Recognising the signs of Neglect

EVERY CHILD HAS THE RIGHT TO FEEL SAFE AND LOVED
Key Facts about Neglect

Over 25,500 children were identified as needing protection from neglect last year.

Neglect is the most common reason for taking child protection action.

The NSPCC’s helpline responded to over 16,000 contacts about neglect last year.
The 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 caregivers); or
  - ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment
- It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child’s basic emotional needs
Poor appearance and hygiene;

Neglected Children & Young People may appear:
• to be smelly or dirty
• have unwashed clothes
• have inadequate clothing, e.g. not having a winter coat
• seem hungry or turn up to school without having breakfast or any lunch money
• Repeat and frequent catching on lice
• have frequent and untreated nappy rash in infants.
Signs of Emotional Neglect

- Frightened & Unhappy,
- Tearful
- Anxious,
- Low self-esteem
- Withdrawn,
- Isolated,
- Fear intimacy and dependence

- Infants: fractious, fretful, clinging, hard to soothe
- Young children: attention seeking; exaggerated affect; poor confidence and concentration; jealous; show off; go to far
- Teens: immature, impulsive; need to be noticed leads to trouble at school and in community
- Neglectful parents feel angry and helpless: reject the child; to grandparents, care or gangs
Health and development problems

They may have:

- untreated injuries, medical and dental issues
- repeated accidental injuries caused by lack of supervision
- recurring illnesses or infections
- not been given appropriate medicines
- missed medical appointments such as vaccinations
- poor muscle tone or prominent joints
- skin sores, rashes, flea bites, scabies or ringworm
- thin or swollen tummy
- anaemia
- tiredness
- faltering weight or growth and not reaching developmental milestones (known as failure to thrive)
- poor language, communication or social skills.
Housing and family issues

They may be:
• living in an unsuitable home environment for example dog mess being left or not having any heating
• left alone for a long time
• taking on the role of carer for other family members.
Effects on brain development;

The first years of a child's life have a big impact on how their brain develops. That is why neglect can be so damaging - a child's experiences can change their thought processes and neural pathways.

If a baby is malnourished, neural cells can become weak or damaged and this can cause lowered brain function.

If a child has a poor relationship, attachment or little interaction with a parent then it can change how their brain develops emotional and verbal pathways.

Neglect can severely alter the way a child's brain works. This can lead to an increased risk of depression in later life as well as dissociative disorders and memory impairments. Changes to the brain caused by neglect have also been linked to panic disorder, posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).

(Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2009)
Effects on relationships and attachment

A parent or carer's behaviour has a big impact on a child. It can also affect the relationship between parent and child.

This relationship, or bond, between a child and their primary caregiver - usually mum or dad but sometimes another family member or carer - is described by attachment theory.

When a child is neglected they don't usually have a good relationship or bond with their parent. Psychologists would describe this as a poor attachment.

Poor attachment can significantly affect the relationships that people have throughout their lives, including how they interact with their own children. Early intervention can change attachment patterns, reducing harm to a child and helping them to form positive attachments in adulthood.

(Howe, 2011)
NEGLECT: So much more than just a grubby child

In February 2016, Peterborough & Cambridgeshire Local Safeguarding Boards hosted a joint conference to raise awareness of Neglect.

All presentations from the event are available to view on the website

http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/lscb/info/14/lscb_multi-agency_training/35/lscb_conferences_and_learning_events/3

Presentations to note are;
Dr Emilia Wawrzkowicz - More than just a grubby child
Patrick Ayre - Four Aspects of Neglect
Dr Zeyn Green-Thompson - Parental Mental Health & Neglect
Sarah Hamilton & Dr Emilia - Avoidable Impairment
Child Neglect in the headlines

Social workers in Baby P borough failed to save children from 'chronic neglect', report finds


Jeremy Kyle neglect case: Cold, dirty and malnourished children 'ate like little animals' and smelt strongly of faeces

http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/jeremy-kyle-neglect-case-cold-6163553
Child Neglect in the headlines

Disgusting squalor inside house where two young children were neglected so badly they looked like Oliver Twist urchins when they were rescued and drugs were left lying around in their reach


Evil aunt jailed for 'worst case of child cruelty' on tragic seven-year-old Shanay Walker

Child Neglect in the headlines

Mum jailed for child neglect after seriously ill son, 4, was found living in home of ‘absolute squalor’ crammed with TWENTY uncaged ferrets and FOURTEEN dogs

Is there any neglect training available?

2 multi agency neglect courses available

- An Introduction to Neglect (level 1)
  This training is aimed at people who do not work with children on a one to one basis e.g. admin staff, receptionists or those who work with the adults in families

- Understanding the Impact of Neglect (level 2)
  This training is aimed at professionals who work on a one to one basis with children. Please access this course, you do not need to attend level 1 training.
Tools used in Peterborough to assess Neglect

- Outcome Star
- Graded Care Profile (the Peterborough model)
- Strengthening Families Approach
What can be achieved with early intervention

Before, suffering chronic neglect

After 6 months in foster care
Is there any training available?

- Early Help & Outcome Star
- Quality of Care (based on Graded Care Profile)
- Details for all training can be found on our website:

  www.safeguardingpeterborough.org.uk/children-board/professionals/training/

For training, please contact Business Support for the PSCB on
- 01733 863747
- PSCB.Training@peterborough.gov.uk
The Department for Education has produced a number of training resources that can be used for training practitioners.

References

• Key facts on Neglect are taken from the NSPCC website

• Information on Child Brain Development (Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2009)

• Inform on Attachments and Relationships taken from (Howe, 2011) https://he.palgrave.com/page/detail/attachment-across-the-lifecourse-david-howe/?sf1=barcode&st1=9780230293595

• Further information can be found on the Action for Children website https://www.actionforchildren.org.uk/what-we-do/policy-and-research/tackling-child-neglect-early/