

7 Minute Briefing

Neglect

1. Background

Neglect is the most common reason for referral to Childrens Services. The definition of neglect is not as objective as other forms of abuse, and so relies on professional assessment.

2. What is it?

Professionals will often intervene with physical environment cases of neglect. However the child will often see neglect in terms of emotional issues.

3. What is it?

Neglect is not a one off event but rather an accumulation of issues over time. It can happen to children of all ages including teenagers

4. How to recognise it

Failure to provide: adequate food, shelter and clothing; adequate supervision; access to medical care; failure to protect from physical harm; unresponsive to child's emotional needs.

5. Causes

In many cases the cause is recorded as either poor parental health (54%), domestic abuse (49%), substance misuse (49%), alcohol misuse (38%). This is unlikely to be a 'quick fix'.

6. Why it matters

Neglect can be fatal and affects the global development of children. Neglect can also affect longer term development with negative consequences for physical and mental health over the lifetime

7. Action

Look out for low level concerns and intervene early to assist families before crisis. Ensure you listen to the child's story. Complete an assessment to decide on assistance needed. Refer to targeted/social care.