

Neglect Audit

A recent audit looked at the experience of children who were subject to professional involvement due to neglect. This briefing shares good practice, highlights key learning and identifies areas for improvement in safeguarding practice for children subject to professional involvement due to neglect.

Good Practice

Information Sharing & Communication

- In many cases, practitioners communicated regularly with each other to ensure information was shared. Schools in particular did this well.

Early Help Intervention

- Where families were supported by Early Help, thresholds were applied correctly and the range of interventions offered was good. Families were supported with referrals to other agencies. Where a higher level of support was needed, cases were escalated appropriately and in a timely way.

Key Learning

Consideration of Family History

- Often historical information was available to practitioners but was not collated and analysed effectively, with assessments only considering current circumstances.

Holistic Assessment of Families

- Assessments and plans tended to focus on tackling presenting concerns without considering the reasons for this. It was not always recognised how different issues and needs intersect and can impact on parenting capacity.

Use of Screening, Assessment, and Direct Work Tools

- Of the cases reviewed, none had a neglect screening tool or assessment such as Graded Care Profile 2 (GCP2) recorded nor had any direct work tools been completed with the children.
- Interventions tended to be quite adult-focused, and it is important to capture the child's lived experience to order avoid this.

Improving Practice

Use a chronology

- Chronologies are valuable tools which can help us identify patterns of behaviour, understand the child's experience, and evidence concerns. An example of how to build a chronology is included in the Neglect Toolkit.

Think more holistically about families.

- Consideration should be given to supporting underlying issues that may be contributing to neglect. Where threshold is met for statutory intervention, assessments should be holistic and consider parenting capacity as well as family history.

Capture the lived experience of the child.

- Understanding what a child is feeling and the impact of neglect on them can avoid intervention being too adult-focused. Neglect-specific tools such as GCP2 and the Neglect Toolkit should be used to understand and evidence concerns, and support in planning any intervention.

Next steps

- ✓ Share this briefing with your team and discuss neglect at team meetings and practice workshops.
- ✓ Use the Neglect Screening Tool for all families where there are any concerns that children's needs may not be met.
- ✓ Utilise the Neglect Toolkit.
- ✓ GCP2 training is recommended for all practitioners working with children.