

MULTI-AGENCY CHILD NEGLECT STRATEGY & TOOLKIT **2019-2021**

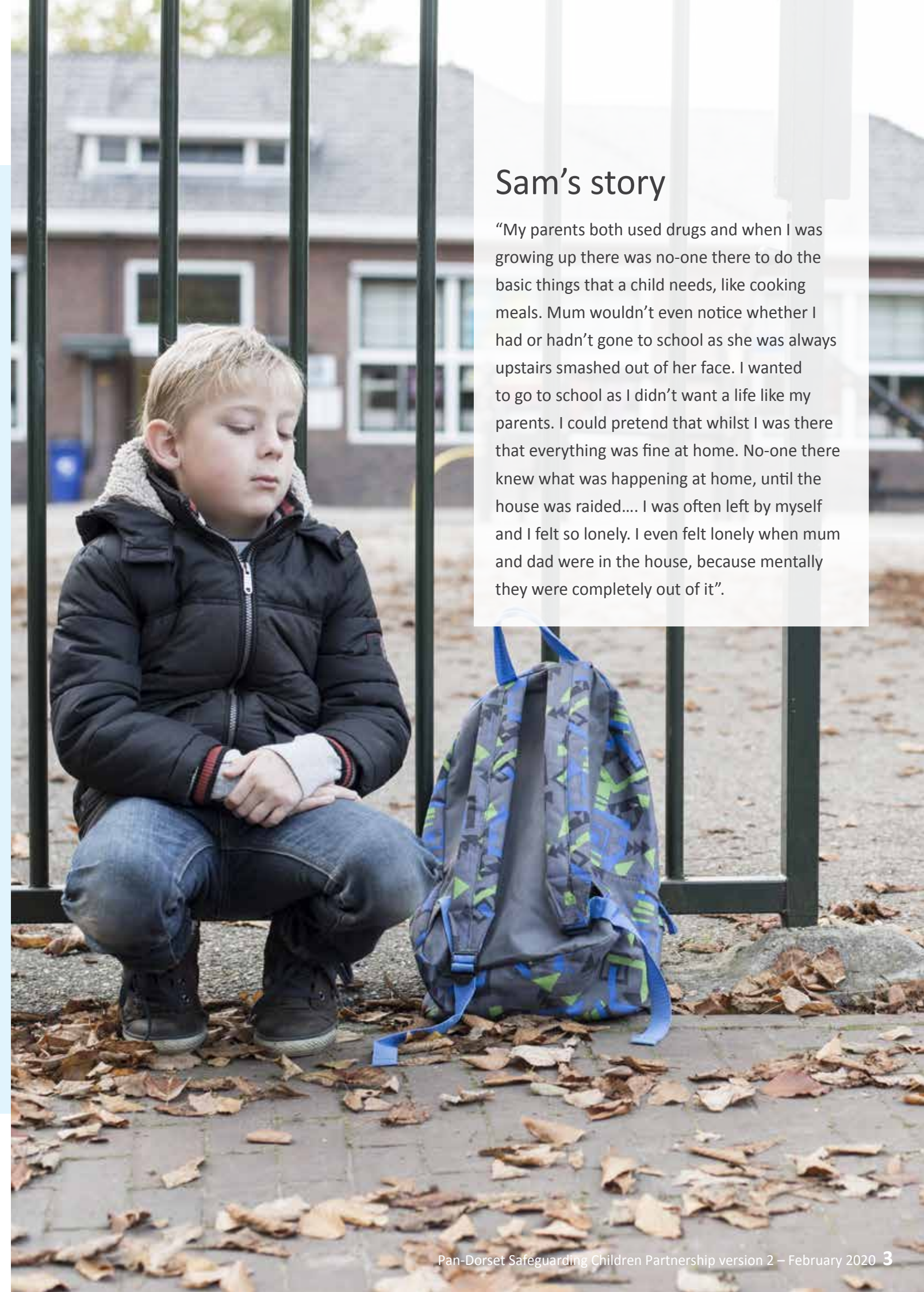
Our vision is that by agencies working collaboratively through our multi-agency partnership, alongside children, young people and their families that their lives will benefit from a reduction of the occurrence and impact of neglect.

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Sam's story

"My parents both used drugs and when I was growing up there was no-one there to do the basic things that a child needs, like cooking meals. Mum wouldn't even notice whether I had or hadn't gone to school as she was always upstairs smashed out of her face. I wanted to go to school as I didn't want a life like my parents. I could pretend that whilst I was there that everything was fine at home. No-one there knew what was happening at home, until the house was raided.... I was often left by myself and I felt so lonely. I even felt lonely when mum and dad were in the house, because mentally they were completely out of it".



We are pleased to introduce the new Pan-Dorset, Multi Agency Child Neglect Strategy and Toolkit, which replaces our initial Neglect Strategy and builds upon the Practitioner Toolkit launched in 2016.

The purpose of our strategy is to:

PREVENT AND REDUCE CHILD NEGLECT THROUGH EARLY AND EFFECTIVE SUPPORT TO CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILIES

This updated strategy brings together the work of representatives from a wide range of local services supporting children and their families to improve their lives into adulthood. We ask you to ensure that it is widely disseminated and adopted across all partner agencies, services and communities.

We know that when children and young people are subject to Adverse Childhood Experiences, including neglect, not only does this impact on their development, but it will also have enduring consequences throughout their lives and potentially the lives of their own children.

“The cumulative and pervasive impact of neglect on the development of children and their life chances has to be properly addressed if they are to be able to contribute to and benefit from society as adults and future parents” (In the Child’s Time – Professional Responses to Neglect, OFSTED 2014)

We also know that neglect is a feature in a large proportion of cases that are reported as Serious Incidents and which then lead on to Serious Case Reviews.



To have a real impact on this area of safeguarding, a better shared understanding and a coherent, strategic approach to addressing child neglect is essential across adult and children’s services and including third sector agencies. A shared approach is particularly crucial at a time where collective resources have become more limited, whilst at the same time social pressures such as poverty and availability of suitable housing is stretched and housing costs are increasing.

This strategy underpins the continuing shared commitment of the new Pan-Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership (led by the Local Authorities, Health and Police) to work collectively to tackle child neglect and improve the quality of the lives of children, young people and their families.

Strategic Objectives

As multi-agency partners we commit to pushing forward on our four strategic objectives:

Objective A:

Securing collective commitment and resource across all partner agencies, demonstrating effective leadership in driving forward improved outcomes for children and young people at risk from neglect.

Objective B:

Further developing awareness, understanding and recognition of child neglect at all ages and stages, including pre-natal, peri-natal and adolescence.

Objective C:

Developing our understanding of factors that can lead to neglect and supporting families, through local Early Help strategies, to strengthen prevention, recognition and responses before statutory intervention is required.

Objective D:

Improving the effectiveness and impact of intervention and service provision in working alongside families to achieve and sustain improved outcomes.

Objective A

Securing collective commitment and resource across all partner agencies, demonstrating effective leadership in driving forward improved outcomes for children and young people at risk from neglect.



Governance and Accountability

This strategy is owned and overseen by the Pan-Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership which will monitor progress against the strategic objectives.

Multi Agency Responsibilities

Child neglect is an area where all agencies have a part to play in preventing, responding to and working with families to improve their lives.

Working Together 2018 Guidance sets out key roles for individual organisations and agencies to deliver effective arrangements for safeguarding. It is essential that these arrangements are strongly led and promoted at a local level, specifically by local area leaders, including local authority Chief Executives and lead members of Children's Services, Mayors, Police and Crime Commissioners

and through the commitment of chief officers and governance leads in all organisations and agencies.

The purpose of this strategy is to seek to work with families below the child protection threshold as early as possible, although early intervention work requires the willingness of families to engage in this. Staff working in schools and early years settings are key to understanding the extent of early help needs and the proportion of children who move on to higher levels of concern where statutory intervention is required.

Responses to Child Neglect

In developing this strategy, consideration has been given to best practice identified in other areas through the government's joint targeted inspections.

For example:

Wokingham (July 2017)

- Many agencies understand the importance of hearing the voice of the child in families where there is neglect.
- Effective development of chronologies by health representatives in the multi-agency safeguarding hub means that the assessment of patterns of neglect and parental engagement, including failing to bring children to medical appointments are used well to identify risk.
- Police leaders have made an unambiguous commitment to the development of improved multi agency working and have prioritised the protection of vulnerable children, including those who suffer neglect.

Cheshire West and Chester (November 2017)

There is a clear drive at a strategic level to embed a shared approach across partners to tackle neglect.

- Strong partnership working and mature relationships, where there is challenge between agencies and from the LSCB Chair are driving improvement.
- Impact is evident ...this is resulting in many children receiving at timely and appropriate response to reduce risk and the impact of neglect.
- Clear evidence that in many agencies professionals are supported to identify neglect early, for example through the good use in some health services of neglect assessment tools.
- A shared approach to building and maintaining effective working relationships with families, together with a good level of understanding of children's experiences of neglect is leading to highly effective practice in some cases and is making a real and positive difference for many children.

The purpose of this strategy is to seek to work with families below the child protection threshold as early as possible, although early intervention work requires the willingness of families to engage in this.

Objective B

Further developing awareness, understanding and recognition of child neglect at all ages and stages, including pre-natal, peri-natal and adolescence.

Defining Neglect (see also Appendix A) Working Together 2018 defines child 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.”*

This is the official Government definition of neglect and is important as it supports a consistent understanding of neglect amongst multi-agency professionals. It provides a guide and a threshold in the identification, assessment and decision-making process of neglect and is the criteria for determining if a child is to be placed on a child protection plan.

However, the definition can only be useful if there is a clear and shared understanding of neglect and its impact upon a child’s health and development - in its broadest sense. In contrast to other forms of abuse, child neglect often presents us with less tangible and more diverse indicators making it harder to identify. Furthermore, differences of opinion about what constitutes ‘persistent failure,’ ‘serious impairment of health or development’ and ‘adequate’ make this definition, as with others, more open to interpretation resulting in confusion and lack of consensus amongst childcare professionals about what neglect actually involves.

An additional difficulty that professionals may have in identifying neglect relates to concerns about imposing their own standards and values on other people and a reluctance to be ‘judgemental’. Yet professionals are tasked to make professional judgements, based on the best evidence available and within a co-ordinated multi-agency response.

The definitions of neglect, an understanding of the impact upon the child’s health and development and effective working together can help professionals to distinguish between being ‘judgemental’ and articulating a defensible ‘professional judgement’.

Context of Child Neglect

Neglect during childhood can have significant, long-lasting and pervasive consequences, affecting all aspects of a child’s development.

These effects can impact on:

- Cognitive development.
- Development of speech and language.
- Physical growth.
- Emotional wellbeing.
- Behavioural and social development.

These factors in turn can affect a child’s ability to make and sustain relationships, achieve in education and play an active role in their social network, family and community as they develop towards adulthood.

Research into Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) highlights the cumulative impact of ACEs on resilience to health-harming behaviours such as binge drinking, poor diet, substance misuse, unplanned pregnancy and involvement in violent behaviour or incarceration. The cyclical

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link between neglect and ACEs is now widely recognised. ACEs research suggests that 1 in 10 children have experienced adversity in the form of neglect.

Longer term, the legacy of neglect can affect a child’s physical and emotional health and their own parenting skills, perpetuating inter-generational cycles of neglect.

Child neglect also needs to be considered within the context of social and economic factors such as poverty and deprivation, family environment and community resources. There is now growing recognition of safeguarding risks beyond the home environment. These are referred to as Contextual Safeguarding. Children and young people experiencing neglect are likely to be more vulnerable to those seeking to harm, abuse or exploit them beyond their home environment.

Furthermore, it is believed that the impact of austerity, including cuts to local services, changes to the benefits system and access to affordable housing will all contribute to the overall context of neglect.

Scale and scope, nationally and locally

The scale and scope of child neglect is not clear across the UK, but it is the most common type of abuse experienced by children and young people in England. Nationally, there is no recent data to identify the scale and scope of child neglect.

- 2014 national data recorded 48,300 children subject to a child protection plan, with 43% in the category of neglect.
- An NSPCC survey in 2017 suggested that 4% of children under the age of 11 years and 11% of children aged 11 to 17 years had experienced neglect. This would mean that older children are 3 times more likely to be neglected.
- Local data for Bournemouth, Christchurch, Poole and Dorset (March 2019) shows that the category of concern of child neglect accounts for over half of all Child Protection Plans pan-Dorset.



When considering data, it is important to note that neglect can at times be used as a “catch all” child protection plan category, where a number of types of abuse may be present with an overall categorisation that a child is being neglected. Nationally, the use of neglect as the main concern in child protection plans fluctuates considerably between local authorities. (Source: Growing Up Neglected; A Multi Agency Response to Older Children)

It is equally important to note that these figures are where statutory intervention has been required, often after early intervention processes have been deployed but change has not been achieved or sustained. In such cases, neglect may have been present at varying and/or growing levels in a child’s life before statutory intervention is agreed upon. This figure therefore represents the ‘tip of the iceberg’.

Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews (previously known as SCRs) are carried out when a child has died or been seriously harmed, and neglect or abuse are present. Nationally these are studied and analysed on a triennial basis and over the decade that these studies have been carried out, child neglect was found to be present in 60% of cases reviewed.



Objective C

Developing our understanding of factors that can lead to neglect and supporting families through local Early Help strategies to strengthen prevention, recognition and responses before statutory intervention is required.

Learning from Children and Young People and their Families

Hearing the voice of the child and young person is a key element of our strategy.

Guidance within Working Together 2018 sets out guiding principles for engaging children and young people within the overall safeguarding system:

Children have said that they need:

- vigilance: to have adults notice when things are troubling them
- understanding and action: to understand what is happening; to be heard and understood; and to have that understanding acted upon
- stability: to be able to develop an ongoing stable relationship of trust with those helping them
- respect: to be treated with the expectation that they are competent rather than not
- information and engagement: to be informed about and involved in procedures, decisions, concerns and plans
- explanation: to be informed of the outcome of assessments and decisions and reasons when their views have not met with a positive response
- support: to be provided with support in their own right as well as a member of their family
- advocacy: to be provided with advocacy to assist them in putting forward their views
- protection: to be protected against all forms of abuse and discrimination and the right to special protection and help if a refugee

Anyone working with children should see and speak to the child; listen to what they say; take their views seriously; and work with them and their families collaboratively when deciding how to support their needs. Special provision should be put in place to support dialogue with children who have communication difficulties, unaccompanied children, refugees and those children who at risk of experience of exploitation including victims of modern slavery and/or trafficking.

Practitioners who are working with children or young people who are potentially being neglected need to build trusting relationships so that they can understand what life is like for the child(ren) in that home as they may view it as normal and not realise the impact this is having on their life and future life chances.

Understanding the root causes of why children or young people are neglected

There is no single reason why parents/carers may neglect their children; the root causes are complex and potentially multiple. They may include the following factors, but this list is not exhaustive, and factors may interact with each other to further enhance complexity:

- Impact of poverty and deprivation, unemployment or low pay
- Lack of parenting skills
- Social influences – peer group, partner, family
- Cultural or community influences
- Lack of effective budgeting skills
- Poor mental health or learning disabilities
- Housing issues
- Substance misuse
- Domestic abuse within the home
- Inter-generational neglect – neglect is the family ‘norm’
- Pressures and impacts on families
- Lack of support from family, community or services
- Focus on parental priorities overrides the need of the child
- Impact of caring responsibilities
- Changes to family arrangements
- Perceptions of when a child/adolescent should be expected to “stand on their own two feet”
- Impact of ill health or bereavement within the family

For neglect interventions to be effective, practitioners from various agencies need to elicit and understand all the social, environmental and family dimensions of each family, to understand the root causes of neglect and provide effective support to families, which can create and sustain change.

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Objective D

Improving the effectiveness and impact of intervention and service provision in working alongside families to achieve and sustain improved outcomes.

How will we work to tackle child neglect?

Hearing the voice of the child and young person is a key element of our strategy.

By adopting and disseminating our Strategy and Key Principles for Multi Agency Responses across our workforce:

MULTI-AGENCY KEY PRINCIPLES IN PREVENTING AND ADDRESSING CHILD NEGLECT

All children and young people have the right to have their basic needs met by their parents or carers. We acknowledge that evidence shows that children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities are potentially more vulnerable to neglect. We have a collective responsibility and commitment to tackling neglect where the safety, well-being and development of children is the overriding priority. We will do this by promoting practice that focuses on empowering parents and carers to take responsibility to make sustainable positive changes to their children’s and their own lives.

To maximise positive outcomes for children and their families, we will:

- Build upon our 'whole family approach,' owned collaboratively by all multi-agency stakeholders and families, to assure effective identification, assessment and support, working with and alongside families to address their needs
- Ensure early recognition and identification of the signs, symptoms and root causes of child neglect, assisted by an updated Neglect Toolkit
- Continue to deliver outcome-focused services, through a well-trained multi-agency workforce who can identify and intervene effectively and work collaboratively in cases of neglect at all ages and stages, including pre-natal, peri-natal and adolescent
- Build upon a shared understanding, underpinned by professional curiosity and healthy challenge, of the potential overlap between child neglect and other Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)
- Continue best practice in using historical case information to consider cumulative harm and identification of families at risk of inter-generational neglect
- Further develop effective outcome-based assessments and plans which are key to making a positive difference for children, young people and their families
- Enhance joint planning through effective information sharing to inform assessments, and evaluation and on-going monitoring of risk
- Enhance effective support for sustained outcomes that build resilience
- Guide and support frontline staff with effective supervision to avoid drift and 'start again' syndrome by taking decisive action when improved outcomes are not made or sustained

All children and young people have the right to have their basic needs met by their parents or carers. We acknowledge that evidence shows that children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities are potentially more vulnerable to neglect.

What will progress and impact look like?

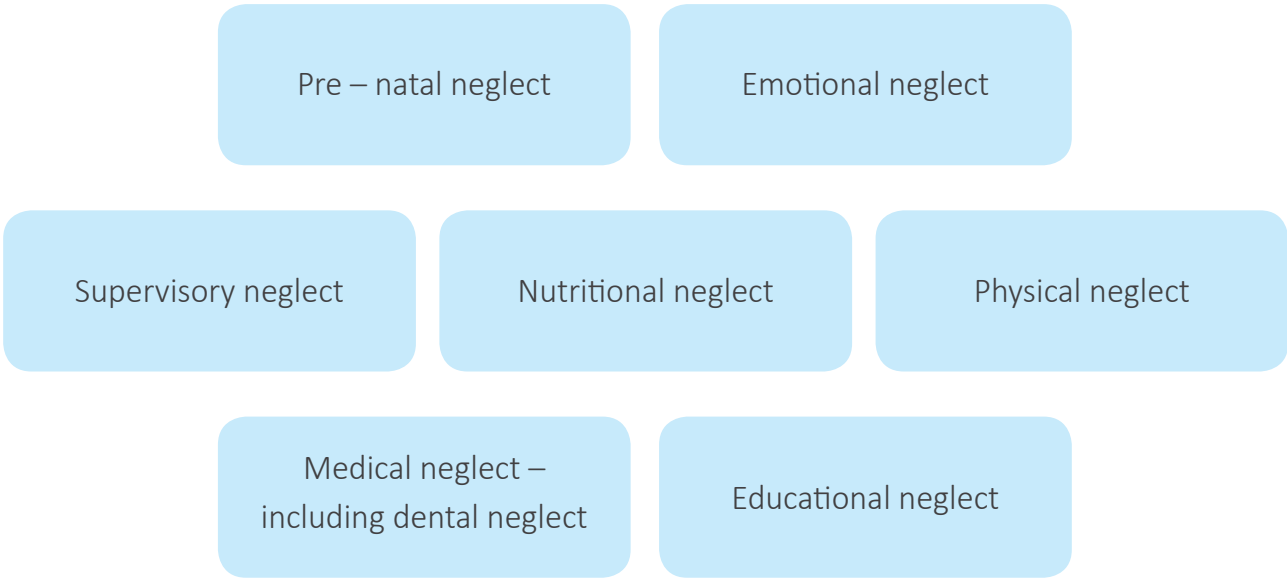
Key indicators for the measurement of the effectiveness of our Child Neglect Strategy

Appendix B sets out the intended indicators and measures to be used to demonstrate the effectiveness of the strategy, its implementation and most importantly the impact on outcomes for children and families.

These indicators will be monitored and reported to the Pan-Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership.



Appendix A- Types of Neglect



Appendix B

**(Based on South West model)
Child Neglect Data Profile**
The following indicators have been identified to indicate the potential prevalence of neglect by consideration of issues that may impact upon parenting capacity and support needs.

Indicators of Potential Child Neglect:

Parent/Carer factors: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• parents/carers (adults) admitted to hospital for mental health needs - (cumulative total over the year & last 3 years)• parents/carers (adults) receiving mental health treatments (tertiary care) - (cumulative total over the year & last 3 years)• domestic abuse incidents logged as ‘where children are present’ - (cumulative total over the year & last 3 years)• parents/carers (adults) admitted for treatment of substance misuse - and or number of parents carers (adults) who have undergone treatment for substance misuse (cumulative total over the year & last 3 years)• parents/carers who do not take up free nursery entitlement (cumulative total over the year & last 3 years)	Child/Young person <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Number of young carers (cumulative total over the year & last 3 years)• Number of children with repeated attendances at Emergency Departments/Minor Injury Units• Number of children needing total or significant extraction of their first teeth through dental neglect Proposed Measures: <p>The following Measures are proposed to identify the nature and depth of frequency of neglect and as a measure to see if the Neglect Strategy and Toolkit are effective in reducing child neglect.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Total number and % of Early Help assessments where child neglect is a prime concern• Total number and % of Referrals to MASH received coded as abuse	and neglect (cumulative total over the year & last 3 years) as evidenced by assessment using the Graded Care Profile Neglect Toolkit <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Total number and % of neglect cases as outcome of CSC Assessment• % of total and number of children starting on Child Protection or Child in Need plans wher the primary concern is neglect (cumulative total over the year & last 3 years)• % of total and number of children entering in care during a year coded as neglect• Number of Police-recorded crimes of child neglect (cumulative total over the year & last 3 years)• Number of individuals convicted of child neglect (cumulative total over the year & last 3 years) according to Police data.
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Appendix C

Multi Agency Child Neglect Assessment Toolkit

<https://pdscp.co.uk/working-with-children/child-neglect/neglect-assessment-toolkit/>

The Toolkit was reviewed and updated by a group of multi-agency practitioners in July and contains various guides and tools that can be used by practitioners from any service to identify and work with child neglect

The Toolkit has been divided into 5 categories:

1 Guidance / supporting information

The Rule of Optimism
Be Professionally Curious! Investigators/Professionals Guide
Signs of Safety Assessment and Planning Form
Using Precise Questions

2. Tools to catch the voice of the child

My Views, All About me – Older children
My Views – Young Children
Three Houses

3. Tools for use for direct work with families

BCP area Graded Care Profile
BCP area Graded Care Profile Guidance 8.17
Dorset area Graded Care Profile
Dorset area Graded care Profile Guidance
Signs of Safety Assessment and Planning Form (BCP area only)
Hoarding Assessment Tool – Threshold
Hoarding Assessment Tool – Screening Questions
Hoarding Assessment Tool – Level of Risk
Three Houses
Clutter Image Rating Tool
Neglect – Adverse childhood Experiences (ACEs) Tool
Assessment Framework Triangle
Adolescent Graded Care Profile
Adolescent Graded Care Guidance Notes

4. Tools for direct work with young people

Three Houses
My Views, All About me

5. Tools for professional supervision

Child Scaling Tool
Supervision Tool – Resilience Vulnerability Matrix
Framework for recording the condition of a home
Guide to recognising neglect for children and young people
Assessment Framework Triangle

Useful links and resources;

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse/types-of-abuse/neglect/>
<https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/bullying-abuse-safety/abuse-safety/neglect/>

Adverse Childhood Experiences

<https://www.nwcpwd.nhs.uk/attachments/article/276/Presentation.pdf>

Child Exploitation Notes and Toolkit

<https://pdscp.co.uk/working-with-children/child-exploitation/>

The Pan-Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership website also includes downloadable awareness- raising posters to be used in multi-agency settings.

Adult Self Neglect

The Local Safeguarding Adult Boards have developed resources including a toolkit. These can be accessed via these links:

https://www.bcpsafeguardingadultsboard.com/uploads/7/4/8/9/74891967/self_neglect_toolkit.pdf

<https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/care-and-support-for-adults/information-for-professionals/dorset-safeguarding-adults-board/dorset-safeguarding-adults-board-pdfs/self-neglect-toolkit.pdf>

Appendix D

KEY PRINCIPLES

TACKLING CHILD NEGLECT THROUGH MULTI-AGENCY WORKING

All children and young people have the right to have their basic needs met by their parents or carers. We acknowledge that evidence shows that children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities are potentially more vulnerable to neglect. We have a collective responsibility and commitment to tackling neglect where the safety, well-being and development of children is the overriding priority. We will do this by promoting practice that focuses on empowering parents and carers to take responsibility to make sustainable positive changes to their children's and their own lives.

To maximise positive outcomes for children and their families, we will:

- Build upon our 'whole family approach,' owned collaboratively by all multi-agency stakeholders and families, to assure effective identification, assessment and support, working with and alongside families to address their needs
- Ensure early recognition and identification of the signs, symptoms and root causes of child neglect, assisted by an updated Neglect Toolkit
- Continue to deliver outcome-focussed services, through a well-trained multi-agency workforce who can identify and intervene effectively and work collaboratively in cases of neglect at all ages and stages, including pre-natal, peri-natal and adolescent
- Build upon a shared understanding, underpinned by professional curiosity and healthy challenge, of the potential overlap between child neglect and other Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)
- Continue best practice in using historical case information to consider cumulative harm and identification of families at risk of inter-generational neglect
- Further develop effective outcome-based assessments and plans which are key to making a positive difference for children, young people and their families
- Enhance joint planning through effective information sharing to inform assessments, and evaluation and on going monitoring of risk
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Pan-Dorset Safeguarding Children Partnership

