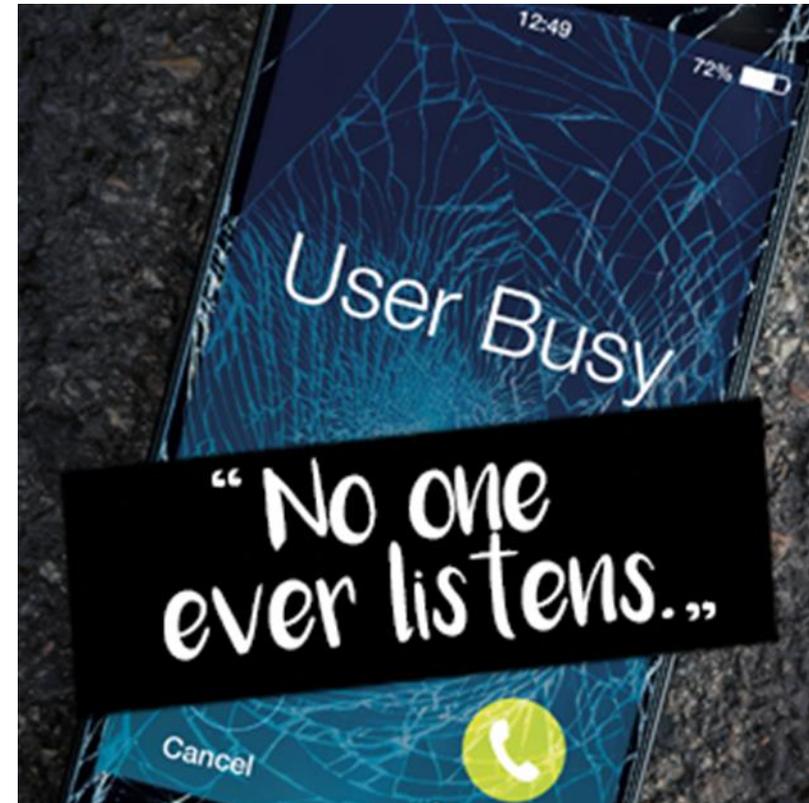
“Using GCP meant I could show mum exactly what was going on.”

“You get used to it.”

“Neglect is so hard to be certain about.”

“The children haven’t known anything different... I mean that makes it really hard for us. If they don’t say it’s awful what do we do?”

“The GCP2 is great I can think of a few families I would use it with.”



What Children and Young People Think

“When neglected you feel alone, isolated and like you’re different to the rest, nothing you do or say matters.”

Through all our audits and work with children and young people affected by abuse and neglect, they have told us they want the following:

- To be listened to.
- To be included in their plans, and understand what the concerns are and why they need a plan.
- For professionals to be clear with them about what is going to, or could happen.

“I understood I was neglected and it made me feel worthless, unwanted and just a piece of pooh on someone’s shoe. You feel belittled no matter what effort you make personally.”

We talked to a group of young people who are currently on plans for neglect in Cheshire East and their thoughts are included throughout this document as a powerful reminder to us all about how being neglected makes children and young people think and feel.

Young people who have not experienced neglect have told us that they don’t understand the term neglect and would not necessarily know what to look for in a friend who was suffering neglect.

“I felt like I missed out and for me it felt like it was my fault we weren’t allowed what others had, we didn’t get the love others got, it makes you feel different and even now 2 years later the feeling never goes away”.

Tackling adolescent neglect is a key area of focus of this strategy. We have worked with the young people from Eaton Bank Academy to come up with a campaign that they feel will have the biggest impact on young people to support those affected and their peers to get help and support.

“I was not being neglected around the village. My mum would come out looking for me and ask me to come home”.... “to say I’m neglected is bang out of order.”

What Audits tell us about Neglect

The last Cheshire East audit of neglect was carried out in September 2016. This found that there is more work to do around neglect in the borough. Whilst the GCP has been introduced, there is more work to do to ensure that this is used consistently and effectively across the partnership.

Further work is also needed around staff challenging or escalating concerns about the progress of planning for a child.

"It's my naughty behaviour in the past but I am doing better now and helping in the community, picking up litter and that" - "I've stopped hanging around with those bad influences".



PRIORITIES FOR 2017-19

Priority 1 – Strategic Commitment Across all Agencies

Neglect continues to be a priority for Cheshire East. Ofsted's review of the effectiveness of the LSCB in July 2015 concluded that the LSCB needs to evaluate the impact of the neglect strategy and disseminate the findings to help agencies improve their practice. Significant work took place in 2016 to improve the multi-agency response to neglect and this strategy sets out how this will be further improved and sustained from 2017-19.

To address this, we will:

- **Relaunch Cheshire East's Neglect Strategy**
- Drive neglect as a **key priority of the LSCB** with a whole family approach
- Maintain **Neglect Subgroup** of the LSCB
- Ensure neglect is embedded in the LSCB's **quality assurance framework**
- Revise the **neglect scorecard** to incorporate more targets on which to measure success
- Raise awareness and **collaboration around neglect with other partnership boards** through the Partnership Chairs Board, including the Health and Wellbeing Board, Children's Trust, Safeguarding Adults Board, Safer Communities Cheshire East and Domestic Abuse Partnership.

Priority 2 – Improve Awareness, Understanding and Recognition

This is a priority because frontline practitioners are still telling us that neglect is difficult to recognise. Our audits suggest that some children and young people need to step up more quickly from child protection to court proceedings. We believe that adolescent neglect is overlooked or misinterpreted by professionals.

To address this, we will:

- **Work with young people** to get a better understanding of neglect from their perspective
- Refresh and relaunch the **Neglect Campaign** focussed on adolescent neglect and neglect by affluence.
- Review and **refresh our website**, including procedures content around neglect.
- Improve the use of **communication channels** to promote awareness, understanding and recognition of neglect, including facebook, newsletters, twitter etc
- Roll out **GCP2 training**.
- Continue to support **Neglect Champions** in each agency.

Priority 3 – Prevent Neglect through Early Help

This is a priority because the impact of neglect of children is often gradual and therefore there is a risk that agencies do not intervene early enough to prevent harm. Working Together (2015) requires local agencies to have in place effective

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assessments of needs of children who may benefit from early help services. In Cheshire East agencies should effectively utilise the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) to assess unmet needs and co-ordinate appropriate support. The neglect screening tool and graded care profile are tools that have been introduced into Cheshire East to support the identification and support for cases of neglect, but we know that these have not been maximised to date.

To address this, we will:

- Ensure that neglect is included in the revised **Early Help Strategy**.
- Promote the use of the **neglect screening tool** across the partnership.
- Carry out **CAF audits** to check the use of the neglect screening tool.
- Review access to **parenting courses** to ensure these meet the needs of neglectful parents.
- Develop good practice **case studies**.

Priority 4 – Improve Effectiveness of Interventions and reduce the impact of neglect

This is a priority because we know that sometimes our interventions do not make a big enough difference impact quick enough to improve the lived experiences of our children and young people.

To address this, we will:

- **Embed the graded care profile 2** across Cheshire East.
- **Revise the guidance and procedure** for neglect screening and GCP2.

- Pilot a **Neglect Operational Group** whereby practitioners can share concerns, good practice and advice on neglect cases.
- Improve our responses to specific **target groups**, eg, children with disabilities.
- Improve the quality and timeliness of **parenting assessments** for children on a child protection plan/ pre proceedings.



*“I don’t feel neglected.”
“It gets me peed off and annoyed when
someone mentions this.”*

Making our priorities happen

Action Plan

The action plan at Appendix 3 sets out the key actions we think we need to do to achieve our priorities. This will be reviewed and updated quarterly to ensure delivery of this strategy.

Governance

The Neglect Subgroup will continue to meet to monitor the implementation of the strategy. A Chair's report outlining progress and any issues or risks will be regularly presented to the Executive Group and onto the Board. Performance reporting and impact will be scrutinised by the Quality and Outcomes sub-group, including the quarterly neglect scorecard.

As a key priority of the Board, the Chair of the subgroup will also update the Board on a regular basis and the LSCB will hold partners to account for the delivery of the strategy. Progress and impact will also be included in the LSCB's Annual Report, which is shared with key officers in the local authority, Police etc. and scrutinised by the Health and Wellbeing Board and the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Measuring Success

The success of the strategy will be measured based on a range of quantitative and qualitative measures set out in this strategy.

Qualitative Measures

A number of qualitative measures will be monitored and reported through the governance arrangements. These include:

- LSCB multi-agency audits of neglect child protection plans show good impact of the plan and use of graded care profile (GCP).
- Common Assessment Framework (CAF) and Children's Social Care audits show good use of screening tool and GCP
- The independent review of children in need plans for neglect shows effective planning and impact and good use of tools, including GCP and neglect screening tool
- Feedback from parents collected at children in need, initial child protection case conference, child protection case review meetings and at case closure.
- Young people's views of neglect through the LSCB safeguarding survey, feedback at children in need, initial child protection case conference, child protection case review meetings and at case closure and specific work as part of the neglect strategy.
- Feedback from frontline staff through frontline visits, audits, staff surveys and training questionnaires.

Quantitative Measures

A neglect scorecard has been developed and will be produced quarterly and reported to the Quality and Outcomes Group. This is attached at Appendix 2.

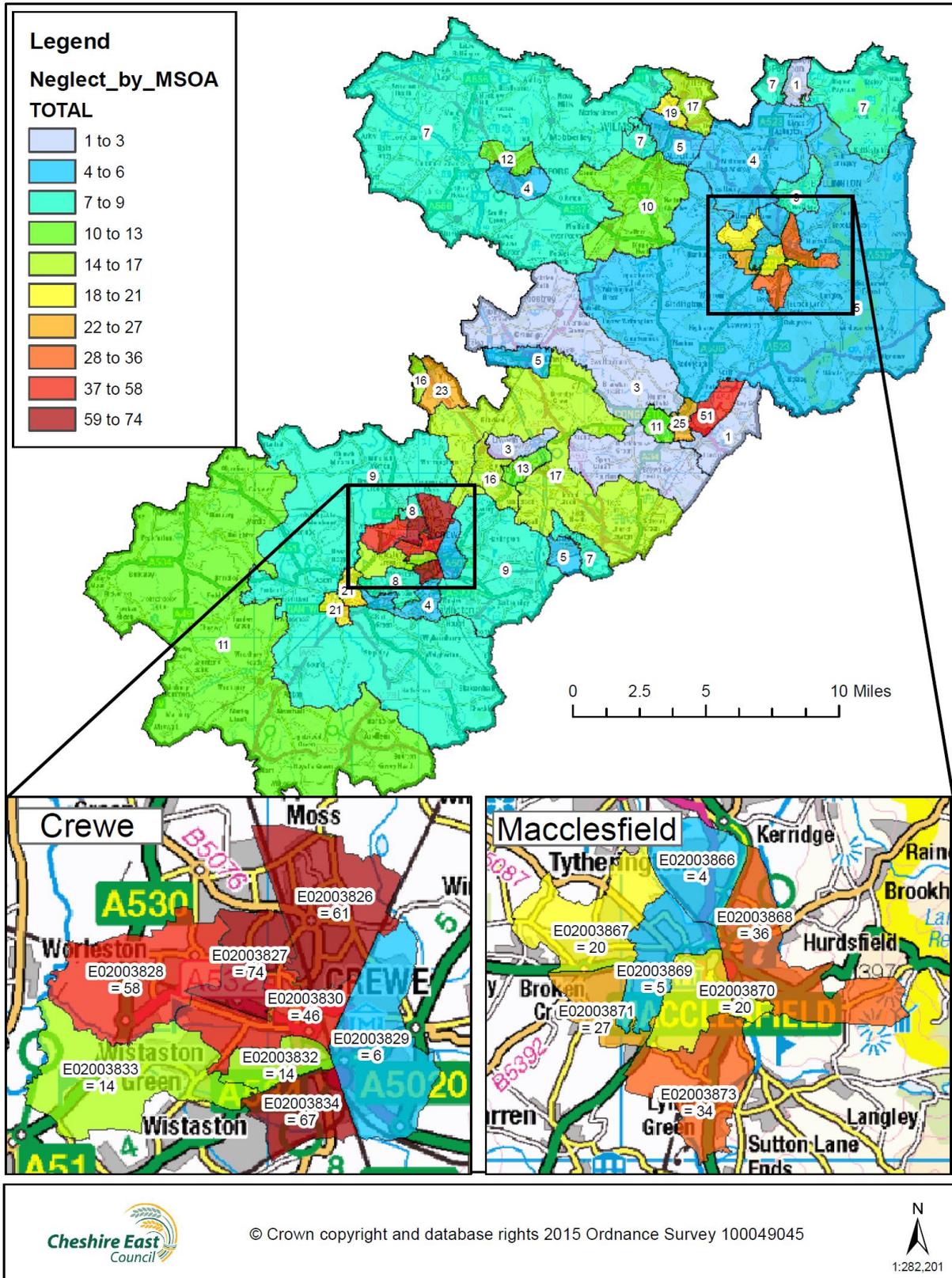
How we will know our practice is good

How much we did	What does it show?	
This will be measured by the neglect scorecard at Appendix 2	The neglect scorecard will show us whether we are identifying neglect early enough and at a young enough age, whether we deal with cases in a timely way and avoid drift and delay. It will also tell us whether practitioners are taking up the training offered and using the tools we have developed to support them in their practice.	
How well we did it	Is anyone better off?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LSCB multi-agency audits of neglect child protection plans show good impact of the plan and use of graded care profile (GCP). Common Assessment Framework (CAF) and Children's Social Care audits show good use of screening tool and GCP. Independent Review of children in need plans for neglect shows effective planning and impact and good use of tools, including GCP and neglect screening tool. 	Feedback from Children and Young People, Parents and Carers	Feedback from Staff
	<p>Feedback from parents collected at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children in need Initial child protection case conference Child protection case review meetings Case closure. <p>Young people's views of neglect through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Direct work with those young people on a plan for neglect Focus groups Safeguarding survey Feedback at children in need, initial child protection case conference, child protection case review meetings and at case closure 	<p>Feedback from frontline staff through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Frontline visits Audits Staff surveys Training questionnaires.

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Appendix 1

Distribution of Neglect Cases as of March 2016 by MSOA



Neglect Scorecard

PI Ref	Measure	Eng Av	Thresholds			Yr end 15-16	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Comments
			Requires Improvement	Good	Outstanding						
1.1	Number of Consultations		2800	2700	2600						
1.2	Number of Consultations where neglect is a factor		No threshold								
2.1	Number of Assessments completed this quarter where neglect is a factor		No threshold								
3.1	Number of CIN plans for Abuse/Neglect		No threshold								
3.2	Number of children on a CIN plan for abuse/neglect with a disability		No threshold								
3.3	Number of CIN plans for Neglect open longer than 6 months		No threshold								
3.4	% of CIN plans for Neglect open longer than 6 months		No threshold								
4.1	Number of Initial Child Protection Conferences (ICPC) for neglect		No threshold								
4.2	Number/% of Initial Child Protection Conferences (ICPC) for neglect Number where GCP was completed		No threshold								
5.1	Number of children and young people on child protection plans		300	280	260						
5.2	Number of Children and young people on a child protection plan who are disabled		No threshold								

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5.3	Number of children and young people on child protection plans due to Neglect		No threshold								
5.4	Of these, aged unborn-4	43%	50% - 60%	35%-50%	<35%						
5.5	Of these, aged 5-9	28%	35%-45%	25% - 35%	<25%						
5.6	Of these, aged 10-15	26%	35%-45%	25% - 35%	<25%						
5.7	Of these, aged 16 and over	3%	10%-15%	5%-10%	<5%						
5.8	% of children and young people on child protection plans due to Neglect	45%	55%	45%	35%						
5.9	Number of children and young people on a plan for neglect who are disabled		No threshold								
5.10	Number of children and young people on child protection plans due to Neglect for 12 months or more		No threshold								
5.11	% of children and young people on child protection plans due to Neglect for 12 months or more		15%	10%	5%						
6.1	Total number of children coming onto a CP plan for a 2nd or subsequent time										
6.2	Number of these where the plan is for neglect										
6.3	Number of these where the plan is for neglect for 2nd/ subsequent time										
6.4	% of these where the plan is for neglect for a second time (i.e 1st plan was neglect and 2nd plan was neglect)										
6.5	Number where neglect is 2 nd /subsequent time (within 5 years)										
6.6	% where neglect is 2 nd /subsequent time (within 5 years)										

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7.1	Number of 0-5 on CP plan for neglect										
7.2	Number of 0-5 on CP plan for neglect that are registered with local children's centre										
7.3	% 0-5 on CP plan for neglect that are registered with local children's centre										
7.4	Number of 0-5 on CP plan for neglect that are engaged at children's centre (i.e attended in last 6mths)										
7.5	% of 0-5 on a CP plan for neglect that are engaged at children's centre (i.e attended in last 6mths)										
8.1	Number of children entering care										
8.2	Number of children entering care for Abuse/Neglect										
8.3	% of children entering care for Abuse/Neglect										
9.1	Number of individuals trained in GCP 2										

Cheshire East Neglect Strategy, 2017-19 - Action Plan

Ref	Action	Who	By When
Outcome 1 – Strategic commitment across all agencies			
1.1	Hold partner agencies to account for the performance and quality of their interventions in regard to neglect	LSCB Quality & Outcomes Sub Group	Quarterly
1.2	Ensuring the Neglect Subgroup of the LSCB drives the implementation of the neglect strategy by reporting on impact to the LSCB	LSCB Neglect Sub Group	Quarterly
1.3	Carry out regular multi-agency auditing of practice and report the findings to the LSCB	Kate Rose, Head of Safeguarding, CEC	Bi-annually
1.4	Each partner agency to report their impact on neglect to their respective safeguarding governance boards and back to the LSCB.	Partner agencies	Bi-annually
1.5	Launch revised strategy	LSCB Business Unit	March 2017
1.6	Present the Neglect Strategy to the Partnership Chairs Board and seek inclusion in the priorities of the relevant partnership boards.	Neglect Subgroup Chair	June 2017
1.7	Include progress and impact of the strategy in the LSCB Annual Report	LSCB Business Manager	Annually
Outcome 2 – Prevent neglect through early help			
2.1	Review all neglect training, both single and multi-agency, to ensure that it promotes use of the Neglect screening tool.	Vicky Moran	April 2017
2.2	Collect evidence through training that the neglect tools are being promoted and used.	Vicky Moran	May 2017

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2.3	Introduce CAF audits that include a check on the use of the neglect screening tool	Lindsey Thompson	May 2017
2.4	Ensure that the updated Early Help Strategy includes tackling Neglect	Early Help Subgroup	May 2017
2.5	Develop case studies around preventing neglect through early help	Neglect Subgroup	May 2017
Outcome 3 – Improved awareness, understanding and recognition of neglect			
3.1	Refresh and relaunch the neglect campaign, focussed on adolescent neglect	Lesley Seal	March 2017
3.2	Commission a design agency to develop materials to support the neglect campaign	Lesley Seal	February 2017
3.3	Workshop with young people around neglect	Lesley Seal	March 2017
3.4	Gather the thoughts and feelings of young people who have experienced neglect	Jacquie Sims	April 2017
3.5	Develop a young person's definition of neglect	Lesley Seal	March 2017
3.6	Roll out materials, including posters, pull-ups and digital content	Lesley Seal	March 2017
3.7	Update websites and launch tools	LSCB Business Unit	March 2017
3.8	Roll out graded care profile 2 workshops aiming to have 500 staff trained across the partnership by April 2017	Vicky Moran	April 2017
3.9	Continue to support Neglect Champions to share the neglect screening tool and the delivery of single agency neglect training, where appropriate.	Vicky Moran	April 2017
Outcome 4 – Improve Effectiveness of Interventions and reduce the impact of neglect			
4.1	Support staff who have completed GCP2 to share the good practice associated with the assessment and planning following use of the tool.	Vicky Moran	April 2017

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4.2	Revise the guidance and procedure for neglect screening and GCP2	Neglect Subgroup	March 2017
4.3	Pilot a Neglect Operational Group whereby practitioners can share concerns and seek advice on neglect cases	Neglect Subgroup	June 2017
4.4	Review policies and procedures around specific target groups, eg, children with disabilities, to ensure that they are in line with the neglect strategy	Neglect Subgroup	April 2017
4.5	Improve the quality and timeliness of parenting assessments for children on a child protection plan/pre proceedings	Jacque Sims	April 2017