

No.1 Neglect

What is neglect?

Neglect is defined in 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' 2015 as 'the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical, emotional and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development.'

Neglect may involve the parent/carers failure to:

- Provide adequate food, clothing or shelter
- Protect the child from physical and emotional harm or danger
- Ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care givers)

It may also include neglect, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs. It is characterised by the absence of a relationship of care between the parent/carer and the child and the failure of the parent/carer to prioritise the needs of the child.

Who does it affect?

Neglect can affect children of all ages. It tends to affect boys and girls equally.

How is it different from other types of abuse?

Neglect differs from other forms of abuse in that there is rarely a single incident or crisis that draws attention to the family. It is repeated, persistent, neglectful behaviour that causes incremental damage over a period of time.

How can school staff spot neglect?

Staff in education settings are likely to observe a range of signs that a child may be suffering neglect. These could include:

- The child may disclose that they are left 'home alone' or that they witness domestic violence/abuse on regular basis
- A child may be very underweight with no obvious medical cause and may take food from other children
- There may be unexplained changes in the child
- The child may repeatedly miss health appointments
- The child may be persistently absent from school
- You may just have a 'gut feeling'

What should school staff do?

Think about what you know about the child and what their life might be like. Talk to other professionals to see if they share your concerns.

If the support the school is able to offer is not achieving an acceptable standard of care for the child consider what other agencies or services may be able to support the child (Multi-Agency Early Help). The Early Help Co-ordination Centre will be able to advise on this. However, if the risk escalates a MASH enquiry should be made, including a chronology of what has been tried and to what effect.

Key contacts and links

MASH:

Telephone ☎ 0345 155 1071

E-mail ✉ mashsecure@devon.gcsx.gov.uk

Referral form 📄 www.devon.gov.uk/mash-enquiryform.doc

Early Help and MASH Consultation: ☎ 0345 155 1071

Children's Social Care Emergency Duty Team (out of hours):

☎ 0845 6000 388

Police (non-emergency): ☎ 101

Daniel Pelka Serious Case Review:

<http://www.staffordbc.gov.uk/live/Documents/PolicyAndImprovement/Serious--Case-Review---Daniel-Pelka.pdf>