

Neglect Story Board

CYSCB Neglect Sub-group

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Vision, Priority and Outcomes

1. Introduction

This storyboard describes the City of York's vision for responding to childhood and adolescent neglect. It presents the priorities, strategies and initiatives being developed to ensure best practice and deliver the best outcomes.

Defining neglect is problematic due to it being largely an act of omission; a failure to provide adequate care. As a result judgements have to be made as to what represents adequate and reasonable care. However, for the purpose of this paper the Government's definition (Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018) will be used.

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:

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

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

Adolescent neglect can be a deliberate act where young people may be abandoned by parents or forced to leave home. Neglect can include parents not being aware of their child's activities outside the home; not making sure they get health care when they need it; not taking an interest in their education; or failing to provide emotional support with problems or offering encouragement.

This document is intended to set the context and shape the work plan for the Child Neglect Sub-group for the period 2016-18.

2. Local Picture

It is well documented that awareness of child and adolescent neglect and its consequences on the future wellbeing and development of children has increased during the last two decades and is the most common reason for child protection plans in the UK.



In 2016/17 concerns about neglect were the most common reason for contacts to the NSPCC helpline and the numbers had increased by 61% since 2011/12 ([How Safe Are Our Children. NSPCC 2017](#)¹). In York at the end of March 2017, 54% of children subject to a Child Protection Plan were listed under the category of 'Neglect' compared to 47.8% nationally.

Neglect causes significant distress to children and leads to poorer health and wellbeing in the short and long term. Research and findings from Serious Case Reviews inform us that in extreme cases, neglect can result in a child death. These reviews also provide us with evidence that, for professionals working with children, young people and families, neglect is one of the most challenging areas of their work.

The consequences of neglect can include an array of health and wellbeing problems including difficulties in forming attachments and relationships, lower educational achievements, an increased risk of substance misuse and a higher risk of experiencing abuse as well as difficulties in assuming parenting responsibilities later on in life.

The degree to which children are affected during their childhood and later life depends on the type, severity and frequency of the maltreatment and on what support mechanisms and coping strategies were available to the child.

3. City of York's Multi-agency Strategy

City of York Safeguarding Children Board has prioritised the steps taken to address neglect since 2014/15. Our aim is to strengthen the identification and effective response to neglect of practitioners working in all agencies working with children, adults and families across York.

A [CYSCB Multi-agency Neglect Strategy](#)² has been developed and published that establishes the strategic aims, objectives and priorities for York's approach in tackling neglect and identifies a number of guiding principles that underpin all work around neglect. The strategy is informed by research and by the findings of the thematic review of child neglect commissioned by the CYSCB and published in 2013; Serious Case Reviews; and by a Learning Lessons Review which was completed in 2016.

¹ <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/services-and-resources/research-and-resources/2017/how-safe-are-our-children-2017/>

² <http://www.saferchildrenyork.org.uk/neglect.htm>



4. Strategy bookcase

[City of York Safeguarding Children Board Annual Reports](#)³

[CYSCB One Minute Guide to Child and Adolescent Neglect](#)⁴ (2017)

[Children and Young People's Plan 2016-2020](#)⁵

[In the Child's Time: Professional Responses to Neglect](#)⁶ (Ofsted, March 2014)

[Child Neglect: The Scandal That Never Breaks](#)⁷ (Action for Children, March 2014)

[Neglect and Serious Case Reviews](#)⁸ (NSPCC, 2013)

[City of York Serious Case Reviews](#)⁹

[CYSCB Thematic Review of Child Neglect](#)¹⁰ (CYSCB, 2013)

5. The Vision

The CYSCB believes that every child and young person in York should grow up in safety and always to feel safe. Each child should have the opportunity to reach their full potential.

A strategic action plan has been created alongside the Strategy, and the CYSCB Neglect Sub-group monitors and scrutinises the actions and their outcomes for children and young people in York.

The action plan states that we will:

- Secure collective commitment to addressing child neglect robustly across all partner agencies
- Demonstrate effective leadership in driving forward the appropriate system, culture and process changes required

³ <http://www.saferchildrenyork.org.uk/annual-reports-and-business-plan.htm>

⁴ <http://www.saferchildrenyork.org.uk/child-protection-procedures.htm>

⁵ <http://www.yor-ok.org.uk/workforce2014/Dream%20again%20and%20YorOK%20Board/dream-again---the-children-and-young-peoples-plan.htm>

⁶ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/professional-responses-to-neglect-in-the-childs-time>

⁷ <https://www.actionforchildren.org.uk/resources-and-publications/reports/child-neglect-the-scandal-that-never-breaks/>

⁸ <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/services-and-resources/research-and-resources/2013/neglect-serious-case-reviews/>

⁹ <http://www.saferchildrenyork.org.uk/safeguarding%20practice%20reviews%20formerly%20serious-case-reviews%20htm>

¹⁰ <http://www.saferchildrenyork.org.uk/safeguarding%20practice%20reviews%20formerly%20serious-case-reviews%20htm>

- Improve the awareness and understanding of child neglect across the city
- Develop a common understanding of neglect and the thresholds for intervention
- Ensure timely identification, assessment and intervention for children and young people exposed to neglectful parenting/living in neglectful situations at all levels of intervention, including the use of evidence based tools and interventions
- Ensure effective service provision to prevent child neglect occurring in the first instance, and address the impact and prevent re-occurrence once substantiated, in order to ensure that children are safely cared for and provided with optimum caring environments.

6. Delivering the Strategy

The child neglect strategy has been developed and is implemented and coordinated by the CYSCB Neglect Sub-group.

The Sub-group has identified specific effectiveness measures to assess whether the Neglect Strategy Action Plan is successful. These measures and outcomes will be monitored by the group. While many are, as yet, aspirational, there have been a number of key developments and work streams across the city for which outcomes are beginning to be affected.

7. Key developments and work streams

The CYSCB recognised neglect as a significant issue in 2010 as a result of lessons emerging from case reviews. As a result the Board undertook a wide ranging thematic review exploring the local professional response to child neglect alongside reviewing national and international research. Several 'lessons learned' workshops took place in the context of the Thematic Review and Serious Case Reviews. The thematic review was launched at a conference in November 2012 with Professor Eileen Munro as the key note speaker.

In 2016 there was another conference led by Professor Jan Horwath looking in particular at the child's experience of neglect from the child's point of view.

Social Workers and Healthy Child Practitioners have been trained to use the Graded Care Profile, an assessment model specifically designed to evaluate family strengths and weaknesses, to support in the identification of neglect. The training is now being rolled out to practitioners in the Local Area Teams so that neglect can be assessed and interventions take place at the earliest opportunity.



York Teaching Hospital has introduced a 'Was Not Brought' policy. The use of 'Was Not Brought' rather than 'Did Not Attend' for all children who do not attend health appointments. The clear message is that children do not bring themselves to appointments and therefore do not wilfully choose not to attend. They rely on parents or carers to bring them.

In 2017, CYSCB published a ['One Minute Guide to Child and Adolescent Neglect'](#)

CYSCB has worked hard to continue to raise professional awareness and improve practice in recognising and intervening with child and adolescent neglect. Learning and development events have included:

- Workshops for practitioners working with children and families, sharing the lessons learned from a learning lessons review
- Workshops for colleagues from adults and housing services
- Single agency seminars and workshops in relation to the above
- A 'Voice of the Child' training day delivered by colleagues from North East Lincolnshire NSPCC
- Graded Care Profile training for practitioners both 'train the trainer' and the use of the GCP
- Information about recognising the signs of child and adolescent neglect via social media including Twitter ([@YorkLSCB¹¹](#)), the CYSCB website and the CYSCB newsletter
- Neglect awareness training sessions accessible to all practitioners across York working with children and/or families.

8. The next 24 months

- A key priority will be for the CYSCB via the Neglect Sub-group to continue to scrutinise and challenge the actions and outcome measures in the CYSCB Neglect Multi-agency Strategy Action Plan.
- The Neglect Sub-group is in the process of developing a 'Neglect Screening Tool' for use by any practitioner who has a concern about the neglect of a child or adolescent.
- Further workshops are planned in relation to lessons learned from recent reviews.

¹¹ <https://twitter.com/YorkLSCB>



- The CYSCB website is being developed to provide practitioners with more advice and guidance about child and adolescent neglect and links to further information.
- An audit of the 'Was Not Brought' policy in health services will ascertain how well this terminology is being used and whether it has increased an understanding that children depend on their parents and carers to access medical attention for them.

9. How will we know we are succeeding

Progress against the objectives agreed by the Child Neglect Task Group will be monitored and challenged by CYSCB via the Neglect Sub-group.

The Sub-group expects to see:

- An increase in the number (initially), and improvement in the quality, of referrals from health colleagues into early help services and statutory services where there are emerging concerns regarding neglect
- A reduction in referrals to social care and an increase in Child In Need and Early Help service intervention
- Partner agencies having in place appropriate measures to support professionals to identify and respond to indicators of child neglect
- The widest possible distribution at both strategic and frontline level of the Multi-Agency Neglect Strategy
- An acceptable multi-agency uptake of the CYSCB Neglect training and a good participant evaluation of the course
- Feedback from participants that the learning from the training has been used in practice.
- Increase of the use of the Graded Care Profile across the Healthy Child Service, Children's Social Care and the Local Area Teams.
- An interrogation and an understanding of the dental health data in York and whether the level of dental caries in children is in any way linked to neglect.
- An increase in the numbers of children aged 3+ who are visiting the dentist.

