



Guidance for practitioners using the NSCP and NCSCP neglect toolkit

The neglect toolkit was produced alongside the [NSCP and NCSCP child neglect strategy](#). It should be used in conjunction with the Nottinghamshire and Nottingham City pathway and threshold documents which provide guidance on requests for support for families and what services are available to meet families' needs.

Nottinghamshire: [pathway to provision](#)

Nottingham City: [threshold of needs](#)

Please also see the [neglect section](#) in the NSCP and NCSCP interagency safeguarding children procedures. Two short videos are also available for professionals and families designed to raise awareness of the impact of neglect: [recognising and responding to neglect – for professionals](#) and [raising awareness about neglect - for families](#)

What is the child and young person's Neglect Toolkit?

The child and young person's Neglect Toolkit is provided to assist practitioners from organisations across Nottinghamshire and Nottingham City in identifying and assessing children and young people who are at risk of or experiencing neglect. It is to be used when practitioners are concerned that the quality of care of a child/young person suggests that their needs are being neglected. The toolkit can be used in a number of ways.

- When working in partnership with parents to assess levels of concerns and identify areas of strength.
- When working with an older child to help them to understand their lived experience.
- To identify priority areas for work with the child and areas of focus for change.
- It can be used within supervision to support and develop a practitioner's assessment of strengths and needs.
- It should be used in partnership with families. The toolkit will support good practice and enable honest conversations regarding levels of care. It will also prompt practitioners to recognise strengths in the family which can be extremely motivating for families when faced with professional's concerns.
- The toolkit can assist with the early identification of neglect.
- It can be used to track improvements in the child's lived experience, or where their situation is getting worse, or failing to improve.

The toolkit does not replace assessments carried out by social workers such as the early help assessment or the child and family assessment but can be used to inform these assessments.

Using the Neglect Toolkit

The toolkit focuses on seven key areas of need, including the extent of the parent's commitment to care for the child and the extent to which children and young people's needs are being put first or come secondary to the needs of their parents/carers. In using the neglect toolkit practitioners should keep in

mind that although poverty does not cause neglect it can make the impact of neglect worse.

Practitioners are encouraged to use the toolkit in the areas they are familiar with to inform discussions with their safeguarding lead, and to enable productive discussions either with the social worker allocated to the child or with the MASH if needs indicate this. The most important part of the **summary sheet** is the examples of impact on child section for each area of need where detail and analysis are provided. If practitioners have a wider knowledge of the child's lived experience, more sections of the toolkit can be completed, and a picture of the family's strengths and needs can be built.

The summary sheet is designed to give a visual picture of the areas of good and worrying care. The toolkit helps practitioners to assess strengths and needs of a family across the seven key areas. The trigger for further action is not a specific score and relies on professional judgement and reference to the pathways documents for [Nottingham city](#) and [Nottinghamshire](#). If there are mainly 3s and 4s and there are detailed examples of the negative impact on the child, then this is cause for concern and should be discussed with the relevant safeguarding lead or manager. This must be done as soon as possible so that a clear plan of support can be agreed and put in place.

Best practice

- Decide how you will involve the parents/carers and the child/young person and how you will share the toolkit with them.
- Depending on your role, you might visit the child's home, or you might have a conversation with someone who has and who has discussed the toolkit on your behalf with the family.
- Ideally complete the toolkit with the adult in the home who is the main carer and speak to the child to inform your completion of the toolkit. Ask the parents/carers to give their views and where they would place themselves in the descriptors in the toolkit.
- As far as possible comment on the usual state of the house, is this normal or has there been a recent improvement or deterioration?
- Don't take into account any external factors such as a family support worker arranging for the house to be cleared or cleaned, unless the parents have positively contributed in some way.
- Allowances should be made for background factors such as recent bereavement or loss of job.
- Where explanations do not match observations/assessments this should raise concern.
- Include all children in the home and consider them individually as well as looking at things in the home which impact all of them. For example, poor housing conditions are likely to impact all of the children, but there may be differences in the love and care provided to individual children. Care must be taken to capture the voices and lived experiences of all the children.

If concerns about neglect are identified

Practitioners need to make a judgment about the appropriate response by discussing with their safeguarding lead or manager, and considering the levels of need for the child which have been identified and if requests for support for the family should be made.

Decisions following the use of the toolkit may include:

- talking about your concerns with the family and continuing to support as a single agency. This may be a suitable response if there is potential for positive change and if the risks to the child are manageable. It is important to clearly record decisions made and regularly review;
- making referrals to community-based services who will be able to meet the family's needs;
- alternatively, it may be appropriate to make a request for support to Early Help or the multi-agency safeguarding hub (the MASH), using the separate front door arrangements for city and county depending on the child's address;

- if at any point you are concerned that a child may be at risk of or may be suffering significant harm contact the city or county MASH urgently for advice.

Reviews

The neglect toolkit should be reviewed regularly with the family to look at what changes have taken place in response to the support offered. Your safeguarding lead or manager will advise on how often review should happen, which will be in line with the level of the child's need and your organisation's procedures.

If progress has been made and sustained it is important to celebrate this with the family at reviews.

Issues to consider at reviews:

- is the support in place working and is it making a positive difference to the child?
- has there been a change in the circumstances which originally caused concerns?
- have the needs increased, or is there a lack of improvement and if so is the involvement of other services now needed?
- is there an indication that the child is at risk of significant harm?
- if there has been an improvement, has this been sustained over time and can the support to the family be reduced?

Further considerations

When discussing parental conflict in a relationship (section 5.2 in the toolkit), practitioners should be vigilant and confident there are no indicators of domestic abuse, including fear, imbalance of power and controlling behaviour. During discussion of the toolkit with parents, practitioners may be given information suggesting that domestic abuse is a risk. This may require urgent actions such as the completion of the [DASH RIC](#) form, if it is safe to do so, which is a request for support for an adult who is experiencing domestic abuse.

For further information regarding the difference between parental conflict and domestic abuse please see [Reducing Parental Conflict: what is parental conflict? - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)