

7 Minute Briefing

1 What is neglect?

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.

Persistent means there is a pattern which may be continuous or intermittent which has caused, or is likely to cause significant harm. [national-guidance-child-protection-scotland-2021-updated-2023.pdf](#)

There can also be single instances of neglectful behaviour that cause significant harm. Neglect can arise in the context of systemic stresses such as poverty, and is an indicator of both support and protection needs. Linking directly to articles 19, 24 and 27 of UNCRC

[The Convention on the Rights of the Child: The children's version | UNICEF](#)

2 Why does it matter?

Of all forms of significant harm, neglect leads to the most profound long-term effects on a child's physical development and emotional wellbeing.

Neglect is rarely life threatening but has the potential to compromise a child's development significantly, across multiple domains. Because neglect frequently coexists with other forms of maltreatment, it can be difficult to disentangle its unique consequences.

7 Neglect Pathway

Has the need for a Comprehensive Medical Assessment been reached?

Apply the following criteria:

- Developmental Delay
- Concerns in relation to; Growth / weight / dental health / skin conditions / nutrition/ infestations
- Known Long term medical condition
- Pattern of child not being brought to medical/dental appointment
- Unmet health needs

Neglect

Health



3 Categories of neglect

Physical - A child's basic needs, such as food, clothing or shelter, are not met or they aren't properly supervised or kept safe.

Emotional - A child doesn't get the nurture and stimulation they need. This could be through ignoring, humiliating, intimidating or isolating them.

Medical A child doesn't receive the health care they require in a timely fashion. Children not brought for appointments. This includes dental care and refusing or ignoring medical recommendations.

Educational - A parent doesn't ensure their child is given an education

[Neglect is also Child Abuse: Know All About It | NSPCC](#)

6 Responding to the assessment and analysis of the impact of neglect

This will be based on the use of the GIRFEC [National Practice Model - Getting it right for every child \(GIRFEC\) - gov.scot National Risk Framework to Support the Assessment of Children and Young People - gov.scot](#), [Neglect Toolkit](#) which includes the [Home Conditions Tool](#)

Complete a request for assistance making it clear what is required from a multi-agency approach. If significant risk of harm has been identified, follow child protection process contact the child protection team.

5 Questions to consider

What might you observe in a neglected child? What might a child who was being neglected tell you? What might you observe in parents who were neglecting their children? Can you think of one way you can listen to children more? What do you do well regarding neglect in your team/service? How can you improve?

4 Responding to neglect

Using a trauma informed approach means recognising the profound impact neglect can have on a child's physical and emotional wellbeing.

Consider contributing factors such as poverty, parental health, substance use, domestic abuse, the child's age and developmental stage and disability.