



CSCB Neglect Conference Key Messages

The Croydon Safeguarding Children Board Annual Conference 2017 focussed on Recognising and Responding to Child Neglect.

Thank you to all of our speakers and to those who attended and took part in some great conversations about how we can help protect and support children from neglect. On the day, we welcomed practitioners from a range of different settings including children's social care, health services, school and nursery settings, police, housing and community and voluntary groups. Such a mixed audience illustrates just how we all have a role to play in recognising and responding to neglect, and in particular recognising and responding to signs of early neglect.



There were some great discussions on the day about recognition of neglect; common standards and language, use of tools and assessments, engagement of parents, role of supervision and engagement of wider communities to help support families who need help.

We will be using learning and feedback from the day to inform the CSCB Neglect Strategy. If you are interested in being part of developing this strategy, you can join our working group.

For more details contact us at safeguardingchildrenboard@croydon.gov.uk

There were many useful points learnt and discussed, some of the key messages from the day included:

For Children and Families

- Hear the child – ensure the child's need stay at the centre
- Realising the child's potential – child's strengths and resilience
- Neglect leaves children highly vulnerable to other abuse
- Long term mental health impact – risk of mental health issues of adolescents
- Cumulative harm – importance of early recognition and working together
- Importance of responding effectively and within the child's timeframe
- Recognising the stigma families may experience – the importance of reducing this to have the family feel supported
- Supporting kinship carers and children in kinship arrangements – ensuring they are given the right support to understand the changes experienced
- Everybody's responsibility to safeguard children and be alert to children suffering neglect – teachers, community leaders, housing staff, school nurses

- Support communities to know how they can help children who are suffering and parents who are struggling

For Working with Neglect

- Early intervention before 6 months helps to reduce long term impact
- Multiple episodes of neglect – moving from incident based to recognising cumulative impact of harm
- Professional curiosity and maintaining vigilance – the importance of these professional behaviours in understanding child's lived experience
- Information and analysis sharing where there are concerns and also at key transition points (moving house/borough, school or other changes)
- Safeguarding supervision – the importance of supervision to support and enable practitioners
- Use of evidence based interventions and projects such as London Infant Family Team to support families
- Use of standard language and assessment tools to help identification of need

- Need to build and support the professional network – such as through Neglect Champions
- The need to support wider communities such as through developing a Thriving Communities Framework

Presentations from the day are now available to download. Some of the key points from our speakers include:

- **Sarah Baker, CSCB Independent Chair** opened the event looking at neglect in Croydon including serious case reviews, the definition of neglect and a reminder of how neglect can impact infants, children and adolescents. [You can view Sarah's presentation here](#)
- **Jo Negrini, Chief Executive of Croydon Council.** Croydon has the largest number of young people of all London boroughs which bring lots of opportunities and challenges to ensure they are safeguarded. Jo highlighted the importance of partnership and collaborative working, stressing how we can all play a part in spotting neglect – giving the example of a gas-fitter who upon visiting a home raised concerns about the conditions children were living in.
- **Dr Rebecca Brown, Independent Researcher and Research in Practice Associate** presented evidence from a longitudinal study of infant suffering or likely to suffer significant harm and explored the obstacles to effective action. [You can view Rebecca's presentation here](#)
- **Moira Keen, Head of Service Children in Need, Croydon Council** highlighted the challenges of recognising neglect especially where there maybe a number of other and related issues, how assessments are made and the need to work with and understand the family through family histories, relationships and patterns of interaction, and outlined the specialist services available to support families. [You can view Moira's presentation here](#)
- **Lynne Reed, Head of Health Visiting and School Nursing, Croydon Health Service NHS Trust** presented how services are working to support families to develop secure attachment and resilience in families: through Best Start, antenatal care, support for breast feeding and integrated pathways for 0-19 year olds. Lynne also highlighted key approaches to responding to neglect including maintaining a child centred practice, maintaining professional curiosity, and working with the family and effective information sharing. [You can view Lynne's presentation here](#)

- **Dr Simon Wilkinson, Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist, Croydon CAMHS (Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services, South London and Maudsley NHS)** presented strong evidence that childhood neglect increases risk of mental health problems and the need for intervention before 6 months old. [You can view Simon's presentation here](#)
- **Dr Nicola Cosgrave, Consultant Clinical Psychologist, South London and Maudsley NHS trust, Clinical Director London Infant Family Team (LIFT), NSPCC.** Nicola presented the work of the London Infant Family Team which aims to improve decision making about entry to care and parents' capacity to support children safely at home through focussing on and supporting child and care giver relationships and assessing parents' capacity to change behaviour and strengthen their care giving relationship with the child. [You can view Nicola's presentation here](#)
- **Dr Ruth Brown, Advisor Children's Services NSPCC and Honorary Senior Research Fellow at the Centre for the Child and Family, University of East Anglia.** Ruth presented some of the challenges in recognising and understanding the impact of cumulative harm, how harm affects a child and adolescent's ability to learn. [You can view Ruth's presentation here](#)

Key policies and guidance to support practice – more information is available on the CSCB website,

- [Thresholds Guidance](#)
- [Early Help Pathways](#)
- [Joint Working Practice Guidance](#)
- [Escalation policy](#)

Don't forget you can access a range of learning opportunities to help you safeguard children and support vulnerable families, including training on

Neglect | Early Help | Domestic Abuse | Role of MASH and Thresholds
Parental Substance Misuse | Parental Mental Health and more

[You can view all available learning and development event here](#)