

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY DIRECTOR of CHILDREN'S, EDUCATION AND EARLY HELP

TO:	ADULT SOCIAL CARE, CHILDREN'S SERVICES AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE		
DATE:	5 NOVEMBER 2015	AGENDA ITEM:	9
TITLE:	READING BOROUGH COUNCIL PREVENTION OF NEGLECT ACTION PLAN		
LEAD COUNCILLOR:	CLLR JAN GAVIN	PORTFOLIO	CHILDREN'S SERVICES
SERVICE:	CHILDREN'S AND EARLY HELP SERVICES	WARDS:	All
LEAD OFFICER:	SYLVIA CHEW	TEL:	0118 937 4771
JOB TITLE:	DIRECTOR OF CEEHs	E-MAIL:	<a href="mailto:Sylvia.Chew@reading.gov.uk">Sylvia.Chew@reading.gov.uk</a>

**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This report details the manner in which Reading Borough Council (RBC) will address the harm experienced by children and young people as the result of neglect.
- 1.2 In 14/15 the percentage of Reading children subject to a Child Protection Plan and classified under the category of neglect stood at 48%. This was above the performance of statistical neighbours (34.1%) and nationally (42.1%). As of the 31<sup>st</sup> August 2015 the number of children with Child Protection Plans and a category of neglect had reduced to 45%.
- 1.3 Reading's LSCB approved a Neglect Protocol in September 2015. This protocol is attached (Appendix 1). Reading Borough Council's response is to set out an action plan to ensure that neglect is identified and interventions are put in place at the earliest possible stage. This action plan is set out in Appendix 2.

**2. RECOMMENDED ACTION**

- 2.1 That the Prevention of Neglect Action Plan is considered and endorsed.

- 2.2 That all services working with Children, and Young People familiarise themselves with the protocol, ensure staff are equipped to identify neglect and are aware of referral pathways.
- 2.3 An update on progress made against the Prevention of Neglect Action Plan to be brought back to ACE committee in June 2016.

### 3. POLICY CONTEXT

- 3.1 The Department for Education guidance 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' (2015) defines neglect 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 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.*

- 3.2 Neglect is frequently found alongside other forms of abuse - emotional, physical and sexual. Neglect has historically been under-identified and affected families often make short term changes to improve the situation at home with professional support but are not able to sustain changes into the long term. This is then experienced as re-referrals back into Early Help or Social Care teams for more cycles of intervention.
- 3.3 Child Neglect is a criminal offence as set out in section 1 of the Children and Young Persons Act 1933. This provides that any person aged 16 or over who has responsibility for a child under that age commits an offence if they wilfully assault, ill-treat, neglect, abandon or expose that child (or cause or procure him to be so treated) in a manner likely to cause him unnecessary suffering or injury to health.

### 4. THE PROPOSAL

- 4.1 The LSCB have identified Neglect as a priority as it continues to be the highest category on Child Protection Plans. Whilst the % trend of neglect categorisation on Child Protection Plans over last four years is down from a high of 73% (end of year 11/12 figure) the end of year figure for 14/15 still

remains significantly above statistical neighbours (34.1%) at 48%. In addition to the statistical information neglect will also be present alongside other forms of abuse.

- 4.1 The impact of neglect is significant, both in the short term for children as well as long term as children become adults.

The LSCB protocol is a call to action for all partners to respond to this priority. As a consequence Reading Borough Council has set out its response to tackling Neglect in family life.

- 4.2 Evidence from both local and national case reviews highlight the reasons why services need to change their practice to ensure sustained change.

These include:

- Work with families where neglect is a feature may 'drift' with a loss of professional interest or purpose leading to either no change or a lack of sustained change.
- Work may have a lack of focus on the lived experience of the child, with professionals failing to take regular account of the impact of neglect on the child through their own words or lived experience.
- There may be a de-sensitisation or professional failure to identify what is the impact on children of neglect. Often known as professional accommodation, this can lead to reluctance to repeatedly challenge standards that need to be addressed.
- Aligned to professional accommodation can be the acceptance amongst professionals that providing resources will alleviate neglect. This can lead to a false or un-sustained change within the family as the more fundamental reasons for neglect in the family are not assessed and worked on.

Therefore 4 objectives have been identified to be the focus of RBC's Prevention of Neglect Action Plan. These are:

1. To ensure that all relevant RBC staff are confident and capable of identifying and responding appropriately to potential/ actual neglect.
2. To ensure that a common understanding of the language used to describe neglect and thresholds for intervention are in place for all relevant RBC staff.
3. To improve the recognition at the earliest point and that an assessment and response to children and adolescents living in neglectful situations before statutory intervention is required is available.
4. To ensure the effectiveness of service provision that is addressing Neglect in families.

The action plan will be monitored regularly by the Department management team and a six monthly update will be provided to the Lead Member on the

progress made against actions and outcomes expected.

## **5. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS**

5.1 The development and writing of a Prevention of Neglect Action Plan contributes to these RBC strategic aims;

1. Safeguarding and protecting those that are most vulnerable;
2. Providing the best start in life through education, early help and healthy living;

## **6. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION**

6.1 As part of the action plan communication a review of existing consultation with service users in Children's Services will be completed and gaps in information and knowledge will be added to action plan updates.

## **7. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

7.1 As part of the action plan communication the council will complete an Equalities Impact Assessment to inform our public duties of:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

## **8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 There are no legal implications for RBC in this piece of work

## **9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 The action plan is expected to be delivered within current resources.

## **10. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

10.1 LSCB Neglect Protocol - Appendix 1

10.2 Prevention of Neglect Action Plan - Appendix 2

Appendix 1

# LSCB Neglect Protocol

# **Reading Local Safeguarding Children Board**

## **Neglect Protocol 2015**

## Contents

Introduction.....	2
Definition.....	2
Effects of Neglect.....	3
Why is this a priority for the LSCB?.....	4
Current Learning.....	5
LSCB Recommendations.....	7
Appendices.....	8

## Introduction

Awareness of child neglect and its consequences on the future wellbeing and development of children has increased during the last two decades. It is notoriously difficult to evidence and research shows that it often co-exists with other forms of abuse and adversity. It is also the most common reason for child protection plans in the UK. In the year ending 31st March 2006, 43 per cent of child protection registrations in England related to children considered to be at risk of neglect (DfES, 2006a).

The purpose of this document is to raise awareness and provide direction on how agencies and professionals should deal with neglect in families. This document outlines a set of partnership commitments from the LSCB to reduce the impact of neglect on children's lives.

Throughout this document any references to child, also include unborn children and young people.

This document was agreed by the Reading LSCB Board on 17<sup>th</sup> September 2015.

## Definition

Working Together defines neglect as:

*Neglect is 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.*

There is overlap between emotional abuse and many forms of child maltreatment and this is especially true of neglect so when working with children subject to neglectful situations an understanding of emotional abuse is also important.

Working Together defines emotional abuse as:

*Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.*

It should also be noted that child neglect is a criminal offence as set out in section 1 of the Children and Young Persons Act 1933. This provides that any person aged 16 or over who has responsibility for a child under that age commits an offence if he wilfully assaults, ill-treats, neglects, abandons or exposes that child (or causes or procures him to be so treated) in a manner likely to cause him unnecessary suffering or injury to health.

## Effects of Neglect

Apart from being potentially fatal, neglect causes great distress to children and leads to poor outcomes in the short and long term. The degree to which children are affected during their childhood and later in adulthood depends on the type, severity, length of exposure and frequency of the maltreatment and on what support mechanisms and coping strategies were available to the child.

### Short term effects

Living within a neglectful environment may result in short term effects for a child or young person, many of which may reduce or disappear with support and care. These can include:

- Persistent illness or infections
- Persistent nappy rash
- Under / over weight
- Difficulty in establishing friendships / few friends
- Withdrawn
- Lack of confidence
- Lack of trust
- Bullying



### Long term effects

Children who have been neglected may experience long-term effects that last throughout their life. These can be similar to the short term effects and can include:

- emotional difficulties such as anger, anxiety, sadness or low self-esteem
- mental health problems such as depression, eating disorders, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), self harm, suicidal thoughts
- problems with drugs or alcohol
- disturbing thoughts, emotions and memories that cause distress or confusion
- poor physical health such as obesity, aches and pains
- failing to thrive, not meeting developmental milestones
- struggling with parenting or relationships
- worrying that their abuser is still a threat to themselves or others
- difficulties in learning, lower educational attainment, difficulties in communicating
- behavioural problems including anti-social behaviour, criminal behaviour.

In addition children who don't get the love and care they need from their parents may find it difficult to maintain healthy relationships with other people later in life, including their own children. They are more likely to experience mental health problems including depression and post-traumatic stress disorder, and may also engage in risk taking behaviour such as running away from home, breaking the law, abusing drugs or alcohol, or getting involved in dangerous relationships.

Reading's LSCB threshold criteria incorporates a range of specific indicators across the levels two to four regarding the identification of emerging to significant neglect in children's lives. The LSCB recommends that all practitioners reference the threshold guidance document (<http://www.readinglscb.org.uk/information-professionals/threshold-criteria/>) when making a decision on how to best support and tackle the issues of neglect in families.

### Why is this a priority for the LSCB?

Neglect is the highest category for children and young people in Reading on a Child Protection Plan and has been for some time. It has been routinely above 50% for the last three years, which is significantly above the national figure of 43%.

However reliance on the numbers of children on a child protection plan alone potentially conceals the extent of neglect and hinders attempts to understand the impact on the lives of children of measures to address it. LSCB discussed the lack of visibility of this issue and has included it in one of the 5 priorities for action and improvement.

There has been two recent publications highlight the national agenda at Government level about neglect. In July 2014, the National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) published a draft scope for consultation on a social care guideline for child abuse and neglect. The Ofsted Report: "In the Child's Time: Professional Responses to Neglect" was published in March 2014. It is based on the findings of a survey of 11 local authorities across England.

## Current Learning

### National Serious Case Reviews

Serious Case Reviews in relation to cases of neglect have identified a number of lessons with regard to professional practice. These should be considered when recognising and responding to neglect, and explored within supervision where possible.

**Professional Accommodation:** It is often observed that professionals want to think the best of families with whom they work. In cases of neglect where professionals have worked hard to establish a precarious relationship which is contributing to the maintenance of a 'just good enough' situation, there may be a reluctance to confront unacceptable standards for fear this would jeopardise future working. Workers can become desensitised and fail to differentiate the just good enough from the unacceptable. Practitioners should be challenging themselves (and others) when such accommodation is evident, and using reflective supervision to explore.

**Drift:** This is closely allied to professional accommodation. Drift can be identified as a loss of interest or a loss of purpose in a particular case, and it is a particular danger in long term cases of neglect, where much of the necessary work may be repetitious. Supervision, consultation and clear planning with specific objectives are essential to counter this. In addition to the consideration of the need for an "outside perspective" from another agency or professional, it may be beneficial to provide a fresh set of eyes from within the team, e.g. for another colleague, Team Manager, Advanced Practitioner or Safeguarding Lead to undertake joint visits with the long term worker.

**Provision of Resources:** It is dangerous to assume that the provision of material resources will alleviate neglect. This may on occasion be a necessary and appropriate part of a plan of work, but it may also be an inappropriate alternative to confronting more fundamental problems in patterns of care and family relationships. It is essential to analyse the impact of the provision of material resources. (E.g. if a fridge has been provided, has this in fact led to the children being better fed? If a washing machine has been provided, has this led to an appreciable improvement in the presentation of the children?). If a family is in receipt of regular Section 17 payments the Children's Social Work Service the chronology should include an analysis of the impact of this provision. For other services records should reflect some consideration of the impact on the child. Ideally views from the different agencies working with the families where neglect is thought to be an issue should share their opinions on the impact of resource provision.

**Focus on the Child:** In cases of physical or sexual abuse practitioners are used to talking to even young children about their experience of what has happened to them. Neglect cases, by contrast, virtually never start with an allegation from a child; invariably they are from an observation by a professional, or perhaps a member of the community.

The focus is not on what has been done to the child, but on the standard of care provided to him or her. However to understand the impact of that standard of care it is essential that the child is spoken to, and his/her experience explored. For children who cannot verbally communicate their experiences, feelings and wishes should still be gathered using

alternative methods. Neglect needs to be understood from a child centred perspective, focusing on the child's unmet needs, and on the consequences for the child of parental behaviours e.g. is the child bullied or ostracised at school because of poor hygiene.

In situations whereby external factors such as domestic violence or substance misuse are creating or impacting upon a neglectful situation, although responses should be considered within a Think Family, Work Family approach, the needs and voice of the child should not be lost.

## Local Learning

Local learning from a LSCB Multi-Agency Neglect Audit has identified the following key points:

- Lack of evidence of holistic assessments being undertaken led to gaps or inconsistencies in assessments.
- Inconsistent use and standards of chronologies had a direct impact on the outcome of assessments.
- Lack of coordination between agencies and lack of escalation at an earlier stage led to drift in some cases.
- Voice of the adult appeared to overshadow the voice of the child which resulted in over optimism of parents and disguised compliance.
- Inconsistent communication between agencies particularly prior to cases escalating to the child protection process led to delay.

Further information can be found on the LSCB website:

[www.readinglscb.org.uk/training/learning-audits/](http://www.readinglscb.org.uk/training/learning-audits/)

## LSCB Recommendations

Based on the learning above, the LSCB recommends that:

- A regular review of the LSCB threshold document is undertaken to ensure the inclusion of new signs and symptoms of neglect from research or Serious Case Reviews
- That key agencies ensure that their safeguarding policy and protocol adequately addresses the risks related to neglect and the need for timely and proactive intervention
- That all agencies provide access to training for staff in their organisation to assist with the identification and response to neglect.
- That all agencies ensure that staff are briefed or trained on the importance of listening to the voice of the child and mindful of the risks of the child's voice being overshadowed by adult opinion or circumstance.
- That all agencies ensure that there is a record of significant events over time in the form of a chronology or log on order to assist with the identification of neglect and its impact on the child.
- That all agencies ensure that staff understand how to escalate concerns and are confident in the escalation process
- That all agencies fully participate in multi - agency assessments including the CAF and single assessment

Specific to Reading Borough Council:

- That RBC ensure that CAT and CSC staff are upskilled to be 'experts' in assessing the impact of neglect
- That RBC staff are trained in the use of the 'graded care profile' assessment tool.
- For RBC Children's Services to consistently use chronologies in assessment, analysis and decision making.

## Appendices

### 1. Recognition of Neglect

The growth and development of a child may suffer when the child receives insufficient food, love, warmth, care and concern, praise, encouragement and stimulation.

Apart from the child's neglected appearance, other signs may include:

- Short stature
- Faltering Growth (failure to thrive) in a child because an adequate or appropriate diet is not being provided
- Severe and persistent infestations (for example, scabies or head lice) in a child
- Parents or carers who have access but persistently fail to obtain NHS treatment for their child's tooth decay
- Parents or carers who repeatedly fail to attend essential follow up appointments that are necessary for the health and well-being of their child
- Medical advice is not sought, compromising the health and wellbeing of a child, including if they are in ongoing pain
- A child who is persistently smelly or dirty particularly if the dirtiness is ingrained.
- Parents or carers who persistently fail to engage with relevant child health promotion programmes which include immunisations, health and development reviews, and screening
- Child or young person is not being cared for by a person who is able to provide adequate care
- If parents or carers persistently fail to anticipate dangers and to take precautions to protect their child from harm
- Repeated observation or reports of any of the following home environments that are in the parent's or carer's control
- Poor standard of hygiene that affects the child's health
- Inadequate provision of food
- Living environment that is unsafe for the child's developmental stage
- Re/purple mottled skin, particularly on the hands and feet are seen in the winter due to cold
- Swollen limbs with sores that are slow to heal, usually associated with cold injury
- Abnormal voracious appetite (at school or nursery)
- Dry sparse hair
- General physical apathy
- Dental Decay
- Childhood Obesity
- Unresponsiveness or indiscrimination in relationships with adults (may be attention-seeking or seek affection from any adult)

NICE, Quick Reference Guide: *When to suspect child maltreatment*, (2009)

## 2. Causes of Neglect

It is not easy to say what causes a person or persons to neglect someone. An individual may purposefully choose to neglect another, or it may be the result of other contributing factors such as parental ill-health, parental learning disabilities, substance misuse, domestic abuse, unemployment and poverty. It is the presence of one or more of these factors which impacts on the ability to parent a child and which may result in neglect. In addition neglect may be contributed to by factors which relate to the child rather than the parent / carer, but which may still impact on parenting capacity, for example illness or disability.

The relationship between poverty and neglect is problematic. It is important to separate material impoverishment and emotional impoverishment. It may be difficult to distinguish between neglect and material poverty. However, care should be taken to balance recognition of the constraints of the parents' or carers' ability to meet their child's need for food, clothing and shelter with an appreciation of how people in similar circumstances have been able to meet those needs. Neglect can be viewed as a persistent failure to meet the essential needs of a child by omitting basic parenting task and responsibilities despite parents having the economic resources to meet the needs.

Situations of neglect can also be heightened as a result of the carers response to those who recognise it and offer support. For example a parent / carer who refuses to engage in support, or change neglectful actions will be adding to the situation. Practitioners should be aware of non-engaging behaviours (for example disguised compliance, non-engagement with services [adult or childrens]) and how to respond to them.

## 3. National Publications

Two recent publications highlight the national agenda at Government level about neglect. In July 2014, the National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) published a draft scope for consultation on a social care guideline for child abuse and neglect. NICE has been asked by the Department of Health (with approval from the Department for Education) to develop this guidance. In March 2014, Ofsted published a summary of a thematic inspection on the quality of professional responses to neglect. The Ofsted report makes a number of recommendations to Government, LSCBs and Local Authorities.

The Guideline Scope from NICE notes that the common parental and socio-economic factors associated with neglect are parental alcohol and drug misuse, parental mental health problems, domestic abuse, poverty and residential instability (particularly in combination). These factors are common features of the lives of the population of children in Reading who become the subject of child protection plans or who are children in need.

NICE anticipates that its guidance will enable practitioners to determine more effectively the seriousness of need and risk experienced by children and young people. Areas and issues that will be covered include recognition, multi-agency assessment, preventative and targeted interventions. The focus will range from early help preventative interventions to more intensive social work led interventions. It should be noted that the guideline is intended to be published in September 2017.

The Ofsted Report: “In the Child’s Time: Professional Responses to Neglect” was published in March 2014. It is based on the findings of a survey of 11 local authorities across England.

The key findings of the survey are:

- Variable quality of professional practice
- Insufficient account of history or consideration of impact of neglect on the child
- Good support - meeting short-term needs
- Lack of use of models measuring extent of neglect: underestimation of extent and reduced capacity to measure the effectiveness of interventions - at an operational and strategic level
- Inconsistent approaches by practitioners across services in use of effective strategies and evidence based practice to address neglect.

The report challenges local authorities, partners and LSCBs to review the current approaches to neglect and ensure more effective responses are in place.

Appendix 2

# Prevention of Neglect Action Plan for Reading





## The Role of Reading Borough Council Children's Services in Neglect

In response to the LSCB neglect protocol RBC has created a short term action plan to tackle many of the protocols recommendations and practice improvements to prevent and respond to the negative impacts of neglect in families.

A clearly understood threshold for access to Children's Services is crucial to ensuring that neglect is responded to robustly in order to protect children. The very nature of neglect - cumulative harm, non - incident focused, improving and worsening often in line with the advance and retreat of professional help - can present challenges for practitioners assessing parental behaviours and the impact on children.

Children's Social Care services can be accessed via the contact form to the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) where decisions are made about whether to progress and assess a child under S.17 or s.47 Children Act 1989. The Level 3 and 4 of need to access Children's Social Services is set out in Reading LSCB threshold document, which is available on the LSCB website at:  
<http://www.readinglscb.org.uk/information-professionals/threshold-criteria/>

Reading's Early Help offer can be accessed via the Early Help pathway, where decisions are made about offering an intervention to meet the needs of children as described in the Reading LSCB threshold document in Level 2.

All agencies that make contact into Children's Services can expect clear communication about whether the contact and subsequent referral has been accepted and the role of the referrer going forward. If the referral has not been accepted clear reasons why this is the case will be provided and what support the referrer can offer or seek for that child outside of Children's services.

Any child who is subject of an assessment and on-going support from Children's Services will have a plan that identifies their needs, what outcomes the plan hopes to achieve and what actions the adults in the child's life will have to take to achieve the outcomes. These plans are multi-agency and the ambition of all our plans is that children have permanent and secure homes where the adults are able to meet their needs without on-going support of statutory safeguarding services.

All front line workers in Children's Services will be trained to understand how neglect presents, the long and short term effects on children and will be supervised and supported to make judgements required to safeguard a child from neglect.

Children's Services will work with universal services throughout their involvement with the child or young person and will work with these services to ensure a clear plan is in place both for the period of intervention and beyond.

RBC aims to ensure early recognition of neglect and improve agency responses to children and young people affected by neglect through strong and effective multi-agency leadership. To that end this action plan has 4 core objectives. These are:

1. To ensure that all relevant RBC staff are confident and capable of identifying and responding appropriately to potential/ actual neglect
2. To ensure that a common understanding of and language used to describe neglect and thresholds for intervention is in place for all relevant RBC staff.
3. To improve the recognition at the earliest point, assessment and response to children and adolescents living in neglectful situations before statutory intervention is required
4. To ensure the effectiveness of service provision that is addressing Neglect in families.

### **Governance and accountability**

The implementation of this plan will be overseen by the Department Management Team on a bi-monthly basis and the LSCB Quality Assurance Sub group which meets six times per year.

### **What the action plan is looking to achieve.**

This plan is looking to achieve a continued reduction over time of the % of Child Protection Plans that has Neglect as the primary category. Our ambition is to achieve a reduction that puts us in line with National averages and then eventually with statistical Neighbouring Authorities by Sept 2016. This target takes into account the likelihood that the Local Authority will experience an initial increase in CP neglect plans, as a result of the increased awareness but then be followed by improved interventions to prevent and reduce effects of Neglect in families.

End of Year 14/15 figures

- Current rate: 48%
- Stat neighbours: 34%
- National rate: 42%

In addition to this we would expect:

- A reduction in the number of children who experience a repeat child protection plan process. We would aim to reduce this by 4.7% (to 16% from 20.7%) over the next 12 months, by September 2016.
- A 10% reduction in number of cases open as Children in Need in the Local Authority by September 2016.

Other key measures that will help us understand the impact of this action plan will be to follow;

- Number of cases that are being worked in the Early Help Service with neglect as a feature and the % of these that result in a positive change
- Number of cases in our Early Help Service that are reporting positive change through the use of the outcome star tool in areas related to Neglect
- Number of cases in the Edge of Care Service (that have Neglect as a feature) that are reporting positive change through the use of the outcome star tool in areas related to Neglect.

Action plan covers period 1<sup>st</sup> Oct to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016

Objective 1: To ensure that all relevant RBC staff are confident and capable of identifying and responding appropriately to potential/ actual neglect					
Action	Lead	Timescale	Progress Update	Outcomes - what will the difference be?	How will we know this is achieved?
Prevention of Neglect Action plan to be presented to ACE	Lead Member for Children's Services	02/11/2015		There will be clear political and corporate governance in place to support the delivery of actions across the council.	Minutes of ACE provide evidence of corporate and political support.
Understand the baseline of current corporate staff use of LSCB universal safeguarding training (can be online package) and discuss with relevant corporate service managers results.	Workforce Development Team	31/01/2016		A clear understanding of strengths and gaps in the current corporate training safeguarding programme to ensure that staff are aware of signs of Neglect and action to take.	Report on numbers of relevant staff who have attended training against a target of 85%.  Analysis of LSCB training courses demonstrates that 100% include reference to neglect and all include details of referral pathways
Presentation at 'Team talk' on the prevalence and our corporate response required to tackle Neglect	Director of CEEHs	31/12/2015		Corporate leads are made aware of the neglect agenda and referral pathways	Follow up Questionnaire to participants in 3 months demonstrates that 80% can identify 3 signs of neglect and 100% can identify referral pathways
Staff presentation provided to key RBC teams: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Housing officers and maintenance teams.</li> <li>• Refuse collection teams</li> <li>• Community safety and community development teams.</li> <li>• Environmental officers</li> </ul>	Children's Services - range of service managers	31/03/2016		Presentation will be available for RBC managers enabling them to provide clear information on signs of Neglect and expectations of staff. This will increase awareness and confidence of staff members to respond appropriately to Neglect.	End of staff meeting confidence and 'test' measures from presentation for each staff groups. Expectation that 75% staff participating can confirm how to identify and respond to Neglect including an

					understanding of the referral pathways.
Awareness raising in schools to ensure that teachers are confident in identifying neglect and referral pathways.	Virtual head for children missing out on education + Service manager for Early Help.	31/03/2016		All school designated Child Protection leads are equipped to deliver a presentation to a school staff meeting on signs and response to Neglect in families.	End of staff meeting confidence and 'test' measures from presentation for each staff groups. Expectation that 75% staff participating can confirm how to identify and respond to Neglect including an understanding of the referral pathways. During review of application of Thresholds in MASH and Early Help pathway, contacts from schools demonstrate good identification of Neglect.
Produce some simple 'help' guides for staff to use as reminders in their team offices and accessible on the LSCB website on 'Signs and Responses'	Head of Children's Services	31/12/2015		LSCB website information to download and view.	Positive visual check and feedback from services on availability and use of Neglect information and ease of referral from at least 2 other services in RBC
LSCB Threshold document & Early Help pathway launched	LSCB Business Manager	20/11/2015		Participant RBC staff members will gain an understanding of what are thresholds in Reading, how to apply and respond to them. This will lead to more informed and improved decisions for children, over time, to access support.	End of events confidence and 'test' measures from events for each RBC staff attending. Many staff from which teams/ services attending and an aim to have 75% success of learning from these identified groups.

Complete an equalities impact assessment of our work on neglect to inform our actions in reference to protected groups	Service Manager - Early Help	31/12/2015		Impact assessment completed that confirms any actions to add to this plan to improve our effectiveness of working with families from protected groups	Actions added to this plan to improve our effectiveness in objectives 2 to 4.
--	------------------------------	------------	--	---	---

<b>Objective 2: To ensure that a common understanding of and language used to describe neglect and thresholds for intervention in children's services</b>					
<b>Action</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Progress</b>	<b>Outcomes - what will the difference be?</b>	<b>How will we know we've achieved this?</b>
LSCB Threshold document & Early Help pathway launched	LSCB Business Manager	20/11/2015		Participant Children's Services staff members will gain an understanding of what are thresholds in Reading, how to apply and respond to them. This will lead to more informed and improved decisions for children, over time, to access support.	End of events confidence and 'test' measures from events for each RBC staff attending. Children's Service staff from which teams/ services attending and an aim to have 100% success of learning from these identified groups.
Review and update LSCB safeguarding training, universal, to include information Thresholds and Early Help pathway and resources on key topics (e.g. Neglect, CSE)	Workforce Development Team (LSCB lead)	31/12/2015		All safeguarding training courses include an element on Neglect and application of Thresholds. Participants will be more confident and knowledgeable on Neglect and use of Thresholds	Feedback mechanism at end of course to demonstrate significant (90%) learning of participants
Complete a group audit to look at 15 Neglect cases, following the child's journey through Children's Services. This needs to be understanding; Assessment quality and language used Supervision quality and identification of Neglect signs and impact	Service Manager Early Help & Service Manager YOS and intensive support	31/03/2016		Findings to show Neglect identified in assessments SMART Plans in place addressed to change neglect at home Quality supervision that discussing key issues engagement, drift and achieving outcomes for children identified in the plan	Audits will demonstrate 50% are Good 50% are Requires Improvement as a minimum standard

Review the of application of Thresholds in MASH and Early Help pathway to ensure consistency of application on 30 cases	Head of Service Children's Services	31/03/2016		Consistent use of thresholds across MASH and Early Help pathways.	Review will demonstrate 50% are Good 50% are Requires Improvement as a minimum standard

<b>Objective 3: To improve the recognition at the earliest point, assessment and response to children and adolescents living in neglectful situations before statutory intervention is required.</b>					
<b>Action</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Progress</b>	<b>Outcomes - what will the difference be?</b>	<b>How will we know we've achieved this?</b>
Complete an audit of children currently on a repeat Child Protection Plan that have Neglect as the CP category	Service Manager review and quality assurance	30/11/2015		Clear learning points identified for the service to prevent children experiencing repeat CP processes	Audit demonstrates 50% are Good 50% are Requires Improvement as a minimum standard  Follow up audit will demonstrate that remedial action has been taken if required.
All social work and early help staff to be trained in the 'Graded care profile' tool to assess neglect	Principal Social Worker	31/12/2015		Staff will be more confident and capable to identify and address neglect in families. This will lead to improved planning and interventions.	90% attendance of relevant staff. Audits planned will show graded care profile in place
Outcome star training to be delivered to all relevant RBC children's services staff.	Workforce Development	31/03/2015		Staff will be more confident in using the star as a way of reviewing the success of intervention and ascertaining the feedback of children and parents.	80% of relevant staff will have received training. 50% of relevant staff will use the star on a regular basis.
All files to have a high quality chronology of significant events.	Principal Social Worker	31/12/ 2015		Planning and intervention will be informed by historical events	Monthly audits will demonstrate that 100% of case files audited have a

Training delivered on Chronologies, case summaries and analytical writing for relevant staff.					chronology on file. 80% of chronologies are a good quality.
Voice of Child to be evident on all files (CSC and Early Help) and used in decision making and planning meetings with families. Tool boxes for Direct work to be re-issued to relevant staff Direct work training to be delivered to relevant staff	Principal Social Worker plus Service Managers	31/03/2016		Children's views will be sought, recorded and affect our decision making and planning.	Monthly audits will demonstrate that 100% of case files audited is showing Voice of Child is in place. Evidence in group audit reports that Voice of Child is affecting decisions in meetings (TACs, Core groups, LAC reviews etc)

<b>Objective 4: To ensure the effectiveness of service provision that is addressing Neglect in families.</b>					
Action	Lead	Timescale	Progress	Outcomes - what will the difference be?	How will we know we've achieved this?
Themed audit of repeat Child protection Plans under the category of neglect.	Service Manager review and quality assurance	October 2015		A clear understanding of why and how to reduce the number of children on repeat CP plans.	Report on the audit going to the improvement board with action plan
Signs of safety to be used in monthly case file supervision. A package of support and training delivered to managers on reflective supervision	All Service Managers	Ongoing		Planning and intervention will be informed by the signs of safety model which will be used consistently.	Reporting will identify that 90% of case supervision occurs monthly  Monthly audits will demonstrate that 100% of supervision records use Signs of safety
All Children subject to ongoing work under the auspices of early help, CIN due to neglect to have a	All Service Managers	31/03/2016		Children's plan will be progressed in a timely manner and stay focused on addressing neglect in the family. Cases will be escalated or stepped	Report on the number of reviews completed: Early Help - 100% of relevant cases reviewed

formal management review at 9 months or the second CP review.				down appropriately in a timely manner	CiN - 80% of relevant cases reviewed at 9 months
Service user feedback collated on the effectiveness of our interventions and support	Service Managers Early Help LT teams	31/03/2016		Children and families will be identifying the changes made and impact on reducing Neglect in family life	70% of children and families participating in the feedback can identify positive changes and impact (mainly using outcome star)