BIRMINGHAM Safeguarding Children PARTNERSHIP

Safeguarding Leaders' Assembly

Thursday 3rd November 2022

The MAC, Birmingham

This Morning's Agenda

09:30	**Independent Chair's Introduction & Safeguarding Update**
09:45	**Keynote*: A Lived Experience – Breaking the cycle of Neglect:*** In conversation with Kerry Littleford, Advocate for Children in Care and Public Health Specialty Registrar
10:30	***Working together to Build Strong Family Foundations;*** Launch and Implementation of the Birmingham Neglect Strategy 2022-26
10:55	**Comfort Break – 15 minutes**
11:10	**Facilitated Workshop –** Working together to implement the Birmingham Neglect Strategy 2022-2
11:40	**Plenary Session:** Agreeing the way forward
11:55	**Any Other Business** Date of Next Assembly: 9am to 12.30 - Thursday 27th April 2023 9am to 12.30 - Thursday 26th October 2023
12:00	**Close**

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Independent Chair's Introduction and Update

Penny Thompson CBE
BSCP Independent Chair
3rd November 2022

Independent Chair's Introduction & Safeguarding Update

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a. Birmingham Joint Statement on Cost-of-Living Crisis – 25.07.2022
b. Safeguarding in Faith Communities Steering Group – 29.09.2022
c. West Midlands MASA Network – 06.09.2022
d. Publication of HH Serious Case Review – 01.09.2022
e. BSCP Childhood Neglect Conference – 26th September 2022
f. Launch of the Birmingham Neglect Strategy 2022-26 – 26th September 2022
g. BSCP Executive Board – 28th September 2022

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Keynote:

A Lived Experience – Breaking the cycle of Neglect

In conversation with

Kerry Littleford,

Advocate for Children in Care

and Public Health Specialty Registrar

Working Together to Build Strong Family Foundations

Launch and Implementation of the Birmingham Neglect Strategy 2022-26

Graham Tilby,

Assistant Director, Safeguarding, Birmingham Children's Trust

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- **Levels of deprivation and child protection in our City – 43% of our population live in 10% most deprived areas of England; 42% live in poverty**

- **Disproportionate impact of poverty on black, Asian and minority ethnic families**

- **Impact of Covid and cost of living crises on families**

There can be no keener revelation of a society's soul than the way in which it treats its children

(Nelson Mandela, 8 May 1995)

What does the latest research tell us about Neglect?

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Neglect is more prevalent than we thought – featured in 75% of Serious Case Reviews

Neglect has significant long-term impact on children and their lived experience is often not understood

Plans can focus too heavily on practical tasks rather than understanding the underlying cause

Practitioners can be desensitised – 'normalisation of neglect'

DfE, *Learning for the future: final analysis of Serious Case Reviews, 2017-19*, Dickens, Taylor et al (not yet published)

Further Key Messages from research

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Neglect is complex and our safeguarding systems are not always designed for this

Parental engagement is key – many feel they are doing their best or do not understand concerns

Pandemic and cost of living crisis are likely to have significant impact on parenting capacity

Some groups are 'forgotten' (adolescents, children with disabilities, more affluent families, 'resilient' children)

Jan Horwath, keynote speech, September 2022

Children with disabilities and complex health needs

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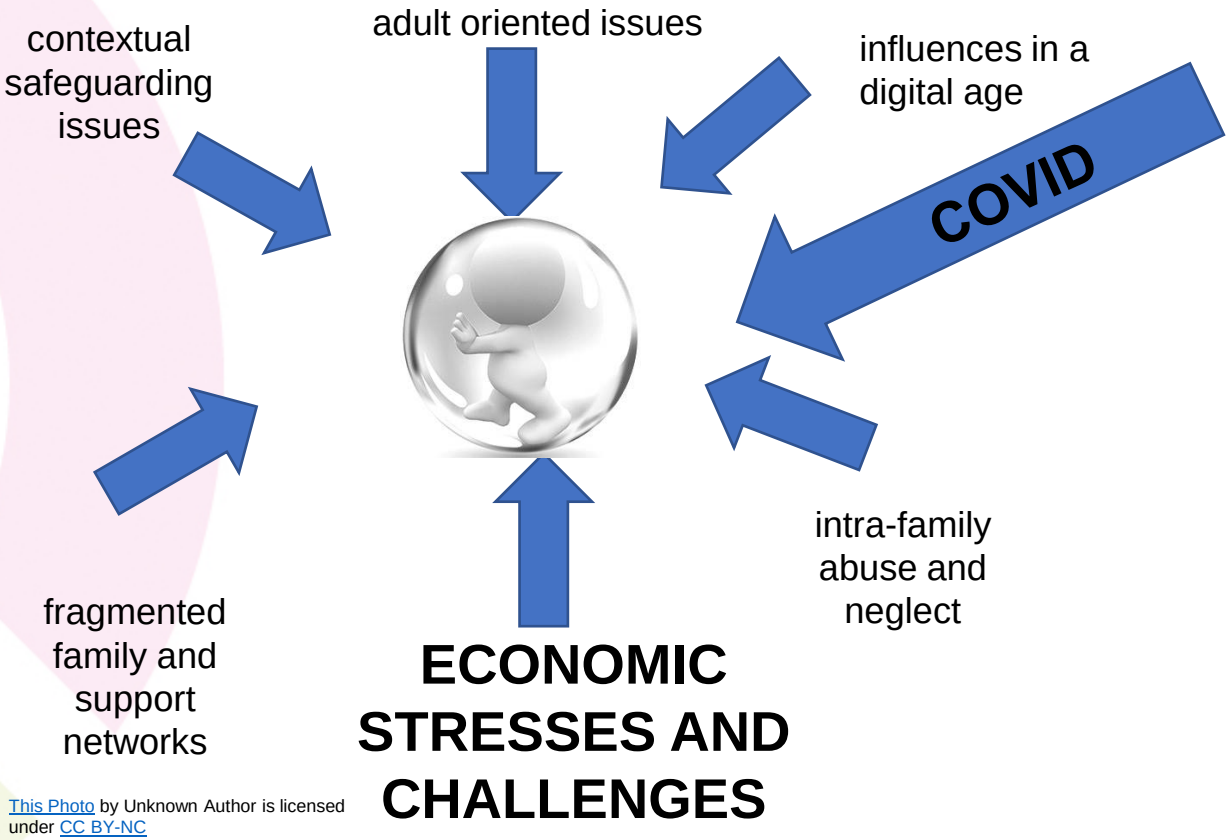
- Birmingham has a higher percentage of children and young people recorded with a disability compared to the national average. (SEND JSNA 2019 The SEND strategy 2019-2023)
- Disabled children are at higher risk of neglect due to more financial pressure on their families. (SCOPE- disability price tag 2019)
- A disabled child is less likely to receive support and protection when they have been abused (Taylor 2014)
- Professionals have difficulty identifying safeguarding concerns when working with disabled children (NSPCC 2016)
- It is estimated that disabled children are over 3 times more likely to be abused or neglected than non-disabled children. (OFSTED 2017)

The World of the Family



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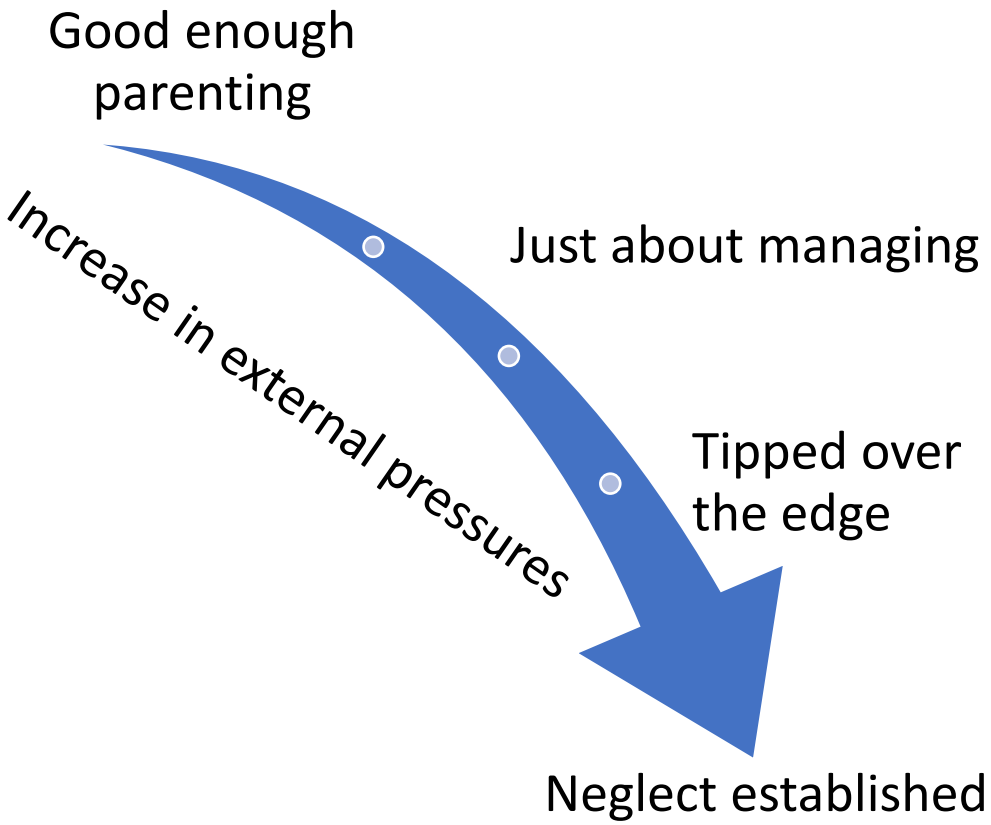
The Parenting Challenge



The Practitioner's Burden

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- Consider the 'burden' that our practitioners carry when working with neglectful families

- How is this affecting their ability and motivation to meet the needs of the children?

Key Themes from Serious Cases

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- De-sensitisation to neglect: *in the context of poverty and austerity*
- Complexities around identifying neglect
- Information exchange
- 'Hidden in plain sight': *a pattern of withdrawal from services*
- Dealing with difference: *cultural competence and biases*
- The long term impact of living with neglect

The response of many agencies too often suggests that there were limited expectations of the young people, their families and what life was likely to hold for them. The reactions of agencies suggest a high tolerance towards damaging and worrying experiences, parenting and life chances that in other settings in the community would simply be unacceptable **(Brandon *et al.*, 2020).**

Neglect in Birmingham: our journey

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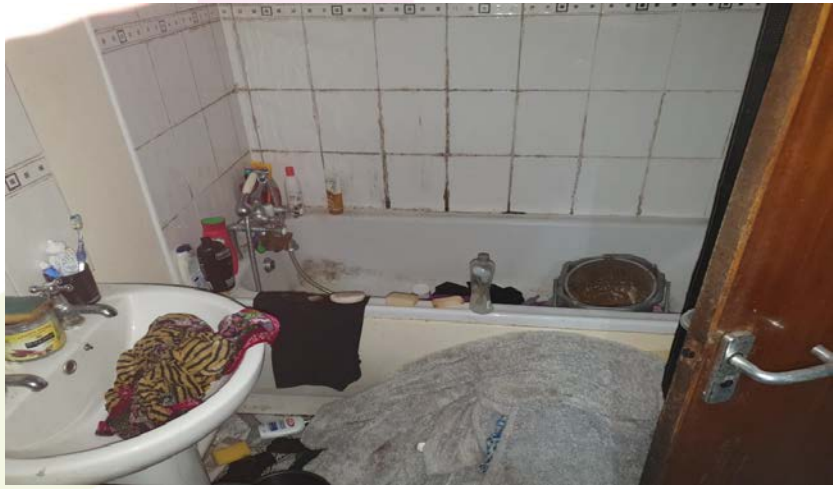
- Neglect has been a priority for BSCP for several years with previous neglect strategy launched in 2019
- Specific issues in Birmingham include the highest child poverty rates in the UK and some of the highest rates of health inequality
- The city has seen some high profile cases featuring neglect
- Some progress made but we need to be better at working together and intervening earlier



Supporting practitioners to respond to neglect – multi agency toolkit

Includes guidance and tools to help practitioners:

- Recognise the signs of neglect
- Understand causes of neglect
- Respond to neglect
- Assess neglect
- Make an action plan to support a family
- Deal with challenges
- Capture the child's lived experience
- Know when to escalate or step down

Supporting practitioners to respond to neglect – Neglect Screening Tool

Child Neglect Screening Tool

This Screening Tool should be used in all cases where neglect is suspected and will aid practitioners in deciding whether a Graded Care Profile 2 (GCP2) tool should be completed. The tool is intended for practitioners working with children and families in all partner agencies to quickly identify areas of concern which may indicate a child/young person is being neglected.

If you have 3 or more 'Yes' answers, completion of the GCP2 is recommended to understand the lived experience of a child you are worried about.

If you are not trained to carry out the full assessment using GCP2, you should contact a relevant person or team within your organisation who can complete this. If you feel your concerns for the child warrant a multi-agency response, you should submit a Family Connect or Request for Support form stating why you believe the child, young person or family would benefit from an assessment including the GCP2 and use this screening tool as evidence.

This screening tool does not replace Birmingham's and/or your own agency's safeguarding policy and procedures, in cases where you are concerned that a child has suffered, or is at risk of, immediate and/or significant harm. All agencies should refer to Right Help, Right Time for threshold guidance.

Child(ren)'s Name(s)	
Child(ren)'s Date(s) of Birth or EDD	
Is there open Early Help or statutory intervention for this family? Yes/No	
Practitioner completing form	
Agency	

	Are You Worried About?	Yes	No	Comments / Evidence
1	The child's access to adequate and nutritious food	☐	☐	
2	Conditions in the home (are they unhygienic/cluttered/ overcrowded/lacking basic amenities?)	☐	☐	
3	The child not having a suitable or safe place to sleep	☐	☐	
4	The child not having appropriate clothing for weather conditions	☐	☐	
5	A child not having clean or adequate clothing (size/condition/hygiene)	☐	☐	
6	A child's presentation (eg hygiene/body odour/dental decay/unclean hair and skin)	☐	☐	
7	Whether a parent/carer is seeking medical advice appropriately or attending routine appointments	☐	☐	
8	A lack of age-appropriate safety measures (eg stair gates/window locks/car seats/internet safety)	☐	☐	
9	A lack of age-appropriate supervision in home and outside (including online)	☐	☐	
10	A parent/carer not making safe and age-appropriate childcare arrangements (eg using unsuitable babysitters/leaving young children home alone)	☐	☐	
11	A lack of emotional warmth and positive interaction between parent and child	☐	☐	
12	A lack of appropriate stimulation or play (including lack of age-appropriate toys/activities/books)	☐	☐	
13	Poor school attendance or parent/carer not supporting education/does not engage with nursery or school	☐	☐	
14	Inappropriate behaviour management /frequent criticism/lack of interest in child's achievements	☐	☐	
15	A lack of (or inconsistent) age-appropriate routines and boundaries	☐	☐	
16	A high level of instability for the child (such as frequent home moves or changes of school, changes to people living in the home/caring for the child)	☐	☐	
	Any other concerns around neglect? Please specify			
	Total (add number in each column)			

Tackling Neglect with GCP2

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- ✓ Strengths-based approach to support families
- ✓ Clearer assessment of risks and vulnerabilities
- ✓ Better understanding of parenting capacity and ability to change
- ✓ Brings child's lived experience to the forefront

1. **Child's needs always met**
   Child always put first by carer
2. **Child's needs are met**
   Child is priority most of the time
3. **Child's needs met most of the time**
   Child and carer's needs equal
4. **Child's needs *not* met most of the time**
   Child secondary to carer
5. **Child's needs never met**
   Child comes last or not considered

Who can use GCP2 and when?

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GCP2 can be used by anyone who works with children and families, including:

- Health Visitors
- Teachers & DSLs
- Family Support Workers
- Housing Officers
- Social Workers
- Midwives
- Nursery Practitioners
- Youth Workers
- Children's Centres

Early Help – identify needs and areas of strengths

Child in Need/ Child Protection – supports social work practice and decision making

PLO/ Care proceedings - can support legal decision making and as part of the court bundle

Using GCP2 in Birmingham: Family Foundations

- Family Foundations projects set up in Hodge Hill and Northfield areas in October 2021
- Aim of project - to introduce GCP2 at an Early Help level and promote partnership working when children are experiencing or at risk of neglect
- Over 600 practitioners have been trained
- Positive feedback received from practitioners and families
- Positive changes evidenced when using tool with families

Using GCP2 in Birmingham: Key findings of evaluation

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Benefits identified from the Family Foundations work:

- GCP2 provides a positive framework for discussions with families
- Professionals and families recognised the benefits of the strengths- based approach
- Practitioners confidence in understanding and responding to neglect has improved significantly
- Practitioners' skills and confidence in addressing 'difficult' issues with parents have improved
- Parents report improved confidence in their own abilities to meet their children's needs
- Families shared a wide range of positive impacts of the GCP2 process

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Using GCP2 in Birmingham: recommendations from evaluation

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What do we still need to get right?:

- Practitioners report feeling under pressure and can see GCP2 as additional work
- Managers need to encourage practitioners to complete GCP2 assessments and to include these in children's plans as part of allocation/ supervision
- Some agencies have fewer practitioners trained and will need to support staff to become licensed to use GCP2
- Agencies need to be clear about expectations and thresholds for GCP2 use – who should complete this and when?

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Birmingham Neglect Strategy: What are our key priorities?

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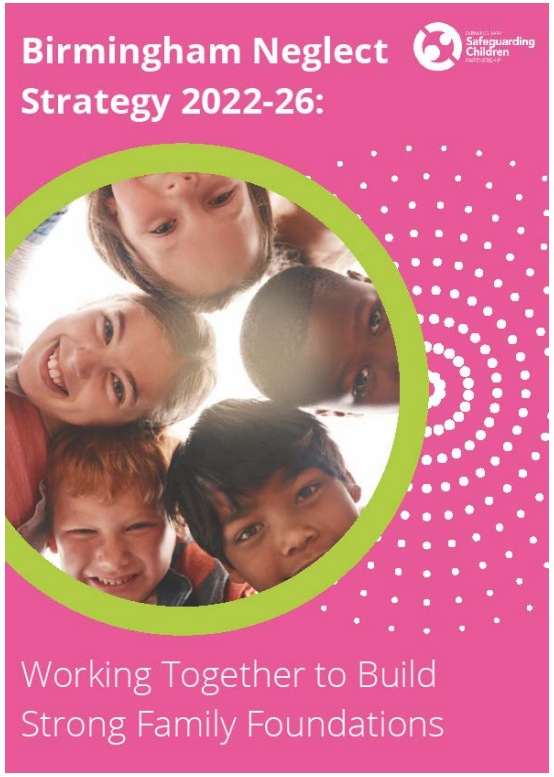
1. Strategic commitment across all agencies to understand, prevent and reduce the impact of neglect
2. Improve the capability of the multi-agency workforce to recognise and act on the signs of neglect
3. Respond to neglect in a consistent and timely way through Early Help
4. Improve the effectiveness of assessment, planning and interventions to reduce the impact of neglect



Comfort break

Back in 15 minutes!

Workshop: Working together to implement the Birmingham Neglect Strategy

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How will your agency commit to preventing and reducing the impact of neglect in Birmingham?

Each group to review one key priority in the action plan

What could your strategic leadership and commitment look like?

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- Membership of the 'NOG' (Neglect Operations Group)
- Actively promoting use of the Practice Toolkit
- Actively supporting the role of Neglect Champions
- Enabling your staff to attend neglect training
- Enabling your staff to screen for neglect and/or complete GCP2 assessment tool
- Contribute to a culture of sharing good practice (what's working)
- Be part of a public awareness campaign
- Resource a sustainable Early Help offer…

Plenary Session

- Reflection on workshop feedback
- Capturing key issues and challenges
- Agreeing the way forward

Final Thoughts

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Please put the date in your diary!

Next Safeguarding Leaders' Assembly

9am to 12.30 - Thursday 27th April 2023

9am to 12.30 - Thursday 26th October 2023