

SAFEGUARDING ADOLESCENTS

STRATEGY GUIDE

Theme: Adolescent Neglect

Introduction

We know that the experience of neglect in childhood can have significant and long-term consequences, affecting many areas of a child’s development and their lives into adulthood. Neglect is the most common type of abuse experienced by children in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight, as it is nationally. The Hampshire and Isle of Wight Safeguarding Children Partnerships (HSCP and IOWSCP) see neglect as a key priority.

In order to recognise and address neglect it is important there is a clear and shared understanding of what neglect is. HSCP and IOWSCP use the definition from [Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018](#), which defines neglect as:

“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 a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- a. provide adequate food, clothing, and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment),
- b. protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger,
- c. ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caregivers),
- d. ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

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



Types of Neglect



Nutritional

When a child is provided with inadequate calories for normal growth/ 'to thrive' or when childhood obesity occurs due to provision of an unhealthy diet.



Supervisory

When a child fails to be provided with adequate guidance and supervision to protect them from harm, e.g. leaving them with inappropriate carers or abandoning them.



Emotional

When a child doesn't get the nurture or stimulation they need to form secure and positive attachments. e.g. they are ignored, humiliated or isolated.



Physical

When a child's basic needs associated to food, clothing and shelter are not met, e.g. not providing appropriate clothing, food, cleanliness and living conditions.



Educational

When a child is not given access to education e.g. parents/ carers fail to support their learning, respond to special needs or show an interest in the child's education.



Medical

When a child is denied medical or dental care, to treat or prevent an illness or condition, e.g. ignoring or refusing recommendations and failing to seek medical attention.

What is the impact on safeguarding adolescents?

Why adolescent neglect matters?

- Nationally, neglect is the most prevalent presenting issue for contacts with children's social care.
- Neglect is a predominant factor in Serious Case Reviews/Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews where a child has died or been seriously injured.
- Neglect creates lasting damage and has long-term consequences.

What is the impact for adolescents?

- Evidence suggests that neglect is a particularly damaging form of maltreatment.
- It is difficult to disentangle the specific effects of neglect from those of other forms of maltreatment. However, there is evidence that, for many children, neglect has significant implications for a range of developmental dimensions.
- In utero-stunted growth, pattern of facial features/physical characteristics (if alcohol abuse), central nervous system dysfunction.
- Insecure/disorganised attachment behaviours.
- Extreme cases – life threatening.
- Mental health problems – Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), depressive disorders, anxiety disorders, behavioural and conduct disorders.
- Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) – impacting on increased risks of chronic disease e.g., Type II diabetes, cardiovascular disease.
- Poor educational outcomes – greater risk of poor attendance, attainment, exclusion, bullying, special needs.
- Increased vulnerability to other risks – Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE), County Lines, other forms of maltreatment, substance misuse, youth offending.

[Source: Dr J Wilkinson and Dr S Bowyer, March 2017, DfE.](#)

Key factors in successful interventions:

- Acting early - structured, intensive interventions.
- Building effective relationship with child and parents/carer.
- Supporting the development of positive family relationships.
- Actively supporting positive peer relationships for child and parent/carer.
- Improving parenting skills.
- Addressing parent/carers needs (substance misuse/mental health/domestic abuse).
- Recognising the role of deprivation.

Neglect Toolkit

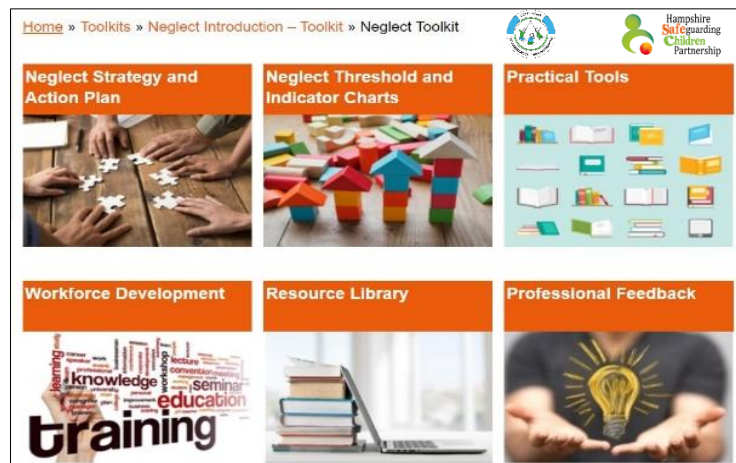
The Neglect Toolkit was commissioned by both Hampshire and the Isle of Wight Safeguarding Children Partnerships (LSCPs) to support the practical application of the joint HSCP and IOWSCP Neglect Strategy, which was first published in October 2016.

The HSCP and IOWSCP Neglect Strategy has since been revised and updated and the 2020-23 publication sets out the refreshed vision and key priorities of both LSCPs and provides the framework under which ongoing multi-agency work will be undertaken.

The information in this toolkit reflects the updated Neglect Strategy which has been developed to support frontline professionals and managers who work with children and families to identify and respond to issues of neglect, this includes specific tools aimed at supporting work with adolescents.

[Access the Strategy](#)

[Access the Toolkit](#)



Additional Resources and Information

Joint Targeted Area Inspections (JTAs)

[Joint inspections of the response to children experiencing neglect](#)

Joint targeted area inspections include a 'deep dive' investigation – an evaluation of children and young people's experiences. This changes periodically to investigate different themes in detail. The theme for May to December 2017 was a response to children experiencing neglect.

Department for Education (DfE)

[DfE Research Publication on Assessing Parental Capacity to Change when Children are on Edge of Care \(2014\)](#) - An overview of current research evidence.

[Childhood Neglect and Abuse: Comparing Placement Options](#) - A review examining the effects of abuse and neglect on children, and whether different placement types affect their outcomes.

[Indicators of Neglect: Missed Opportunities](#) - Research evidence identifying early indicators of child neglect.

[What to do if you're worried a child is being abused](#) - Guidance for practitioners to identify signs of child abuse and neglect and understand what action to take.

[Signs of Safety](#) - This study provides a comprehensive and rigorous independent evaluation of 'Signs of Safety' practice conducted in England.

National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC)

[Minding the Baby – Qualitative Findings on Implementation from the First UK Service](#) - An early intervention programme designed to enhance a mother's relationship with her baby.

[Spotlight on Preventing Child Neglect](#) - An overview of NSPCC research on child neglect, evaluations of assessment tools and services, and evidence on working together to prevent child neglect.

[Neglect Matters](#) - A guide for parents, professionals, and carers. This guide outlines what neglect is, what children and young people need, how to recognise neglect (signs and symptoms), the consequences of neglect and where to go for help.

[Realising the potential: tackling child neglect in universal services](#) - A model for the provision of early help for neglect in universal services and recommendations for what is required to get there.

[Neglect and its relationship to other forms of harm](#) - NSPCC, Action for Children with Research in Practice commissioned three linked evidence scopes investigating the potential relations between neglect and forms of sexual harm and abuse.

[How Safe are Our Children 2017](#) - An overview of data on the abuse of adolescents.

Miscellaneous

[Promoting healthy weight in children, young people and families: A resource to support local authorities](#) - Public Health resource concerning childhood obesity.

[NICE Guidance – Child Abuse and Neglect](#) - This guideline covers recognising and responding to abuse and neglect in children and young people aged under 18. It covers physical, sexual and emotional abuse, and neglect.

[An Exploration of How Social Workers Engage Neglectful Parents from Affluent Backgrounds in the Child Protection System](#) - This exploratory research was commissioned by the City of London and was developed out of a scoping review, which sought to find out what is known about child neglect in affluent families. The resulting study investigates what factors arise for social workers in responding to this type of child maltreatment in affluent families.

[Understanding Adolescent Neglect: Troubled Teens](#) - This looks at the extent of neglectful parenting of teenagers in homes across the country, as well as society's widespread failure to understand and respond to the lack of care and support that many teenagers receive.

[Understanding Childhoods Report 2017](#) - Building on The Children's Society 136-year history of tackling child poverty, this first 'Understanding Childhoods' report marks the beginning of a longitudinal study following the lives of 60 children growing up in poverty in Britain today.

[10 Talking points on preventing child abuse and neglect](#) - The Guardian newspaper's expert panel discuss how social care services can work with other agencies to identify and tackle child protection risks.

[Research in Practice – Engaging resistant, challenging and complex families](#) - Prompt briefings.

[Research in Practice \(RIP\)](#) – Have a mapping resource on neglect. This selection of resources is intended to support the sector to build evidence-informed learning and development pathways in relation to child neglect. The resource can be accessed via their website.

References

Horwath, J. (2007). Child Neglect: Identification and assessment. Hampshire: Palgrave MacMillan.

Wilkinson, J. and Bowyer, S. (2017). DfE GOV.UK. Research and analysis overview: [Childhood neglect and abuse: comparing placement options.](#)