

LACK OF SUPERVISION & GUIDANCE

failure to keep a child safe, including leaving a child alone; leaving a child with inappropriate carers; failure to provide appropriate boundaries.

What could that look like?

A parent/ carer failing to provide the right support or supervision based on the individual child's age and ability. This could include not providing any support when it is needed, asking someone unsuitable to look after children, or overprotectiveness of a child; keeping them indoors and excessively supervised. A parent/ carer failing to communicate and apply appropriate rules for the child's age and ability to keep them safe and promote their wellbeing.

What are the impacts on the child?

Children who have no routine or do not know what will happen in their day, who will look after them, where this will be, what is expected of them, can become very anxious, depressed, angry, untrusting of others, or blame themselves for being unlovable. It is very hard for a child to navigate the world if they have no consistency or someone they can trust. If someone feels that nobody else in the world cares for them/ understands their needs, then they may not care what happens to themselves, or what happens to other people. This means they are far more likely to become harmed or harm others through abuse, exploitation, bullying etc. They are also more likely to have serious life threatening or life taking accidents and health concerns; including substance abuse, eating disorders, self-harm, or suicide.

What action can be taken?

Each situation will require careful consideration of the impact, severity and duration of possible harm a child is experiencing from lack of supervision and guidance. It is very likely that other types of neglect or abuse may occur simultaneously. Professionals should consider the guidance for the threshold of need of the child and take the appropriate action. The [neglect screening tool](#) may be of assistance. Some specific points to consider:

- The highest percentage of serious incident notifications are for children under 12 months old. Both parents/care givers should have access to/provided with information/advice/guidance on the fragility of babies, the impact of young babies within the family and the needs of infants.
- The online world is forever developing and is now an intricate part of life. There are a lot of benefits to being online as long as this is done safely. It's important for parents/ carers to be encouraged to discuss and explore with the child the online world they navigate and always questions the age of the person their child may speak to or meet in real life, any evidence of behaviours that are persuading their child to do things or individuals offering rewards; looking out for any signs of possible abuse; grooming or exploitation. The NSPCC provide a range of resources to help parents <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/>
- It is possible that parents/ carers have had many adverse childhood experiences themselves. This means that at time where they would have possibly been developing skills needed in later life; like the importance of routine, goal setting, planning and emotional regulation, they were unable to, because their body was overloaded with toxic stress because of the issues they were being faced with. It is important to acknowledge that parents have however developed copings skills to help them survive the adverse issues they faced, and while they may have been useful at the time, they may not be so helpful now. Helping parents to build positive relationships, learn the life skills they may have missed and make links with support in the community can help. The following clips may be helpful to explain adverse childhood experiences and what to do about them: [Childhood Trauma and the Brain | UK Trauma Council \(youtube.com\)](#) [How Toxic Stress Affects Us, and What We Can Do About It \(youtube.com\)](#)
- Parents and carers play a vital role in supporting their children through, what can sometimes be a difficult transition from childhood to adulthood, referred to as adolescents. Often an adolescent will come to the attention of service because of 'their' behaviour. It is essential to build trusting relationships with the adolescent, to understand their lived experience; they too may not only have adverse childhood experiences, but they may also still be living with toxic stress from the trauma they are experiencing through abuse and neglect. Their behaviour should therefore not be the focus of interventions, but viewed as a symptom of the trauma and how they are coping with it (the first clip above may help to explain this). As well as providing the child with access to support and services, it is imperative work with parents takes place for them to make positive changes. Children's care needs do not stop when they reach adolescence. If the focus is only on the child and not the parents need for change, then there is a danger that any intervention only enforces a belief that what is happening is only the child's responsibility, which can create more harm for the child and leave the parents behaviour unchallenged.

