



**Coventry
Safeguarding
Children
PARTNERSHIP**

**Neglect Strategy
2021 - 2023**





Foreword from the Chair

The need for agencies to work effectively together to tackle neglect has never been greater, for even without the ongoing impact of the pandemic too many of our children and young people are experiencing conditions, situations and behaviours that negatively affect their development.

This strategy highlights the types of neglect, the reality in our communities as revealed by audits and case studies, and importantly four key objectives that we all must look to deliver as a priority.

I commend this strategy to you and look forward to working with every member of the Coventry Safeguarding Children Partnership to improve the lives of our children and young people.

Derek Benson

Independent Chair





Purpose and scope

Coventry Safeguarding Children's Partnership works closely with local agencies to ensure that the priorities laid out in Working Together 2018 are met, and that all agencies take joint responsibility for protecting children and young people from harm and abuse.

The aim of the strategy is to set out Coventry's approach to tackling neglect.

At the heart of this strategy are Coventry Safeguarding Children's Partnership's key values:

- To put children, young people and families at the heart of everything we do.
- To ensure that partners work together achieving better outcomes for children, young people and their families.
- To recognise and share examples of good practice so that these can be replicated in other areas.
- To be innovative and to try new approaches to ensure continuous improvement.
- To be open and honest about barriers that may be preventing improvement so that we can collectively agree how these may be overcome.
- To ensure that poor practice is challenged appropriately to ensure that it leads to improvement in the system.
- To ensure that children, young people and their families receive the right service, at the right time in the right way.

The strategy focuses on four key areas:

- Recognise
- Respond
- Quantify
- Evaluate

This strategy should be read in conjunction with other key strategies, policies and procedures including the regional Child Protection procedures for [West Midlands Neglect Policy](#), [Right help, right time](#), and the [Early help strategy](#).



Context

The One Coventry Plan has a strategic objective to keep children safe from harm and to provide early intervention to all children who need it. Neglect is the most common form of child maltreatment in England and in Coventry 33.3% of Child Protection Plans are open due to neglect.

A report commissioned by the NSPCC identifies the long term, often irreversible harm that can be caused to children as a result of neglect. Senior Research Fellow Ruth Gardner found the following during her research:

All forms of neglect (physical, emotional, environmental) are associated with measurable developmental damage, including to the child's emotional and social functioning. This can emerge at the pre-school stage and endure into adulthood. Without effective intervention, neglect can lead to active victimisation of the child both within and outside the family. In some cases this results in multiple abuse and death through attrition, murder or the child's suicide.

The NSPCC state that the ability to identify and manage potential or actual neglect cases in childhood is important because of its ubiquity in the UK:

1 in 10 children will experience neglect.

Neglect is a factor in 60 per cent of serious case reviews.

33 per cent of calls to the NSPCC helpline were about neglect.

Neglect is the most common reason for taking child protection action in 2019.

Neglect was the most common category for child protection plans in England (March 2019).

The term 'cumulative harm' is not explicitly used in Working Together 2018. However research shows that the cumulative impact of repeat episodes of neglect (cumulative harm) can lead to the child suffering significant harm.



Neglect definition

Working Together 2018 defines neglect as, “.....the failure to meet a child’s basic physical and/ or psychological needs likely to result in serious impairment of the child’s health and development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance misuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- provide adequate food, clothing or 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).
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

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

The Department for Education (2018) defines neglect as ‘ the ongoing failure to meet a child’s basic physical and psychological needs.....

- it can be difficult to identify.
- is the most likely form of abuse to be repeated.
- can expose children to other types of abuse.
- is the most common form of child abuse.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) states that, ‘ Neglect is different to poverty because it happens when there is a failure to provide the resources to meet a child’s needs if those resources exist or should be available’.



Types and signs of neglect

Working Together 2018 defines neglect as, “.....the failure to meet a Neglect can be a lot of different things, which can make it hard to spot. But broadly speaking, there are 7 classifications of neglect.

Medical neglect – the child’s health needs are not met, or the child is not provided with appropriate medical treatment when needed as a result of illness or accident.

Nutritional neglect – the child is given insufficient calories to meet their physical/ developmental needs; this is sometimes associated with ‘failure to thrive’, though failure to thrive can occur for reasons other than neglect. The child may be given food of insufficient nutritional value (e.g. crisps, biscuits and sugary snacks in place of balanced meals); childhood obesity as a result of an unhealthy diet and lack of exercise has more recently been considered a form of neglect, given its serious long-term consequences.

Emotional neglect – this involves a carer being unresponsive to a child’s basic emotional needs, including failing to interact or provide affection, and failing to develop a child’s self-esteem and sense of identity. Some authors distinguish it from emotional abuse by the intention of the parent. 4.

Educational neglect – The child does not receive appropriate learning experiences; they may be unstimulated, denied appropriate experiences to enhance their development and/ or experience a lack of interest in their achievements. This may also include carers failing to comply with state requirements regarding school attendance, and failing to respond to any special educational needs.

Physical neglect – The child has inadequate or inappropriate clothing (e.g. for the weather conditions), they experience poor levels of hygiene and cleanliness in their living conditions, or experiences poor physical care despite the availability of sufficient resources. The child may also be abandoned or excluded from home.

Lack of supervision and guidance – The child may be exposed to hazards and risks, parents or caregivers are inattentive to avoidable dangers, the child is left with inappropriate caregivers, and/or experiences a lack of appropriate supervision and guidance. It can include failing to provide appropriate boundaries for young people about behaviours such as under-age sex and alcohol use.

Pre-natal neglect – Whilst it is good practice that neglect should be seen through the experiences of the child, pre-natal neglect can only be identified from observations of the experiences of the expectant mother and her family context, and so must be considered separately. Pre-natal neglect may be associated with (but not exclusively)

- Drug use during pregnancy
- Alcohol consumption during pregnancy
- Failure to attend prenatal appointments and/or follow medical advice
- Failure to prepare for a new baby
- Experiencing domestic violence during pregnancy



The list below represents some signs of neglect that professionals should be vigilant for:

- Appearing hungry without lunch or dinner
- Clothing that is dirty, too big or too small
- Being left alone or unsupervised
- Untreated health or dental issues
- Issues with weight
- Delays in development e.g. emotionally, cognitively or language skills
- Poor behaviour/ no boundaries
- The home is indisputably dirty or unsafe
- Behind their peers educationally and socially (not accessing education)
- Poor friendships and relationships
- Risk taking behaviour, substances, risky sexual behaviour or criminal involvement
- Lack of stimulation
- Lack of social attachment or interaction
- Unrealistic expectations
- Adult presentation- appearing under the influence of drugs or alcohol, mental health issues or learning disabilities that may impact on parenting.
- Listen to what the child is telling you



Strategic Objectives

Coventry Safeguarding Children's Partnership will focus on 4 key objectives:

Objective	Aim
Recognise	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Undertake a multi-agency workforce development analysis of the existing offer and the uptake.• Refresh the city-wide workforce development offer.• Undertake a campaign focussed on adolescent neglect and promote this via a multi-agency electronic/social media campaign.• Make neglect the focus of a CSCP annual conference 2021.• Develop a suite of resources to raise awareness of neglect.
Respond	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop a toolkit to be adopted across the partnership to assist practitioners in identifying and responding to neglect.• Continue to promote right help, right time across the partnership to support children, young people and families receiving the right support at the earliest opportunity.• Continue to promote Signs of safety across the partnership so that agencies have a consistent approach.• Develop resource to support workforce development around good chronologies.• Ensure that agencies are trained and supported to use the EH Assessment to ensure that families receive co-ordinated and appropriate support at the earliest opportunity.• Develop a directory of agencies who might support children, young people and families where neglect is a factor.• Raise awareness of the escalation process.

Objective	Aim
Quantify	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a CSCP neglect dataset to support the understanding of neglect across the partnership. • Provide regular reports on the findings of the data set for the CSCP Execs.
Evaluate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consult with practitioners about their confidence levels, their perceptions of impact of their work and what support they may still need. • Develop a programme of multi-agency neglect themed audits and share what is learnt across the partnership. • Quality assure the refreshed multi-agency workforce development offer on neglect.



How will we measure success

- Evaluation of the Neglect conference.
- Evaluation of impact on practice of practitioners attending training.
- Increase in the number of children, young people and families supported with neglect through early help plans and assessment.
- Appropriately and safely reduce the number of children subject to a Child Protection plan for a second or subsequent time.
- Hits to the website to access neglect resources.
- Multi agency audits demonstrate a Signs of Safety approach being implemented.
- All CSCP agencies will have at least 80% of their workforce trained in safeguarding awareness at any time.

