

# The “Think About Neglect” Tool

The purpose of this “Think About” Tool, is to support the work being undertaken by Early Help and Preventative Staff and Specialist Children’s Services Staff when there are worries of Neglect within families.

**Think about** the care the child is actually receiving and what life is like for them

**Think about** what is working well and the family strengths

**Think about** what areas parents and professionals are worried about

**Think about** what needs to happen and where the family are on the journey

**Think about** what level of intervention the family/child may need

**Think about** what parenting support and appropriate single agency or inter agency intervention can be planned and targeted to improve the level of care a child receives



# Physical and Behavioural Indicators

Physical indicators Is the child....?	Behavioural indicators Is the child....?
Dressed inappropriately for the season or weather eg: exposure symptoms may include recurrent colds, pneumonia, sunburn, frostbite etc	Ignored or pushed aside when trying to tell the carer something
Extremely dirty and un-bathed eg: dirty face, hair, persistent body odour, severe nappy rash or persistent skin disorders or rashes as a result of poor hygiene	Afraid to tell parents of minor accidents eg: breaking a toy
Inadequately supervised or left unattended more frequently or for longer than acceptable; may be left in the care of an inappropriate carer	Assume a parental role of providing or emotional support
Not receiving adequate medical or dental care and has unattended health problems eg: squint, toothache	Showing signs of severed speech, motor sensory development lags without obvious physical cause
Not receiving adequate nutrition or sufficient quantity/quality of food eg: may result in child being constantly hungry	Displaying extreme and often unpredictable behaviour ranging from being unusually aggressive and destructive to being passive and withdrawn
Being given inappropriate food or drink	Demonstrating a lack of attachment to parents
Malnutrition eg: manifested by being undersized, under weight or chronic lethargy	Excessively clingy to, or in absence of parents, may be inappropriately affectionate with strangers
Unsafe, inadequately heated or unsanitary house	Exhibiting sudden behavioural changes eg: regression, wetting pants, thumb sucking, frequent crying or becoming disruptive or uncommonly shy and passive. In isolation, these behaviours may be common. The assessment should consider combinations of behaviours and parental response.
Evidence of child being locked in rooms or cupboards	Kind to pets/animals?

# Safety, Protection and Harm

Is the child.....?
Able to access age inappropriate video, DVD, computer games etc
Able to access adult pornography?
Allowed uncontrolled access to the internet?
Experiencing unrestricted access to late night television?
Unsupervised by responsible person during potentially dangerous leisure activities?
Allowed to undertake age inappropriate activities?
Self-harming or threatening self-harm?
Experiencing self-harming, or threats of self-harming by a parent or sibling as part of family life?
Left alone inappropriately?
Cared for by baby sitters are of an appropriate age, known to child and without obvious problems that may impact on child's care?
Protected from wandering from home and/or parents have clear ideas of limits of play areas?
Effectively supervised in potentially dangerous situations – in and out of home?

# Physical Care of a Child

Question	
Is the child regularly fed?	Is there recognition and concern about the child's well-being?
Is the child given enough (age appropriate) food?	Is the child appropriately dressed for the weather; does child have own clothes?
Are the signals of hunger or being full up properly interpreted?	Is the child changed and clean?
Is the manner of feeding comfortable and anxiety free?	Is home in general adequately clean and heated?
Does the fridge/freezer/cupboards contain adequate food?	Are the sleeping arrangements adequate, is bedroom appropriately heated and bedding clean?
Is the child too thin, small or unwell – evidence that child is thriving? Or any reason to suspect that child is not thriving?	Child plays with appropriate toys? And possesses toys of own?
Is the child's medical care being seen to e.g. medical examinations, vaccinations, eye and ear tests etc?	Is the child supervised when playing outside?
Is medical advice sought when the child is unwell?	Is the child provided with fresh air and outdoor activities?
Are medical or other welfare related appointments being kept?	Is the child protected from the use of alcohol, smoky atmosphere and other unhealthy and damaging substances?
Do the parents administer required medication?	Is the garden (area immediately around home) safe?
	Safety equipment in use? (stair-gates, fireguards etc)

# Social and Educational Care of a Child

Does parent / carer .....	
Encourage the child's ideas?	Make eye contact during conversation?
Listen carefully so as to understand?	Address child by name?
Communicate clearly to the child?	Remember child's birthday?
Respect child's privacy?	Talk to child about family matters?
Set an example for the child?	Discuss (when age appropriate) death, education, religion, sex or religion?
Provide guidance at appropriate times?	Teach child appropriate social skills?
Share – family news appropriate decisions?	Ensure the child has books/toys etc?
Respect child's views?	Accept child's appropriate friendships?
Acknowledge the child's efforts?	Resolve (fairly) any conflict between children?
Offer emotional support (comfort etc)?	Set reasonable limits e.g. bed and meal times and stick to them?
Child is comforted when distressed?	Ensure that child receives compulsory education?

Think about.....

Am I being over optimistic about likelihood of long term change?

Have I thought carefully enough about what day to day life is like for this child?

- Do the parents prioritise their children?

- Quality of parent/child interactions?

- History of parents and their experience of being parented

- Parents attitudes to (positive or negative?)
  - Might the parents have an undiagnosed learning difficulty?

- Who is visiting/staying within this household?

- Do the parents ensure the children have a clean and safe home to live in?

- Am I worried that this parents is misusing alcohol or drugs?

- Is domestic abuse a worry within this family?

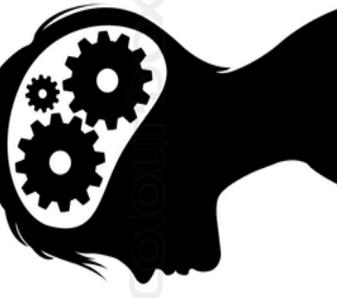
- Is the parent a young parent?

- Do the parents meet the health and medical needs of the children?

- How does this child behave at home and in other settings?

- Are there worries that parents are experiencing of poor mental health?

- Does the child have a disability?



- How do the children view themselves?

- How do the parents and children control their emotions?

- Do the children have good self esteem and confidence?

Have I taken the time to observe the child within his/her home environment?

Am I challenging parents and other professionals enough?

Am I in danger of becoming habituated or desensitised to the needs of this child?