



# Neglect

## Practice Guidance

**What is neglect?**



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South Gloucestershire Child Protection Procedures can be found on the South West Child Protection Procedures (SWCPP) [website](#) and neglect procedures are available [here](#). This practice guidance must be read alongside the SWCPP procedures.

## What is neglect?

Neglect is defined in [Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026](#) as, "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 the 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
- ensure suitable education

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

Neglect differs from other forms of abuse in that there is rarely a single incident or crisis that draws attention to the family. Rather it is repeated, persistent neglectful behaviour that causes incremental damage over a period of time. It is important to avoid 'start again' syndrome. Neglect should not only be measured by the most recent set of events but should be judged by the cumulative impact on the child of any previous incidents.

## What are the signs?

## Are there any resources to help identify neglect?

South Gloucestershire Children's Partnership have a multi-agency Neglect Toolkit that should be used by any professional who is worried that a child is being neglected. The toolkit helps you to think about neglect across 6 domains: Physical Care, Health, Safety & Supervision, Love & Care, Stimulation & Learning, and Capacity & Commitment to Change. You can access and use this tool by [clicking here](#). There is a [video](#) which has been produced to support you to use the toolkit.

There are [other resources](#) to use with children and families which can be located on the Children's Partnership website.

## Using the Neglect Toolkit

The Neglect Toolkit should be used by professionals from all organisations, or a team of professionals, to help assess and review neglect within families, even at a low level, and to plan for change. Following completion of the Toolkit, you will draw up an action plan which will determine which areas of concern/domain(s) you are going to work on with the family first; it may be that you only review this domain until positive change has been achieved and sustained before you move on to focus on other concerns/domains as needed. At any review point, you should check that there continues to be sustained change where work has been completed.

Always attach a copy of the completed Neglect Toolkit if making a referral to the [Access and Response Team \(ART\)](#) for a child or sibling group where there are worries about neglect.

- You can contact the Compass Team who will help identify the right help for the child ([compass@southglos.gov.uk](mailto:compass@southglos.gov.uk)).
- You can complete a [Request for Help Form](#).
- If you are worried about a child being at risk of significant harm you should contact the ART Team **01454 866000**.
- If you suspect a child may be in immediate danger, you should dial [999](#) immediately.

## How can I report neglect?