Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Safeguarding Children Partnership



Neglect: One Minute Guide

What is Neglect?

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 in a wide range of circumstances including during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse or as a result of other parental harm or vulnerabilities, such as domestic abuse, mental health or learning disabilities...

- ...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 (Working Together 2015).

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs. Neglect is a factor in 60% of serious case reviews and can be a medical emergency. Neglect can result in long-term physical, health, emotional and behavioural consequences and indeed can be fatal.

Identification of Neglect

Physical Neglect:

Where a parent/carer does not provide appropriate clothing, food, cleanliness and/or living conditions.

Medical Neglect:

Where a parent/carer minimises or denies a child's illness or health needs and/or fails to seek appropriate medial attention or administer medication and treatment.

Lack of Supervision and Guidance

Where a parent/carer fails to provide an adequate level of supervision and guidance to ensure a child's safety and protection from harm. For example, lack of stair gate or fire guard; medication not put out of a child's reach; a child may be left alone or with inappropriate carers, or appropriate boundaries about behaviours (under-age sex or alcoholuse) may not be in place.

Neglect

Nutritional Neglect:

Where a child does not receive adequate calories or nutritional intake for normal growth (also sometimes called 'failure to thrive'). At its most extreme, nutritional neglect can take the form of malnutrition or in extreme cases obesity.

Educational Neglect:

Where a parent/carer fails to provide a stimulating environment or support a child in their school activities. They may fail to respond to any special needs and fail to comply with state requirements about school attendance.

Emotional Neglect:

Where a parent/carer is unresponsive to a child's basic emotional needs. They may fail to interact or provide affection, undermining a child's self-esteem and sense of identity. (Most experts distinguish between emotional neglect and emotional abuse by intention; emotional abuse is intentionally inflicted, emotional neglect is an omission of care.)

http://www.safechildren-cios.co.uk/health-and-social-care/childrens-services/cornwall-and-isles-of-scilly-safeguarding-children-partnership/

What should practitioners do?

Practitioners have a duty to:

- Understand neglect and how it can impact on children at different stages of their development.
- Understand parental behaviours and the cumulative impact of neglect over time.
- Talk to children about their daily lived experience and be alert to a range of neglect, including physical, emotional, lack of appropriate supervision/boundaries.
- Intervene at the earliest opportunity to prevent the chronic impact of long term physical or emotional neglect on children.
- Work with parents, children and their network to prevent concerns escalating.
- Understand the likely impact of neglect and use evidence based predictive assessment to intervene early and effectively.
- Share evidenced based information about children who are suspected to be at risk of harm from neglect. This must be shared within and between agencies in order to ensure effective intervention that both builds on protective factors and reduces ongoing risk in families.

Key Contacts and Links

RCHT Safeguarding team (adult, children & maternity): 01872 254551

MARU: Telephone 0300 123 1116

E-mail MultiAgencyReferralUnit@cornwall.gcsx.gov.uk

Early Help: 201872 322277

Children's Social Care Duty Team: 20300 1234 101

Children's Social Care Out of hours: 2 01208 251300

Police (non-emergency): ☎101

If you feel a child is in immediate danger please contact 999

For more information about neglect please go to: http://

www.proceduresonline.com/swcpp/

As developed by the Devon Children and Families Partnership