

Exercise

When undertaking longer term work with children who are living at home it can be a challenge to remain focused upon the child or children, especially if the parents' lives are characterised by crises and events that require a lot of attention.

In small groups, consider families where there has been active involvement as a result of child neglect for at least six months. You can also consider the scenarios provided as prompts for discussion.

1. What is the potential impact of neglect on each child or young person?
2. Identify and list the range of ways in which you can ensure that each child is kept at the centre of your attention.
3. Consider the formal processes such as supervision, reviews and core group meetings.
4. Consider, also, the nature of your contact with the child or children and their parents and the nature of the intervention.
5. Note how you monitor the short and longer term outcomes for each child in the family.

Identify key messages to share with the wider group.

Continued ↘

Exercise

Scenario 1

Claire and Darren have a volatile relationship characterised by incidents of domestic violence. There does not appear to be a regular household routine involving for example, set times for meals or bedtime. The house is dirty and there are no curtains at the upstairs windows. Darren is often absent from the home - either working or socialising. The use of alcohol does not feature on a daily basis, but at least twice per week the couple are known to be heavily intoxicated. This is witnessed by members of the local community at the local social club or often in the street, when they are returning home late at night.

There are 5 children in the household – 16 year old Michelle who is 6 months pregnant, Troy aged 12, Susan aged 6, Ryan aged 3 and Kimberley aged 12 months.

Scenario 2

Michelle is 16 years old. She is 6 months pregnant and she has not been attending ante-natal appointments on a regular basis. She lives with her parents and the house is overcrowded so she sleeps on the sofa most nights. Since she became pregnant she has continued to smoke cannabis and drink alcohol regularly. Neither she or her partner Jim have made any preparations for when the baby is born and they recently told the Health Visitor 'there is plenty of time yet and babies don't need much when they are first born...'

Scenario 3

Fiona and Steve both suffer from mild, long-term depression which health professionals have told them is 'situational'. Both have been long-term unemployed and, since Steve became unemployed, have been living in poverty for the last seven years. There are three children in the family – Liam aged 15 years (step-son to Steve), Shireen aged 10 and Lewis aged 8. The family are becoming increasingly isolated from the wider community and all the children have very poor school attendance.

Scenario 4

Steve wants his 15 year old step-son - Liam, out of the family home as he is constantly causing problems for the family and the police are always at the door. Liam has been listed for discussion at a forthcoming Anti-Social Behaviour Case Conference Meeting as a result of his drinking and causing a noise nuisance in the local community. When he is drunk, he is abusive to neighbours and he regularly breaks in to local sheds and garages where he sleeps.

Scenario 5

Mabina spends nearly all her time at home with her 2 year old, Wasim. Her husband, Saleem works long hours and is rarely home before 8pm. Mabina and Wasim only usually leave the house once a week to go to the local supermarket and shops. Mabina has no friends or family living locally and she is socially and culturally isolate in her home on a new housing estate in a town that the family moved to shortly after Wasim's birth. Mabina is lonely and she does not have the confidence or motivation to get involved in any community or social activities.