

GUIDANCE FOR ALL MANAGERS AND PRACTITIONERS

Assessing Child Neglect – The Graded Care Profile

One of the priorities for the Knowsley Safeguarding Children Board is to assist all who work with children and families in assessing child neglect. Many children with additional needs experience neglect a variety of levels and it is vital that we all recognise and assess this. Research findings from Serious Care Reviews, both nationally and locally, show that neglect is the second highest category for Child Protection Plans and is often the backdrop for physical, emotional and sexual harm.

An assessment tool known as the Graded Care Profile has been identified as beneficial when assessing neglect as it helps to show the type and level of neglect and areas of parental strength as well as difficulty. It can be used in early intervention with parents and carers to promote their strengths and recognise the areas in which they need to improve. It can also be used with children at higher levels of need to provide evidence of what must change if the child is to develop and be safe. The Graded Care Profile gives clear evidence of neglect and its impact on children of all ages.

The Knowsley Safeguarding Children Board has accepted the recommendations of a multi-agency working group and the Graded Care Profile will be adopted in practice in Knowsley. **It is now expected that the GCP be used in all situations where we suspect that a child is experiencing neglect.**

It should be used in **early help** to families when neglect appears to be an issue, and referrals for **Children in Need** due to neglect must be accompanied by a GCP. Where a **child protection** referral is made there should be no delay in making that referral and the completion of a GCO will be agreed as part of the Child Protection process.

Wherever possible, the Graded Care Profile should be used in partnership with parents or carers and **completed with them**. They are then more likely to recognise and agree the changes needed to help meet children's needs. However, the GCP can be used as a reflective tool by practitioners to gain a full picture of neglect and consider the evidence in supervision and reflective practice.

Please ensure that the following guidance is used to assist those using the Graded Care Profile.

Training with regard to neglect and the use of this tool will be available via the Knowsley Safeguarding Board Training Calendar. The Neglect Strategy and the Neglect Matrix have already been launched and this is a tool to assist staff in their assessment of neglect

Using the Graded Care Profile to Assess and Review Neglect

When to use the GCP

- Whenever there is concern about a child/young person being neglected.
- In Early Help and for children with additional needs related to neglect (Level 2/3 on the Threshold Chart)
- For children in need, where neglect is at a more concerning level and is starting to impact on the child's development (Level 4 on Children's Needs Framework) Any referral to another agency should be accompanied by a GCP.
- **Where children are at risk of significant harm and neglect is a feature, there must be no delay in referring to Children's Social Work.** If a GCP has already been completed it should be attached to the referral. If not, the Graded Care Profile will have to be completed as part of the child protection process after referral.
- The GCP can be used to review progress with a child and family. Once completed the GCP should be revisited in an agreed period of time to assess progress made.
- The GCP can be used when a child is returning home after a period of being looked after – this can help establish levels of care on offer and identify strengths and areas for improvement.
- The GCP is suitable for all ages of children & young people, involving young people in the assessment can be beneficial.
- The GCP has been welcomed as evidence in Care Proceedings and courts are increasingly requesting such evidence.

Who can complete the Graded Care Profile?

- All practitioners working with children, young people and adults who are carers or parents can complete a GCP.
- Access to the home and the opportunity to observe parent and child together is necessary to complete a GCP.
- The assessment can be co-worked between two workers who have different types of involvement with a family – for example, an adult mental health worker and a worker offering early help could complete a GCP. Joint assessments of this kind have been shown to lead to better assessment and outcomes.
- Some practitioners will recognise the impact of neglect on a child – for example a teacher, but not be in a position to complete a GCP. Another practitioner in school or in the community must then complete the assessment.
- Whenever it is recognised that a child/young person is experiencing neglect, the practitioner who recognises this must ensure that a GCP is completed, even if they are not able to do so.

Engaging parents/carers and children/young people with the Graded Care Profile.

Whenever there is concern that a child's needs are not fully met it is crucial to involve the parent fully and engage them in meeting the child's needs (as long as it is safe to do so).

Parents will need information about the GCP and an explanation of why it will be useful. Explaining that a GCP helps to show areas of parental strength as well as difficulty will help with engagement. The following will also help:

- Providing written explanation about the GCP as well as verbal.
- Assuring a parent that they will be involved in the completion of the assessment and will have a copy.
- Being clear about who the information will be shared with and why.
- Working with informed consent – the parent needs to know how the GCP will be used to improve life for the child and that they will play the major role in that improvement.
- Giving examples of how using the GCP has had positive outcomes for other children and families.
- Carefully going over the format with parents and showing them how it works.
- Completing the assessment via conversations with the parent and observations of the child and parent together, rather than 'filling the form in'.
- Giving regular feedback to the parent during and after assessment about what is going ok and where work will be needed.

Ultimately, if a parent will not or cannot co-operate with a GCP it may be that a worker has to use it as evidence for supervision, for a referral or for court. If this is going to happen, we need to tell parents.