

NEGLECT TOOL

Six Questions to Inform Assessment and Analysis of Neglect

THE SIX QUESTION TOOL

This Framework provides a series of questions to assist professionals in being professionally curious. They cover **SIX** key areas of **NEGLECT**.

PERSISTENCE AND CHANGE

- ◆ Parental Motivation to change
- ◆ Cumulative harm
- ◆ Past experiences and ACE's

THE CHILD'S DEVELOPMENT NEEDS

- ◆ Physical Care
- ◆ Emotional Care
- ◆ Medical Needs
- ◆ Supervision and Guidance
- ◆ Stimulation and Education

THE IMPACT OF NEGLECT AND THE CHILD'S LIVED EXPERIENCE

- ◆ The Child's Experience
- ◆ Other Abuse

CAUSAL FACTORS

- ◆ Parental Mental Health
- ◆ Parental Substance Misuse
- ◆ Domestic Abuse
- ◆ Parental Learning Disability
- ◆ Poverty and Social Isolation

ACTS OF OMISSION OR COMMISSION

- ◆ Carer ignorance of neglect or
- ◆ Deliberate harm/abuse

8 OTHER KINDS OF ABUSE TAKING PLACE



PERSISTENCE AND CHANGE

Parental Motivation to Change

- ◆ Is the carer concerned about the child's welfare and wants to meet their physical, social and emotional needs to the extent the carer understands them?
- ◆ Is the carer determined to act in the best interests of the child and has realistic confidence that they can overcome problems?
- ◆ Is the carer willing to ask for help when needed and is prepared to make sacrifices for children?
- ◆ Does the carer have the right "priorities" when it comes to child care and may take an indifferent attitude?
- ◆ Does the carer believe that there is something about the child that deserves ill treatment and hostile parenting?
- ◆ Does the parent seek to give up the responsibility for the child?

Cumulative Harm

- ◆ What evidence is there of persistence of neglect? (i.e. has the neglect been present over a significant period of time; what efforts been made to intervene to minimise or prevent neglect; has this had any significant impact in the past?) Assessment should include whether every time a new referral/report is made whether a number of low level risk factors is demonstrating significant cumulative harm?
- ◆ Look at:
 - Case history
 - Case conferences
 - Worker handover
 - Risk assessments

Parents Experience

What is the parent's experience of being parented?

- ◆ Lack of caregivers
- ◆ Poor early experiences
- ◆ Poverty
- ◆ Lack of skills knowledge
- ◆ Social Isolation
- ◆ Domestic Abuse
- ◆ Parental Learning Disability
- ◆ Parental Substance Misuse
- ◆ Parental Mental Health Issues
- ◆ Parental Separation and Divorce

THE CHILD'S DEVELOPMENT NEEDS

Physical Care

Growth, Diet and Nourishment

- ◆ Is the child's growth appropriate for age?
- ◆ If growth is not appropriate is there an organic reason for this?
- ◆ Does the child have nutritionally balanced meals?
- ◆ Is there food in the cupboards?
- ◆ If the child has dietary advice for low weight or obesity does the carer follow dietetic advice?

Hygiene

- ◆ Is the child clean either given a bath/ washed daily or encouraged to do so if appropriate to age?
- ◆ Is nappy rash treated consistently?
- ◆ Does the carer take an interest in the child's appearance?

Safe Sleeping for babies

- ◆ Does the carer have information on safe sleeping and follow the guidelines?
- ◆ Is there suitable bedding and carer has an awareness of the importance of the room temperature, sleeping position of the baby and the carer does not smoke in household (be aware this raises risk of cot death)
- ◆ Is the carer aware of guidance around safe co-sleeping, recognises and observes the importance of the impact of alcohol and drugs on safe co-sleeping?
- ◆ Is carer not concerned about the impact on the child or risks associated with co-sleeping, such as witnessing adult sexual behaviour?
- ◆ Are there adequate sleeping arrangements for children?
- ◆ Is the carer indifferent or hostile when given safe sleeping guidance? Sees it as interference and does not take account?

Clothing

- ◆ Does the child have clothing which is clean and fits?
- ◆ Is the child dressed for the weather?
- ◆ Is the carer aware of the importance of suitable clothes for the child in an age appropriate way?
- ◆ Is the carer hostile when given advice about the need for suitable clothes for the wellbeing of the child?

Animals if present

- ◆ Are animals well cared for and do not present a danger to children or adults?
- ◆ Are children encouraged to behave properly towards animals?
- ◆ Is there a presence of faeces or urine from animals and animals are not well trained?

THE CHILD'S DEVELOPMENT NEEDS

Emotional Care

Carer's attitude to the child

- ◆ Does the carer talk consistently warmly about the child and is able to praise and give emotional reward?
- ◆ Does the carer value the child's cultural identity and seeks to ensure the child develops a positive sense of self?
- ◆ Is the carer ridiculing of the child when others praise?
- ◆ Is the carer hostile when given advice about the importance of praise and reward to the child?

Warmth and Care

- ◆ Does the carer respond to the child's needs for physical care and positive interaction?
- ◆ Is the emotional response of the carer one of warmth?
- ◆ Is the child listened to?
- ◆ Is the happy to seek physical contact and care?
- ◆ Does the carer respond with concern if child is distressed or hurt?
- ◆ Does the carer understand the importance of consistent demonstrates of love and care?

Responses to baby

- ◆ Does the carer respond to the baby's needs and is careful whilst handling and laying the baby down, frequently checks if unattended?
- ◆ Does the carer spend time with baby, cooing and smiling, holding and behaving warmly?
- ◆ Is the carer hostile to advice to pick the baby up, and provide comfort and attention?
- ◆ Does the carer recognise the importance of interaction with the baby?

Responses to adolescents

- ◆ Are the adolescents' needs fully considered with consistent adult care?
- ◆ Does the carer recognise that the adolescent is still in need of guidance with protection from risky behaviour i.e. an awareness of the adolescent's whereabouts for long periods of time (missing or absent)?
- ◆ Does the carer encourage the child to see education as important, and supports regular attendance at school?
- ◆ Does the carer either address directly or seek support to address risky and challenging behaviour?
- ◆ Does the carer take an active interest in the child's day to day life and activities?

- ◆ Does the carer have the capacity to be alert to and monitor the adolescent moods for example recognising depression which could lead to self-harm?
- ◆ Does the carer have the capacity to be alert to and monitor relationships (including online relationships) which may be risky or exploitative?
- ◆ Is the carer aware of any risks associated to online activities particularly; grooming in relation to sexual exploitation or radicalisation?

Positive values

- ◆ Does the carer encourage the child to have positive values, to understand right from wrong, be respectful to others and show kindness and helpfulness?
- ◆ Does the carer understand the importance of the child's development to include an awareness of smoking, underage drinking and substance misuse as well as early sexual relationship?
- ◆ Does the carer ensure the child does not watch inappropriate films/TV or play with computer games which are unsuitable for the child's age and stage of development?

THE CHILD'S DEVELOPMENT NEEDS

Medical needs

- ◆ Does the carer seek advice from professionals/ experienced adults on matters of concern about child health?
- ◆ For adolescents, does the carer ensure that sexual health needs are met including advice on contraception and sexually transmitted infections?
- ◆ Are medical appointments made and attended?
- ◆ Is preventative care carried out such as dental/ optical and all immunisations up to date?
- ◆ Does the carer ensure child completes any agreed programme of medication or treatment?
- ◆ Does the carer attend to childhood illnesses or are illnesses allowed to deteriorate before advice/ care is sought?
- ◆ Is the carer hostile when given advice from others (professionals and family members) to seek medical advice?

Disability

- ◆ Does the carer comply with needs relating to child's disability?

- ◆ Is the carer proactive in seeking appointments and advice and advocating for the child's wellbeing?
- ◆ Does the carer accept advice and support i.e. follows advice from physio and occupational therapists?
- ◆ Does the carer always value child and not allow issues of disability to impact on feelings towards the child?

Supervision

- ◆ Is supervision provided in line with age and stage of development?
- ◆ Does the carer recognise the importance of supervision to child's wellbeing?
- ◆ Is there consistent supervision provided both indoors and outdoors, and the carer does intervene where there is imminent danger?
- ◆ Does the carer always know where child is and has inconsistent awareness of safety issues when child is away from home?
- ◆ Is there a risk that the adult carer is being groomed for criminal or other exploitative purposes i.e. particularly parents who have learning difficulties or misuse substances?

Care by other adults and children

- ◆ When the child is left in care of someone over the age of 16 are they a suitable carer?
- ◆ Is the carer consistent in raising the importance of a child keeping themselves safe from others and provides some advice and support?
- ◆ Are there occasions where a child/young person is left in the care of another child, young person or unsuitable adult?
- ◆ Does the parent risk assess the circumstances to ensure the child is safe?

Boundaries

- ◆ Do the carers provide consistent boundaries and ensure the child understands how to behave and to understand the importance of set limits?
- ◆ Is the child disciplined with the intention of teaching proactively?
- ◆ Does the carer treat the child harshly and cruelly, when responding to behaviour?
- ◆ Is the carer hostile when given advice about appropriate methods of disciplining?

THE CHILD'S DEVELOPMENT NEEDS

Stimulation

- ◆ Is stimulation provided? Does the carer understand the importance of it for the child?
- ◆ Does the child have suitable toys to play with?
- ◆ Does the child have opportunities to go on outings? To child centred places?
- ◆ Does the child have the opportunity and space to play outside the house?



Education

- ◆ Does the carer take an active interest in the child's schooling and gives support at home e.g. for homework?
- ◆ Does the carer engage well with school/nursery and does not sanction missed days unless necessary?



THE IMPACT OF NEGLECT AND THE CHILD'S LIVED EXPERIENCE

The Child's Experience

- ◆ If you put yourself in the child's shoes, what is life like?
- ◆ Can you describe a day in the life of this child?
- ◆ What is it like for this child living in this house?
- ◆ What are we seeing? What is the child telling us, without telling us?
- ◆ How does the child interact with and / or react to other family members?



- ◆ How does the child interact with and / or react to you?
- ◆ What is the child doing when you see them?
- ◆ Should the child be there? By being there, are they missing school or another appointment?
- ◆ Are you making any assumptions about the experience of this child? Is there anything you need to clarify or check with them for their perspective?
- ◆ How is the neglect experience impacting on them socially? Emotionally?
- ◆ Have you talked to the child / young person face to face alone? (with reassurance to talk openly) – have you listened to the child's / young person's views about home life – likes/dislikes/? Questions – Can you tell me what is like in the morning / evening / school for you? Do you have any worries or concerns?
- ◆ Are adolescents' needs fully considered with consistent adult care? Have you spoken to the adolescent?
- ◆ Does the carer and adolescent recognise and understand that the adolescent still needs guidance with protection from risky behaviour? E.g. the carer still needs an awareness of the adolescents' whereabouts for long periods of time (missing or absent)?
- ◆ Do you have additional concerns that are impacting on the child / young person? If so, have you explained how you will act on these?

CAUSAL FACTORS

Mental Health

- ◆ Does the carer have a history of depression or is currently experiencing depression?
- ◆ Does the carer talk about feelings of depression/ low mood in front of the children?
- ◆ Are the child's needs understood and the carer is aware of the impact of talking about their mental health issues in front of the children?
- ◆ Does the carer hold the child responsible for feelings of depression and is open with the child and/or others about this?
- ◆ Is the carer hostile when given advice focused on stopping this behaviour and carer does not recognise the impact on the child?

Domestic Abuse

- ◆ Is the carer currently experiencing domestic abuse?
- ◆ What is the family norm of domestic abuse?
- ◆ Does the carer argue aggressively and/or is physically abusive in front of the children?
- ◆ Does the carer understand the impact of arguments and anger on children and is sensitive to this?

Substance Misuse

- ◆ What is the carer's frequency of substance and what substances are they using?
- ◆ Does the carer believe it is normal for children to be exposed to regular alcohol and substance misuse?
- ◆ Does the carer understand the importance of hygiene, emotional and physical care of their child and arranges for additional support when unable to fully provide for the child?
- ◆ Are finances affected by parental substance misuse?
- ◆ Is the mood of the carer irritable or distant at times?
- ◆ Are alcohol and drugs secured safely?
- ◆ Is the carer aware of the impact of substances misuse on the child (including unborn child)?
- ◆ Does the carer hold the child responsible for their use and blames their continual use on the child?

Learning Disability

- ◆ Is it apparent that the carer has any learning disability?

- ◆ What is the level of understanding of the carer?
- ◆ Does the carer understand written advice and/or instruction?
- ◆ If learning disability is not apparent, the parent may still have limited comprehension that needs to be assessed. Is there any evidence of barriers to level of understanding or ability to implement advice?

Poverty and Social Isolation

- ◆ Are the family currently in debt?
- ◆ What is the family's source of income and how do they chose to spend their money?
- ◆ How do those choices impact on the child?
- ◆ Does the carer have a consistent support network within the family or community?

ACTS OF OMISSION OR COMMISSION

Omission or Commission

- ◆ Does the neglectful behaviour occur as a result of carer ignorance or competing carer priorities? (Omission)
- ◆ Is there a general lack of action regarding the child's needs?
- ◆ Does the neglectful behaviour occur due to a deliberate intention to harm? (Commission)
- ◆ What do the caregivers say about what causes the difficulties they are experiencing with care giving?
- ◆ Does the parent blame the child for their inability to care for them?
- ◆ What do you consider to be the primary factors causing poor quality parenting?



WHAT OTHER KINDS OF ABUSE ARE TAKING PLACE?

- ◆ Is there any bruising or other marks on the child?
- ◆ Is there any change in the child's behaviour or presentation that might be cause for concern?
- ◆ Are there any signs or indicators of other forms of abuse: such as - sexual abuse, physical abuse, emotional abuse or domestic abuse?
- ◆ Are there any signs or indicators of exploitation?
- ◆ What is the interplay between the different forms of abuse? How do they impact on one another, on parenting and the neglect present? How do they impact on the child?

Useful Links

The following YouTube clips explain the impact of neglect on brain development:

Science of neglect

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bF3j5UVCSCA>

Attunement and why it matters

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=URpuKgKt9kg>

How neglect affects brain development

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uOsgDkeH52o>

Early Help

A recent review of learning carried out by NSPCC “Spotlight on preventing child neglect” says that research shows that the following can make a difference in preventing neglect:

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/globalassets/documents/research-reports/spotlight-preventing-child-neglect-report.pdf>

Research also states that practitioners feel there is a lack of agreement around what constitutes child neglect and when professionals should intervene ([Gardner, 2008](#)).

<http://www.nspcc.org.uk/globalassets/documents/research-reports/developing-effective-response-neglect-emotional-harm-children.pdf>

1001 Critical Days

A wealth of research has been undertaken into the effect of neglect in a baby’s early days with the Wave Trust (2014) developing 1001 critical days.

<http://www.wavetrust.org/our-work/publications/reports/1001-critical-days-importance-conception-age-two-period>

ACEs

Further information in respect of ACEs can be found at: <http://www.aces.me.uk/in-england/>

Adolescent Neglect

<https://www.rip.org.uk/news-and-views/latest-news/evidence-scope-risks-in-adolescence/>

<https://www.childrensociety.org.uk/what-we-do/research/troubled-teens-understanding-adolescent-neglect>

What Does Neglect Look Like For Children in Teesside?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IOeQUwAjE0>

Risk Outside of the Home

[Child Sexual Exploitation \(teescpp.org.uk\)](http://teescpp.org.uk)

[Tees-wide Child Exploitation Screening Tool \(teescpp.org.uk\)](http://teescpp.org.uk)

[Wrong Hands Toolkit \(teescpp.org.uk\)](http://teescpp.org.uk)

[VEMT Practitioner Screening Tool / Referral Form \(teescpp.org.uk\)](http://teescpp.org.uk)

<https://www.relate.org.uk/relationship-help/help-family-life-and-parenting/parenting-teenagers/communicating-teens>

[The principles of Contextual Safeguarding on Vimeo](#)

[\(75\) Contextual Safeguarding: Re-writing the rules of child protection | Carlene Firmin | TEDxTottenham - YouTube](#)

Looking for tools to help you communicate with adolescents

[Youth Archives - Free Social Work Tools and Resources: SocialWorkersToolbox.com](#)

<https://www.relate.org.uk/relationship-help/help-family-life-and-parenting/parenting-teenagers/communicating-teens>

Language Tools

[TACT An Overview of Language that Cares](#)

