

Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland LSCBs Neglect Briefing 2016



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What some children have said about neglect



“ Our house is filthy and I have to take care of my little brother all the time. I have started to harm myself to try and cope. I just feel like running away or ending my life (Girl aged 14) ”

“ Sometimes no-one believes you or no-one comes to your house to see what's going on, so no-one might know or can tell from the outside. ”

“ Children need parents to take care of them, give them cuddles and enough food; I was always hungry – I never knew what a chocolate biscuit was until I went into foster care. ”

Background

- Neglect is a priority for Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland LSCB.
- Neglect has been identified as a feature in national & local SCRs, local learning reviews and multi-agency audits.
- Neglect may be a factor or a direct cause of death or severe injury in children and young people, and it has been identified as a prevailing or risk factor when there is hidden harm relating to physical and sexual abuse.
- There's association between neglect and damage to the child's lived experience and their physical and emotional wellbeing.
- It is important that professionals/practitioners understand that neglect is a safeguarding issue as every child has the right to develop healthily, and to do this their basic needs must be met.
- Links can be made between impairment of the child's health and development and neglect of aspects of their care provided by their parents or carers.
- A pre-requisite in recognising neglect in general terms, is a knowledge and understanding of children's development, of their families, life events and experiences. This does not initially imply 'expert knowledge', although in some instances urgent expert assessment may be needed.

LLR LSCB Vision for neglect

Identifying neglect earlier within families, supporting parents to enable change through partnership working in order to reduce the impact of neglect on the emotional and physical wellbeing of children

What has the LSCB work around neglect involved?

- Establishment of the LLR LSCB Neglect Reference Group
 - Development of the LLR LSCB Neglect Strategy
 - Development of the LLR LSCB Neglect Toolkit
 - Updating of the LLR LSCB Neglect Procedure
 - Leicester LSCB Multiagency Neglect Audit
 - Leicester LSCB Assurance on Neglect
 - LLR LSCB S11 Practitioner Audit
 - LLR LSCB Neglect Survey
- The LLR LSCB Neglect Reference Group and associated LSCB work around neglect involved a range of agencies**

Learning points – what do we need to do?

- Increase identification/understanding of neglect, its impact on children and families; particularly if not identified and dealt with earlier leading to sustained neglect. The LLR LSCB neglect strategy and toolkit aims to help with this
- Comply with agency and LLR LSCB multi-agency safeguarding procedures; including use of the updated LLR LSCB neglect procedure/guide
- Be familiar with the definitions of neglect (see overleaf)
- Ensure children and families are offered services/support earlier and that intended outcomes are met in a timely way.
- Take into account the child's environment and family makeup, including men in the household – use the 'Whole Family Approach'
- Ensure the child's lived experience and 'voice' is obtained and considered
- Share information/work with other agencies/services to attain shared understanding of what improvements are required for positive outcomes for the child and safeguard the child
- Escalate concerns/disagreements using your agency and/or LLR LSCB Resolving Practitioner and Escalating Concerns procedure, particularly where there is drift & delay
- Record accurately the child and families demographic information including who has parental responsibility and keep case files up-to-date
- Have management oversight of cases where neglect is, or could be an issue
- Develop ways in which neglect can be recorded so that we know the number of children at risk of neglect or experiencing neglect

Working Together 2015 defines 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 carers 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); or
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

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

*In addition to the above, the LLR LSCB definition includes: ‘or failing to receive appropriate antenatal care’



On 3rd May 2015, the Serious Crime Act 2015 amended s.1 Children and Young Persons Act of 1933 (Child Cruelty) regarding neglect to read:

“ If any person who has attained the age of sixteen years and has responsibility for any Child or young person under that age, wilfully assaults, ill-treats (whether physically or otherwise), neglects, abandons, or exposes him, or causes or procures him to be assaulted, ill-treated (whether physically or otherwise), neglected, abandoned, or exposed, in a manner likely to cause him unnecessary suffering or injury to health (including injury to or loss of sight, or hearing, or limb, or organ of the body, and any mental derangement) (whether the suffering or injury is of a physical or psychological nature), that person shall be guilty of an offence.

”

Further Information/Resources

LSCB Websites: www.lcitylscb.org/ and <http://lrsb.org.uk/>
<http://lrsb.org.uk/dfe-neglect-resources>

LLR LSCB Multi-agency Safeguarding Procedures: <http://lrsb.proceduresonline.com/chapters/contents.html>

LLR LSCB Neglect Procedure/Guidance: http://lrsb.proceduresonline.com/chapters/g_neglect.html

LLR LSCB Resolving Practitioner Disagreements and Escalation of Concerns: http://lrsb.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p_res_profdisag.html

LLR LSCB Neglect Strategy: <http://lrsb.org.uk/llr-neglect-strategy>

LLR LSCB Neglect Toolkit: <http://lrsb.org.uk/llr-neglect-toolkit>

ChildLine: www.childline.org.uk/Explore/AbuseSafety/Pages/Neglect.aspx?utm_source=google&utm_medium=cpc&utm_campaign=UK_GO_S_P_GEN_New_Grant_ChildLine_Neglect&utm_term=neglect&gclid=CL7_j77C_MsCFYIW0wodY38HRg&gclid=aw.ds

Action for children – tackling child neglect early: www.actionforchildren.org.uk/what-we-do/policy-and-research/tackling-child-neglect-early/

Young carers: www.nhs.uk/conditions/social-care-and-support-guide/pages/young-carers-rights.aspx