



Multi-Agency Neglect Strategy

Lancashire Safeguarding
Children Board

2019-2021



CONTENTS

Foreword, Independent Chair	3
Definition of Neglect	5
Working Together 2018 definition of neglect	5
Types of Neglect	6
Impact of neglect	6
Young people's view of neglect	9
Lancashire's vision and principles	10
Why we need a neglect strategy	11
What we want from our new strategy	12
What we have achieved so far	13
Neglect in Lancashire	14
What frontline practitioners think	16
What children and young people think:-	18
Priorities for 2019–2021	18
Priority 1: Strategic commitment across all partner agencies	18
Priority 2: Improve awareness, understanding and recognition	19
Priority 3: Prevent neglect through early help	19
Priority 4: Improve effectiveness of interventions and reduce the impact of neglect	19
Making our priorities happen	20
Action plan	20
Governance	20
Measuring Success	21
How we will know our practice is good?	22
Appendix 1 - Lancashire Multi-Agency Neglect Strategy, 2019 - 2021 Action Plan	23



Foreword, Independent Chair

I am pleased to present the Lancashire Neglect Strategy 2019-21. This important multi-agency strategy has been developed by Lancashire Safeguarding Children Board, in consultation with children, young people and practitioners, and applies to all agencies working within Lancashire. It is expected that emerging or refreshed relevant agency policies and procedures will take into account the strategic priorities identified within this document.

I urge all agencies and professionals, along with the wider voluntary sector and community, to read the strategy, to sign up to it and to think about how you can make a purposeful contribution to its implementation. Whilst complex safeguarding i.e. child exploitation and radicalisation are dominating the media, we must not lose sight of neglect. Neglect remains the most common form of child abuse across the United Kingdom and is usually the most common reason for a child being subject to a child protection plan. Numbers of recorded cruelty and neglect offences in England and Northern Ireland are now the highest they have been for a decade.

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 well-being is often compromised and this impacts on their success in adulthood and their ability to parent in the future. This refreshed strategy builds on the achievements of the 2013 strategy and further demonstrates the commitment and ambition of all partners in Lancashire to maintain our focus to better identify children experiencing neglect and to more effectively join up the support offered to families in order to improve the outcomes for our children and young people. The strategy is informed by lessons learned nationally and locally, by statutory guidance and research. The time span of this strategy is such that it will be part of the multi-agency safeguarding partnership arrangements laid down in Working Together to Safeguard Children (HM Government, 2018) and will reflect this transition.

Jane Booth

Independent Chair, Lancashire Safeguarding Children Board



Definition of Neglect

Working Together 2018 definition of neglect

The definition of neglect from statutory guidance Working Together to Safeguard Children (HM Government, 2018) 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 and development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance misuse. 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 care givers)
- d) Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment

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

As well as the statutory definition, it is necessary to recognise the specific needs of children and in turn understand 'failure to meet basic needs'. Neglect is defined as "the ongoing failure to meet a child's basic physical and psychological needs" (Department for Education, 2018; Department of Health, 2017; Scottish Government, 2014; All Wales, Child Protection Review Group, 2008). It is a form of child abuse that can have serious and long-lasting impact on a child's life - it can cause serious harm and even death.



Types of Neglect

The main types of neglect are:-

- **Physical neglect:** not meeting a child's basic needs, such as food, clothing or shelter; not supervising a child adequately or providing for their safety
- **Educational neglect:** failure to ensure a child receives an education
- **Emotional neglect:** failing to meet a child's needs for nurture and stimulation, for example by ignoring, humiliating, intimidating or isolating them, witnessing the harm of another.
- **Medical neglect:** not providing appropriate health care (including dental care), refusing care or ignoring medical recommendations.

In addition, we see nutritional neglect, for example, obesity and failure to thrive; and lack of supervision and guidance, for example, monitoring on-line activity or whereabouts when out alone.

Impact of neglect

Pre-birth - a child can experience neglect at any age. The impact of neglect can start before birth – a mother may neglect her own (and therefore the unborn baby's) health during pregnancy which would affect the development in the womb. Once a baby is born, physical and emotional neglect during the early years of life can also have a profound impact on the development of the brain and the body

Infancy (birth to two years) – a baby's growth and development is linked to their interaction with the world and their caregivers. Emotional and cognitive development e.g. games like 'peek-a-boo' where actions are repeated for social and emotional reinforcement from the reactions of caregivers, and neural connections are 'fixed' through stimulation. Disinterest or indifference to such actions and/ or failing to offer stimulation will limit the child's development and growth. A secure attachment to a primary caregiver is the foundation that allows children to learn to trust others and explore the world around them. Studies have shown that children with disrupted attachment who have experienced

neglect have problems coping and managing emotions, are more hopeless, and have a poor self-concept. The ongoing nature of chronic neglect significantly impacts the brain in infancy and early childhood.

Pre-school (two to four years) – most children of this age are mobile and curious, but lack understanding of danger; they need close supervision for their physical protection, which neglected children may not experience. Children may not be appropriately toilet trained if they are in neglectful families, as this process requires patient and persistent interaction and encouragement. Children’s language development may be delayed if their caregivers are not interacting with them sufficiently, and physical care may be inadequate, e.g. dental decay.

Primary age (five to eleven) – for some neglected children, school can be a place of sanctuary. However, if their cognitive development has been delayed and they are behind their peers at school, it can also be a source of frustration and distress. Signs of neglect, e.g. dirty or ill-fitting clothing, will be apparent to peers, teachers and to the children themselves, and may cause embarrassment and difficulties in their social interactions. Children without clear and consistent boundaries at home can struggle to follow school rules.

Adolescence (twelve to eighteen) – neglect is likely to have an impact on the young person’s ability to form and maintain friendships and positive relationships, though the young person may be more reluctant to disclose their situation if they fear becoming looked after or being split up from their siblings. Whilst adolescents can find sufficient food for themselves, they are likely to be drawn to the availability of high-fat, high-sugar convenience foods if they have never learned to prepare meals which may lead to other associated medical conditions, for example,



severe tooth decay, vitamin deficiencies and weight issues including obesity. Adolescent risk-taking behaviour may be associated with, attributed to or exacerbated by a lack of parental supervision, which can expose neglected young people to the risk of harm through, for example, alcohol and substance misuse, risky sexual behaviour or criminal activity. Resilience to neglectful situations does not increase with age, and can have significant consequences for young people's emotional wellbeing.



Young people's view of neglect

A key part of our strategy is to work with young people. We have gathered the experiences and thoughts of those young people who have experienced neglect. Through our safeguarding surveys, young people have told us that they do not understand the term 'neglect' and would not know how to spot the signs or how to support a friend who was experiencing neglect. Our strategy is based on what young people have told us would have most impact.

Young people think neglect is...

Not feeling safe

Having no food

No-one speaks to you

No-one cares

Where drugs are more important than me

Not being clean

Not helping with school work

Being hit

Lancashire's vision and principles

In Lancashire we are committed to making a positive difference to the lives of children and young people in our communities. We want Lancashire to be a great place to be young, where all children and young people thrive and feel safe from harm and neglect. Our neglect strategy is aligned with our business plan and will focus on the key things we think will make the most difference to improving the lives of our children and young people:



Why we need a neglect strategy

There is considerable national research and local evidence which demonstrates the damage done to children and young people living in situations of neglect. Whilst the harm resulting from neglect can be especially damaging in the first 18 months of life, it has a cumulative impact across childhood and into adolescence and so affects all of our children and young people. Sadly, for some children the consequences of neglect are fatal.

Neglect is one of the most common reason for a child to be the subject of a child protection in Lancashire.

Neglect is the form of maltreatment more likely to be repeated.

Neglect exposes children to other forms of abuse, e.g. exploitation/increased vulnerability.

Neglect can be difficult to identify, making it hard for professionals to take action to protect a child.

Neglect is an area where there can be drift and delay; professionals can become desensitised to a child's living conditions and experiences of poor parenting.



What we want from our new strategy

The aim of the strategy is to enable us to...

- ✓ More robustly tackle the issue of neglect
- ✓ Listen to the voice of the child and their lived experiences
- ✓ More effectively mitigate the impact this form of child abuse has on children and young people.
- ✓ Identify neglect much sooner when it happens and earlier in children's lives.
- ✓ Reduce the number of children that suffer neglect and reduce the impact and time they suffer.
- ✓ Elevate child and adolescent neglect to the highest level of awareness and priority that this single most prevalent form of child abuse merits.
- ✓ Deliver a well-trained multi-agency workforce confident in tackling neglect and a public that recognises and reports neglect.



What we have achieved so far

This is our second neglect strategy in Lancashire, having first developed a comprehensive strategy in 2013.

So far we have:

- ✓ Established a multi-agency working group;
- ✓ Delivered multi-agency neglect training;
- ✓ Developed website resource for practitioners;
- ✓ Delivered a Serious Case Review conference in 2018;
- ✓ Completed multi-agency case file audits;
- ✓ Developed a quality assurance framework to enable the LSCB and others to understand and scrutinise performance around neglect;
- ✓ Spoken with young people who have been neglected, to better understand their experiences;
- ✓ Consulted young people from Lancashire to inform our new strategy;
- ✓ Taken part in the DfE national campaign to encourage the public to report neglect and child abuse;
- ✓ Introduced a **Risk Sensible Framework** for multi-agency partnership handbook.



Neglect in Lancashire

Neglect continues to be an area of priority and focus in Lancashire. Early help also has a key role to play in supporting parents and preventing children becoming at risk from neglect or abuse. Lancashire 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. Work is needed to ensure better identification to bridge this gap and provide early help to children and families.

As at the end of March 2018 1,243 children were on child protection plans in Lancashire; 375 were due to neglect; a percentage of 30.1%. In comparison, over the same time period, the England average was 47.5% and the North West average 40.5% with regards to neglect. The number and percentage of plans for neglect in Lancashire over recent years are set out below. Also provided below is the Lancashire District split, this illustrates the number of child protection plans across each of the Children's Social Care team areas.

Number of children & young people on child protection plans Lancashire data

As at end of March	No. on child protection plan	No. due to neglect	% due to neglect
2015	936	318	33.90%
2016	1,443	488	33.80%
2017	1,394	451	32.30%
2018	1,243	375	30.10%

A large proportion of these plans 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. 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 County. A large proportion of children subject to child protection plans for neglect live in deprived areas. In Lancashire, this is largely in the areas of Pendle (42%), Rossendale (38.7%) and Preston (34.1%).

**Team/District split
Lancashire District split - As of end of March 2018**

Team	No. on child protection plan	No. due to neglect	% due to neglect
Burnley	98	26	26.5%
Chorley & South Ribble	179	56	31.3%
Fylde & Wyre	157	35	22.3%
Hyndburn & Ribble Valley	181	69	38.1%
Lancaster	126	21	16.7%
Pendle	88	37	42.0%
Preston	214	73	34.1%
Rossendale	62	24	38.7%
West Lancs	22	22	23.4%



What frontline practitioners think

The views of multi-agency practitioners underpins this strategy through discussion and analysis at a number of neglect workshops held between September and October 2018. In addition, a Survey Monkey went out to all LSCB partner agencies. The LSCB collects views from frontline practitioners through a number of ways, including audits, surveys and feedback collected through training.

Some of the feedback from frontline multi-agency practitioners is set out below:

**Use plan,
clear
language**

**Better
understanding
of
outcomes**

**Early
identification
of neglect
is vital**

**Voice of the
child**

**Underpinned
with quality
multi-agency
training**

**Measurable
action plans**

**Long term
neglect
requires
long term
solutions**

**Definion of
neglect needs
to be clear
and consistent
across partner
agencies**

**Shared understanding of
neglect across all partners**

**Prevention and early
intervention is paramount**

**Improvement of root causes - poverty, mental health,
substance misuse, domestic abuse**

What children and young people think:-

Through our audits and work with children and young people affected by abuse and neglect, they have told us they want the following:

- ✓ To be heard and listened to
- ✓ To be included in planning and have the opportunity to ask questions
- ✓ For all professionals to be clear with them about what is happening

I don't feel noticed

Neglect is being mistreated and getting hit

No, I was neglected but my Mum still cared for me

I wanted to be treated the same as others

Being in care is helpful. You get to go out and your needs are met i.e. health, people who listen to me. I feel safe and have better clothes and glasses. I did not feel like a kid at home. I had to pay for everything by working. I feel better because I'm happier - I don't want to go home

It is better now because I am in care, if I went back home it would be the same

Social Worker gives you more stress sometimes, but I know that I am cared for and feel safe.

Things didn't get better, as they would just come round the Social Workers and Mum would be fake and then they left and she would be the same

I am no longer at home. I needed to have more help at home i.e. Outreach Worker, no-one supported me at home

Priorities for 2019–2021

Through consultation the following key priorities evolved:

Priority 1: Strategic commitment across all partner agencies

Neglect continues to be a priority for Lancashire

To address this, we will:

- ✓ Relaunch Lancashire's neglect strategy
- ✓ Drive neglect as a key priority of the LSCB with a whole family approach

Priority 2: Improve awareness, understanding and recognition

Frontline practitioners are still telling us that neglect is difficult to recognise

To address this, we will:

- ✓ Work with young people to get a better understanding of neglect from their perspective
- ✓ Refresh and relaunch a neglect campaign focused on adolescent neglect and neglect by affluence
- ✓ Review and refresh the LSCB website, including procedures content around neglect
- ✓ Improve the use of communication channels to promote awareness, understanding and recognition of neglect, including social media etc.

Priority 3: Prevent neglect through early help

Raise awareness and collaboration around neglect with other partnerships

To address this, we will:

- ✓ Ensure that neglect is included in the revised early help strategy.
- ✓ Promote the use of online tools across the partnership.
- ✓ Carry out CAF audits to check the use of the neglect tools.
- ✓ Develop good practice case studies

Priority 4: Improve effectiveness of interventions and reduce the impact of neglect

Sometimes our interventions do not make a big enough difference or impact quick enough to improve the lived experiences of our children and young people.

To address this, we will:

- ✓ Promote the use of achievable and measurable action plans e.g. SMART
- ✓ Pilot a virtual neglect operational group whereby practitioners can share concerns, good practice and advice on neglect cases.
- ✓ Promote effective safeguarding supervision particularly neglect cases where there is drift.
- ✓ Improve our responses to specific target groups, e.g. children with disabilities.
- ✓ Improve the quality and timeliness of parenting assessments for children on a child protection plan/ pre proceedings





Making our priorities happen

Action plan

The action plan at Appendix 1 sets out the key actions we think we need to do to achieve our priorities. This will be reviewed and updated quarterly to ensure delivery of this strategy.

Governance

The LSCB will continue to meet to monitor the implementation of the neglect strategy. A report outlining progress and any issues or risks will be regularly presented to Board. Performance reporting and impact will be scrutinised by the Quality Sub-Group.

Updates on progress will be regularly provided to the LSCB and will hold partners to account for the delivery of the strategy. Progress and impact will also be included in the LSCB's Annual Report, which is published annually, and shared with key officers and committees in the local authority, Police and Clinical Commissioning Groups.

Measuring Success

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

A number of measures will be monitored and reported through the governance arrangements. These include:

- The LSCB multi-agency audits of neglect child protection plans show good impact of the plan and use of neglect tools.
- Common Assessment Framework (CAF) and Children's Social Care audits show good use of neglect tools.
- The independent review of children in need plans for neglect shows effective planning and impact and good use of tools.
- Feedback from parents collected at children in need, initial child protection case conference, child protection case review meetings and at case closure.
- Young people's views of neglect through the LSCB safeguarding survey, feedback at children in need, initial child protection case conference, child protection case review meetings and at case closure and specific work as part of the neglect strategy.
- Feedback from frontline staff through frontline visits, audits, staff surveys and training questionnaires across the partnership.



How we will know our practice is good?

How much we did	What does it show?	
<p>This will be measured by the LSCB</p>	<p>The neglect measures will show us whether we are identifying neglect early enough and at a young enough age, whether we deal with cases in a timely way and avoid drift and delay. It will also tell us whether practitioners are taking up the training offered and using the tools we have developed to support them in their practice.</p>	
How well we did it	Is anyone better off?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ LSCB multi-agency audits of neglect child protection plans show good impact of the plan. ✓ Common Assessment Framework (CAF) and Children's Social Care audits show good use of screening tool. ✓ Independent Review of children in need plans for neglect shows effective planning and impact and good use of tools. 	Feedback from children, young people, parents and carers	Feedback from staff
	<p>Feedback from parents collected at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Children in need ✓ Initial child protection case conference ✓ Child protection case review meetings ✓ Case closure. <p>Young people's views of neglect through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Direct work with those young people on a plan for neglect ✓ Focus groups ✓ Safeguarding survey ✓ Feedback at children in need, initial child protection case conference, child protection case review meetings and at case closure 	<p>Feedback from frontline staff through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Frontline visits ✓ Audits ✓ Staff surveys ✓ Training questionnaires.

Appendix 1 - Lancashire Multi-Agency Neglect Strategy, 2019 - 2021 Action Plan

Priority 1: Strategic commitment across all partner agencies

Ref	Action	Who	By when
1.1	Launch revised Neglect Strategy.	LSCB	1st April 2019
1.2	LSCB to hold agencies to account for the implementation of their own agency plans detailing operational response to the 4 agreed priorities	All partner agencies	May 2019



Priority 2: Improve awareness, understanding and recognition

Ref	Action	Who	By when
2.1	Launch the Neglect Strategy – including the rollout of materials such as posters and flyers.	LSCB	April 2019
2.2	Undertake a workshop with young people around neglect to develop a definition of neglect and "what makes a difference". Develop material from this workshop to support practitioner awareness and provide impact.	Children in Care Council	May 2019
2.3	Review and refresh LSCB website, including procedures in relation to neglect on Tri-x.	LSCB	April 2019

Priority 3: Prevent neglect through early help

Ref	Action	Who	By when
3.1	Review all multi-agency neglect training to ensure it is evidence based and is aligned with the 4 key priorities.	LSCB	April 2019
3.2	Develop online multi agency toolkit.	Chris Coyle (CSC)	April 2019
3.3	Ensure neglect is a central theme within the revised early help strategy.	Early Help, LCC	July 2019
3.4	Commitment from agencies to the "Safeguarding Networks" pilot model	LSCB Partners	April 2019





Priority 4: Improve effectiveness of interventions and reduce impact of neglect

Ref	Action	Who	By when
4.1	To ensure that multi-agency practice with regard to neglect is on a par with other safeguarding cases.	LSCB	September 2019
4.2	Develop mechanisms to prevent drift and delay in neglect case.	CSC, LCC	May 2019
4.3	Undertake thematic multi agency audit in relation to neglect with an outcome based perspective and considering the quality of interventions. To include the Voice and the Child and Lived Experience. Feedback learning from these audits, to include case studies.	LSCB	September 2019



Further information

You can find more information about Neglect by visiting the Lancashire Safeguarding Board's website:

www.lancshiresafeguarding.org.uk/

The website holds information about Neglect as a form of abuse, offering toolkits and guidance to support practitioners.

If you wish to contact the LSCB, please email **lscb@lancashire.gov.uk**, and follow us on Twitter for information relating to Safeguarding **[@LancsSguarding](https://twitter.com/LancsSguarding)**

The NSPCC also holds a range of useful information in relation to Neglect: **www.nspcc.org.uk**

If you are concerned about the safety of a child, please call:

Children's Social Care on **0300 123 6720**; or
Police on **101** (dial **999** in the case of an emergency)

