



# **Neglect Multi-Agency Strategy**

**2020 - 2023**

## Why we need a neglect strategy

There is considerable national research which demonstrates the damage to infants, children and adolescents living in situations where their needs are neglected.

Ofsted have published two thematic reports, ***In the child's time: professional responses to neglect, 2014*** and ***Growing Up Neglected: A multi-agency response to older children 2018*** which evidences that, the quality of professional responses to neglect is variable and can result in some children being left in situations of neglect for too long.

Whilst the harm from neglect can be particularly damaging in the first 18 months of life, it can have a cumulative impact across childhood, the impact of which can be clearly demonstrated as children progress through their adolescence. The consequences of neglect can last a lifetime, span generations and for some children prove fatal. The inspections have highlighted real urgency for improvements to be made in driving up standards of professional practice and leadership in responding to neglect. The recommendations and best practice examples from both of the thematic inspections have been considered in our strategy.

## Our Vision

Neglect is one of Hounslow Safeguarding Children Partnership's (HSCP) key priorities for 2019-22. In 2017 and 2018 we completed two multi-agency neglect themed audits which highlighted areas for further development and improvement in relation to tackling neglect.

A further multi-agency neglect audit was completed in November 2021, which reflected the findings of the two previous audits; highlighting that whilst good practice was identified, practice in relation to neglect cases in Hounslow is not yet good overall.

Two Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews, featuring the chronic neglect of children completed in 2021 and 2022 respectively, made findings and recommendations which resonate with the principles and priorities of this Strategy.

The HSCP, linking to our strategic principles of **Empowerment**, **Prevention** and **Proportionality** intend to reduce the impact of neglect on the emotional and physical well-being of children by identifying it earlier within families. Through partnership working we will support parents to enable and sustain change and by intervening early we know we can reduce the damaging and long-term impact of neglect on our children.

## Our Principles

Through this strategy the HSCP and all of its partner organisations (*see list of relevant agencies*) across Hounslow agree:

- That the safety and welfare of children is paramount
- All professionals and volunteers have a statutory responsibility to safeguard children from neglect.

## Our Priorities

The priorities that this strategy will focus on over the next two years are:

- 1) Full strategic and operational commitment from all organisations
- 2) Improve awareness, understanding and recognition

- 3) Improve the response at Early Help level
- 4) Responses are effective, timely and interventions reduce the impact of neglect

## Our Aims

All professionals working with children and families in Hounslow will:

- Raise awareness and challenge neglect when it's recognised.
- Identify neglect earlier in children's lives including older children and coordinate support through early help processes. (Link to: **Hounslow Early Help Commitment 2019-21**)
- Tackle child and adolescent neglect giving it the priority it deserves.
- Work hard to mitigate the impact of neglect on children and young people.
- Reduce the number of children that suffer neglect, reducing the amount of time that they experience neglect ensuring interventions are timely and that children do not continue to have their well-being and life chances impacted.
- Recognise the lived experience of children and young people and listen to and act on their voice at all times.
- Communicate and share information promptly and effectively across agencies and with families.
- Interventions are supported by evidence so that they are effective and make a difference to the outcomes for children, young people and their families.

## Our Workforce

To ensure successful outcomes all organisations will commit to:

- All senior managers will lead by example to actively tackle neglect and improve outcomes for children by ensuring neglect is a priority within all agencies and across all partnerships.
- Practitioners receive good quality supervision and multi-agency training to support their work.
- Developing a workforce that works together to tackle neglect, ensuring that practitioners and managers are confident and able to identify it early and recognise a concern and what action needs to be taken, using language that is appropriate to the whole family.
- Everyone is mindful of diversity, additional vulnerabilities and special needs and disabilities that impact children and young people.
- Tools are used consistently, including the mandatory use of the Quality of Care Assessment Tool (QoC) (with input the multi-agency team around the family, or as directed) in all Child in Need and Child Protection cases to ensure that plans and interventions are effective, evidence based and collectively owned.
- Implementing the findings and recommendations arising from the 2021 Multi-agency Neglect Audit, and the two Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews completed in 2021 and 2022.

***The HSCP retains all rights and control of the QoC assessment tool. Organisations are not permitted to create "local" versions to meet their own need and any suggested amendments or alternative use of the tool must be agreed by the HSCP.***

## Governance Arrangements

The HSCP has established a Neglect Task and Finish Group chaired by a senior leader from Children's Social Care and supported by a multi-agency partners who advise and champion the work to tackle neglect. The group will report to the Safeguarding Effectiveness Sub-Group who have operational oversight of each of the HSCP's priority areas.

Regular progress reports will be shared with the Partnership Board and Executive Group over the lifespan of the strategy.

### **How we will measure success?**

We will measure the success of our strategy, work and interventions by:

- Undertaking repeat neglect themed multi-agency audit and quality assurance work which shows the impact of good planning and consistent use of the QoC tool.
- Monitor data and analysis on the percentage of referrals to Children's Social Care for neglect and those cases that progress to statutory assessment.
- Gathering feedback from parents and children who have engaged with services because of neglect.
- A reduction of incidents of neglect, with fewer children on Child Protection Plans for neglect.
- An increase in support from Early Help services supporting families where neglect is a factor with a reduction of cases escalated to Children's Social Care.
- A reduction of repeat referrals for concerns about neglect at the Front Door
- See a decrease the amount of time that Child Protection Plan and Child in Need Plans are in place where neglect is identified as a feature.

### **Review of our strategy**

Hounslow's Neglect Strategy will be reviewed on a two-yearly basis by the HSCP. The 2019-2021 Business Plan will be monitored annually, and action plans and implementation plans monitored at every meeting until completion, ensuring that any delay in progress is identified and actioned quickly.

### **References**

**Definition of neglect** <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/child-abuse-and-neglect/neglect/>

**Ofsted – In a child's time** <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/professional-responses-to-neglect-in-the-childs-time>

**Ofsted – Growing up neglected** <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/growing-up-neglected-a-multi-agency-response-to-older-children>

**Hounslow Safeguarding Children Partnership Multi-Agency Arrangements -**  
<https://www.hscb.org.uk/partnership/hscp-plan/>

**Early Help Hub -**