

# ADOPTING A FAMILY APPROACH

## Short Guide Series

# Recognising Neglect in Children

Neglect can be difficult to spot. Having one of the signs listed below does not necessarily mean a child is being neglected, but if you notice multiple signs that last for a while, it may indicate a serious problem.

Children and young people who are neglected might present with the following signs:

### 1. Poor appearance and hygiene

- being smelly or dirty
- being hungry or not given money for food
- having unwashed clothes
- having the wrong clothing, such as no warm clothes in winter
- having frequent and untreated nappy rash in infants

### 2. Health and development problems

- anaemia
- body issues, such as poor muscle tone or prominent joints
- medical or dental issues
- missed medical appointments, such as for vaccinations
- not given the correct medicines
- poor language or social skills
- regular illness or infections
- repeated accidental injuries, often caused by lack of supervision
- skin issues, such as sores, rashes, flea bites, scabies or ringworm
- thin or swollen tummy
- tiredness
- untreated injuries
- weight or growth issues

### 3. Housing and family issues

- living in an unsuitable home environment, such as having no heating
- being left alone for a long time
- taking on the role of carer for other family members

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### 4. Change in behaviour

- becoming clingy
- becoming aggressive
- being withdrawn, depressed or anxious
- changes in eating habits
- displaying obsessive behaviour
- finding it hard to concentrate or take part in activities
- missing school
- showing signs of self-harm
- using drugs or alcohol

Source: [NSPCC](#)

#### Who can help?

In an emergency always dial 999.

If you are worried about the safety of a child or young person [contact children's services](#) in your local area.

#### Further information

[3.1 Children who are Neglected](#) - Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton (HIPS) Safeguarding Children Procedures Manual.

[Missed opportunities: Indicators of neglect – what is ignored, why and what can be done?](#) - Research Report from the Department of Education (November 2014).

[Neglect is also Child Abuse: Know All About It](#) - Information guide produced by the NSPCC.