NEGLECT STRATEGY

Bradford District Safeguarding Children Partnership (BDSCP)

# **Introduction**

The experience of neglect during childhood can have a significant, long-lasting traumatic impact on children affecting all facets of their life and development into adulthood. Central to this is evidence from ground-breaking epidemiological research and Public Health studies that show the effects of adverse childhood experiences are a leading determinant of all the main physical, mental and social problems in our society today. It is the most common kind of abusive lived experience seen across the Bradford District, which has levels above the national average. Issues related to neglect are significant factors highlighted in Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews both nationally and locally. This, coupled with the impacts of a population demographic that has a higher proportion of children than other districts and significant issues surrounding deprivation poverty and societal recovery from the impacts of the Covid-19 Pandemic, makes the responses to neglect among the highest priorities for the Bradford District Safeguarding Children Partnership (BDSCP). This strategy is therefore a key strand in our priority to make Bradford the best place it can be for children to grow up, be safe, be healthy and develop to their full potential.

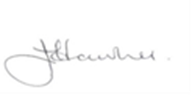
While a great deal of work has already been completed looking at early multi-agency responses to provide support to children and families in need, we recognise there is much more still to do so that children have their needs met by their parents or carers and support is provided where this is not the case. We aim to continue this work to ensure that we identify and prevent unmet needs escalating at the earliest opportunity, so that families and the children within them thrive. Work with children and families should be positive and empowering and by utilising the restorative practice principles, we aim to maintain a clear focus on the impact of neglect upon children.

This is a partnership strategy. All agencies within Bradford have played a key role in its development and will contribute to its ultimate success. By working together, we will demonstrate key improvements in the health and wellbeing of our families and children, improved educational attainment and a reduction in the number of children having to be cared for outside their own families.

Full commitment from all partners to urgently address neglect is essential. We speak for the whole Partnership when we invite everyone in Bradford to support our work to increase the number of families thriving in the district and reduce the instances of neglect of children and young people within them.

Kersten England Rob McCoubrey Therese Patten Janice Hawkes

Text, letter

Description automatically generated   

Chief Executive District Commander Chief Executive Independent Chair

Bradford Council West Yorkshire Police Bradford District and Scrutineer

Care Trust BDSCP

# cid:cdbf25cd-b40d-4103-a7d1-771f7a00a27b@GBRP265.PROD.OUTLOOK.COM**Definition**

Neglect is defined in Working Together to Safeguard Children (HM Government 2018; page 104) 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 and 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 children from physical and emotional harm or danger
* Ensure adequate supervision including the use of inadequate care givers
* Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment
* Neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child’s basic emotional needs

The British Society of Paediatric Dentistry (BSPD) also published a policy document in 2009 on dental neglect which defined it as ‘the persistent failure to meet a child’s basic oral health needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of a child’s oral or general health or development’ (Harris JC, Balmer RC, Sidebotham PD. British Society of Paediatric Dentistry: a policy document on dental neglect in children. Int J Paediatr Dent. 2009 May 14).

Neglect can cause serious, long-term harm to a child. If a baby or young child suffers neglect, this can have a significant impact on neurodevelopment resulting in life-long consequences that may impact on cognition and learning, behaviour and mental and physical health. In the most severe cases, consequences can be fatal (NSPCC 2016).

Neglect also has a negative impact on older children and teenagers. Some of the long-term effects of chronic neglect include:

* Mental health problems including depression, anxiety, mood swings and post-traumatic stress disorder
* Behaviours such as breaking the law or abusing drugs or alcohol
* Difficulties forming or maintaining healthy relationships
* Generally poorer performance at school compared to children who do not suffer neglect.

(NSPCC and Cardiff University, 2014 4a, b).

A note on cumulative harm: Neglect is different from other forms of abuse because it isn’t necessarily a single incident or crisis that brings attention to the family, but rather it is more likely to be repeated, persistent neglectful behaviour that causes damage over time;

***“The unremitting daily impact of these experiences on the child can be profound and exponential, and diminish a child’s sense of safety, stability and wellbeing.” (Bromfield and Miller 2007)***

***“Cumulative harm can overwhelm even the most resilient child; attention should be given to the complexity of the child’s experience.” (Bromfield and Miller 2007).***

# **Our Priorities**

* Children, including unborn babies, infants and babies, young people and families will be at the heart of everything we do.
* We will improve awareness, understanding and recognition of neglect in all its forms.
* We will engage communities and harness their resources to tackle neglect and build resilience in local areas.
* We will intervene and support at the earliest possible point and endeavour to ensure we prevent the situation reaching a level where it may become criminal neglect and/or necessitate Child Protection interventions.
* We will develop our understanding and responses to neglect as it impacts on other childhood vulnerabilities for example risk of exploitation.
* We will develop and implement effective responses and interventions to neglect in all its forms. In particular, in our identification of cumulative neglect.
* We will evidence the impact of this work by evidencing what we have achieved both for individual children but also more broadly across the neglect agenda.
* We will reflect learning from both national and local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews in our policies and working practices to build a culture of continual reflection and learning.

# **How Are We Going to Achieve This?**

The approach to child neglect needs to be consistent, holistic, strength-based and child and family centred.

* We will develop the principles of restorative practice principles to assist early identification and responses to neglect.
* We will promote and monitor the use of the Multi-agency Neglect Toolkit ([Neglect Toolkit](https://www.saferbradford.co.uk/media/adtbwc4u/bradford-neglect-toolkit-amended-july-2022.docx)) to enhance professional practice in identifying and responding to instances of neglect.
* We will ensure that our responses are cognisant of learning from Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews, both locally and nationally, and that policy, procedure and training reflect these findings.
* We will ensure that our training programmes are regularly reviewed and updated with the latest practice and responses to neglect and that frontline professionals have access to such training both single agency and multi-agency.
* We will further enhance our multi-agency responses to early help and support, building on the successes in the current pilot areas.
* We will improve record keeping and explore opportunities for co-located working to improve cross agency work and information sharing.
* We will explore and seek to implement IT solutions to enhance the sharing of information across agencies to enable more informed assessments of family circumstances to take place.
* We will utilise data analysis to identify targeted engagement with communities to enable them to be a key partner in finding solutions to address neglect, build resilience and raise aspirations of children in their area.
* In doing this we will seek to work collaboratively across different partnerships in Bradford, including those actively involved in the work generated by the Bradford District Anti-Poverty Strategy (see resources below).
* We will approach this work through a Trauma Informed Approach understanding that unless neglect is tackled, further adverse childhood experiences may occur. We will do this by linking with the adversity, trauma and resilience programme and strategy (see link below).

# 

# **How Will We Know if We Have Succeeded?**

* Data evidences an increase in families referred to Early Help support for early signs of neglect rather than child protection for early signs of neglect.
* Multi-agency audits of Children in Need Plans and Child Protection Plans for neglect shows effective assessment, planning and impact and good use of neglect tools. Also evidence of effective capturing and understanding of the voice and/or lived experience of children subject to the plans.
* Feedback from parents and carers collected at Early Help, Child in Need, Initial Child Protection Case Conference, Child Protection Case Review meetings and at case closure.
* Young people’s views of neglect through participation in forums/surveys/feedback as well as following the completion of Early Help intervention and at Children in Need, Initial Child Protection Case Conference meetings.
* Feedback from frontline staff through frontline visits/surveys and multi-agency training and practitioner events.
* A reduction over time in the numbers of children subject to Child in Need and Child Protection Planning for neglect and case reviews where serious neglect is a key component.
* A reduction over time in the instances of criminal neglect recorded and investigated by West Yorkshire Police in Bradford where there have been previous concerns of neglect recorded.
* A reduction over time in the number of children reaching a level of neglect that requires Child Protection intervention.
* We will develop a partnership scorecard to monitor our performance against our key performance indicators to enable high level overview and interventions as required.

# **Resources**

[Neglect Toolkit](https://www.saferbradford.co.uk/media/adtbwc4u/bradford-neglect-toolkit-amended-july-2022.docx)

Dental neglect document

[Multi-agency Training Courses](https://www.saferbradford.co.uk/resources/training/safeguarding-children-training-courses/)

[7 minute briefing - Neglect](https://www.saferbradford.co.uk/media/asrkxfpd/7-mb-neglect.pdf)

[Bradford District Adversity Trauma and Resilience Strategy](https://www.bradfordatrpartnership.co.uk/who-we-are/strategy/)

