

Day In My Life

Neglect Tools



Neglect

There are varying experiences of neglect but long-term exposure to neglect or serious neglect have long lasting effect on children.

Improving outcomes for neglected children means we need to know how, when, where and why neglect is occurring for each child in the household.

The original 'Day in the Life of the child' tools devised by Jan Horwath aim to help practitioners gain a better understanding of what is happening in families where neglect is an issue and what the lived experiences are for each child individually.

Neglect

Published case reviews highlight that professionals face a big challenge in identifying and taking timely action on neglect. The learning from these reviews highlights that professionals from all agencies working with children or their families must be able to:

- Recognise physical, emotional, medical, and educational neglect
- Understand the cumulative and long-term impact of neglect
- Take timely action to safeguard children.



Defining Neglect

The national definition of neglect is:

‘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 caregivers)
- Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment
- Provide suitable education.

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child’s basic emotional needs’

Adolescence

For the neglected child, adolescence presents a range of increased risks including:

- Going missing from home or care
- Poor school attendance
- Risk of exclusion from school
- Getting into trouble with the police and anti-social behaviour
- Engaging in substance misuse, including peer abuse, online abuse
- Increased risk of becoming the victim of child exploitation
- Increased risk of exploitation by gangs and other criminal groups (e.g., violent extremists)
- Increased risk of low mood, depression, self-harm, suicidal ideation, eating disorders and poor mental health as a result of the cumulative emotional impact of neglect

Poverty and Neglect

Deep and persistent poverty is more damaging for children's safety and development than a low income or temporary difficulties.

Children who live in the most deprived 10% of neighbourhoods are ten times more likely to be looked after or on a child protection plan, than children in the least deprived 10% of areas (Bywaters et al., 2020).

Deprivation is a contributory causal factor in child abuse and neglect

Impact Chronology

The harm arising from neglect is rarely the result of a significant incident and is normally a case of accumulative concern, for example gradually deteriorating home conditions, repeated incidents of children attending school tired or repeat injuries as a result of poor parental supervision. A clear succinct chronology in neglect cases allows for an emerging pattern of concern to be identified quickly, as well as identifying areas of strength.

Understanding Lived Experience and Sharing The Child's Voice

In order to fully understand how various experiences (including neglect) impacts on an individual, it is necessary to identify the associated risks, unmet needs and areas of resilience.

To do this it is critical understand what life is like for the child or young person on a daily basis; in the evening, during the night, at weekends, during public holidays and when different people are involved in their care.

In order to understand how the behaviours and parenting/caring style of the parent or carer contributes to the risks or unmet needs, it is also necessary to understand a day in their life.

It is only by understanding the lives of both parent/s and each individual child in a family that one can begin to understand why the needs of the child are not being met and what would need to change in order for those needs to be met. (Horwath)

Age related tools

The Toolkit has a range of tools that can be used by any professionals that have an ongoing involvement with children and their families. The agreed age and need specific “day in my life” tools should be used by all professionals working with children. The Neglect Toolkit contains the age specific “day in my life” templates for the following range of children:

- Pre-birth
- Baby
- Pre school
- Primary School aged
- Teenager
- A Disabled Child

Day In My Life – The complete toolkit

Good practice is based on the principles of completing timely, proportionate and analytical assessments, outcome focused planning, relationship-based practice, recognising and working with family's strengths, delivering evidence-based interventions, and strongly hearing the voice of the child. The Neglect Toolkit supports these practice standards with a focus on eliciting the right information to understand the lived experience of the child. The expectation for practitioners is that the following tools will be used with children and families where there are concerns around neglect:

- The appropriate age/need specific “day in my life” template
- Impact chronology
- Signs of Safety mapping and analysis
- Genogram

In addition, where there are concerns about the child's emotional/behavioural presentation social workers will also complete a Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire.

Analysing the information

To capture the information, and to support a robust analysis and assessment, the Signs of Safety Assessment Mapping tool should be used.

By following the process and working through the mapping, there will be the need for a decision on what the next steps may be.

The tools can be used at any point during work with a family and can be accessed as a stand alone form.

At point of completion the notes column should be used to share analysis of the information.

Information within the chronology, the day in my life tool and genogram should then be triangulated to understand the next steps.

There needs to be a discussion with your designated safeguarding lead if you identify that a child needs to be referred to the safeguarding hub.

Links

- [Neglect Strategy](#)
- [Day in My Life Tools](#)
- [CSCP Website](#)



Questions



Cumbria Safeguarding Children Partnership Split

- Local Government Reform
- [Working together to safeguarding children 2023](#)
- Agreement to split taken August 2024
- Partnership split April 1st 2025
- Cumberland Safeguarding Children Partnership
- Westmorland and Furness Safeguarding children Partnership
- What does this mean for my organisation
- [5 Minute briefing](#)

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