

Open Report on behalf of Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children Board

Report to:	Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee
Date:	24 July 2015
Subject:	Neglect Strategy

Summary:

This report presents the Neglect Strategy which has been developed by the Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) and its partners.

Actions Required:

The Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee is invited to consider and comment on the contents of this report.

1. Background

Following on from the publication by Ofsted of '*In the child's time*', it was recognised that all Local Safeguarding Children Boards should have a neglect strategy to monitor, address and coordinate awareness of, and the response to, the signs and symptoms of neglect.

The purpose of the Neglect Strategy in this county is to solidify and coordinate Lincolnshire's approach to tackling neglect. This Strategy also identifies key risk factors and vulnerabilities within adults that may adversely impact on children and their experience of neglect. In addition, it identifies key priority areas of work in order to improve Lincolnshire's response to neglect. Key to the Strategy is the importance of identifying neglect, and supporting children and families through Early Help Arrangements.

This Strategy has been developed in conjunction with Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) partners.

Neglect is the most common reason for a child in the UK to be the subject of a Child Protection Plan. It 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, drug and alcohol problems, or poverty).

Strategic objectives for Lincolnshire LSCB – Neglect

1. *Promote a common awareness and understanding in Lincolnshire of what neglect means and the effects upon children.*

- A common understanding of neglect between and within agencies is crucial to allow effective identification and a common language.
- This will be achieved by ensuring that the Strategy is agreed by LSCB and Lincolnshire Safeguarding Adults Board (LSAB) *by establishing then improving* a strong professional base for identifying, understanding and managing situations of neglect with clear and agreed multi-agency approaches.
- Ensure a 'whole family' approach is embedded within all multi-agency assessment cultures.
- Ensure continued multi-agency training in early identification and help for families.

2. *Minimise the incidences of neglect for children and the repeat incidences of neglect for children.*

- Ensure consistent use of pre-birth protocol.
- Ensure that, after any multi-agency plan, the family has an agreed 'keeping it going' plan (with the aim of maintaining good standards of care and awareness of when to ask for help). This plan should become known as the 'Keeping It Going Plan' (similar to the 'Exit Plan', which is in common practice within Families Working Together).
- Improve the recognition and assessment of children living in neglect at an early stage, and increase early help provision through Team Around the Child (TAC) arrangements.
- Clear and robust thresholds, as identified within '*Meeting the Needs of Children in Lincolnshire*' should be utilised.
- Improve ongoing support through consistent 'step down' to TAC after the end of a Child in Need Plan or a Child Protection Plan.

3. *Ensure the effectiveness of service provision*

- Continue to use the Signs of Safety approach, which helps adults, children and workers to understand what needs to change and what needs to be done, by whom and by when.
- Develop a multi-agency quality assurance audit, which includes families and children, to ensure processes are being followed, starting with quality auditing of TAC.
- Ensure that audits of families' situations focus on sustained improvement.
- Provide practitioners with effective skills and tools to work with families experiencing neglect.
- Support practitioners to resolve common problems when working with families experiencing neglect.

2. Conclusion

Attached at Appendix A is Lincolnshire's Neglect Strategy. The Strategy is designed to coordinate the work of all partners, in order to reduce the impact and instances of neglect. This report outlines an action plan for the partners of the LSCB to achieve by September 2016. After September 2016, the LSCB will conduct an audit of the Strategy's impact in Lincolnshire.

A range of professionals and partners have been involved in developing the Neglect Strategy. The Strategy has been approved by the LSCB, and we are confident that it will deliver better quality risk assessments, and also raise the profile and awareness of the causes and impact of neglect. It will aid practitioners to accurately identify those children and young people who are vulnerable to, or experiencing, neglect.

3. Consultation

a) Policy Proofing Actions Required

No policy proofing is required for this report.

4. Appendices

These are listed below and attached at the back of the report	
Appendix A	Neglect Strategy

5. Background Papers

No background papers within Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972 were used in the preparation of this report.

This report was written by Andrew Morris who can be contacted on 01522 553310 or Andrew.Morris@Lincolnshire.gov.uk

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