



**BCP SAFEGUARDING
CHILDREN** PARTNERSHIP

CHILD NEGLECT STRATEGY 2025-2027



Sam's story

"My parents both used drugs and when I was growing up there was no one there to do the basic things that I needed, like having cooked meals.

Mum wouldn't notice if I had gone to school as she was always upstairs smashed out her face.

I wanted to go to school as I didn't want a life like my parents. I could pretend that when I was there that everything was fine at home.

No-one there knew what was happening at home, until the house was raided. I was often left by myself and I felt so lonely. I even felt lonely when mum and dad were in the house, because they were completely out of it.

A photograph of four children running through a tall grassy field. In the foreground, a boy in a dark blue long-sleeved shirt and jeans is running towards the right. Behind him, a girl with long dark hair in a white long-sleeved shirt and patterned leggings is also running. To the left, another boy is partially visible, running. On the far right, the back of a girl in a dark top and light-colored pants is visible. The background is a dense line of green trees under bright, slightly hazy sunlight.

Introduction

The purpose of the strategy is to prevent and reduce the occurrence of child neglect through effective early support to children, young people and families.

All practitioners working with children and families are key to understanding the extent of early help needs and when statutory intervention is required.

We know from local and national child safeguarding practice reviews and research that when children and young people are subject to neglect this has a long-term effect on their health and development, continuing into adulthood.

The strategy reflects this and the knowledge and expertise of local practitioners and managers' contributions from a wide range of services.

A group of four people are seated around a long white table in a bright, modern meeting room with large floor-to-ceiling windows. A woman with dark curly hair, wearing a light blue blazer, stands at the head of the table, gesturing with her right hand as if leading the discussion. The other three people (two women and one man) are seated, listening attentively. The room is filled with natural light from the windows, and the atmosphere appears professional and collaborative.

Leadership, governance and accountability

Statutory guidance Working Together (2023) strengthened the role of Lead Safeguarding Partners (BCP Council, NHS Dorset and Dorset Police) to ensure there is effective multi-agency safeguarding arrangements in their area and to set priorities for safeguarding children and young people. Child neglect is as a strategic priority for the BCP Safeguarding Children Partnership.

The strategy and its associated action plan is owned by the BCP Lead Safeguarding Partners and is overseen, implemented and monitored by the BCP Safeguarding Children Partnership and its Quality Assurance and Learning Group on their behalf.

Safeguarding children is everyone's business. Child neglect is an area where all agencies have a part to play in recognising and responding at the earliest opportunity.

Defining child neglect

Working Together (2023) defines child 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 caregivers),*
- *Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child’s basic emotional needs.”*

The definition provides a basis to develop a clear and shared understanding of what child neglect is so that all practitioners and managers interpret and apply it in the same way.



BCP child neglect Child Protection Plan data 2024/2025

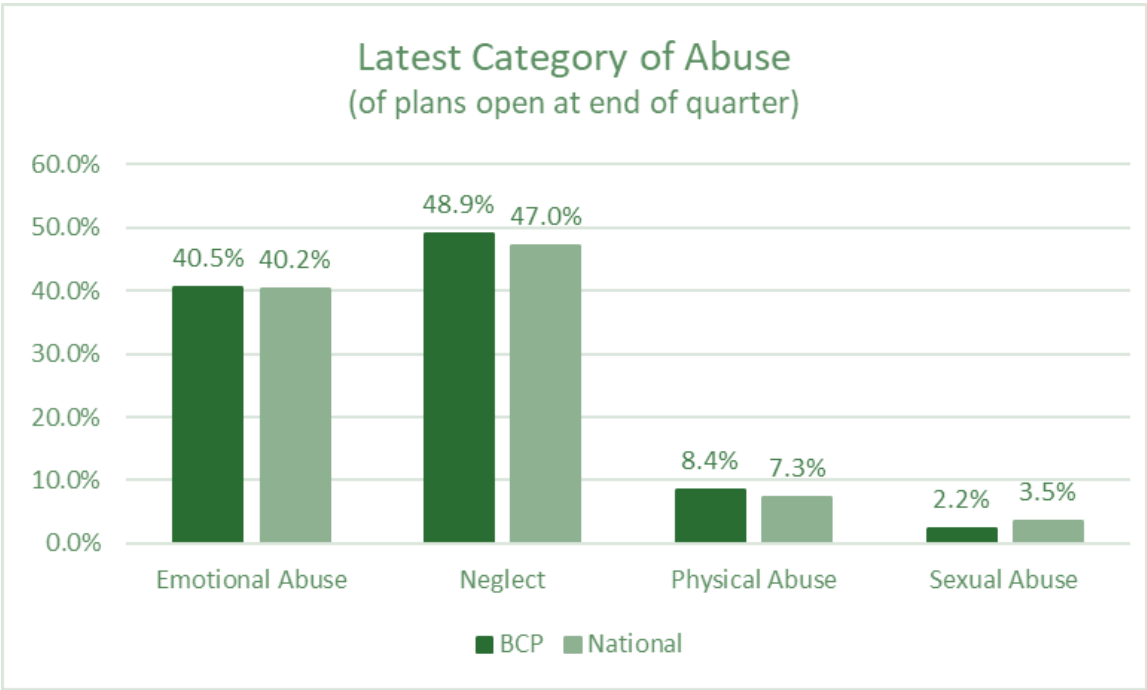
At the end of Quarter 3 (October- December 2024) there were 491 open Child Protection Plans (CPPs), which is a 2.7% increase (13 children) compared to the end of quarter 2 (July-September 2024).

The rate at end of Quarter 3 is 66.1 per 10,000 0–17-year-olds, which is above the 2023/24 national and regional comparators.

The averages for England, Regional and Statistical Neighbours remain below with the national rate at 41.6% and Good+ local authorities at 43.8%.

Neglect accounted for 46.8% of all CPPs in Quarter 3 and the highest % of all CCPs.

The numbers of neglect child protection plans has remained static for several years, the strategy and action will seek to better understand the story behind the data.





Voice of the child

Listening to and capturing **the voice of the child** is central to effective safeguarding practice. It is how we understand children's lived experiences, hear their views about their lives and circumstances, and take effective action to support or safeguard them.

Children have a right to participate in safeguarding processes, which enable effective safeguarding.

BCP Partnership Delegated Safeguarding Partners will work with empathy to do so.

Tackling child neglect through multi-agency working

We have a collective responsibility and commitment to tackling child neglect. We will do this by promoting practice that focuses on empowering parents and carers to take responsibility to make sustainable positive changes to their children's and their own lives. To maximise positive outcomes for children and their families, we must:

- Build on our 'whole family approach,' owned collaboratively by all multi-agency stakeholders and families, to assure effective identification, assessment and support, working with and alongside families to address their needs
- Ensure early recognition and identification of the signs, symptoms and root causes of child neglect, assisted by a multi-agency neglect screening tool
- Continue to deliver outcome-focused services, through a well-trained multi-agency workforce who can identify and intervene effectively and work collaboratively in cases of neglect at all ages and stages, including pre-natal, peri-natal and adolescent
- Build upon a shared understanding, underpinned by professional curiosity and healthy challenge, of the potential overlap between child neglect and other adverse childhood experiences
- Continue best practice in using historical case information to consider cumulative harm and identification of families at risk of inter-generational neglect
- Further develop effective outcome-based assessments and plans which are key to making a positive difference for children, young people and their families
- Enhance effective support for sustained outcomes that build resilience
- Enhance joint planning through effective information sharing to inform assessments, and evaluation and ongoing monitoring of risk
- Guide and support frontline staff with effective supervision to avoid drift and "start again" syndrome by taking decisive action when improved outcomes are not made or sustained

BCP Partnership five strategic objectives

Unite partner agencies to improve outcomes for children and young people at risk of child neglect

Raise awareness and recognition of child neglect from prenatal to adolescent stages

Understand causes of child neglect and support families with early help strategies to prevent it

Enhance intervention and services to achieve better, lasting outcomes for families

Include children, young people, and families' perspectives on child neglect

Multi-agency child neglect assessment toolkit, multi-agency training and research

- **Multi-agency neglect training** [PDSCP - Neglect | Dorset Nexus](#)
 - **Current multi-agency child neglect assessment toolkit** [Neglect toolkit](#)
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Useful research

How childhood trauma affects child brain development [Understanding child brain development | NSPCC Learning](#)

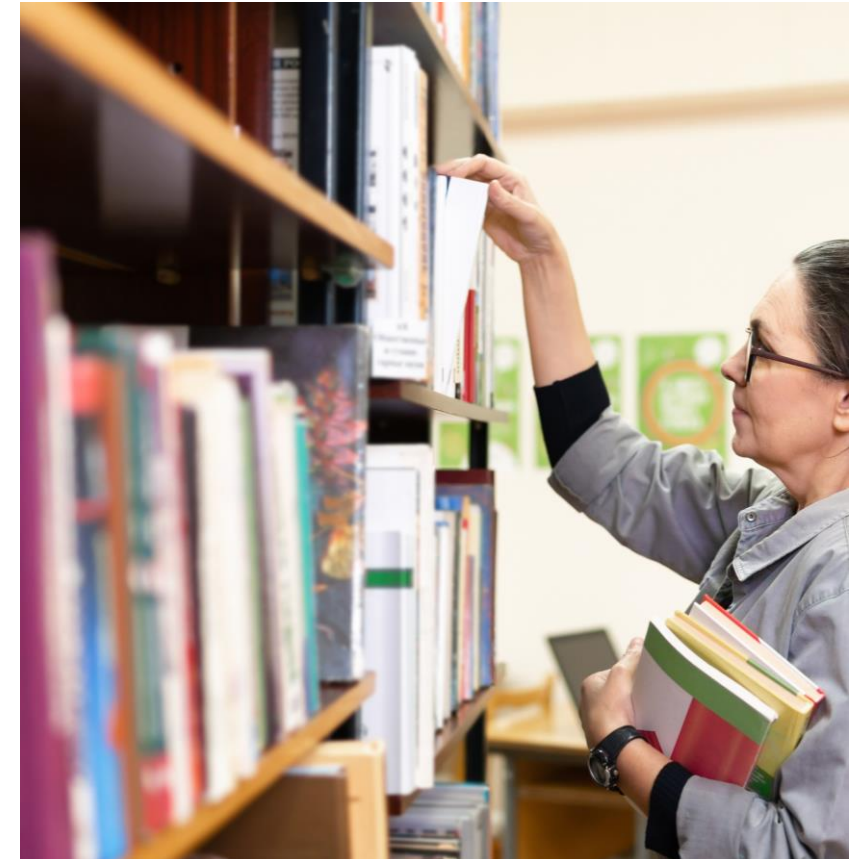
Protecting children from neglect [Protecting children from neglect | NSPCC Learning](#)

Neglect in a context of poverty and austerity (RiP 2019) [frontlinebriefing-neglectmay19_web-2.pdf](#)

Making trauma informed practice a reality (RiP 2019) [Making trauma-informed practice a reality | Research in Practice](#)

Developing and leading trauma informed practice (RiP 2019) [Developing-and-leading-trauma-informed-practice.pdf](#)

[Adverse childhood experiences: What we know, what we don't know, and what should happen next - Tackling Child Exploitation](#)



Version control

Version	Approval date	Review date
Version 1	11 March 2025	March 2027