

**Neglect identification tool**

June 2025

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| **Summary of Purpose** | This tool is designed for practitioners to use to assist in the identification of children who may be experiencing neglect, to enable early intervention and action.  |
| **Accessibility** | This document can be made available in large print, or in electronic format. There are no copies currently available in other languages.  |
| **Equalities Impact Assessment** | During the preparation of this policy and when considering the roles and responsibilities of all agencies, organisations and staff involved, care has been taken to promote fairness, equality, and diversity, in the services delivered regardless of disability, ethnic origin, race, gender, age, religious beliefs or sexual orientation.  |
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| **Policy Review Date** | This document will be reviewed in June 2025.  |

**1.** **Introduction**

This identification tool has been designed to support Kent practitioners in identifying and responding to neglect. It should be used alongside reading the Kent Neglect Strategy, in particular section 3 which outlines the roles of different agencies and professionals in responding to neglect.

The identification tool is to be used by professionals to identify whether a child may be experiencing neglect and to what extent. It is designed for all practitioners who have any interaction with children and their families whether this is short or longer term.

The tool also includes guidance and considerations on the next steps to be taken. It has been written bearing in mind the Kent Support Levels Guidance format and indicators, to assist professionals in understanding the level of need a child maybe experiencing and therefore their response.

Using the tool

The tool is structured around five areas:

* Physical care
* Health and medical need
* Safety, supervision and support
* Parenting, care and love
* Socialisation, development and education.

Each section contains a range of indicators, set across the spectrum of concern from no concern to severe concern. Practitioners should review the indicators in each section and consider what level of concern is held for each, including relevant evidence and assessment that supports your view. Your overall responses should indicate a summary as to what level of concern you have for the child, and therefore the next steps required. This is outlined in the final section of the screening tool ‘Summary and next steps’. It is recommended that where concerns are identified, a date is included for a review of the indicators at a timely interval (where appropriate to a practitioners involvement with a child or family).

**2. Neglect identification tool**

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| **Child details** | **Professional details** |
| **Name:** |  | **Name:** |  |
| **Date of birth:** |  | **Agency:** |  |
| **Age:** |  | **Date completed:** |  | **Date to review:** |  |

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| **Physical care** |
| **Concern level** | Level 1 -No concern | Level 2 -Emerging concern | Level 3 - Substantial concern | Level 4 -Severe concern |
| **Indicators** | * I have an adequate and nutritious diet
* I live in adequate housing, which is a safe and secure environment
* I have appropriate clothing
* I am a healthy weight
 | * My family is impacted by poverty, affecting access to services
* My family home is in a poor state of repair or there is serious overcrowding
* My family home conditions are often unhygienic[[1]](#footnote-1)
* My family are facing eviction/statutory homelessness
* I am often smelly or dirty
* I am under or overweight
* My clothing is often dirty or unkempt, or does not fit me well
 | * Food is often not available to me
* I am a homeless child in need
* My family are being evicted
* Warmth and safe shelter are often not available to me
* I live in concerningly inadequate home conditions (whether or not this is in the control of my parents)
* My home is consistently unhygienic or cluttered[[2]](#footnote-2)
* I am consistently smelly or have ingrained dirtiness
* I display physical signs of neglect such as dry sparse hair, slow healing injuries, physical apathy
* I am significantly overweight or underweight
* I frequently have clothing which is dirty or is not suitable (i.e. during colder months) or is badly worn
 | * I have been kicked out of home
* I have been abandoned
* I am severely obese or underweight
* I am not eating due to not being fed for some time
* I beg for food, take food from others, or scavenge for food
* My clothing is consistently inappropriate, and is significantly too small or large
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| **Screening** |  |  |  |  |
| **Further comments and evidence for scoring:** |
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| **Health and medical need** |
| **Concern level** | Level 1 -No concern | Level 2 -Emerging concern | Level 3 - Substantial concern | Level 4 -Severe concern |
| **Indicators** | * I am physically healthy and my development checks are up to date
* I have regular optical and dental checks
* My parents/carers regularly seek medical advice or intervention when needed
* My immunisations are up to date or parents/carers are aware of the immunisation pathway but have not been given due to parent choice or have medical reasoning
 | * My parents/carers sometimes do not take me to my appointments
* Medical advice is not always sought or followed by my parents or carers in a timely manner
* I have missed some immunisations or regular developmental checks
* My parents/carers are not addressing nutritional concerns for me
 | * I have significant dental decay that has not been treated
* I am not always brought to follow-up appointments for my health and wellbeing
* I am failing to thrive or have faltering growth
* I have severe and persistent infestations
* I have a poor standard of hygiene which affects my health
* My parents/carers persistently fail to engage with relevant health promotion programmes (i.e. immunisations, health and development reviews, screenings)
* My parents/carers have failed to address nutritional concerns or lifestyle is impacting my health and medical needs
 | * My parents or carers are not supporting my medical or developmental needs
* I am consistently not brought to medical appointments
* I am not given medication, treatment or equipment prescribed to meet my medical needs
* Safety or care plans to prevent a health exacerbation or episode are not in place, shared or consistently followed (e.g. Asthma plan)
* I have serious dental hygiene issues, including broken teeth, pain, swelling, bleeding gums, or ulceration in/around the mouth
* I have been brought to hospital in a severe or emergency condition, when early medical intervention could have been sought
* I am removed from health care/treatment against medical advice resulting in significant risk of harm
* My medical or developmental needs are not being met
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| **Screening** |  |  |  |  |
| **Further comments and evidence for scoring:** |
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| **Safety, supervision and support** |
| **Concern level** | Level 1 -No concern | Level 2 -Emerging concern | Level 3 - Substantial concern | Level 4 -Severe concern |
| **Indicators** | * I have a safe and appropriate sleep environment
* My parents/carers have good safety awareness and take appropriate precautions to keep me safe
* I am supervised appropriately
 | * I am frequently unattended, for example, when feeding (in infants e.g. prop feeding)
* My parents/carers do not always identify or respond to risks to me
 | * My parents/carers continually fail to engage or disengage with services offering support
* I am subject to repeated referrals or re-referrals to services
* My parents/carers do not always follow safe sleep guidance or advice
* My parents/carers do not anticipate danger and take precautions to protect me
* There are unsafe or inappropriate care arrangements for me
* My parent/carers use substances that impair their judgement and ability to care for me safely
 | * I have a consistently unsafe sleep environment
* I am often left alone with no supervision or support
* I am often in dangerous situations or at risk
* I am left unattended in unsafe scenarios (i.e. for infants in a bath)
* My parents use substances that mean they are unable to wake up if there is a danger to me or in the home
* I am exposed to someone who poses a violent or sexual risk to me
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| **Screening** |  |  |  |  |
| **Further comments and evidence for scoring:** |
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| **Parenting, care and love** |
| **Concern level** | Level 1 -No concern | Level 2 -Emerging concern | Level 3 - Substantial concern | Level 4 -Severe concern |
| **Indicators** | * I have stable and affectionate relationships with my parents/carers
* My parents/carers can meet my needs
* My parents/carers provide me with secure and caring parenting
* My parents/carers provide me with guidance and boundaries to support my development
* My parents/carers have appropriate supplies and equipment for me both in and out of the home
 | * My parents/carers struggle to meet my needs, or place their own needs above mine
* My parents/carers struggle to provide me with good supervision or behaviour management
* My parents/carers are slow in responding to my needs
 | * My parents/carers are unable to parent consistently
* I am at risk due to inappropriate/unsafe care arrangements
* My parent/carers are unable to provide a stable and affectional relationship
* My parents/carers are unresponsive to my needs
 | * I am at risk because my parent/carer is unable to parent me properly
* My parent/carer is known to have neglected another child
* My parents/carers appear insensitive to me and do not display genuine warmth or affection
* I lack meaningful parent/carer interactions
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| **Screening** |  |  |  |  |
| **Further comments and evidence for scoring:** |
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| **Socialisation, development and education** |
| **Concern level** | Level 1 -No concern | Level 2 -Emerging concern | Level 3 - Substantial concern | Level 4 -Severe concern |
| **Indicators** | * I am in education, employment or training (if applicable)
* I have age-appropriate toys and developmentally stimulating activities
* I have suitable extracurricular activities and hobbies
* I have opportunities to socialise and build relationships with friends/peers
 | * My attendance in education is becoming a concern
* I am not meeting my educational milestones
* Toys or developmental activities provided to me are not suitable for my age or development stage
 | * I am persistently absent from education
* I am not on any school roll, not received a suitable education, or am a Child Missing Education (CME)
* There is serious delay in me achieving my developmental milestones
* I have no toys or developmental activities
* I have no opportunities to socialise and interact with others
 | * I am not receiving an education
* I am severely absent from school
* I am not growing or developing properly with no medical reason for this
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| **Screening** |  |  |  |  |
| **Further comments and evidence for scoring:** |
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| **Summary and next steps** |
| **Overall concern rating** | **No concerns** – there are no concerns that I am experiencing neglect. | **Emerging concerns** – there are some indications I may be experiencing low-level neglect or just beginning to experience neglect. | **Substantial concerns** – there are several indications that I am experiencing neglect or evidence that I am experiencing a substantial degree of neglect. | **Severe concerns** – there are indications that I am experiencing severe and/or persistent neglect. I am experiencing harm or am highly likely to experience harm as a result. |
| **Next steps to consider** | No further action needed. | Concern should be discussed with the family, offering advice on areas which require improvement.Early Help support to be offered.Document your conversation and outcome.If the family are already open to Early Help/Children’s Social Care, your concerns should be shared with the named worker. | Concerns should be discussed with the family, offering advice and proposed action steps.Concerns should be reviewed against the Kent Support Levels Guidance to determine if the level of need is at level 3 or 4, requiring a Request for Support (RfS).Parent/carer concern for a RfS should be sought. If not given, but concerns still require RfS, submit stating reasons for submitting without consent.If the family are already open to Children’s Social Care, your concerns should be shared with the named worker.**If the child is felt to be at immediate risk of significant harm, do not delay and submit an urgent Request for Support.** |
| **Action to be taken** |  |

**3. Supporting resources**

[KSCMP Neglect Strategy](https://www.kscmp.org.uk/procedures/kent-and-medway-safeguarding-procedures)

[Kent Support Levels Guidance](https://www.kscmp.org.uk/guidance/kent-support-levels-guidance)

[KMSAB Self-neglect Clutter Image Ratings](https://www.kmsab.org.uk/assets/1/clutter_image_ratings_-_combined.pdf)

1. Reference to the Kent and Medway Safeguarding Adults Board [Self-neglect Clutter Image Ratings](https://www.kmsab.org.uk/assets/1/clutter_image_ratings_-_combined.pdf) may assist your assessments. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. As above. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)