

1 Background and reason for HSCP reviews

Two thematic line of sight meetings have been held where the children had experienced neglect. During both reviews, information was shared by agencies relating to concerns over several years.

Concerns related to historical and current parental drug use and distribution, maternal mental health, parental adverse childhood experiences, domestic abuse, and parental learning difficulties.

Significant concerns noted by agencies at home addresses in relation to children within the properties being in neglectful states. Parents were deemed unable to care for their children.

Parents were caring for a large sibling group and were young parents.

There was very limited support from either the family network or through friends.

7 Further information – links

[Threshold of Need](#)
[HSCP neglect tool kit](#)
[Line of Sight process](#)
[Myth of invisible men](#)
[Analysis and critical thinking in assessment: Literature review \(2014\) | Research in Practice](#)
<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/services-and-resources/research-and-resources/2015/thriving-communities-framework-neglect/>



HSCP-Learning
Programme 2022-2023



6 Next steps

This 7-minute guide will be shared across the partnership to compliment discussions, training and learning in relation to safeguarding children and young people from neglect within individual agencies.

The 'key learning' has been incorporated into the recently revised HSCP neglect tool kit and practice guidance. This includes a tool for practitioners to use when considering neglect to enable children's lives to be understood to ensure an appropriate response at the earliest possible opportunity. The tool has been shared through HSCP briefings to raise awareness in relation to neglect. A recording of a briefing is accessible on the HSCP website.

Training to support practitioners with key learning points is available through the HSCP Learning Programme 2022/ 2023 and attached links (detailed above).

HSCP will deliver a webinar to support practitioners with learning linked to the 'Myth of Invisible men'.

Auditing activity will take place through the HSCP Quality Assurance subgroup in November 2022 to consider the impact on children and young people following work undertaken in relation to neglect across the partnership.

2 Key lines of enquiry – thematic learning event in relation to neglect

Was the appropriate level support and invention provided by all relevant agencies in a timely way?

Was the appropriate threshold applied when work was undertaken with the family?

Was there sufficient professional curiosity in relation to the children's needs and risk, particularly when support was declined by parents?

3 Why is the early identification and support in relation to neglect important?

Nationally, neglect remains the most common reason for child safeguarding actions being taken. It features in most safeguarding practice reviews as it is consistently a factor in the lives of children who die or who are seriously harmed because of child maltreatment.

Neglect is nationally and locally consistently the most common initial category of abuse for children on a child protection plan. Neglect is often linked to other forms of abuse.

Research shows that neglect significantly impacts on children and young people throughout their childhood. Early identification of neglect and provision of support leads to better outcomes for children and into adulthood.

4 Good Practice

When strategy meetings were held, good partnership attendance was noted which enabled the effective sharing of multi-agency information.

There was evidence of some good multi-agency engagement at an early help stage – i.e., communication between education, midwifery and 0-19. Evidence of some good information sharing at some transition points and during ongoing work with the children.

Some good evidence was seen of direct work undertaken with children and young people which assisted in building a trusting relationship with them.

Evidence of tenacity and persistence of practitioners working with the families in striving to make positive change for the children.

5 Key Learning

Working with families where engagement is reluctant and sporadic – the reviews highlighted a history of failed appointments and home visits. Parents often appeared to avoid engagement with agencies including attendance at children's health appointments, mental health services and availability for visits with children's social care. There is a need to understand underlying issues which may impact on engagement i.e., parental adverse childhood experiences, learning difficulties and challenges in engaging with multiple professionals and appointments. Links to be made with adult services, when required.

Professional curiosity – it is important for all practitioners to gather information from a range of sources to inform an assessment of what is happening in a child's life on a day-to-day basis. Individual direct work with children to understand what life is like for them is vital and information relating to all children in the household needs to be correlated. Whilst it is imperative to work with families to improve the lives of children, practitioners should be professionally curious and not be solely reliant on parents/ carers accounts to avoid disguised compliance. Reflections during line of sights meetings were that information had been shared with agencies in relation to drug use within the family home, domestic abuse, hazardous home conditions and concerns in relation to children's dietary requirements not being met. These areas required exploration to understand more thoroughly the impact on the child.

Information sharing - Effective gathering of information from all key agencies is imperative during involvement with a child and young person. This includes ensuring that agencies working with parents/ carers are linked with the plans for children and young people at both early help and safeguarding stages. Information needs to be triangulated and considered alongside historical chronologies to prevent focus just being on a single event. Where neglect is identified, support needs to be provided at the earliest possible opportunity.

All household members / relevant others to be considered – during work with children and families, the focus can often be on the ability of mothers to protect and risk assessments and plans based on their engagement with agencies. It is important to ensure that fathers, and others who are significant to the child and young person, are an integral part of progressing plans to make positive changes and informing assessments.