Swindon
Safeguarding
Partnership

Neglect

Communication and Culture Strategy

2026–2029

Stronger communication.
Shared understanding.
Better outcomes for every child.

1. Purpose

This Neglect Communication and Culture Strategy supports the delivery of the Swindon Safeguarding Partnership Neglect Strategy 2026-2029.

Its purpose is to build a shared partnership culture in which neglect is recognised early, understood consistently and responded to effectively. Through clear, coordinated and purposeful communication, the Partnership will strengthen knowledge, confidence, professional practice and collective responsibility so that concerns are identified before they escalate and children experience improved and sustained outcomes.

Through coordinated communication, learning and leadership, the Partnership will:

- Improve understanding of neglect and its impact on children;
- Promote consistent practice across agencies;
- Strengthen professional curiosity, challenge and accountability;
- Support effective use of agreed neglect resources;
- Keep children's lived experiences at the centre of decision making; and
- Improve outcomes for children experiencing neglect.

Communication will be used not only to share information but also to influence behaviour, reinforce expectations and support sustainable culture change.

2. Our Vision



We will create a partnership culture in which neglect is recognised early, named clearly and addressed with urgency, curiosity, compassion and appropriate challenge.

All professionals should continually ask:

- What is life like for this child every day?
- What does the child see, hear, feel and experience?
- Are the child's needs being met consistently?
- What is the impact of unmet need?
- What needs to change?
- How do we know life is improving for this child?

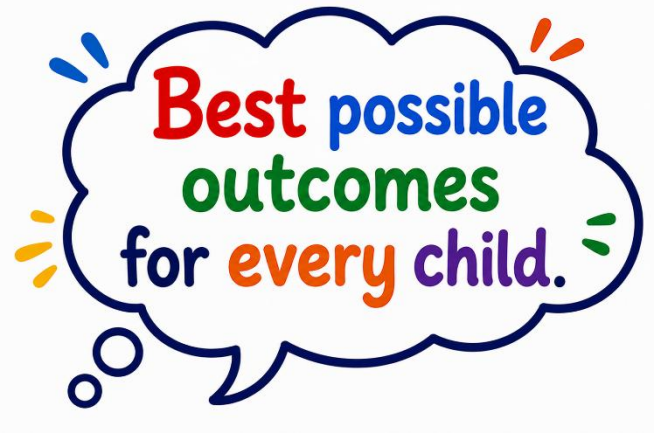
We will continually ask:



We will also ask:



Our shared expectation is that practice should not be simply *"good enough for children"*. It should support:



3. Strategic Objectives

The Partnership will:

1. Build Awareness and Understanding

Ensure neglect remains a visible safeguarding priority and that all agencies understand how to identify and respond to concerns.

2. Develop Confident and Consistent Practice

Promote effective use of agreed neglect tools, shared language and evidence-informed decision making.

3. Keep Children's Lived Experiences Central

Ensure communication, assessment and intervention are grounded in an understanding of the child's daily experience.

4. Promote Curiosity, Challenge and Accountability

Encourage professionals to identify drift, test assumptions and challenge decisions where necessary.

5. Demonstrate Impact

Evaluate whether communication and learning activities improve knowledge, practice and outcomes for children.

4. Our Culture Commitments

We will:

Be Child-Centred

Put children's voices, experiences and outcomes at the heart of all practice.

Identify Concerns Early

Recognise early indicators of neglect and understand cumulative harm.

Be Professionally Curious

Seek evidence, challenge assumptions and explore children's lived experiences.

Support and Challenge

Work collaboratively while maintaining a relentless focus on children's safety and wellbeing.

Be Inclusive and Poverty Aware

Recognise the impact of poverty, inequality and discrimination without conflating poverty with neglect.

Focus on Sustainable Change

Measure success by improvements in children's daily lives rather than compliance or short-term change.

5. Key Communication Messages

Neglect can affect any child

Neglect can affect children of all ages and may be less visible as children grow older. A child's age, disability, presentation, apparent independence or ability to communicate must not prevent professionals from recognising unmet needs.

Early identification and action matter

Recognising concerns early and providing timely support can prevent needs from escalating and reduce the likelihood of long-term harm.

Look beyond the presenting issue

Individual concerns may form part of a wider pattern. Professionals should consider the child's history, daily lived experience, family circumstances and the cumulative impact of unmet need.

See the child and understand their daily life

Direct observation, meaningful conversations, professional curiosity and information from a range of sources are essential to understanding the child's lived experience.

Use the Partnership's neglect practice resources

The Partnership's agreed tools, assessments, practice framework and guidance support professional thinking, early identification, assessment, communication, planning and decision-making. They do not replace professional judgement.

Every professional has a role

Recognising and responding to neglect is everyone's responsibility. All agencies and professionals working with children, families and communities can contribute to early identification, effective support and improved outcomes.

Challenge prevents drift and delay

Professional challenge is a positive safeguarding activity. Concerns should be raised respectfully, clearly and promptly using the Partnership resolution process when children's needs are not being understood or addressed.

Meaningful change must improve children's lives

Engagement, attendance or stated intentions are not outcomes. Improvements should be evidenced through positive and sustained changes in the child's daily experience, safety, wellbeing, development and quality of care.

6. Our Neglect Practice Resources

Resource	Primary purpose
Neglect Identification Tool	Supports early recognition of indicators of neglect, professional reflection and discussion about whether further assessment or action is required.
Quality of Care Assessment Tool	Supports a structured understanding of the child's daily lived experience, the quality and consistency of care and the impact of unmet needs.
Neglect Practice Framework	Provides a shared approach to understanding, assessing, planning and responding to neglect.
Practitioner Guidance and Learning Resources	Provide practical advice, reflective questions, case examples and supporting information.

The Partnership will ensure that practitioners understand:

- When each resource should be considered or used;
- how the resources support one another;
- how findings should inform assessment, planning and decision-making;
- how the child's voice and lived experience should be reflected; and
- that the resources support, but do not replace, professional judgement.

7. Priority Audiences

Audience	Communication Aim
Children and Young People	Accessible information, participation and awareness of support
Parents and Carers	Clear expectations, support and engagement
Practitioners	Consistent resources, learning and practice guidance
Managers and Leaders	Oversight, accountability and culture change

All communication should be clear, accessible, respectful and focused on improving outcomes for children.

8. Communication Channels and Delivery

Delivery of this strategy is a shared partnership responsibility. The Neglect Group will coordinate messaging, but all partner agencies are expected to actively promote communication campaigns, learning and resources through their own organisational channels.

Channel	Purpose	Frequency
Partnership Website	Strategy, tools and resources	Ongoing
Partnership Newsletter	Updates and key messages	Quarterly
Practitioner Briefings	Practice learning	As required
Team Meeting Resources	Discussion and reflection	Monthly
Seven-Minute Briefings	Quick learning messages	As required
Training and Workshops	Knowledge and skills development	Ongoing
Webinars and Learning Events	Multi-agency learning	Twice yearly
Safeguarding Campaigns	Awareness and engagement	Annually

The Neglect Group will determine priority messages and coordinate activity with support from the Safeguarding Partnership team and partner agencies.

9. Three-Year Priorities

Year 1: Awareness and Understanding

- Launch the strategy.
- Promote neglect resources.
- Increase awareness of neglect and cumulative harm.
- Establish baseline measures.

Year 2: Confidence and Consistency

- Embed resources into practice.
- Strengthen supervision and challenge.

- Share learning from audits and reviews.
- Evaluate changes in practice.

Year 3: Impact and Sustainability

- Evaluate effectiveness.
- Demonstrate improvements in practice.
- Identify future priorities.
- Refresh the approach where required.

10. Leadership, Learning and Accountability

Leadership

Leaders will:

- maintain neglect as a safeguarding priority;
- communicate clear expectations;
- support learning and development;
- use data and quality assurance to improve practice; and
- promote a culture of curiosity, challenge and accountability.

Supervision

Supervision should consider:

- the child's lived experience;
- cumulative harm and patterns of concern;
- parental capacity for change;
- use of neglect tools;
- evidence of progress; and
- whether intervention is improving the child's daily life.

Learning and Development

The Partnership will provide learning opportunities covering:

- Identification of neglect;
- use of neglect tools;
- lived experience and cumulative harm;

- professional curiosity and challenge;
- difficult conversations;
- poverty-aware practice; and
- effective multi-agency working.

Learning will be evaluated for impact on confidence, behaviour and practice, including follow-up evaluation where appropriate.

11. Roles and Responsibilities

Neglect Group

Will:

- Oversee implementation of this strategy;
- coordinate communication activity;
- agree priority messages;
- monitor progress and impact; and
- report through governance arrangements.

Partner Organisations

Will:

- Communicate key messages through their own channels;
- promote agreed resources;
- support practitioner learning;
- Embed the use of neglect tools into their organisations training, policies and standards of practice;
- contribute data and feedback; and
- demonstrate improvements in practice.

Leaders and Managers

Will:

- Model expected behaviours;
- provide oversight and challenge;
- demonstrate organisational governance by reporting actions to improve responses to neglect through safety and quality boards and reporting processes;

- support learning; and
- address barriers to effective practice.

Practitioners

Will:

- Keep children at the centre of practice;
- identify and respond to neglect;
- use agreed tools appropriately;
- undertake professional challenge where required; and
- assess whether intervention is improving the child's experience.

12. Measuring Success

Success will be evidenced through:

Workforce Confidence

- Increased understanding of neglect.
- Increased confidence in identifying and responding to concerns.

Practice Improvement

- More consistent use of neglect resources.
- Earlier identification of neglect.
- Better quality assessments and plans.

Culture Change

- Greater professional curiosity and challenge.
- Reduced drift and delay.
- Stronger multi-agency working.

Outcomes for Children

- Improved safety, wellbeing and development.
- Earlier support for unmet needs.
- Sustained improvements in care and lived experience. Activity measures such as attendance, communication reach and resource use will be considered alongside evidence of improved practice and outcomes.

13. Governance and Review

The Neglect Group will oversee delivery of this strategy through its work programme and action plan. Progress will be monitored through:

- Workforce feedback;
- communication engagement;
- learning evaluations;
- audit findings;
- use of neglect resources;
- partner feedback;
- children's and families' feedback; and
- the Neglect Outcomes-Based Accountability Scorecard (Appendix 1)

The strategy will be reviewed annually and refreshed in 2029, or earlier if significant learning or local need indicates that changes are required.

Appendix 1: Neglect Outcomes Based Accountability Scorecard

Priority 3: Neglect

What do we want for children?
Children & young people in Swindon to get help early before neglect causes long term harm

We'll know when
Children's development is supported pre-birth.

Children are:
- achieving their development milestones
- in school everyday & thriving
- visible if they are electively home educated

All professionals:
- understand the legal framework & are clear about their roles & responsibilities
- are open to professional challenge
- use the neglect screening tool to support early identification & provide support to families with increased risk
- understand adolescent neglect & when to use the Metal Capacity Act for 16 & 17 year olds
- recognise the impact of long-term neglect
- recognise adolescents as children
- see children/adolescents alone
- work collaboratively

Child's voice
People see me
I feel happy, loved, safe and supported
I am nourished
I sleep well and am rested
I feel good
I have friends I care about & who care about me
I feel listened to
I enjoy learning
I have age appropriate independence

What will make a difference
Professionals always see the child & talk to them to understand their feelings & experience
Identifying children who are or who could be subject to emotional & / or physical neglect
Ensuring the offer is informed by people's lived experience – children & adults (is it what people want / need / impactful)
Professional curiosity
Intelligence from all our partner practitioners to facilitate early identification of the possibility of both psychological, emotional & physical harm
Support for families at an early opportunity
Clear support pathways for parents who are struggling

In assessing risk & completing their assessments professionals work together to build a holistic picture considering:
- lived experience of the child/adolescent
- impact of domestic abuse, mental health, substance misuse & poverty on parental capacity
- disguised compliance
- parental influence over adolescents particularly those with SEND

Why does it matter in the context of safeguarding children / adults at risk?
Emotional and physical neglect causes long term harm for children which continues into adulthood.

Most critical underlying issue/s we need to address to break the cycle?
Children & vulnerable adults knowing what 'good' should look and feel like.
Ensuring thresholds are not too high for children to get the support they need.
Capacity in the system to provide therapeutic / restorative support
Acting on early signs of neglect, not waiting until children's behaviours escalate

We need solutions for
Dilemmas commonly encountered in practice

Adultification of teenagers

What will we do to improve practice & practice knowledge?
Provide information on signs of emotional & physical neglect in an accessible way.
Knowledge of professionals around pathways
Use learning from LCSPR & insights from staff & experts by experience to review, relaunch & evaluate the impact of the neglec t:
- Multi-agency Strategy and Framework
- Practice Guidance
- Practitioner Toolkit
- Training

What will we do to improve public knowledge?
Normalise the need for help and support - we're not just there to 'remove children'
Improve public knowledge about the help and support available and how this can make a difference
As a partnership, developing and implementing a series of collaborative awareness campaigns focused on child neglect. This s hould include a) tailoring messages to different audiences b) targeting different groups of people parents, caregivers, educator s, professionals, and community members c) community workshops, training sessions, and educational events that are culturally sensitive and co -delivered to provide information and resources on recognising, reporting, and preventing child neglect and offer practical strat egies and support for families to strengthen protective factors.
Engage key stakeholders in raising awareness about child neglect (PVIs providers, schools, health, faith based organisations, youth services)
Use digital and social media platforms to disseminate information, resources and educational material about child neglect in accessible, engaging formats
Look at the possibility of working in partnership with newspapers, radio stations and online platforms, to raise awareness ab out child neglect.

Priority 3: Neglect

What do we want for children?
Children & young people in Swindon to get help early before neglect causes long term harm

We'll know when measures

The correlation between neglect & attainment **(reference 3.3.18 - 3.3.19)**

Children's development is supported pre-birth. **(reference 3.1.1 - 3.1.8**

Children are in school everyday & thriving **(reference 3.7.1 - 3.7.18 for stat school age measures)**

Children are achieving their developmental milestones **(reference 3.5.1 – 3.5.3)**

Child's voice measures (reference 3.3.19)
Conduct age-appropriate interviews or conversations with the child to gather information about their experiences of neglect
Observe the child's behaviour, interactions, and living conditions to identify signs of neglect.
Involve the child in decision making processes related to their care and protection to the extent appropriate for their age a nd developmental level.

Making a difference measures
Decisions for children referred with neglect as a presenting issues deliver access to support that has a positive impact on their well-being (Reference 3.2.1 - 3.2.18)
Increase in the number of
- referrals into MASH with neglect as a referral reason
- neglect screening tools being sent into MASH with referral
- Neglect recorded as a crime

Children and young people do not experience ongoing neglect, we understand the quality if multi-agency practice, which is continually improving towards being consistently good (Reference 3.3.1 - 3.3.17)
Multi-agency audits focused on neglect demonstrate that professionals
- confidently identify, assess and respond to neglect
- understand the legal framework
- have clarity about their roles and responsibilities
- take decisive action
- are open to professional challenge
- work together to build a holistic picture considering:
    a) the lived experience of the child/adolescent
    b) the impact of domestic abuse, mental health, substance misuse & poverty on parental capacity
    c) disguised compliance
    d) parental influence over adolescents particularly those with SEND
    e) recognise adolescents as children
    f) see children/adolescents alone

Trend data to track underlying issue/s (reference 3.2.1 - 3.2.11)
Number & % of & repeats of
- contacts
- referrals
- CIN plans
- CP plans

for Neglect

Underlying issue/s we need to 'deep dive' / consider in single & multi-agency audits
Responses to adolescents including the use of the mental capacity act for 16- & 17-year-olds

Prevalence of neglect, which children are at highest risk, other types of abuse they will be at greater risk of for example sexual abuse, extent to which practice is trauma informed.

Elective home educated children and their well-being

Additional Information Requests on an annual basis to shine a light on challenges

Children not brought to medical appointments / discharged
Number of neglect medicals **(reference 3.1.8)**

Improved practice & practice knowledge measures
Increase in the number of staff completing Partnership Threshold training & Neglect Training from the 2022 -2023 baseline.
Reported increase in confidence from practitioners around the early identification & assessment of neglect from the 2022 -2023 baseline.

Improved public knowledge
Neglect is identified and action taken to address it indicating improved public knowledge and earlier action for children
(Reference 3.4.1 - 3.4.4 proxy indicators)