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Background

Neglect is the ongoing failure to meet a child's basic needs. A third of all Child Protection Plans in Rochdale at the end of March 2022 were for children experiencing neglect. Neglect takes many forms. Neglected children may be left hungry or dirty, without adequate clothing, shelter, supervision, medical or health care. They may be put in danger or not protected from physical or emotional harm. They may not get the love, care and attention they need from their parents or carers.



Child Neglect



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Why it matters

Neglect has harmful consequences in both the short and long term. It can be life threatening and needs to be treated with as much urgency as other forms of child abuse. Neglect can result in poor physical, emotional and mental health - it can severely alter the way a child's brain develops, damage their capacity to form positive relationships and increase vulnerability to other forms of abuse such as CSE.

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What to do?

- Take neglect seriously.
- Understand roles and thresholds; use guidance, resources and tools available.
- Clearly articulate and share your concerns.
- Be prepared to challenge and to escalate if necessary.

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Information

Neglect happens when parents or carers cannot or will not meet a child's needs. Sometimes this is because they do not have the skills or support needed, and sometimes it is due to other problems such as mental health issues, domestic abuse or drug and alcohol problems. The needs, safety and welfare of the child must always be the priority.

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Questions

Is the child at risk of significant harm? What is daily life like for the child? What is the impact on the child? How have concerns been raised with the family? How has information been shared? What is the plan and what difference is it making? Are there any signs of disguised compliance?

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Tools and Guidance

A range of evidence-based tools have been developed in Rochdale to assist practitioners. These tools, guidance together with other resources are housed on the [RBSCP](#) website.

RBSCP are currently redeveloping Rochdale's Neglect Strategy and this will be made available over the coming months.

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Information

It is not always easy to identify neglect but the longer a child is living in a neglectful environment, the greater the damage and likelihood of other abuse will be. The first step for practitioners is identifying those children at risk and being able to express the evidence base for this. Neglect is often dependent on seemingly small, pieces of information, which when collated present an overall picture of a child who is at risk or harm. Neglect must always be defined in terms of the impact on a child and practitioners must be alert to the fact that two or more children in a neglectful household will have a different experience and outcome of being parented.