



The ten children chosen for this audit were aged between 13 and 17 years old at the time of the audit. 9 of the children are White British and one mixed heritage.

The children have a range of needs and experiences including substance misuse, mental health, bereavement, domestic abuse, exclusion from school, exploitation, parental mental health, physical ill health, sexual abuse, neurodiversity, Elective Home Education, Self Harm, Gender Identity, Transitioning to adulthood

What we are worried about?

- Continued risk despite good multi agency working with a child approaching adulthood
- No use of early intervention/diversion of risk of offending
- CP plan for neglect with no neglect tool use
- Day in the life not understood for a child
- CP Plan for 3 years, and still experiencing neglect
- Some sibling groups with wider physical and developmental issues which adds complexity and risk of children being 'hidden' within the family
- Adultification and use of language 'boyfriend' when exploitation is identified
- Children not identified as victims of DA in their own right
- 'Poor' home conditions – recording not specific and no use of clutter rating tool
- Cumulative impact of neglect, alongside other concerns and recognition of this

Multi agency impact chronology should be used for families with long term neglect

What Good Practice did we see?

- Good information sharing evident
- Appropriate flags on systems
- Revisiting the messaging about support even when the child is not ready
- Voice of child heard and recorded for most of these children
- Evidence of challenge
- Engagement with specialist services to support families
- Strong partnership working between agencies and the family
- Evidence of good rapport building with child
- Good joint working between Next Link, Drive and MARAC
- School often a protective factor and safe space for children



Themes for Learning: Emotional Neglect

- Low warmth, high criticism
- Structure and support not adequate
- 'friend' rather than parent
- Protection from unsafe adults absent/not recognised
- Parental substance misuse with no recognition of impact on child
- Boundaries inconsistent or not in place
- Absence of care, permissive parenting
- Chronic pattern of lack of nurturing, comfort, validation



Emotional Neglect is often what the caregiver *doesn't* do so can be hard to identify

Risk of decline in curiosity over time as situation is 'normalised'



Online abuse and risk of COM Network

Find out more about COM Networks – click here

Themes for Learning - Identifying Neglect

What we found: Hidden Neglect

- The cohort of children identified for audit are experiencing multiple other factors and often neglect is not recognised or identified and is masked by other presenting issues
- Holistic overview, not just focus on diagnosis or framing the child as 'the problem', parenting approach impact needs to be considered alongside

What needs to Happen?

- Use of neglect tool to help identify and name neglect
- Recognition of emotional neglect
- Be trauma informed but be aware of allowing the trauma in a family overshadow impact of neglect
- Day in the life work needs to happen for children to help understand what their lived experience is like



Day in the Life work is vital when there is concern about neglect

Neglect Tool and resources click here



Evidence of parents talking about not experiencing being parented themselves and leading to intergenerational neglect

Multi Agency Quality Assurance Audit: Adolescent Neglect Feb 2026

The audit of 19th February 2026 reviewed the records of ten children who are identified as experiencing adolescent neglect.

The aim of the audit was to ascertain whether there were good multi-agency standards for managing cases and whether organisations have implemented a robust and consistent response in line with statutory and good practice guidance, and the Children's Partnership policies and procedures.

Organisations that audited their involvement with the ten children were: GPs, Social Care, Sirona, NBT, AWP, Next Link, Police, YJS, EDT, Preventative Services, Education.

