



# Neglect Matters

**What you need to know about neglect;**  
a guide for parents, carers and professionals

NSPCC

 Surrey  
Safeguarding  
Children  
Partnership



# Neglect Matters

## This guide tells you:

- 1) What neglect is
- 2) What children and young people need
- 3) How to recognise neglect (signs and symptoms)
- 4) The consequences of neglect
- 5) Where to go for help.

## What is neglect?

"The persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and / or psychological needs, likely to result in the impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse."

Neglect erodes the child's resilience. It makes a child or young person lack worth.

**Neglect is about the relationship a parent/carer has with their child.**



# What do children and young people need?

## **Physical Care:**

- 1) To be clean
- 2) To be warm
- 3) To have clean, well-fitting clothing
- 4) To live in clean comfortable accommodation
- 5) To have nutritious food
- 6) To have regular dental checks
- 7) To have medical care when needed

## **Development (to learn):**

- 1) To attend nursery/school regularly
- 2) To have access to books and toys
- 3) To have opportunity for play and to develop social skills
- 4) To have support with reading, writing and learning at home
- 5) To be supported to experience success and achievement
- 6) To have targeted help when the child has additional needs



### **To be loved and wanted:**

- 1) To feel safe and securely attached to one or more person
- 2) To have a stable home environment
- 3) To feel valued and have a sense of belonging
- 4) To understand who they are and where they come from
- 5) Support to develop friendships
- 6) To have praise and encouragement to build esteem
- 7) Support to help the child regulate their behaviour and emotions through positive role models

### **To be safe:**

- 1) To be protected from unsafe adults
- 2) To be protected from exposure to danger at home and in the community
- 3) To have clear and consistent boundaries
- 4) To be properly supervised
- 5) To be helped to understand potential dangers in the community
- 6) To be protected from exposure to harm from social media; phone, computer, Facebook, Twitter etc.

## How to recognise neglect:

### Physical Care:

- 1) The child or young person frequently looks unkempt and has poor personal hygiene
- 2) The child or young person is unnecessarily exposed to the cold due to a lack of warm clothing and bedding
- 3) The child or young person regularly has unclean, ill-fitting clothing that is not suited to the weather conditions
- 4) The child or young person is given food that lacks nutrition or is being under or over fed
- 5) Regular dental checks are missed causing signs of decay
- 6) Medical appointments or follow up on treatment are missed when needed
- 7) The child or young person has frequent accidental injuries.

### Development (to learn):

- 1) Attendance at nursery/school is irregular and children are often late
- 2) The parent/care giver does not promote the child's access to books and toys
- 3) The parent/care giver restricts opportunities for play and to develop social skills when their own needs come first
- 4) The parent/care giver limits support with reading, writing and learning at home as their own needs come first
- 2) There may be lots of changes in care and an environment that creates behavioural problems in the child
- 3) The child or young person experiences feelings of worthlessness which creates sadness and anger
- 4) The child or young person lacks stable and secure friendships



- 5) The child or young person feels frequently criticised, experiences limited physical comfort and low emotional warmth
- 6) The parent/carer frequently shouts or loses control with the child or young person

**Being unsafe:**

- 1) Boundaries are inconsistent or absent
- 2) Children are regularly left unsupervised at home, i.e. in the bath, or in the community, even for short periods
- 3) There is a failure to recognise or take action when a child or young person is exposed to an unsafe adult (risk of sexual and physical harm)
- 4) There is a failure to take action to ensure children are supervised by trusted and known adults
- 5) There is a failure to help the child or young person understand danger and risks to them from an unsafe home environment, or in the community from strangers, road safety, exposure to drugs and alcohol, fire and water hazards
- 6) There is a failure to recognise and take action when a child or young person is exposed to social media without adequate parental controls.

## **The consequences of neglect:**

**Babies under 1 year are statistically more at risk of dying from neglect.**

### **0-5 years:**

- Failure to thrive; stunting, poor height and weight gain
- Developmental delay; not meeting milestones e.g. not sitting, crawling,
- Pale skin, poor hair and skin condition
- Understimulation; head banging, rocking
- Language delay
- Emotional, social and behavioural difficulties e.g. frequent tantrums; persistent attention seeking or demanding; impulsivity or watchful and withdrawn
- Frequent attendances at A&E
- Persistent minor infections

### **5-11 years:**

- Poor concentration and achievement at school
- Speech and language delay
- Aggressive/withdrawn
- Emotional, social and behavioural difficulties as above
- Frequent attendances/admission to A&E
- Isolated or struggles to make and keep friendships
- Problems with taking turns and negotiation



- Poor physical co-ordination/dexterity
- Is bullied or bullies others

### **11-18 years:**

- Failure to learn
- Poor motivation
- Socially isolated/poor peer relationships
- Increasingly high risk anti-social behaviour
- Potential for self-harm/substance use
- Feelings of low self-worth and alienation
- Poor self-esteem and confidence

**Long Term Effects: Young people who experience the cumulative effects of neglect are most at risk and can result in:**

- > Taking it out on yourself
- > Taking it out on others
- > Substance use
- > Eating and sleeping disorders
- > Mental health difficulties/self-harm
- > Criminality and violence
- > Anti-social behaviours
- > Problems with intimacy and separation
- > Suicide





## Where to go for help

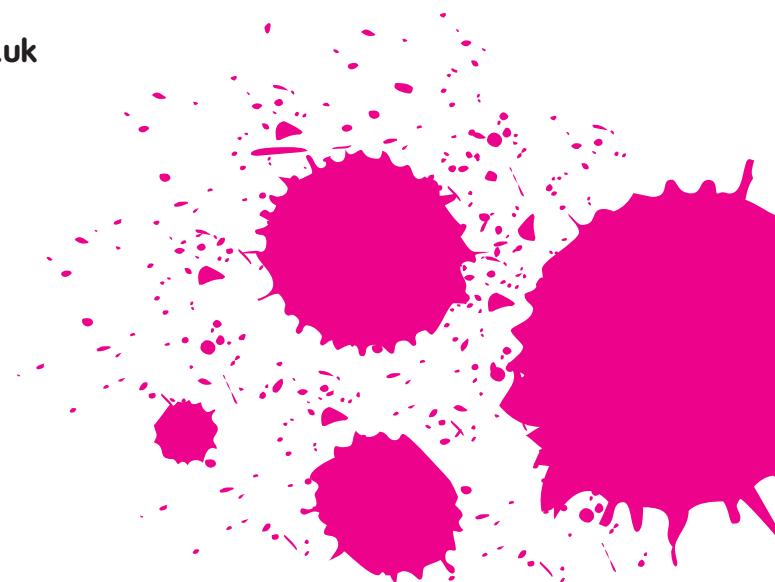
If you are concerned about a child or young person contact the Surrey Children's Single Point of Access (C-SPA)

Phone **0300 470 9100** Email: [cspa@surreycc.gov.uk](mailto:cspa@surreycc.gov.uk)

Or contact the NSPCC helpline **0808 800 5000**  
[www.nspcc.org.uk/helpline](http://www.nspcc.org.uk/helpline)

**In an emergency please call 999**

Childline **0800 1111** or visit [www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)



## Notes

## Notes



## Neglect Matters

For more information on Surrey's Neglect Strategy  
please visit Surrey Safeguarding Children  
Partnership website [www.surreyscp.org.uk](http://www.surreyscp.org.uk) and  
for help and advice please visit Surrey Family  
Information Service [www.surreycc.gov/fis](http://www.surreycc.gov/fis)

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