

Redbridge Local Safeguarding
Children Board (LSCB)

Multi-Agency Neglect Strategy

2nd Edition

July 2017

Executive Summary

Neglect can be a difficult and complex area for professionals to understand and address. Chronic neglect can be seriously damaging for children and young people who are living this experience. As a response to this, the Redbridge LSCB adopted neglect as a strategic theme, using this as focus of its 2014 Conference. It was part of their Multi-Agency Business Plan for 2014 – 2015 and the 1st Edition of this Multi-Agency Neglect Strategy in January 2015.

A review of the Strategy by the LSCB Learning & Improvement Sub Group in June 2017 concluded that the overall vision of the Strategy should essentially remain the same, with the focus moving to embedding of the work on prevention of neglect, including a comprehensive and consistent identification and response across Redbridge. The objectives are now:

1. Embedding a shared understanding of what is meant by the term 'neglect' across all partners, including agencies working in the area of adult social care and mental health, supported by the use of the [Redbridge Neglect Toolkit](#).
2. Continuing to ensure that all staff and volunteers working with children, young people and adults who are parents or carers in Redbridge are aware of the damage caused by the experience of long-term and chronic neglect.
3. Continuing to ensure that practitioners, and their managers /staff, working with children, young people and their families and/or carers across Redbridge have the right knowledge, skills and experience to support the prevention of neglect and identify and respond early indicators of neglect in a collaborative and consistent way.
4. Improvement in sharing of information across agencies, on specific cases of neglect, including historical information.
5. Continuing to ensure that practice is evidence informed using messages from research findings and learning achieved through participation of service users.
6. Develop and share an understanding of the specific risk of neglect for children who may have disabilities and more complex vulnerabilities.
7. Provision of individually tailored intervention and support at the earliest opportunity, reducing impact and risk, which aims at building strength and resilience within families rather than promoting dependency.
8. A commitment to ensuring that all plans are clear about what needs to change, by when, how change will be measured and the consequences of change not being achieved, through decisive action and the initiation of care proceedings where necessary.
9. Further development of the provision of local community initiatives (in universal and targeted services) to raise awareness of neglect and to support families to reduce levels of neglect across Redbridge e.g. through Children's Centre provision, the Redbridge Early Intervention and Family Support Service (EI&FSS), the Redbridge Children and Young People's Network (RCYPN) etc.

CONTENTS

Section	Title	Page No.
1	Introduction by Independent Chair of the LSCB	4
2	Background	5
3	Purpose and Scope	5
4	Definition of Neglect	6
5	The Redbridge Context	7
6	Aims and Objectives	8
7	Learning and Development	9
8	Evaluation and Review	9
9	Links and Resources	10

1. Introduction

This multi-agency Neglect Strategy was first developed in January 2015 by the Redbridge Local Safeguarding Board (LSCB) and in conjunction with its partners, and has been refreshed in July 2017, and published as this 2nd edition.

The purpose is to set out the LSCB's approach to the way in which partner agencies across the Borough work together to safeguard children and young people at risk of neglect and work to support those that are already experiencing this and provides some key principles under which all work undertaken by LSCB partners should be guided by.

The Strategy was developed in response to the findings and recommendations of the report of the Ofsted thematic inspection of neglect - [In the child's time: professional responses to neglect, March 2014](#), and improve multi agency response to child neglect and has since been informed by the LSCB's Multi-Agency Audit on children that have Child Protection Plans under the category of Neglect.

Research tells us that awareness of child neglect and its consequences on the future well-being and development of children has increased during the last two decades¹. It is difficult to define and agree on what we mean by neglect and research shows that it often co-exists with other forms of abuse and social conditions. However, what is clear is that it is the most common reason for children to become subject to child protection plans in the United Kingdom².

The consequences of neglect are wide-ranging. Neglect at its worst is potentially fatal. Other consequences include physical and mental health problems, difficulties in forming attachments and relationships, increased risk of substance misuse, higher risk of experiencing abuse as well as difficulties in assuming parenting responsibilities later on in life (Taylor and Bridge, 2005¹). It can cause great distress to children and leads to poor outcomes, including health, social skills, and educational attainment.

I commend this Strategy to you and thank those members of the Multi-Agency 'Task and Finish' Group that developed the original document in consultation with partners. Please work with us to ensure that this has a meaningful and positive impact on the lives of the children and young people of Redbridge.



John Goldup Independent Chair, Redbridge LSCB

¹ [Understanding and working with neglect, Turney, D and Tanner, K, Research in Practice, 2005](#)

² [NSPCC Research Briefing, Key Findings, August 2012](#)

2. Background

Neglect was identified as a key priority of the Redbridge LSCB in its Business Plan for 2014 – 2015 and was the focus of the LSCB multi-agency conference in 2014. It was chosen as such due to the recognition of its prevalence and given that at the time it was the basis of the highest percentage of Child Protection Plans in Redbridge. When this Strategy was first produced in early 2015, there were 309 children with a Child Protection Plan, 108 (36%) of whom were subject to a plan under the category of Neglect. By the end of March 2017, this had gone up to 459 children with a Child Protection Plan, of which 146 (32%) were related to neglect, a slight shift downwards in terms of the category as a percentage, but still the second most prevalent cause.

The Ofsted thematic report highlighted key areas of learning and areas for development that continue to provide an excellent marker for both strategic planning and front-line delivery in cases of neglect.

This Strategy should be read in conjunction with other key documents such as the [London Child Protection Procedures](#) and [Working Together to Safeguard Children](#).

3. Purpose and Scope

The purpose of this Strategy is to set out the Redbridge LSCB strategic aims, objectives and priorities for tackling neglect, including prevention and early response. Within the scope of the Strategy will be the definition of neglect, an understanding of the Redbridge context and the aims and statement of objectives which will inform the LSCBs work in this area going forward.

The Strategy has been adopted by all partner agencies within the LSCB for use in directing the planning and delivery of services to children and young people in Redbridge, and promoting a consistent, collaborative and preventative approach which focuses on reducing the risk factors that can cause neglect within families.

The Strategy also acknowledges that neglect within the adolescent age range is more commonplace than often predicted and even when identified, is often poorly responded to. However, as a LSCB there is a commitment to see beyond assumptions made about teenage resilience and to acknowledge that safeguarding responses for this age group need to be equally robust and dedicated.

Evidence suggests that neglected children may become adults who may experience difficulties including poor mental health, substance misuse problems and/or abusive relationships. Neglect can also manifest itself over family generations – with links to parental mental ill-health, substance misuse and domestic violence. It is therefore important that staff and volunteers of agencies working with children, young people and their parents or carers in Redbridge have the necessary skills to identify and support children and young people who have experienced neglect to seek to break the cycle prominent within some families.

4. Definition of Neglect

Neglect is defined as follows in the [Statutory Guidance Working together to safeguard children, HM Government, 2015](#) (page 93).

“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.

Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a 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 child from physical and emotional harm or danger;
- Ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); or
- Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child’s basic emotional needs.”

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child’s basic emotional needs.

There is overlap between emotional abuse and many forms of neglect when working with children subject to neglectful situations and an understanding of emotional abuse and its correlation with neglect is equally important.

5. The Redbridge Context

In Redbridge, children and young people who are recognised as living with neglect support through either a Child Protection (CP) Plan or a Child in Need (CiN) Plan which aims through a series of SMART actions to improve outcomes for that child. Support is also available via early help and completion of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF).

Over the last few years, the numbers of children that have been sufficiently impacted by neglect to result in them being subject to a CP Plan has steadily increased, although that growth has been reflected in the overall number of children subject to a plan.

Table: No. of Redbridge children subject to a CP Plan under the category of Neglect as at 31 March

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
CP Total	153	228	309	409	459
CP Neglect Category	65 (42%)	108 (47%)	111 (36%)	140 (34%)	146 (32%)

The number of children with a CiN Plan dropped this year but the percentage that relates to Neglect has remained stable.

Table 2: No. of Redbridge children who had a CiN Plan at 31 March

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Total CiN	683	996	1012	1004	847
CiN Neglect Category	252 (37%)	391 (39%)	447 (44%)	500 (50%)	430 (51%)

The data supports the understanding that neglect is one of the main safeguarding issues in Redbridge.

6. Aims and Objectives

The overall aim of the Strategy is to support prevention of neglect and ensure early recognition of neglect and improvement in the way in which partner agencies respond to families experiencing this. The key objectives supporting this aim, which underpin the LSCBs work in this area, are detailed below:

- i. Shared understanding of what is meant by the term 'neglect' across all partners, including agencies working in the area of adult social care and mental health, supported by the use of the [Redbridge Neglect Toolkit](#).
- ii. Continuing to ensure that all staff and volunteers working with children, young people and adults who are parents or carers in Redbridge are aware of the damage caused by the experience of long-term and chronic neglect.
- iii. Continuing to ensure that practitioners, and their managers/staff, working with children, young people and their families and/or carers across Redbridge have the right knowledge, skills and experience to support the prevention of neglect and identify and respond early indicators of neglect in a collaborative and consistent way.
- iv. Improvement in sharing of information across agencies, on specific cases of neglect, including historical information.
- v. Continuing to ensure that practice is evidence informed using messages from research findings and learning achieved through participation of service users.
- vi. Develop and share an understanding of the specific risk of neglect for children who may have disabilities and more complex vulnerabilities.
- vii. Provision of individually tailored intervention and support at the earliest opportunity, reducing impact and risk, which aims at building strength and resilience within families rather than promoting dependency.
- viii. A commitment to ensuring that all plans are clear about what needs to change, by when, how change will be measured and the consequences of change not being achieved, through decisive action and the initiation of care proceedings where necessary.
- ix. Further development of the provision of local community initiatives (in universal and targeted services) to raise awareness of neglect and to support families to reduce levels of neglect across Redbridge e.g. through Children's Centre provision, the Redbridge Early Intervention and Family Support Service (EI&FSS), the [Redbridge Children and Young People's Network \(RCYPN\)](#) etc.

7. Learning and Development

Part of the embedding of the Strategy, is the enabling of staff, volunteers and managers across the children and young people's workforce, and those working with adults, to develop the knowledge, skills and experience required to provide professional support to families and empower them to undertake change to improve outcomes the children and young people within the family.

A wide range of resources and learning opportunities area available including:

- Department for Education (DfE) has produced a number of useful [training resources](#) on neglect, for use by multi-agency groups which focus on identification and dealing with child neglect;
- learning and development activities through the [LSCB Training Programme](#), including training courses on [Safeguarding Children from Neglect](#), the [Common Assessment Framework \(CAF\) Assessment and Planning Workshop for Practitioners](#);
- a newly commissioned Workshop on the practical implementation of the [Redbridge Neglect Toolkit](#); and
- information and links to further reading on the dedicated page on neglect for professionals on the [LSCB website](#), including access to resources from our partner organisation Research in Practice (RiP).

As part of the implementation of the Strategy, the LSCB asks partner agencies to commit to ensuring that their staff and volunteers access the different learning and development opportunities according to their role, to enable:

- (a) consistent, robust, recognition and response to neglect; and
- (b) assessment, analysis and planning to safeguard and improve outcomes for children and young people who are experiencing neglect.

8. Evaluation & Review

The Strategy will be reviewed and evaluated for effectiveness by the LSCB Learning & Improvement Sub Group by the end of 2018 – 2019. Reports on progress in relation to our response to neglect will be included in the LSCB Annual Report and the impact of the effectiveness of training on neglect including in the annual report on training presented to the Board.

9. Links and Resources

- Redbridge Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB)

<http://www.redbridgelscb.org.uk/>

- Redbridge LSCB Child Neglect Guidance, Toolkit and Checklist

<http://www.redbridgelscb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Redbridge-LSCB-Neglect-Toolkit-and-Guidance-2014.pdf>

<http://www.redbridgelscb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Neglect-Toolkit-Checklist.pdf>

- Working Together to Safeguarding Children (HM Government, 2015)

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/592101/Working_Together_to_Safeguard_Children_20170213.pdf

- London Child Protection Procedures (5th Edition, 2017, London SCB)

<http://www.londoncp.co.uk/>

- Child Protection Referrals

<https://www.redbridge.gov.uk/adult-and-childrens-services/child-protection/>

- Redbridge LSCB Are you worried about a child? How to access early help, and thresholds for referral to children's social care, June 2016

<http://www.redbridgelscb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/Redbridge-LSCB-Multi-Agency-Thresholds-Document-June-2016-Final.pdf>

- Ofsted Report

In the child's time: professional responses to neglect (Ofsted, March 2014)

<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/childs-time-professional-responses-neglect>