



## One Minute Guide



### What is Neglect?

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 and development.

*Working Together to Safeguard Children, 2023*

**Neglect is the most common reason for a child to be on a child protection plan and features in 60% of child safeguarding practice reviews.**

### Understanding the impact of neglect:

Neglect has strong links with [ACEs \(Adverse Childhood Experiences\)](#). It occurs across childhood and adolescence but rarely produces a crisis response due to its cumulative nature. In childhood, neglect can seriously impede the brain, bodily functions, academic understanding and behavioural development, it can lead to physical, emotional and health issues later in life. Socio-emotional development can be impacted if a carer is emotionally disconnected with their child potentially leading to problems such as low self esteem and poor emotional regulation. As a result of these experiences poor social skills can develop which can lead to other compounding problems such as bullying.

### Adolescent Neglect

Neglect is equally as damaging to an adolescent as it is to a young child. Children who experience neglect only during adolescence display a range of negative outcomes **at least as strong** as those of children who experience neglect only during early childhood. The range of the risk factors facing teenagers include, alienation from their families; school difficulties; accommodation problems; abuse/exploitation including grooming; unemployment; drug and alcohol misuse; emotional and mental health difficulties; and domestic abuse in the home.

### What can it look like?

- Disorganised or insecure attachment of a child, they may find caring and supportive relationships frightening or confusing.
- Lack of parental response to a child's health needs: e.g. untreated nappy rash, not registered with a dentist / doctor or missed routine appointments.
- Lack of parental stimulation or interaction with child
- No parental concern over educational attainment or attendance at school.
- Leaving children unsupervised or in an unsafe environment.

### Factors which can contribute to neglect:

- Parental alcohol/drug misuse
- Postnatal, maternal and parental depression and other mental health issues
- Domestic abuse including coercive control
- Lone parenting
- Blended families e.g. adolescents may struggle when a new partner is introduced
- Financial difficulties such as homelessness, poverty and unemployment
- Patterns of improvement in parental care, followed by deterioration.

### Impact of Cumulative Harm



*"Chronic neglect over a long period sometimes co-existing with physical, emotional and sexual abuse and that the impacts of neglect can interact with other factors and adversities in a number of ways to increase young people's vulnerability to harm." {NSPCC}*

### Risk Factors

- Practitioners often react to risks that are immediate
- Signals which should alert practitioners to dangers within families can be ignored due to optimistic assumptions
- Children in need, or children on the fringe of interventions are generally more at risk of serious harm than those on a child protection plan
- The *impact* of poverty creates an additional complexity alongside cumulative harm



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## What is the Multi-Agency Neglect Toolkit?

Wakefield's Neglect Toolkit supports practitioners to identify dangers in relation to neglect by providing a baseline to assess the context in which children are living. It supports early identification of Neglect which is essential to ensure effective and prompt intervention to reduce impact and improve outcomes for children. The Neglect Toolkit enables practitioners to understand how and when to take action, it assists in identifying emerging signs of Neglect and can be used to reduce the risk of drift and delay when responding to issues of neglect. It should be used in conjunction with the [West Yorkshire Multi-Agency Procedure Recognising Abuse & Neglect](#) and the Wakefield [Continuum of Need](#).

**The Neglect Toolkit does not replace professional judgement, it aids clarification and supports decision making.** Practitioners need to seek advice from their manager if concerns are identified and they are unsure of the action they should take.



### Neglect: A shared responsibility



It is important that the focus remains on the child; the **voice of the child** must always be sought and responded to. What do they think of

their care, living conditions or their health and wellbeing? The application of the Toolkit should include holding an honest and respectful conversation with the parent(s) or carer(s) about any worries or concerns around Neglect.

The toolkit highlights key indicators that support practitioners to identify if a child's needs are being met or are unmet. It can form [part of an assessment](#) and in conjunction with the [Continuum of Need](#), the toolkit identifies at low risk up to high risk where serious and complex needs are identified.

**YOU MAY NOT ALWAYS BE ABLE TO FILL IN THE WHOLE DOCUMENT WITHOUT WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP WITH OTHER AGENCIES.**

**ANY INFORMATION RECORDED WILL ENABLE A HOLISTIC APPROACH TO ASSESSMENT.**



## The 9 areas to consider

The toolkit is available to view online and has 9 sections that include suggested questions to capture the voice of the child.

Practitioners findings can be recorded in the

separate assessment which can either be printed and shared with the family or accessed online and shared with other professionals as part of an assessment or referral.

## Supporting Documents

The documents below set out the strategic aims and objectives for tackling Neglect in the Wakefield District. They contain key principles under which the work around neglect should be undertaken and identify priority areas of work in order to improve Wakefield's multi-agency response to child neglect.

[Neglect Toolkit—How To](#) presentation

[Multi Agency Neglect Toolkit hub homepage](#) for the Neglect Toolkit assessment form and sample questions to capture the voice of a child

[Multi Agency Continuum of Need Updated Aug 2020](#)

## Where can I get help?

For Early Help advice contact your [community cluster](#).

## Early Intervention is Key

If you are concerned a situation requires an immediate response from **Children's Social Care** contact the Integrated Front Door on **0345 8 503 503**.

## Useful Information

**WSCP** Wakefield Safeguarding Children's Partnership website for further information and guidance and latest documents [www.wakefieldscp.org.uk](http://www.wakefieldscp.org.uk)

**WFT** [Wakefield Families Together](#) for more information and signposting to local services / groups.

**NSPCC** Resources:

- Online introductory child protection course [nspcc.org.uk/cpintro](http://nspcc.org.uk/cpintro)

- weekly newsletter [nspcc.org.uk/caspar](http://nspcc.org.uk/caspar)

[Protecting children from neglect | NSPCC Learning](#)