



# Cheshire East Neglect Strategy

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2014 – 2017

**'Working together to safeguard children and young people from neglect'**



# Cheshire East Neglect Strategy

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## Foreword from Independent Chair of the LSCB

Article 19 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child states that *Governments must do what they can to ensure that children are protected from all forms of violence, abuse, neglect and bad treatment by their parents or anyone who looks after them.*

In March 2014, Action for Children in its paper *Child neglect: the scandal that never breaks* reported some stark statistics:

- One in 10 children suffers neglect
- 73% of UK children know another child who is suffering from neglect.
- One third of professionals have felt powerless to intervene when they have concerns about child neglect
- 94% of the public agree people should do something when they are worried about a child but 45% want more information on where to get help

In our Children and Young People's Plan 2014-18, we set out a vision to create a place to be young. We recognise that not all children and young people have the same experiences, not all children and young people in our borough are brought up in loving families able to care for them and as a consequence they can feel depressed, unloved and invisible.

What children and young people deserve is to be able to talk to someone they can trust, someone who is confident and caring, someone who works in a system that has a shared commitment and mutual accountability to help.

This strategy, agreed by the Cheshire East Safeguarding Children Board, is our shared commitment to re-focus our efforts to better identify children experiencing neglect and to more effectively join up the support can be offered to families.

*Ian Rush*

Chair Cheshire East Safeguarding Children Board

## Definition of Neglect

Neglect is 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"

*Working Together to Safeguard Children, March 2013*

As well as the statutory definition, it is important to have regard to the specific needs of children that are often subsumed under the term 'failure to meet basic needs'

These include:

- Medical neglect
- Nutritional neglect
- Emotional neglect
- Educational neglect
- Physical neglect
- Lack of supervision and guidance



There is an overlap between emotional abuse and many forms of child maltreatment and this especially true of neglect. So when practitioners are working with children who are experiencing neglect an understanding of emotional abuse is also important.

# Why we need a Strategy

## Introduction

The impact of neglect on children and young people is enormous. Neglect causes great distress to children, leading to poor health, educational and social outcomes and is potentially fatal. Lives are destroyed, children's abilities to make secure attachments are affected and their ability to attend and attain at school is reduced.



Their emotional health and wellbeing is often compromised and this impacts on their success in adulthood and their ability to parent in the future.

In addition to the increasing number of children who are subject to child protection plans, nationally and in Cheshire East, there are also children who are not yet in receipt of statutory child protection services but who are being offered early help due to concerns relating to neglect.

## Purpose of Strategy

The purpose of this document is to set out the strategic objectives of Cheshire East's approach to tackling neglect. This strategy also identifies key principles under which work around neglect should be undertaken and identifies key priority areas of work in order to improve the multi-agency response to neglect.

This strategy has been developed in conjunction with multi-agency partners through a task to finish group under the Safeguarding Children Board. This strategy should be considered alongside other key strategies, policies and procedures, such as Cheshire East Early Help Strategy and the Levels of Need framework.

# What we know about Neglect

## Neglect as a National Issue

*'In the child's time: Professional Responses to Neglect - Ofsted thematic audit 2014* found that "The pervasive and long-term cumulative impact of neglect on the well-being of children of all ages is well documented". Findings from inspections and research evidence the following aims:



- Early recognition
- Robust management oversight and supervision
- Specialist training
- Acknowledgement of complexity
- Effective and timely professional responses both for help and protection

## Risk Factors

A number of factors increase the likelihood of neglect in some families. Vulnerable families may have a combination of the following risk factors:

### Child risk factors

Disability  
Behavioural problems  
Chronic ill health

### Parental risk factors

Poor mental health, especially maternal mental health difficulties  
Drug and alcohol (substance misuse)  
Domestic abuse  
Parents' own exposure to maltreatment  
Lack of experience of positive parenting in childhood

### Wider Risk Factors

Poverty  
Unemployment  
Poor social support

## Neglect in Cheshire East

Neglect is one of the identified areas in Cheshire East's Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA).

The percentage of Child Protection (CP) plans for neglect is higher in Cheshire East than the national level. As at the end of March 2013 Cheshire East was at 63%; the Northwest average was 40%, England average was 42% and our statistical neighbours ranged from 26% to 57%.

Cheshire East's % of cases due to neglect as at the end of March 2014 was 49%; this has increased to 55% as at August 2014.

### ***Number of children and young people on child protection plans***

	No. on CP Plan	No. due to Neglect	% due to Neglect
End of March 2012	207	123	59
End of March 2013	161	101	63
End of March 2014	202	99	49

A large proportion of CP plans for Neglect are in the 0-5 age range, with increases in the first year of life and around 4 and 5 years. This is possibly because of greater involvement by midwives and Health Visitors in the earlier age group, and then child care and Primary School in the second. Work is needed to ensure robust case finding to bridge this gap and provide early help to children and families.

Many children subject to Child Protection Plans for Neglect are in sibling groups. A concern or referral in relation to one child may result in all the children of that family becoming subject to a Plan.

Neglect is also localised within specific areas of the Borough. A large proportion of children subject to Child Protection Plans for Neglect live in deprived areas.



The Neglect Graded Care Profile was introduced in March 2012 as a tool for practitioners. The LSCB conducted a thematic review of neglect cases in November 2013; this found that practitioners had only used the Graded care profile (GCP) tool in 11% of cases audited.

In addition to the LSCB auditing, a considerable amount of audit activity of child protection and children in need casework has taken place over 2013-14 following the Ofsted inspection. This has reassured us that children are being protected. The audit findings have revealed that we have achieved a level of compliance and considerably improved the timeliness of assessments. Improving the quality of practice across the partnership needs to be a key area of focus for 2014.



Early help also has a key role to play in supporting parents and preventing children becoming at risk from neglect or abuse. Cheshire East offers a wide range of parenting programmes and open access groups through Children's Centres, and commissions a number of parenting support services, such as one to one support in the home establishing a routine for caring and interacting with children, parenting courses and family counselling sessions as part of our early help offer. Commissioned services are targeted to the areas of the greatest need and should result in a reduction in future demand to Children's Social Care.

The Family Nurse Partnership Programme was commissioned in 2012. This is an intensive programme that targets first time teenage parents from 20 weeks gestation for up to 2 years. The programme is evidence based and has a prescriptive programme of therapeutically led evidenced based interventions that is backed up by over 30 years of research in the USA.

### **What children, young people and parents/carers think**

Children and young people led a conference on safeguarding in June 2014 telling professionals what was important to them and what support they need.

As part of the Practice Audits of Child in Need and Child Protection Plans, children, young people, parents and carers are contacted and asked about their experience of being on a plan. On the whole, young people have been positive about the intervention, have said that they can talk to their Social Workers. They have reported that they have especially good relationships with their Family Support Workers.

Parents and carers have had less positive experiences, and have reported that they need more clarity on what is expected of them from the plan, how they can contribute to the plan and the rationale for decisions.



The number of changes in Social Workers was also highlighted as an issue as this makes it difficult for families to understand the process and form a relationship with the Social Worker.

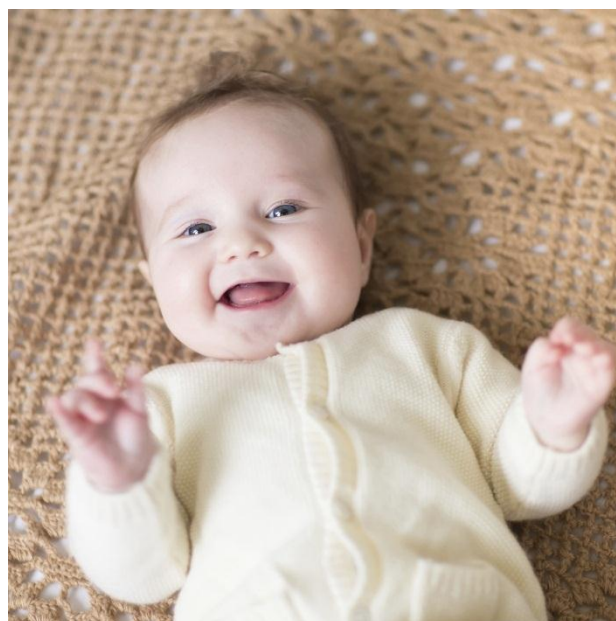
### **What frontline practitioners think**

Workshops for frontline staff across the partnership were held in June/July 2014 to consult with frontline staff on a range of priorities and themes for the new plans. These included a workshop on neglect, where practitioners were encouraged to feed back their experiences around preventing neglect, identifying the signs and effective interventions to tackle neglect. The detail from these workshops has been included in this strategy.

### **What Audits tell us about Neglect**

The following recommendations came out of an LSCB multiagency audit of 25 neglect cases in November 2013:

- To review core documentation used in child protection cases (such as child protection plans and core group records) and how these are being used, to ensure clarity within assessment, planning and ongoing work.
- To ensure the views, wishes and feelings, and daily life experiences of all children are clearly evidenced within assessments and that there is clear recording of, and review of, these within ongoing work. Children should be seen on their own and feedback taken from them about their child protection plan. Where this is not happening the reasons need to be clearly recorded and regularly reviewed.
- The risks associated with over-optimism by professionals and disguised compliance from parents need to be a focus within training and within individual casework across member agencies.
- The reasons for poor use of the Graded Care Profile need to be explored and understood, and action taken to address this.
- To ensure that routine impact analysis of the child protection plan is embedded in practice.



# Principles in Tackling Neglect

One of the key underpinning principles of this strategy to **have a well trained workforce able to identify and intervene in cases of neglect.**



The following are principles that will be adopted in tackling neglect in Cheshire East:

**Child focussed** - the safety, well-being and development of children is the overriding priority.

**Outcome focussed** - work with children and young people needs to be measured by its impact on outcomes.

**Whole family approach** - ensuring a 'Whole-Family' approach is owned by all Stakeholders.

**Shared understanding** - significant regard needs to be given to the overlap between neglect and other forms of child maltreatment such as domestic abuse and substance misuse etc.

**Collaboration** - working together with other professionals to ensure effective identification, assessment and support.

**Good quality assessments and plans** - these are key to getting it right for children and young people.

**Building resilience** - help needs to be of a kind and duration that improves and sustains the safety of children and young people into the future.

**Early help** - ensuring the early recognition and identification of the signs and symptoms of neglect and the importance of effective collaboration amongst agencies co-ordinated through the CAF early help assessment tool.

**Consistency of practice** - agencies need to challenge each other about improvement made by families and its sustainability.

**Inclusive** - children with additional needs such as special education needs and disabilities are potentially more acutely vulnerable.

**Current position informed by historical** - all agencies need to consider historical information to inform the present position and identify families at risk of Inter-generational neglect.

**Information sharing** - ensuring effective information sharing to inform assessments and evaluations of risk.

**Risk management** - suitable statutory action needs to be taken if insufficient progress is achieved and methods have been unsuccessful in addressing levels of risk present.

**Avoid drift** - decisive action will be taken when improvements are not made.

# Priorities for 2014-17

## Priority 1 – Strategic commitment across all agencies

- Launch of Strategy in Autumn 2014
- All agencies signed up to strategy
- Joint commissioning
- Embed neglect in LSCB outcomes framework
- LSCB business plan, 2014-17 Children and Young People's plan, Health and Well-being Strategy
- Annual report to LSCB, Children's Trust and Health and Well-being Board

## Priority 2 – Improve awareness, understanding and recognition of neglect

- Commission Young Advisors to carry out a piece of work with children and young people around neglect
- Training needs analysis
- Piece of work around adolescent neglect – improving awareness
- Revised training programme – training the trainers, including graded care profile and new screening tool
- Neglect champions
- Promote common definition
- Communication strategy – facebook, newsletter, twitter, OMGs
- Case studies

## Priority 3 – Prevent neglect through early help

- Launch new screening tool
- Encourage use of CAFs
- Good practice case studies

## Priority 4 - Improve effectiveness of interventions to tackle neglect

- Ensure levels of need at the front door is properly integrated across partner agencies
- Review existing interventions and agree approach – practitioner guide
- Roll out of Graded Care Profile as key tool across the partnership
- Sharing good practice
- Regular feedback to frontline re learning from audits etc

# Delivering on our Priorities

## Action Plan

The priorities and actions set out in this strategy will be incorporated into the LSCB Business Plan for 2014-15.

## Governance

The LSCB Executive Group will provide the initial governance to oversee the neglect strategy, but performance reporting and impact will be the responsibility of the proposed Quality and Outcomes sub-group.



## Measuring Success

The success of the strategy will be measured based on a range of quantitative and qualitative measures.

### Quantitative Measures

- Reduction in the % of children on child protection plans for neglect for 12 months or more

As at 31/3/2014			% reduction	Outcome at 31/3/2016
No. on plan for neglect	No. over 12 months	% over 12 months		
99	15	15%	5%	No more than 10% of cases for neglect over 12mths

- Reduction in % of repeat child protection plans for neglect (this is where the 2<sup>nd</sup> plan category is neglect and the previous plan was also neglect)

In the year 2013-14			% reduction	Outcome 31/3/2016
No. of repeat plans where neglect is factor	No. where neglect is 2 <sup>nd</sup> or subsequent time (within 5 yrs)	% of neglect CP plans for 2 <sup>nd</sup> time		
32	12	38%	23%	No more than 15% of neglect CP plans are for a 2 <sup>nd</sup> or subsequent time

- Reduction in % of children and young people subject to a children in need plan for neglect for more than 6 months (baseline to be agreed once new CMS system live).

As at 30/11/2014			As at 31/3/2016		%
No. CIN plan for neglect >6mths	No. CIN plan for neglect	%	No. CIN plan for neglect >6mths	No. CIN plan for neglect	
<i>To be determined</i>					

- The number of consultations where neglect is identified as the factor (baseline to be agreed once new CMS system live).

As at 30/11/2014			As at 31/3/2016		%
No of consultations	Number where neglect is a factor	%	No of consultations	Number where neglect is a factor	
<i>To be determined</i>					

- Number of children and young people 0-5 on CP plan for neglect that are registered and engaged with local Children's centre

As at 31/3/2014			As at 31/03/2016	
No 0-5 on plan for neglect	Registered at Children's centre	Engaged at Children's centre (i.e attended in last 6mths)	% Registered at Children's centre	% Engaged at Children's centre
44	43 (98%)	32 (73%)	98%	85%

*(NB Engaged at centre excludes FSW contact sessions)*

- Reduction in the number of children entering care for neglect

As at 31/3/2014			As at 31/03/2016
Number entering care for neglect	Total number of children entering care	%	% of children entering care for neglect
84	147	57%	No more than 30%

## Qualitative Measures

- LSCB multi-agency audits of neglect child protection plans show good impact of the plan and good use of graded care profile tool
- Common Assessment Framework (CAF) and Children's Social Care audits show good use of screening tool and graded care profile
- Increase in the % of children subject on a child protection plan for neglect where health and school attendance has improved
- Independent Safeguarding Chair (ISC) Independent Review of children in need plans for neglect shows effective planning and impact and good use of tools
- Feedback from parents and children collected at children in need, initial child protection case conference, child protection case review meetings and at case closure



## Appendix 1

### CHESHIRE EAST NEGLECT STRATEGY, 2014-17 - ACTION PLAN

Ref	Action	Who	By When
<b>Outcome 1 – Strategic commitment across all agencies</b>			
<b>Strategic Lead – Nigel Moorhouse, Head of Early Help and Protection</b>			
1a	Coordinate Launch of Neglect Strategy	LSCB Business Support	January 2015
1b	Embed neglect in LSCB outcomes framework	Outcomes and Quality Assurance Sub-group	November 2015
1c	Agree baseline data for measuring success of strategy	Neglect Task and Finish Group	March 2015
1d	Ensure focus on neglect is in LSCB business plan, 2014-17 Children and Young People’s plan, Health and Well-being Strategy	LSCB Business Support	November 2015
1e	Report impact of strategy in Annual report to LSCB, Children’s Trust and Health and Well-being Board	LSCB Business Support	Annually by July
1f	Present reports to LSCB on outcomes of audits related to neglect	All agencies	Ongoing
<b>Outcome 2 – Improved awareness, understanding and recognition of neglect</b>			
<b>Strategic Lead – Alex Modder, NSPCC</b>			
2a	Commission Young Advisors to carry out a piece of work with children and young people around their experiences of neglect	Multi-agency Neglect Champions	March 2015
2b	Review current work around adolescent neglect and identify ways of improving awareness across frontline practitioners	Multi-agency Neglect Champions	June 2015
2c	Carry out a training needs analysis around neglect	LSCB Training Unit	April 2015
2d	Revise training programme to incorporate standard use of graded care profile and new screening tool	LSCB Training Unit	January 2015

2e	Identify Neglect Champions	All agencies	December 2014
2f	Promote common definition of neglect across all agencies	Communications sub-group	Ongoing
2g	Embed neglect in LSCB communication strategy – facebook, newsletter, twitter, One Minute Guides	Communications sub-group	March 2015
2h	Develop case studies to exemplar good practice around identifying neglect	Multi-agency Neglect Champions	Ongoing
<b>Outcome 3 – Prevent neglect through early help Strategic Lead – Jonathan Potter, Principal Manager, Early Help</b>			
3a	Launch new screening tool	Neglect Task and Finish Group	November 2014
3b	Increase the use of CAFs to support neglect	Early Help sub-group	Ongoing
3c	Develop case studies to exemplar good practice around preventing neglect through early help	Early Help sub-group	Ongoing
<b>Outcome 4 - Improve effectiveness of interventions to tackle neglect Strategic Lead – Vicky Buchanan, Principal Manager, Children in Need/Child Protection</b>			
4a	Ensure levels of need at the front door is properly integrated across partner agencies	LSCB Executive	Ongoing
4b	Review existing interventions and produce a practitioner's guide	Carolyn Connor	January 2015
4c	Roll out Graded Care Profile as key tool across the partnership	Training sub-group	December 2014
4d	Develop case studies to exemplar good practice around interventions to tackle neglect	Multi-agency Neglect Champions	Ongoing
4e	Regular feedback to frontline re learning from audits etc.	Communications sub-group	Ongoing