

Buckinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership

# Neglect Strategy

2026 - 2028



# Working Together

This strategy was created with the help of all the agencies in Buckinghamshire's Safeguarding Children Partnership; these agencies include Children's Social Care, Education, Thames Valley Police and NHS Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Board.  
(January 2026)



# Mission Statement

**“We, (the Buckinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership), want to support you and your family in making life better. We want to give you the best opportunity to thrive and reach your full potential and have a happy, healthy, loving life.”**



# What young people have said neglect is and what it feels like...

Child neglect is showing a lack of warmth towards a person, not worrying or caring about them, their education or safety

Child neglect causes the child to feel less than a valued human and is abuse

Child neglect involves failing to meet a child's basic needs, including leaving them hungry, dirty, without sufficient shelter or clothing or meeting their medical needs.

\*As told to us by Children



# Our new strategy will help us to...



1

Listen and focus our work on the voice of children and their lived experiences.

2

Spot signs of neglect early and work side by side with the right people at the right time to provide support.

3

Ensure that we have the right plans and tools in place to address the different types of neglect.

4

More effectively reduce the impact of neglect on children.

5

Reduce the number of children that suffer neglect.

# Working Together 2026

## Definition of Neglect

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 caregivers)
- Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment
- Provide suitable education

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

*(Working to Safeguard Children 2026)*



# Understanding Neglect

- Neglect can be anything that makes it hard for a child to get what they need to be healthy, happy and safe, especially if this is over a period of time.
  - Neglect isn't always a wilful act, it could be due to a parent or carer struggling to cope, they may need help and support to make life better.
  - Neglect can be a result of a single action, number of actions or a failing to act
  - Neglect can happen in all kinds of families and cultures, rich or poor. It can take place at home or even outside the family home.
- Neglect can result in the death of a child.
  - Children who are experiencing Neglect can be more likely to face harm outside the home, have repeat missing episodes and be at risk of exploitation.
  - It is important that everyone working with the child and their family work together, to form a full picture of the child's life and lived experience.

# Types of Neglect

Neglect type	Signs and indicators	Example
<b>Educational neglect</b>	Where a parent/carer fails to provide a stimulating environment or show an interest in their child's education at school. They may fail to respond to any special needs and to make sure their child goes to school.	Child is frequently absent from school or late and parents/carers fails to make sure their child attends school, they may not work with the school to remove any barriers to attendance.
<b>Emotional neglect</b>	Where a parent/carer is unresponsive to a child's basic emotional needs. They may fail to interact or provide affection, undermining the child's self-esteem and sense of identity.	Parent/carer is non responsive to baby crying; having a negative view/perception of their child. They may not spend enough quality time with their child and may put excessive pressure on the child to be high achiever.
<b>Medical neglect</b>	Where a parent/carer does not seek and act upon medical or health advice to ensure their child, including unborn babies are as safe and healthy as they can be. This includes taking appropriate action when their child becomes seriously unwell or injured; preventing health professional's access to their child and seeking medical attention repeatedly when it is unnecessary.	Parent/carer not attending ante-natal appointments, not taking their child to health appointments or repeatedly cancelling health appointments; not following advice given by health professionals; failing to give prescribed medication, inaccurately reporting signs and symptoms in their child.
<b>Nutritional neglect</b>	Where the child does not receive a healthy diet to help them grow and develop. This includes a child who may be seriously underweight (faltering growth) or overweight, due to the food they have been offered and there is no identifiable medical reason.	Parent/carer offer their child food that is too high in sugar and fats frequently; the child is allowed to eat too much or are not given enough food; food that is offered is not suitable for the child's age or development.
<b>Physical neglect</b>	Where a parent/carer does not provide appropriate clothing, food, cleanliness and/or living conditions.	Concerns for the child's personal and dental hygiene. For example, the child is dirty and smelly, teeth are not brushed, and clothing is not appropriate for the weather and does not fit.
<b>Supervisory neglect</b>	Where a parent/carer fails to provide an adequate level of supervision and guidance to ensure the child's safety and protection from harm.	The child may be left alone or with inappropriate carers, or without appropriate boundaries (for example, under-age sex or alcohol use) may not be applied. The child in the care of parents/carers who are intoxicated or violent. Un-monitored access to the internet and social media.



# Positive Indicators...

1

The child appears healthy and has access to and makes use of the right health and health advice services.

2

All child's health needs are met by parents, including being appropriately dressed.

3

The child attends school, is not late and is supported to learn. The parent/carer positively supports learning and aspirations and engages with education.

4

The child displays a range of emotions with the parent/carer. A child's ability to express anger, sadness, or fear in front of their parent/carer is a good sign that they feel emotionally safe with them.

5

The parent/carer encourages the child to build friendships, pursue hobbies, such as sports and music. A child pursuing their interests and talents is likely to learn new skills and feel a sense of achievement.

6

The parent/carer creates boundaries on behaviour to keep the child safe and having an open and honest relationships with someone to talk to.

# Our Focus...

1

Children and their families are at the centre of our work, we ask questions to understand their lived experience and how the parents/carers are ensuring that the children's needs are being met.

2

Increase awareness, knowledge, understanding and recognition of all forms of neglect.

3

Deliver effective response and support to all forms of neglect in partnership with all agencies across Buckinghamshire.

4

Ensuring that the partnership provide the right support at the earliest opportunity and put families first.

5

Improve how we evidence the impact of support and monitor long-term outcomes for children and young people.



# Governance...

We will rate the success of our strategy based on the measures set out in this document. The measures will be monitored and reported through the Buckinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (BSCP) governance arrangements.

These include:

- Governance - The governance of this Neglect Strategy will sit with Buckinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership.
- Implementation - The Strategy will be driven via Buckinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership's Subgroup Structure. This is a multi-agency arrangement that includes all key partners.

# Success for the Partnership...

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## A reduction in the:

- Number of families declining support (like saying “no” to a Child and Family Assessment, Early Help or neglect tools) where neglect has been identified.
  - Number of families who require statutory services (Child in Need and Child Protection Plans).
  - Overall number of issues of neglect impacting upon children’s health, wellbeing education and safety.
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## An increase in the:

- Attendance at learning and training opportunities to improve awareness of neglect across the partnership.
  - Identification of neglect across the partnership, including by communities and voluntary sector organisations offering support and taking action when it is required..
  - Buckinghamshire Neglect Assessment Tool completed from a multi-agency approach and input, with all agencies contributing.
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# Success for Education Services...

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## A reduction in the:

- Number of 16-18-year olds who are NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training), where support was / is being provided.
  - Number of school absence, particularly for those children who are either severely or persistently absent.
  - Number of exclusions.
- 



## An increase in the:

- The number of under 5s attending early education and childcare settings, especially for those with an open social care plan for neglect.
  - Improvement in school attainment for children, especially for those with an open social care plan for neglect.
  - Improvement in engagement and participation in personal development opportunities, especially for those with an open social care plan for neglect.
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# Success for Children Social Care...

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## A reduction in the:

- Number of children who are subject to Child Protection Plans for neglect.
  - Percentage of children who have a Child in Need Plan for neglect for more than six months.
  - Number of children coming back into the service as a result of neglect.
- 



## An increase in the:

- Number of early help, single agency assessments for children where there is a concern for neglect and a corresponding reduction in the number of referrals to children's social care for neglect.
  - Children having positive long-term outcomes following Early Help intervention, intervention under Child in Need or Child Protection Plan.
  - Number of children remaining within their family where it is safe to do so.
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# Success for the Police...

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## A reduction in the:

- Number of children being taken into police protection due to neglect.
  - Number of children experiencing neglect who require help and support from police.
  - Number of children who are repeatedly going missing and/or those at risk of being exploited.
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## An increase in the:

- Good quality, child centred thorough investigations.
  - Successful prosecutions when the criminal threshold has been met.
  - Early identification of neglect and referral into locally agreed safeguarding processes.
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# Success for Health Services...

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## A reduction in the:

- Number of children not being brought to health appointments.
  - Number of 0-5 years not meeting their developmental milestones.
  - Number of accidents requiring medical attention.
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## An increase in the:

- Number of families who are engaged in targeted support.
  - Number of pre-birth assessments completed where indicated.
  - Number of Neglect Assessment Tools contributed to and/or completed.
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# Speak to someone about Neglect

**We want to support families and children living in Buckinghamshire to thrive, making sure no one is left behind.**

## **First Response Children and Young People**

 01296 383962

 [cypfirstresponse@Buckinghamshire.gov.uk](mailto:cypfirstresponse@Buckinghamshire.gov.uk)

## **Childline**

 Call free on 0800 1111

 [Get Support | Childline](#)

## **NSPCC**

 Call the helpline on 0808 800 5000

 [NSPCC | The UK children's charity | NSPCC](#)

## **Buckinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership:**

The group of people from different organisations that are responsible for making sure that the agreement on how organisations in Buckinghamshire will work together to protect and promote the welfare of children are effective. This includes schools and colleges, districts and borough councils, charities and the office of Police and Crime Commissioner.

## **Buckinghamshire Safeguarding Children's Executive:**

This group is made up of leaders from organisations the government require to work together to protect the interests of children. This includes Health, Police, Education and the Local Authority.

*The original version of this strategy was produced by Surrey Safeguarding Children Partnership*

