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| **PAN BEDFORDSHIRE NEGLECT STRATEGY 2016 – 2019**  **WE WILL PROACTIVELY WORK IN PARTNERSHIP TO KEEP CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SAFE FROM NEGLECT.**  **NEGLECT is child abuse and we will not tolerate it in our community.** |

**“I did not know anything was wrong until someone told us we were being neglected’.**

**It all seemed normal life, as a small child you don’t really compare yourself to anyone else.”**

**Introduction –** Neglect is one of the most common reasons for child protection plans. Serious Case Review’s (SCR) inform us that in extreme cases, neglect can be fatal.Neglect cannot be dealt with by individual organisations working alone. This strategy sets out our commitment that all agencies will work together to prevent neglect. We are committed to listening to children and young people (c/yp) and their voice is at the heart of what we do.

**Definition –** Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a c/yp’s basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in a serious impairment of the c/yp’s health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance misuse. Once the 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 c/yp from physical and emotional harm or danger. Ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care givers). Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a c/yp’s basic emotional needs.

**Strategic Aim -** We aim to ensure that there is early recognition of neglect, work with families in a positive and empowering way, keeping a clear focus on the impact of neglect on the c/yp. From early support to statutory intervention, there will be appropriate, consistent and timely responses across all agencies working together. The strategy should support all those working with children, young people and their families to improve long-term outcomes for c/p.

**Governance -** The 3 LSCBs will monitor our response to neglect giving consideration to examining the data and quality assurance information to evidence what improvements have been made.

**PRINCIPLES**

* The over-riding priority is a shared understanding of the impact of neglect upon c/yp’s safety, health and development; including, crucially, the impact of emotional neglect.
* Early indicators of neglect and causal factors must be recognised.
* Early assessment and intervention will be promoted and supported where sufficient progress is seen to be possible within the c/yps timescale.
* Where there is insufficient progress, intervention on a statutory basis will take place appropriately and without delay.
* Collaboration between agencies is vital at all stages and levels of intervention; and there must be joint assessments which should be shared.
* Children and their families should expect consistency from the practitioners they work with and in the support they are offered.
* Professional curiosity is essential and professionals need to feel confident to challenge families. They need to challenge each other, as well as the families themselves, about the improvements made and their sustainability.
* The work which underpins the strategy will be informed by service users.
* Neglect must be understood within a context which may include other forms of abuse. The strategy must therefore link with other relevant strategies and work streams.
* Agencies need to ensure that practitioners are trained to be aware of, identify, assess and deal with neglect for c/yp who may be particularly vulnerable, e.g. as a result of disability.
* All assessment and intervention undertaken will be based on research evidence.

**What will we do?**

* Given the findings from local/national SCRs, it is essential to address the issue of identification of neglect at the early stages of intervention. This will be a work stream in its own right.
* Develop a Profile of Neglect in collaboration with all agencies, collating a baseline profile and utilising evidence from local/national sources. This will inform training, assessment, monitoring and evaluation.
* The Graded Care Profile (GCP) will be trialled as the multi-agency assessment tool in cases of neglect.
* A group of professionals who have expertise in the area of neglect and/or the use of the GCP and other recognised assessment tools will be established.
* We will work with relevant Legal teams in each authority, the courts and Cafcass.
* Partner agencies will ensure that their staff are competent and confident to identify, assess and deal with neglect for c/yp who may be particularly vulnerable, e.g. as a result of disability.
* The Pan Bedfordshire LSCB Training Unit will assist agencies with their responsibilities through the provision of relevant learning and development opportunities.

**Evidence of impact:**

The success of this strategy will be measured based on a range of quantitative and qualitative measures. This strategy identifies that the highest number of Child Protection (CP) Plans are under the category of neglect. The first measure of success of this strategy will be to ensure that practitioners are identifying and reporting neglect effectively.

* Reduction in the % of CP Plans for 12 months or more.
* Reduction in the % of repeat CP Plans for neglect (this is where the 2nd plan category and the previous plan were also neglect)
* Reduction in the % of CIN Plans for neglect for more than 6 months.
* Increase in the number of children 0 – 5 on a CP Plan for neglect that are registered and engaged with a Children’s Centre.
* Reduction in the number of c/yp entering care for neglect.
* Multi-agency audits of neglect CP Plans show good impact of the plan and good use of the GCP
* Early Help Assessment and Children‘s Services audits show good use GCP.
* Increase in the % of c/yp subject to a CP Plan for neglect where health appointments and school attendance has improved
* Feedback from parents/carers, c/yp about the services they receive.
* Evidence of GCP and LSCB training making an impact.

**Objective 1:**

To improve awareness and understanding of neglect across all agencies so that early identification is achieved and there is effective working between services working with c/yp & adults

**Objective 2:**

To improve the recognition, assessment and support of c/yp and their families where neglect has been identified but before statutory intervention is required.

**Objective 3:**

To improve the assessment and intervention with c/yp once statutory intervention has become necessary.