

## Learning from the neglect challenge event

Neglect is the most common reason for children in Oxfordshire becoming subject to a child protection plan or repeat plan and is a common feature in both local and national safeguarding practice reviews.

In September 2021 the OSCB held a challenge event to test the effectiveness of the neglect strategy and action plan, against the guiding principles considering the following:

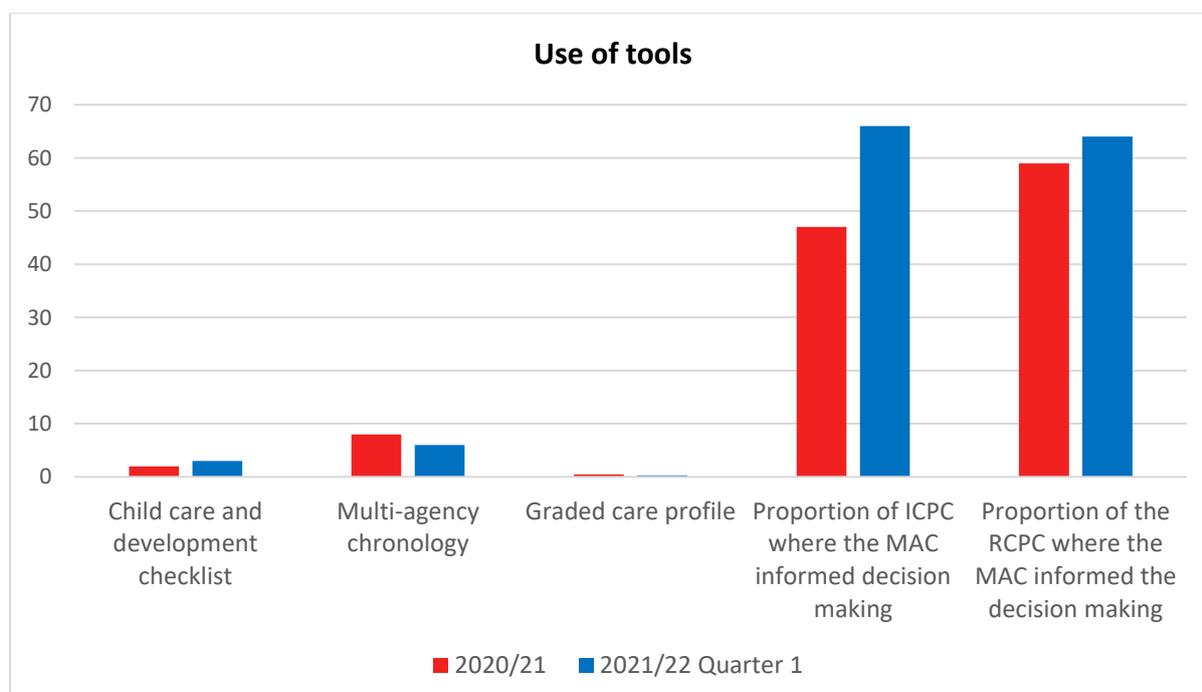
- “Will the Neglect Strategy impact on the lived experience of children and young people in neglectful households today?”

Presenting groups focused on understanding what the data is telling us, early help and identification and evidence of impact for children/young people with complex needs and subject to higher levels of intervention. Presenter and challengers then worked together to problem solve and consider the emerging themes, celebrate good and best practice and focus on impact of action plans and improving outcomes.

## Overview: what the data tells us

### Early identification

- Identification remains low at the early help stage
- Identification at the start of a child in need plan has improved but is still well below the national average
- Proportion of new CP for neglect has been consistently higher than national average but appears to be reducing
- The proportion of children becoming cared for fluctuates but is well below national average
- There appears to be a steady increase in the proportion of children starting statutory plans who are known to early help services



### School attendance and exclusions



- Children starting a Child in Need plan had 3 times the overall absence rates of all children combined, Child Protection Plans and Children commencing a period of care had over 1 ½ times the rate
- Persistent absence rates were 3 times as high for children starting a Child in Need plan or period of care, and twice as high for Child Protection plans
- There is a very significant gap between the proportion of children in these groups who had attendance of less than 95% when compared with all children. Half of children with a new CP plan had less than 95% attendance

## What is going well

- The strategic approach taken in Oxfordshire to looking at systems and culture change in improving the response to neglect
- Development of services, systems and process alongside a multi-agency shift in terms of perception and response
- Increased recognition by partners of roles and responsibilities and willingness to engage – a strategy to support those who are not as aware or as engaged as others
- Development of training and supervisory practice
- Strong emphasis on addressing emerging concerns through early help
- Embedding the lived experience of the child into practice
- Acknowledgement of family strengths in practice
- Focus on SMART, child-focused plans recognising neglect cannot be addressed in a short period of time

## Areas for improving practice/further development

### Use of language:

- consider how language is used and the implications for practice particularly in relation to use of the word neglect with families

### Recognising the impact of neglect on the individual child:

- developing a more sophisticated approach (and not relying on the same tools)
- considering other vulnerable groups in our strategy
- ensuring all the developmental needs of the child are explored

### Recognising the complex lives of parents and carers

- Embedding knowledge of the daily lived experience of the parent/carer to better understand why the needs of a child/young person are not being met, what challenges are faced by parents and what are their strengths
- Recognising relational practice

### Recognising factors that impact on parental engagement with services including daily lived experience of practitioners

### Use of tools

- Expand the suites of available tools and ensure each tool has specific aims and objectives, methodology and possible adaptations
- Focus on outcomes for our interventions

## Communicating the learning and launch of the revised strategy

The OSCB Business Unit will develop a comms plan for the launch of the neglect strategy, to share with the group. The comms plan will detail leads, outline the core messages and share the means of communication, e.g. website, social media, direct mail, dissemination across the network, e.g. via subgroups, on schools news, CEF newsletter, etc.

The Spring Edition of the OSCB quarterly Safeguarding Newsletter, produced in Sway, will be focused on neglect to coincide with the launch of the strategy, share the communications/learning from the challenge event and any additional learning, resources, etc.

The aim is for the Sway to be published at the end of March/beginning of April.

All articles/additions to the newsletter should be sent to [oscb@Oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:oscb@Oxfordshire.gov.uk) marked FAO Carole Kinnell.