



## Norfolk Safeguarding Children Partnership's At-A-Glance Strategy to Identify, Prevent and Tackle Neglect

### Strategic Objectives: What will the partnership achieve?

#### Community Engagement

**We will engage communities and harness their resources to tackle neglect and build resilience in local areas.** Building on the community response to Covid19, our objective is to enable local communities to have open conversations with service providers on their experience and understanding of neglect. We recognise that communities are key to finding solutions to address neglect, building resilience and raising the aspirations of children and young people in their locality

**PREVENTION:** We will engage with communities to develop a shared understanding of neglect so that local people can support children and families in their areas to prevent neglect.

**SHARED LANGUAGE:** We will develop dialogue with community groups to de-stigmatise neglect and understand the support services can offer them.

**COMMUNITY NETWORKING:** We will build on the Family Networking approach to extend it across communities so that they are part of the solution.

**DISRUPTING INTERGENERATIONAL NEGLECT:** We will work with communities to understand the impact of intergenerational neglect and engage them in Norfolk's Social Mobility Agenda.

**RAISED ASPIRATIONS:** We will be solution focused with communities and develop their resilience so that they work with us to achieve their full potential.

**CONSULTATION WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE:** We will engage directly with existing groups on the neglect strategy to hear their voices and learn directly from children as service users.

**LOCAL SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN GROUPS:** We will continue to develop the work of the LSCGs to improve our reach into communities to ensure the voices of local people are heard.

#### Contributory Factors

**We will establish a better understanding of factors which contribute to the risk of neglect so that we can address the needs of parents, children, families and communities.** The workforce and communities have a more holistic understanding of contributory factors – including domestic abuse, substance misuse, parental mental health, incarceration, parental experience of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), intergenerational neglect and impact of poverty – resulting in improved risk assessments and more transparent conversations.

**DATA:** We will overlay the data and intelligence on contributory factors to identify areas of high risk and better assess the cumulative impact of adversity and the risk of neglect.

**TRAINING IN ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES:** All agencies will review their own respective workforce's skill and knowledge in relation to ACEs and provide single agency training where necessary to ensure the right level of skill and knowledge are achieved to better identify cumulative risk and how to build resilience.

**FAMILY NETWORKING:** We will ensure that the principles of Family Networking are embedded throughout the system to ensure that children and their families benefit from the inherent resources within their own networks of support, drawing from people who know and love them.

**LEARNING ABOUT PARENTING CAPACITY FROM SCRs:** We will be clear and transparent with families about our assessment of both their willingness and capacity to change using Signs of Safety methodology.

**CO-PRODUCTION OF ASSESSMENT TOOL(s):** We will work with families where neglect is a concern to develop tools and resources where they can monitor their progress against plans and sense check sustainability.

#### Emotional Impact

**Staff and families will have space to reflect on the emotional impact of neglect on themselves and develop resilience, perspective and a shared language to manage that impact.** The safeguarding system, workforce and families they are working with are supported to develop a shared understanding of the neurological, psychological, emotional and physiological impact of toxic stress and are solution focused when addressing the complexities of neglect

**TRAUMA INFORMED PRACTICE AND LEADERSHIP:** We will continue to embed the learning from Norfolk's thematic SCR with the support of Research in Practice, testing how well we understand the safeguarding system as a human service and the psychodynamic aspects (including how defences are constructed against the inherent anxiety); we will acknowledge the emotional content of child safeguarding work and mitigate the risks to enable the workforce to think and act.'

**SUPERVISION AND REFLECTIVE PRACTICE:** The NSCP will support frontline staff to ringfence time to reflect and share their experiences in a safe place in order to allow space for understanding their emotional response to neglect cases and their relationships to the children and families they serve.

**TRAINING AND RESOURCES:** We will provide access to training in appropriate assessment tools to support frontline to better evidence neglect and monitor the effectiveness of plans

**DISSEMINATING LEARNING:** We will disseminate learning from SCRs/SPRs and other pieces of independent scrutiny work to allow the workforce time and space to consider implications for their practice and the children and families they are working with.

#### Leadership & Governance

The NSCP will give clear direction and guidance on trauma informed practice in relation to neglect and model this through trauma informed leadership.

The Neglect Strategy Implementation Group will have the full support and commitment from strategic leaders across the wider partnership.

The Neglect Strategy Implementation Group will monitor the implementation and impact of the Neglect strategy on children and young people through performance data and the results of multi-agency audit activity. This includes responding to recommendations from SCRs/SPRs and other independent scrutiny.

Gaps identified within the implementation of the strategy will be raised within the NSCP and any other strategic partnership boards as identified

Leaders from within each agency will be accountable for ensuring their respective agencies are aware of the strategy, are appropriately resourced to actively implement it and are working intelligently with other agencies to effectively identify, prevent and tackle neglect.

## **NSCP Neglect Strategy**

The appalling effects of chronic neglect are well-documented. Practitioners and academics are agreed that the cumulative nature of neglect can have a disastrous impact on all aspects of children's health and development. It impacts on children's learning, self-esteem, ability to form attachments and social skills in such a way that the effects can last into adulthood. Brandon therefore states that neglect 'needs to be treated with as much urgency as other categories of maltreatment.'

The Office of National Statistics reported that at 31 March 2019, 25,330 children in England (21 per 10,000) were subject to a Child Protection Plan (CPP) for neglect. The small decrease seen in 2019 follows a steady increase seen in previous years. Neglect was the most common initial category of abuse for CPPs in England at 48%.

Neglect is overwhelmingly the most common category for children on Child Protection Plans in Norfolk. In the year ending 31 March 2020, neglect was the initial category of abuse in 63% of cases who became subject to a child protection plan.

In Norfolk there have been several Serious Case Reviews/Safeguarding Practice Reviews (SCRs/SPRs) in recent years where neglect has been a major theme. Despite this, cases of chronic neglect, where there has not been appropriate or timely intervention, are still being identified.

The Department for Education's *Triennial Analysis of Serious Case Review 2014 – 2017* evidenced that neglect featured in nearly three quarters of the reports examined (208 of the 278, 74.8%), including 68% of fatal cases. Neglect was the category of abuse in 50 out of 84 children who were subject to a CPP at the time of or prior to the incident leading to the SCR.

In summer of 2020, Norfolk's independent scrutiny team undertook a discrete piece of work looking at adolescent neglect. The findings from that scrutiny have been incorporated into this strategy with relevant recommendations shared with Norfolk Safeguarding Children Partnership's Vulnerable Adolescent Group.

Locally, Norfolk's Section 11 safeguarding self assessment process has also highlighted systemic challenges to identifying, preventing and tackling neglect. The findings from Section 11 show that we need to improve: capturing the voice of children and young people experiencing neglect; raising awareness and promoting the strategic approach at all levels; and building confidence in the workforce, particularly where concerns do not meet the threshold for statutory intervention. This strategy aims to address these issues.

The need to improve the safeguarding system to better identify, prevent and tackle neglect is one of the Norfolk Safeguarding Children Partnership's top priorities. This strategy draws from local and national learning in relation to neglect and incorporates the recommendations from Norfolk's SCR/SPRs.

### **Definition**

For the purposes of this strategy, the national definition will apply:

*'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. 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 care-givers); or*
- *ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.'*

*(Working Together to Safeguard Children: A guide to Interagency Working to Safeguard and Promote the Welfare of Children. July 2018).*

### **Principles:**

The NSCP adheres to the following principles in the development and implementation of this strategy:

- We will maintain a clear focus on the child and understanding their lived experience
- We will have whole system leadership in awareness raising and tackling neglect with all partner agencies taking responsibility for professional standards within their organisations.
- We will have clear lines of accountability, roles and responsibility in cases of neglect
- We will have a shared, multi-agency approach to identification of and interventions for neglect
- We will demonstrate commitment to equalities and diversity acknowledging that some children are at more risk due to their diverse needs
- We will be culturally competent in this area of work, recognising that neglect is present in all strata of society
- We will be competent and confident in recognising and managing the complexity and stigma attached to neglect, with a focus on unmet needs
- We will ensure that the complex nature of neglect and the impact on the workforce is acknowledged and that there is practical and emotional support in place for practitioners