

01 Background

Neglect 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 at any time during a child's life from pregnancy and beyond.

After a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or care failing to;

- provide adequate food, clothing and a home
- protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger
- ensure adequate supervision
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment

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

06 Reviewing Progress

When reviewing progress it is important to look for evidence of sustained improvement in the child's health and development. Where there is a pattern of short-lived improvements, the overall situation remains unsatisfactory - if adequate standards of care cannot be sustained, the child may remain at risk of significant harm. The assessment should be repeated to review and measure progress against the assessed deficits.

05 Assessment and working with Families

If you suspect abuse or harm or a criminal offence to a child you must immediately discuss this with your Named/Designated Child Protection Officer and consult with CHECs.

If the Neglect Screening tool has identified that your agency can provide the services required then follow your single agency procedures.

If the answer is no or not sure then work with the family to complete the Grade Care Profile 2 (GCP2). If it indicates that more than one agency is required to deliver support then it can be used in conjunction with Early Help Assessment to enable working together effectively to deliver support

02 Why we have a strategy

National research and local evidence demonstrates the damage done to children and young people living in situations of neglect. 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.

03 Indicators

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.

It is important to avoid 'start again' syndrome. Neglect should not only be measured by the most recent set of events but should be judged by the cumulative impact on the child of any previous incidents.

04 Neglect Screening

Assessing neglect is often dependent on collating seemingly small, un-dramatic pieces of factual information, which when collated may present an overall picture of a child who is being neglected.

For a disabled child practitioners will need to distinguish between what is a result of disability and what are signs of neglect.

The practitioner should use the Neglect Screening Tool to help identify this and seek relevant information from other involved agencies.

