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**Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children Partnership**

**Neglect Strategy**

**2022-2025**

**V1.0 FINAL**

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# **Purpose of the Strategy**

1.1 The LSCP has made it a Strategic priority to identify and reduce the impact of neglect on children and young people.The partnership has agreed to establish a common standard of approach across all agencies that have contact with children and families in Lincolnshire.

1.2 To achieve this the LSCP has agreed that all professionals working with children and families in Lincolnshire should be able to identify, name and describe neglect where it is occurring.

1.3 This Strategy sets out the how the LSCP will achieve this.

1. **National, Regional, and Local Context**
* Working Together to Safeguard Children, DfE February 2018
* The Impacts of Neglect and Abuse on children, DfE March 2017
* Keeping Children Safe in Education, DfE September 2021
* Growing up neglected: a multi-agency response to older children, JTAI 2017
* Child Neglect is Everyone's Business, Local Authorities Research Consortium, 2015
* LSCP Interim Business Plan 2021

# **3.0 Defining Neglect**

3.1 Neglect can be defined 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…it may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child’s basic emotional needs.

***Source: Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018***

3.2 Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

• provide adequate food, clothing, or 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 caregivers)

• ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

3.3 Many factors can impact on parents’ ability to provide safe and appropriate care and meet a child’s needs including substance abuse, living with domestic abuse, and/or poor mental health. Neglect can begin in pregnancy and persist into adolescence.

3.4 While the impacts of neglect can vary depending on the child, it is recognised that neglect is a particularly damaging form of maltreatment that can impact on a child’s health, education, identity, emotional and behavioural development, as well as on their family and social relationships, social presentation, and self-care skills. Research suggests that the longer young children are exposed to neglect the greater will be the harm.

3.5 The experience of neglect in childhood can have long-term impacts on child and adolescent development. For instance, children who have experienced neglect may experience increased vulnerability in adolescence, potentially increasing the vulnerability of some young people to other types of maltreatment and/or victimisation, such as sexual exploitation (though this is an area requiring further research).[[1]](#footnote-1)

**4.0 Understanding the Local Picture**

4.1 To measure the progress and impact of this Strategy, it will be important to establish a reliable baseline of data and information. The LSCP has developed a neglect scorecard which collates data from children’s services, police, and health. The bulk of the data collected relates to the most acute cases where a child is subject to a child protection or child in need plan. Police data reports the numbers of neglect recorded crimes.

4.2 While it is evident that neglect is the most common reason for a child to be placed on a CP plan, less is known about the prevalence and impact of low-level neglect. Currently neglect data is not collected from Early Help Assessments or at the point of referral to Children’s Services.

4.3 In delivering this Strategy the LSCP partners will work collaboratively to build a broader picture of neglect by widening the collection of neglect related data.

4.4 In October 2018 the unexpected death of a 39-day old baby prompted the LSCP to undertake a Serious Case Review (SCR). SCR H18 published in April 2021 found that the family was well known to multiple agencies and services and had been known to Lincolnshire Children’s Services (CS) since December 2014. During this time concerns had been noted regarding home conditions, poor school attendance, maternal mental health, financial difficulties, cannabis and alcohol use, and domestic violence. Professionals attending the child at the time of his death expressed concerns regarding the neglectful state of the home however this was not reflected in multi-agency discussions or the CP plan. The review stressed the importance of staying focused on the picture of neglect, and not on the immediate presentation of the adults. A key recommendation of the review was the introduction of a recognised neglect tool supported by training in its use.

4.5 In December 2021 the LSCP undertook an audit into multi-agency provisions for 11–17-year-olds. Neglect was identified as a concern in 50% of the cases examined. The Audit highlighted the importance of all professionals having the skills and knowledge to recognise the early signs of neglect, the use of clear and consistent language when describing neglect, and the importance of being able to evaluate whether long term and sustainable change in addressing neglect had been made by parents and carers.

**5.0 Strategic Aims**

5.1 The strategic aim of the LSCPs Neglect Strategy is to ensure the early identification of neglect and reduce its on children and young people in Lincolnshire.

**6.0 Objectives**

* **To establish a common standard of approach across all agencies that have contact with children and families in Lincolnshire.**
* **To work with partners to build a broader picture of neglect by identifying, collecting, and analysing neglect related data.**
* **To equip all agencies with the knowledge and skills to identify the early signs of neglect.**
* **To introduce a common language around neglect that is understood across the partnership.**
* **To support parents and carers to make lasting and sustainable changes to address neglect concerns.**
* **To introduce and embed a common, evidence-based neglect toolkit, the Graded Care Profile 2, to ensure that neglect can be identified at an early stage and is responded to consistently, confidently, and appropriately at the right threshold of risk and need.**

**7.0 Outcome and success measures**

* There is a measurable increase in both the early identification and in interventions to tackle neglect in Lincolnshire
* There is a measurable reduction in the prevalence and impact of neglect upon children and young people in Lincolnshire
* There is a measurable reduction in child in need and child protection cases into Children Services where neglect is the main referral issue.
* There is a measurable reduction in repeat referrals into Children Services where neglect is the main reason.
* Children and young people in contact with services report positive change and have a say in how services are delivered to them.
* Parents and carers in contact with services report receiving support to effect positive and lasting change in response to concerns.
1. Dr Julie Wilkinson and Dr Susannah Boyer, *The impacts of abuse and neglect on children; and comparison of different placement options. Evidence review;* Research in Practice, Department for Education, March 2017. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)