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The findings from an **audit of child protection conferences** focusing on neglect cases are on page 2, followed by a reminder of how to ensure the **voices of children and young people** are heard at meetings such as Child Protection Conferences on page 3. A good practice checklist in writing **reports for conferences** is provided on page 4 and other useful resources are on page 5. Read on for a reminder of when to use the **neglect toolkit**.

When and how to use the neglect toolkit

Use the neglect toolkit:

- If the quality of care of a young person suggests their needs are being neglected

- With parents

- Assess levels of concerns
- Identify areas of strength

- With adolescents

- Assist the young person to understand their lived experience

- When planning

- Identify priority areas for your service and areas of focus for change

- In supervision

- To support and develop assessments

AUDIT SUBGROUPS

The SSCP has two **Audit Subgroups** (ASG) which meet on a regular basis to look at the quality of multi-agency working and adherence to child protection policy and procedures.

The audits

The ASGs looked at the cases of **7 children** at the point of Initial Child Protection Conference. The cases were chosen at random, from all those where Child Protection Plans were made in the category of neglect.

Child Protection Plan

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 explains that:

"The aim of the child protection plan is to:

- *Ensure the child is safe from harm and prevent them from suffering further harm;*
- *Promote the child's health and development;*
- *Support the family and wider family members to safeguard and promote the welfare of their child, provided it is in the best interests of the child."*

(Working Together 2018, Page 48)

Audit findings

- The neglect toolkit was only used in one case, when it was used as part of a parenting assessment. However, even in this case there were **missed opportunities to use the neglect toolkit** as part of the parenting assessment. See **page 1** for a reminder of when it may be helpful to use the neglect toolkit.
- **Reports to conference** were of inconsistent quality. Two reports were good, and the practitioners who wrote them have received letters from the SSCP thanking them. See **page 4** for a reminder of good practice in sending reports to conference.
- There was some evidence that **conference outcomes** were not received by all agencies. This was not followed up by the agencies at the time – agencies are reminded to request outcomes if their absence is noted.
- There is one case which is notable in being **child focused**. In this case **advocacy** was used and the child was also present. Advocacy can be requested whenever a child has children's social care involvement. In one case it would have been beneficial to request advocacy at an earlier stage, when the child had a CiN plan. Advocacy should be requested in good time to allow arrangements for the child to attend the conference if they wish to do so. Referrals for advocacy which contain full information also allow the advocacy work to be more targeted – in one of the cases audited the referral was sparse. See **page 3** for more information about working with the advocacy service, Route1.



Things you should know

ADVOCACY FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE



Route1 Advocacy

Route1 is an **independent service** providing advocacy for any young person who is receiving a service from Children's Social Care, and Independent visitors for any young person who is looked after.

Volunteers are recruited and trained in these roles and regular support for volunteers is ongoing. Volunteers are all enhanced DBS checked.

The service is funded by the local authority who has a statutory responsibility to provide this service.

ROUTE1 ADVOCACY

The role of an advocate is to meet with the child or young person prior to any meeting and discuss what the young person wants to say.

Advocacy is carried out on a **wishings and feelings** basis. The young persons' wishes and feelings will be recorded and sent to the Social worker and ISRO prior to the meeting (except for FGC).

The fast lane for your voice

The advocate will then represent the young person in the meeting if they choose not to attend or support them in the meeting if they do attend.

All children and young people receiving a service should be **offered advocacy for meetings** such as Child Protection, Family Group Conference, Child In Need meetings, Child Looked After reviews.

Advocates can support young people to make complaints and can assist in having their voice heard for any reason.

Each piece of advocacy is a stand alone piece of work and a **new referral should be completed for each meeting**. Where possible Route1 tries to allocate the same advocate each time when requested, however this cannot be guaranteed.

Parental agreement should be sought prior to referrals being made unless the young person is accommodated by the local authority.

Recent audit (see page 3) found that we could improve our service to children and young people by:

- ✓ Requesting advocacy in good time to allow the young person to attend if they wish
- ✓ Ensuring referrals contain the relevant information to allow a targeted piece of work to be carried out
- ✓ Remember that advocacy is not restricted to Conferences—it may be helpful for some children with a Child in Need plan

Good practice in report writing FOR CHILD PROTECTION CONFERENCES



For more information about writing reports for Child Protection Conferences, see the South West Child Protection Procedures (SWCPP) chapter "[Child Protection Conferences](#)", especially Section 7 "Information for the Conference".



Things you should know

Developing an effective response to Neglect

The Child/Young Person's Neglect Toolkit (see page 1) is designed to assist you in identifying and assessing children and young people who are at risk of and experiencing neglect. It is to be used when you are concerned that the quality of care of a child/young person you are working with suggests that their needs are being neglected.

The SSCP has a **cascade training pack** which provides the information and resources that will support you in training people within your organisation in developing an effective response to neglect and how **to apply the neglect toolkit to inform your assessment of need**. The neglect toolkit is a tool to aid discussion in supervision and for the clarification of the issues, designed to support not replace professional judgement.

To **request your FREE copy** of this training resource please click on the image on the right, or email SSCPTraining@somerset.gov.uk.



Useful resources—child exploitation

[Child Exploitation and Extra-Familial Risk Library](#)

This is a rolling resource document on the topic of extra-familial harm and exploitation. The document will be updated regularly to ensure that staff have the most relevant research and policy to inform their practice.

If there are additional resources that you need to inform your work, please contact Jessica King on JKing@somerset.gov.uk

Contact the SSCP!

Please note our **new** email address: SSCP@somerset.gov.uk.

The SSCP has a circulation list to send alerts when new newsletters or learning bulletins are published. If you do not currently receive these alerts and would like to sign up to the list, visit our website

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