

# Scrutiny Update -Regional Peer Review on Neglect 24 February 2026

## Herefordshire County Council & Birmingham Childrens Trust



**Referrals** HCC 119 per 10,000  
BCT 138 per 10,000

**CIN -** HCC 280 per 10,000  
BCT 261 per 10,000

**CP** HCC 38 per 10,000  
BCT 45 per 10,000

# Partnership



- **HSCP Child Neglect Strategy 2024-2027** – Objectives are:
- **Multi-agency strategic leadership is in place to tackle child neglect in Herefordshire.**
- Overseen by the HSCP and Quality and Effectiveness Group Sub-Group
- **Improved awareness and recognition of neglect-** Increased referrals with category of neglect across system to ensure support to children
- **Develop a multi-agency dataset that highlights the prevalence of neglect-** in place reviewed by Q&E sub -group and across boundaries with Worcestershire CC-
- **Prevent and minimise the incidents of child neglect and improve the effectiveness of responses to neglect including assessment.** Increase in awareness with earlier identification , reduction in CP numbers, and evidenced more accurate identification.
- **Improve training and improved use of the Graded Care Profile 2 (GCP) Toolkits** and training delivered across the Partnership with over 800 practitioners trained

# West Mercia Police

- Neglect is a priority for Herefordshire Safeguarding Partnership.
- Use of Police Protection Powers in neglect cases are usually appropriate. Greater connectivity with Childrens Services. Multi-agency review would be beneficial e.g. Shropshire
- 50% increase in joint s47 investigations following review Q2 2025/26 –
- Student officers receive mandatory training around neglect with specialist PPU officers trained to undertake criminal investigations in neglect.
- Learning is disseminated from Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews.
- Neglect toolkits are available to practitioners on the safeguarding website –
- The voice of the child is often captured (AWARE) and risk assessments incorporated in the criminal investigation - work in progress on AWARE and CRA's generally

# How police treat neglect as a criminal offence-ongoing review

- There is multi-agency training provided by the partnership in “understanding neglect in all ages”) Although open to all officers, normally only taken up by PPU staff and that take up is low.
- Neglect can be subjective and sometimes mitigating factors prevent a criminal investigation, (mental health, learning difficulties) .
- Outcome 20 (further action will be taken by another agency) is used when Police record neglect and are not pursuing a criminal investigation.
- Partnership audit required re perceived low charge rate for neglect.
- There is currently no data in relation to how many charges and convictions we have for child neglect . The only Police data shows recorded child cruelty incidents and outcomes

# Strengthening the Police Response to Neglect Through VHUB Centralisation

- In September 2025, West Mercia Police centralised all Harm Assessment Units into a single Vulnerability Hub (VHUB), bringing together four Local Authorities to create defined decision-making, clear intervention thresholds, and consistent supervision.
- Safeguarding functions were unified into one coordinated hub, reducing duplication, improving consistency across teams, and establishing clear pathways for action.
- The VHUB enhances the identification of neglect through specialist training on criminal thresholds, shared understanding of when neglect becomes a criminal investigation, and direct access to multi-agency expertise.

- Centralised oversight enables early detection, including spotting repeat referrals, recognising patterns of neglect sooner, ensuring consistent attendance at strategy meetings, and triggering police investigations at the appropriate stage.
- This model delivers clearer roles, consistent processes, earlier intervention, and a strong multi-agency response, ensuring neglect is recognised and treated as both a safeguarding concern and a criminal offence when thresholds are met.
- As the VHUB model embeds, more auditing is taking place and where learning needs around neglect are identified, intervention with staff and training is put in place.

# Health – strengths

- Across ICN and Wye Valley -2 GCP trainers
- All HV and School Nursing Teams have neglect and GCP training
- Reviewed and promoted annually at conference – Q3 2025 conference was Adolescent neglect-
- Medical neglect diabetes after learning review psychologist in place
- Self neglect as an indicator for parents presenting at maternity
- Think Family training across safeguarding forums with neglect and wider disability focus – to support wider response

# Health – strengths and increased awareness

- High conversion rates for MARFs and GCP2
- Increase in practitioners being lead practitioners
- Health Trust train staff internally for both neglect and GCP2, this is monitored and tracked
- All areas of Trust have safeguarding supervision
- Psychologist in place at Trust for diabetes, following a learning review.
- Trust have ‘Think Family’ forums and include a Neglect focus with children with disabilities
- Pediatric ward staff use ‘Voice of the Child’ toolkit to gather children’s voices
- Increased use of audit and data set reporting at Quality and Effectiveness Group

# Health- Challenges

- GPs have very short consultation times which limits their professional curiosity
- GPs refer for neglect but do not use the Neglect toolkit but use their own trained knowledge and understanding of neglect to identify concerns
- PCNs keep a record of referrals into CSC but do not have these broken down into categories
- **Next Steps** -Maintaining data on reason for referral from health data base regarding type of concern.
- Wider evaluation needed of the data for trends across County

## Ofsted Jan 26

- ***Families benefiting from effective early help and family support delivered by a multi-agency network of professionals.***
- ***Well considered, comprehensive assessments by social workers, that are informed by the views of children, families and other professionals, and that demonstrate an understanding of the strengths in families, balancing this against presenting risks and needs”***
- ***There is a renewed practice focus on children living in neglectful households, with recent interventions evidencing a positive impact on children’s lives.***
- ***Effective Partnerships, MA network of professionals which meet regularly***
- ***Appropriate thresholds for care and protection being applied effectively with strong management oversight at all tiers, demonstrating evidence-based rationale for further action.***
- ***When children’s circumstances do not change and risks escalate, the pre-proceedings stage of the Public Law Outline process is strong. This provides effective oversight to ensure that families get the support they need to divert from family court proceedings and for children to remain living with their families.***