Respond Nurture Thrive

Bolton's Multi-Agency Tackling Child Neglect Strategy (2025–2028)



BSCP

Bolton Safeguarding Children Partnership

Nurture, Respond, Thrive.
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1. About This Document

This strategy sets out Bolton's multi-agency commitment to preventing, identifying, and responding to child neglect. It is intended for all organisations and practitioners who work with or have contact with children, young people, and families across the borough.

Under **Section 11 of the Children Act 2004**, agencies that provide services to children—and the organisations they commission—have a statutory duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. This document outlines how those responsibilities must be applied specifically to the early identification, prevention, and response to neglect.

All S11 agencies and commissioned providers are expected to:

- **Embed the strategic principles** of *Respond, Nurture, Thrive* within their organisational policies, procedures, and practice frameworks.
- **Ensure their workforce understands and uses** Bolton's shared definition of neglect, agreed tools, guidance, and pathways, including those aligned with Family Help reforms.
- **Promote early identification and intervention**, ensuring practitioners are confident in recognising early signs of neglect and initiating timely support.
- **Adopt trauma-informed, culturally competent, and anti-racist practice**, ensuring assessments and interventions recognise the diverse experiences, identities, and contexts of Bolton's children and families.
- **Enable strong multi-agency collaboration**, sharing information in a timely and proportionate way, coordinating support, and contributing to shared plans for children.
- **Ensure access to training**, supervision, and resources so staff can consistently apply the expectations outlined in this strategy.
- **Provide assurance to the BSCP** through participation in audit, data return, and evaluation processes, demonstrating how organisational practice contributes to reducing neglect and improving outcomes.
- **Monitor and support commissioned services**, ensuring their approaches align with this strategy and meet Section 11 safeguarding standards.

Successful implementation of this strategy relies on consistent commitment across the partnership. All agencies—statutory, voluntary, community and commissioned—play a crucial role in creating a system where neglect is prevented early, families receive the right help at the right time, and children in Bolton are able to thrive.

2. Introduction

The purpose of this strategy is to establish the vision, principles and focus areas for Bolton that support improved outcomes for children who are vulnerable to or experiencing child neglect. This strategy was developed by Bolton Safeguarding Children Partnership (BSCP) and applies to all practitioners working or volunteering, directly or indirectly with children and their families in Bolton.

The impact of child neglect can be serious, enduring and its legacy potentially continues across the life course. Child neglect in its various forms can occur in the context of poverty and other aspects of social disadvantage but can also affect children in any social context.



Child neglect can be difficult to identify and respond to. It rarely manifests in a crisis or harm that demands immediate action, it commonly intersects with other forms of abuse with practitioners becoming accustomed and desensitized to the chronic nature of child neglect. Therefore, to tackle neglect as a system we need to: -

- Be curious and understand neglect in the context of a child's lived experience.
- Develop trusting relationships with families and explore the underlying factors that can lead to neglectful experiences, including poor parental mental health, domestic abuse, poverty and social disadvantage.
- Consider how support and interventions at the earliest opportunity will help protect against further harm and vulnerability.

Links to National and Local Strategic Arrangements

Given the interface of child neglect with other forms of harm and abuse, BSCP places this strategy in the context of other strategic documents and approaches that influence the safety and wellbeing of children and young people in Bolton. This includes, but is not limited to: -

- **Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023)** – Statutory guidance for inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

- **Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025)** – Guidance for safeguarding responsibilities within education settings.
- **Bolton Early Help Strategy** – Promotes proactive family support and prevention of escalation.
- **Bolton Domestic Abuse Strategy** – Addresses intersecting risks of neglect and domestic abuse.
- **Greater Manchester Children's Plan** – Regional priorities for improving outcomes for children and young people.
- **Family Help Reforms (DfE)** – National reforms to strengthen early intervention and family support pathways.
- **Bolton Exploitation Strategy** – Recognises the link between neglect and increased vulnerability to exploitation.

By aligning with these strategic arrangements, the Neglect Strategy ensures coherence across safeguarding systems, maximises resources, and strengthens collective accountability for improving outcomes for children in Bolton.

3. BSCP Vision and Alignment with Bolton Vision 2040

It is the aim of Bolton Safeguarding Children Partnership that,

'In Bolton we want to give all our children the best possible start in life, so that they have every chance to succeed, be safe and be happy'

The strategy has been developed to support all children from pre-birth up to the age of eighteen. It recognises that child neglect can take many different forms and that living in neglectful circumstances can lead to poorer health, a decrease educational and social outcomes and is potentially fatal. Research tells us that addressing the needs of a family in a holistic way and at the earliest opportunity is more likely to lead to better outcomes for children and their families.

This Strategy is developed in recognition that a whole-system approach is required to effectively identify child neglect and support families. This can only be achieved with the full commitment of all agencies that offer help and support to children and their families.

Through the implementation of this strategy BSCP will: -

- Embed a shared language and understanding of child neglect across the multi-agency partnership.
- Promote early identification, proactive engagement, and coordinated support at the earliest opportunity.
- Ensure all practitioners understand the role they can play in minimising neglectful situations and improving outcomes for children.
- Empower the multi-agency system to align their approaches and respond consistently when working with children and families where neglect is a concern.

We recognise that experiences of neglect and access to support are shaped by factors such as race, culture, faith, language, and migration status. Our approach seeks to

eliminate barriers caused by discrimination or lack of cultural understanding, ensuring every child and family receives equitable, culturally responsive support.

Alignment with Bolton's Vision 2040

Bolton's Vision 2040 sets out an ambitious plan for a borough where every child has the best start in life, families thrive, communities are safe, and the local economy grows sustainably. **'Respond, Nurture, Thrive' (2025–2028)** directly supports these aspirations through its whole-system, prevention-focused approach.

Supporting Family-Friendly Communities

Vision 2040 prioritises strong families and early intervention to reduce inequalities and improve life chances. This strategy aligns by embedding: -

- **Primary Prevention** measures such as universal awareness campaigns, Family Hubs, and parenting programmes.
- Actions that strengthen protective factors and reduce stressors that often lead to neglect.
- Initiatives promoting resilience and linking families to practical resources, contributing to inclusive, supportive communities.

Enabling Every Child to Achieve Their Potential

Educational attainment and wellbeing are central to Vision 2040. Neglect is a significant barrier to learning and development; therefore, the strategy focuses on: -

- **Early identification** and **timely intervention** to prevent escalation.
- **Trauma-informed practice** to support emotional wellbeing and educational engagement.
- Improving attendance and attainment, enabling children to thrive and fulfil their potential.

Building Safer, Stronger Communities

Vision 2040 seeks to create safe neighbourhoods through prevention and partnership. The Neglect Strategy strengthens multi-agency collaboration to: -

- Address neglect early, recognising the intersectionality with domestic abuse, mental health challenges, and exploitation risks.
- Reduce cumulative harm and safeguard vulnerable children.
- Contribute to safer communities and improved public confidence.

Driving Inclusive Growth

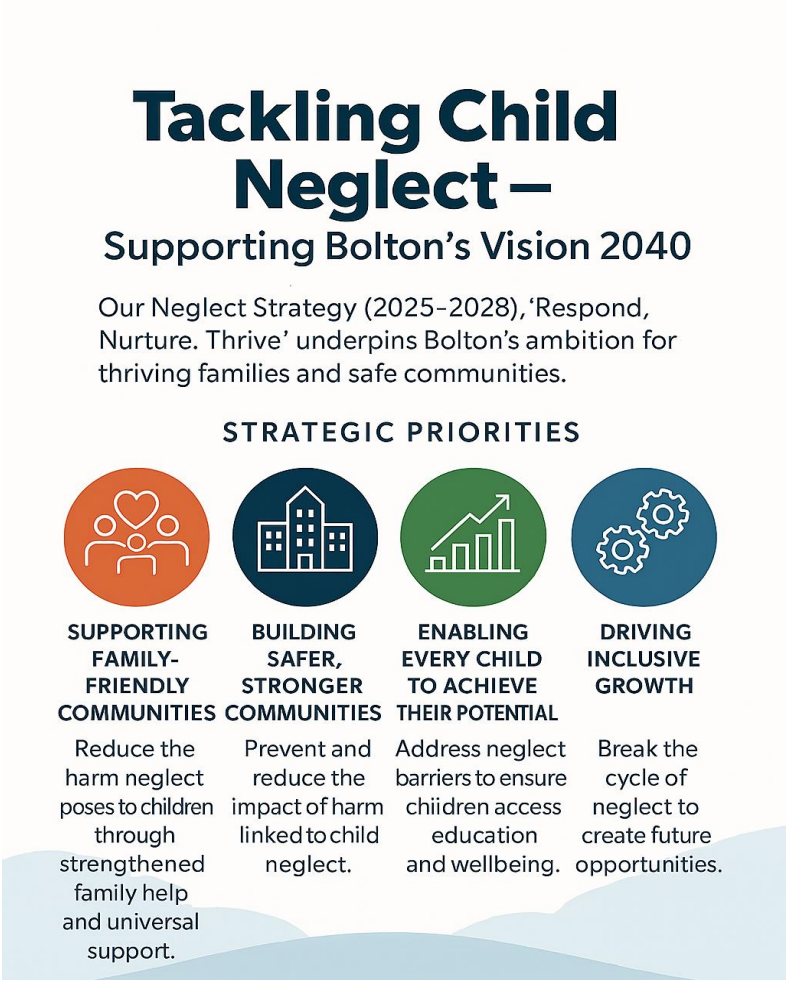
Vision 2040 emphasises investment in people and places to build a resilient economy. By reducing neglect and its long-term social and economic costs, the strategy:

- Supports pathways to education, employment, and skills development.
- Creates a stronger foundation for Bolton's future workforce.
- Enhances the borough's attractiveness for investment.

Embedding the Vision's Strategic Pillars

The Neglect Strategy reflects Vision 2040's core principles of **Prevent, Invest, Grow**:

- **Prevent:** Through universal awareness, early help, and proactive engagement.
- **Invest:** In workforce development, evidence-based tools, and trauma-informed practice.
- **Grow:** By measuring impact, learning from lived experience, and continuously improving safeguarding systems.



4. Defining Neglect

One of the greatest strengths in delivering effective approaches to tackle child neglect is having a shared multi-agency definition of what neglect is. In Bolton while we use Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023[1] definition as a starting point: -

"The persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs likely to result in serious impairment of the child's health or development.

[1] Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023

It may involve the parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger, failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment or provide suitable education…
It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs."

It is important that this definition is placed in the context of the child's lived experience and local practice. When defining neglect, it is essential we recognise that for a child this may mean one or more of the following: -

- **Physical Neglect** - They may not have access to adequate clothing or somewhere warm and safe to live and sleep.
- **Nutritional Neglect** - They do not have access to enough food or have too much of the wrong food. At its most extreme, nutritional neglect can take the form of malnutrition or obesity.
- **Educational Neglect** - They do not have access to a stimulating environment or to an appropriate education whether in a nursery/school/college or at home.
- **Medical Neglect** - They are not taken for routine or necessary health[2] appointments and/or necessary prescribed treatment is not being consistently provided or encouraged. Health needs are minimised or ignored.
- **Supervisory Neglect** - They are not supervised and cared for by a consistent, available and safe adult or they are left on their own to fend for themselves and create their own boundaries. They are absent or missing from home with no timely action being taken to look for them or report them missing.
- **Emotional Neglect** - They are being ignored, scapegoated or excluded unreasonably from family activities. They experience signifncant pressure to achieve and their self-esteem undermined

In Bolton any child who is experiencing one or more of the above should be acknowledged as living with a level of neglect. It is also important to recognise that neglect may occur at any point in a child's life whether that is pre-birth, during the early years or adolescence. The severity and impact of neglect will be unique to each child, as will the response required.

5. A Trauma Informed Approach

Neglect is often a chronic and cumulative issue, with adverse experiences and trauma affecting all family members to varying degrees. Embedding trauma-informed awareness and practice is central to this strategy. Adopting these approaches will help practitioners: -

- See context, not just symptoms - understanding how adversity, poverty, discrimination, disability, culture, ethnicity and isolation shape day-to-day experiences.
- Strengthen engagement - building trust with families through restorative, collaborative approaches that promote high support and high challenge.
- Improve outcomes - by focusing on family help, consistent relationships, and child-centred decision-making.

[2] This covers a range of health appointments including dental, ophthalmic, speech and language, emotional health etc.

- Create safety - establish physical, psychological, cultural and relational safety in all interactions.
- Be trustworthy & transparent - be clear about roles, processes, and decisions; explain why information is shared and how it helps.
- Collaborate and empower - work with children and families; offer options and respect preferences wherever safe to do so, recognise strengths; co-design realistic plans that build capability and resilience.
- Be curious - look beyond single episodes; consider cumulative harm and historical context alongside the current lived experience.
- Promote equity & inclusion - actively address barriers faced by disabled children, minoritised groups, and those experiencing poverty or isolation.
- Restorative - use coaching, motivational interviewing and targeted questions to prevent harm and repair relationships.

Across all these domains practitioners are expected to apply culturally competent and anti-racist practice, recognising how cultural norms, historic experiences with services, and structural inequalities influence engagement, trust and outcomes for children and families. Training will embed practical skills in culturally responsive assessment, interpretation and communication.

For the child, it is essential that practitioners are attuned to their: -

- Physical or learning differences that benefit from tailored communication, support, and reasonable adjustments.
- Behaviours signaling distress or unmet needs (e.g., withdrawal, anger, risk-taking), which call for curiosity rather than judgment.
- Emotional challenges (e.g., anxiety, low mood), and connections to instability, loss, bullying, or feeling unseen.
- Periods of absence from home or education, potentially reflecting feeling unsafe, disconnected, or overwhelmed.
- Seeking connection and relationships in ways that may increase vulnerability to unsafe or exploitative relationships; prioritise protective, strengths-based responses.
- Expressions of emotional pain, including self-harm or talking about not wanting to live; respond with immediate safety planning, compassionate listening, and timely escalation.

For parents and carers, it is essential that practitioners are attuned to their experiences of: -

- Mental health or emotional challenges that impact on energy levels, motivation, or the ability to plan, stay organised, and manage daily tasks.
- Alcohol or drug use as a way of coping.
- Past or current abuse in relationships, including controlling behaviour and its impact on confidence, self-esteem, and motivation.
- Physical or learning challenges or difficulties that affect how parents care for their children.
- Difficult experiences in their own childhood that may affect confidence and expectations about parenting.

- Links to crime or unsafe situations, often connected to disadvantage; focus on reducing risks and building protective support networks.
- Money problems or lack of resources, which can increase stress and limit choices.

For the whole family it will be important to reflect on: -

- Environmental factors that create chronic stress and adversity that can accumulate over time, shaping the lived experience of both children and parents or carers.
- Housing or community conditions that feel unsafe or lack resources—such as poor-quality housing, limited access to services, or absence of green spaces—can undermine a family's sense of safety and stability, increasing feelings of insecurity for children and stress for parents.
- Social norms and expectations, including stigma, discrimination, or unrealistic pressures, can erode confidence and belonging, leaving children feeling unseen and parents feeling judged or powerless.
- When support networks are limited, isolation deepens, reducing protective factors and resilience for the whole family.
- **For some minoritised communities, experiences of racism, community discrimination, or feeling 'othered' may compound family stress, reduce help-seeking, or contribute to mistrust of services. Practitioners should take these contextual factors into account when assessing need and planning support.**

Trauma-informed practice recognises these environmental challenges not as isolated issues but as part of a cumulative context that affects coping, relationships, and wellbeing. By creating safety, building trust, and offering collaborative, strengths-based support, practitioners can help families overcome these barriers and promote healing and resilience.

6. Strategic Objectives

A public health approach has been adopted to support the delivery of these strategic objectives. Applying this approach provides a structured framework for preventing and responding to child neglect by focusing on three levels, namely, **primary**, **secondary**, and **tertiary**. This tiered model ensures that interventions are proportionate, timely, and targeted to the level of help needed, while promoting collaboration across the multi-agency partnership. **It is acknowledged that different agencies will be involved with children and their families at different stages of the intervention.**

Primary Prevention – Preventing Neglect Before It Occurs

Primary prevention focuses on universal measures that reduce the likelihood of neglect arising in the first place. This includes: -

- **Raising awareness** of child neglect across communities to reduce stigma and encourage early help-seeking.
- **Strengthening protective factors** through universal services such as Family Hubs, parenting programs, and community-based support.
- **Addressing root causes** such as poverty, housing insecurity, and social isolation by linking families to practical resources and financial advice.

- **Promoting resilience** through education, health, and wellbeing initiatives that empower families and children.

By embedding these actions into everyday practice, agencies can create environments that support families and reduce stressors that can lead to neglect.

Secondary Prevention – Early Identification and Targeted Support

Secondary prevention targets children and families showing early signs of neglect or vulnerability. Key actions include: -

- **Timely identification** by embedding and using consistent tools and Family Help assessments.
- **Workforce development** to ensure practitioners can confidently recognise and discuss neglect and intervene effectively **to support the diverse communities living in Bolton. The multi-agency training offer will include cultural competence, anti-racist safeguarding and addressing unconscious bias in decision making.**
- **Coordinated multi-agency support** that addresses emerging patterns of neglect before they escalate, while addressing root causes, including trauma, mental health, substance misuse, and domestic abuse interventions. **All agencies will ensure families have access to information and assessments in their preferred language and format and have access to professional interpreters rather than family members. Accessible and alternative formats will be available for those with low literacy, where English is not a first language or those who may have a physical or learning disability. Specialist services will be utilised when needed.**
- **Data-driven decision-making** through neglect profiles and benchmarking to identify trends and allocate resources effectively in the right places.

This level of prevention ensures that concerns are acted upon early, reducing the likelihood of cumulative harm and preventing statutory intervention.

Tertiary Prevention – Responding to Entrenched Neglect

Tertiary prevention focuses on mitigating harm and preventing recurrence in cases of chronic or severe neglect. Actions include: -

- **Intensive interventions** through Child Protection plans and specialist services for families with complex needs.
- **Multi-agency coordination** using clear processes and shared accountability to safeguard children effectively.
- **Trauma-informed and restorative practice** to rebuild trust, repair relationships, and support long-term recovery for families.
- **Evaluation and learning** from audits and reviews to continuously improve practice and ensure sustainable change.

By utilising this model, BSCP can deliver a comprehensive, whole-system response that prioritises prevention, strengthens family help, and ensures robust protection for children at greatest risk. This approach aligns with our vision of giving every child in Bolton the best

possible start in life, so they have every chance to succeed, be safe, and be happy. **Appendix 1 sets out the strategic implementation plan supporting this strategy.**

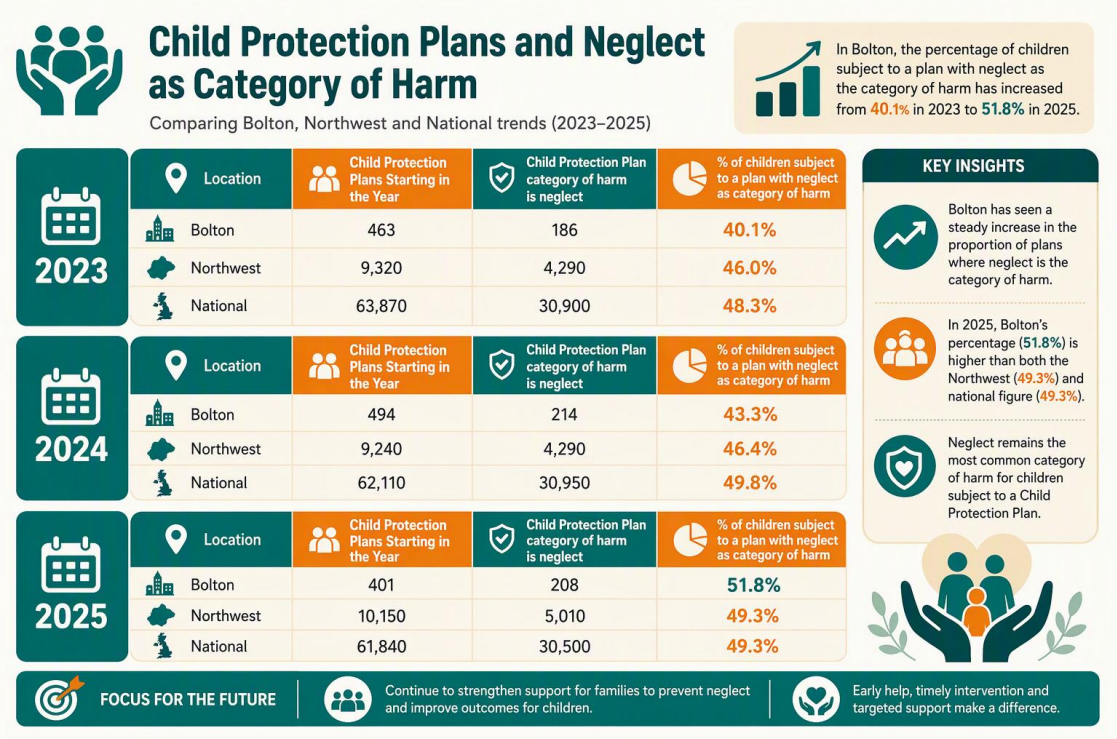
7. Measuring Impact

The success of 'Respond, Nurture, Thrive' will be monitored through a combination of quantitative and qualitative key performance indicators (KPI). These measures align with the strategy's public health approach and reflect our commitment to early prevention, multi-agency collaboration, and trauma-informed practice. The measures provide a systematic overview for each level of the approach: -

- **Primary Prevention:** KPIs on early identification, training, and universal support track progress in preventing neglect before it occurs.
- **Secondary Prevention:** Measures on Early Help uptake, re-referrals, and multi-agency coordination evidence timely intervention and reduced cumulative harm.
- **Tertiary Prevention:** Indicators on repeat Child Protection Plans, child and parent feedback, and case studies show effectiveness in responding to entrenched neglect and promoting recovery

Neglect Over Time in Bolton

The table below draws data from published 'DfE Child in Need Statistics'[3] relating to the Child Protection Plans starting in each year for Neglect. This begins to provide a benchmark for Bolton to begin to measure the impact of the strategy.



[3] Create your own tables on children in need - Explore education statistics - GOV.UK

While this is a snapshot, the data suggests that there has been a shift in the profile of harm categories with a rising proportion related to neglect. The percentage of Child Protection Plans (CPPs) in Bolton with neglect as the primary category of harm increased from 40.1% in 2023 to 51.8% in 2025, overtaking both the Northwest average (49%) and the national average (49%).

As our strategic approach is embedded it is anticipated it will deliver measurable improvements across Bolton's safeguarding system, in particular: -

- **Overall Reduction in Child Protection Plans for Neglect:**
  Fewer children will require statutory intervention for neglect as early/family help support addresses concerns before escalation. This should lead to a progressive decline in neglect-related Child Protection Plans and a lower proportion of neglect referrals compared to current levels.

  Children and families tell us:

  "We receive help early, before things get worse, so our problems don't escalate into a crisis."

  "Support reduces stress at home, helping us create a safer and more predictable environment."

  "Practitioners notice early signs and step in quickly, meaning we no longer reach the point of needing a Child Protection Plan."

- **Decrease in Repeat Plans and Chronic Neglect:**
  Families will experience sustained improvement, reducing the number of repeat Child Protection Plans for child neglect. This signals more effective intervention and improves long-term outcomes for children.

  Children and families tell us:

  "The help we receive leads to real and lasting improvements in our daily life."

  "Workers stay with us long enough to help us make changes that stick."

  "We don't have to keep starting again or repeating our story—we feel stability and continuity."

- **Improved Category Mix and Resource Allocation:**
  As neglect need reduces, resources can be redirected to emerging areas of harm and preventative services, ensuring a balanced safeguarding response.

> Children and families tell us:
>
> **"Support reflects our whole situation, not just one issue, and responds to the things that matter most to us."**
>
> **"Services adapt when our needs change, helping us stay strong and resilient."**
>
> **"We can access the right type of help at the right time because resources are used where they are most needed."**

- **Strengthened Family Help Pathways:**
  Increased engagement with Family Help services will prevent escalation, reflected in lower conversion rates from across the system. In particular an increase in assessments delivered to support family help and a reduction in child protection referrals.

> Children and families tell us:
>
> **"It is easy to ask for help, and we know where to go."**
>
> **"Support is offered quickly and in a way that fits around our strengths, culture and routines."**
>
> **"We feel listened to, involved and respected in decisions about our family."**
>
> **"Because we receive help early, we do not move into Child Protection processes."**

- **Enhanced Multi-Agency Practice:**
  Consistent use of neglect assessment tools, improved workforce confidence, and stronger collaboration will underpin better decision-making and timely support.

> Children and families tell us:
>
> **"Practitioners work together so we don't have to repeat our experiences."**
>
> **"Different services coordinate around us, not separately."**
>
> **"Workers explain clearly what needs to change and how they will support us."**
>
> **"We feel safe, respected and understood because Practitioners use consistent, compassionate approaches."**

These measures will form the basis of a performance dashboard and accountability framework against which the impact and effectiveness of the strategy will be evaluated. **Appendices 2 and 3 provide an indicative set of measures that will be integrated within the partnerships core dataset to track the impact of the strategy and supporting plan.**

8. Governance and Accountability

Effective governance is essential to ensure that 'Respond, Nurture, Thrive' delivers its intended impact and aligns with wider safeguarding priorities. Oversight will be led by the Delegated Safeguarding Partners, who hold local statutory responsibility for coordinating and ensuring the effectiveness of local arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

Key Elements

- **Strategic Leadership: -**
  The Delegated Safeguarding Partners will provide strategic direction, approve delivery plans, and monitor progress on a six-monthly basis against agreed KPIs and qualitative indicators, with the support of the wider BSCP partnership.

  Lead Safeguarding Partners will be provided with an annual report on progress, unless significant exceptions are identified.

- **Operational Delivery: -**
  The Neglect Task and Finish Group will lead implementation, reporting quarterly to the BSCP Safeguarding Effectiveness Group on progress, challenges, and impact. An exception report will be provided to Delegated Safeguarding Partners where needed.

- **Independent Scrutiny: -**
  The BSCP Independent Scrutineer will review effectiveness, provide challenge, and ensure transparency in decision-making on at least an annual basis. They will also provide scrutiny to the strategy on an annual basis and hold the DSPs to account for the overall delivery of the strategy.

- **Performance Monitoring: -**
  A Performance & Accountability Framework will track progress through: -
  - Quarterly KPI reports.
  - Qualitative reviews including feedback from children, families, and practitioners.
  - Continued benchmarking against regional and national data to identify trends and inform resource allocation.

- **Continuous Learning: -**
  Findings from audits, case reviews, and lived experience consultations will inform iterative improvements to practice and policy.

Appendix 1

'Respond, Nurture, Thrive' Strategic Delivery Plan

Prevention Level	Action	Deliverable	Lead	Timeline (2025–2028)	KPI	Intended Impact
Primary Prevention	Revise Resource Pack	Updated resource pack linking neglect types to local pathways and tools	Neglect Task and Finish Group	By mid-2026	Resource Pack published; 100% of practitioners asked are aware and use the resource when needed.	Increase practitioner confidence
	Redevelop Neglect Toolkit	Toolkit aligned with Family Help Reforms	Neglect Task and Finish Group	By mid-2026	Toolkit usage across agencies	Embed evidence-based practice
	Engage lived experience voices	Consultation sessions with families		Ongoing (2025–2028)	Number of sessions; feedback integrated	Ensuring strategy reflects real experiences
Secondary Prevention	Benchmark current practice	Independent Scrutineer report	Independent Scrutineer	2026	Report completed; recommendations implemented	Identify gaps in early intervention
	Create partnership neglect profile	Analysis of neglect crimes and trends	GMP & Data Analysts	2026	Profile published; data informs interventions	Target resources to hotspots
	Refresh and redevelop the workforce development offer	Training programme embedding best practice	Multi-agency Training Co-ordinator	2026–2027	% workforce trained; early identification referrals	Strengthen early help response
Tertiary Prevention	Toolkit for Complex Cases	Toolkit guidance for complex cases	Neglect Task and Finish Group	By mid-2026	Toolkit referenced in CP plans	Improve multi-agency coordination
	Evaluate the impact of the strategy Interventions	Evaluate effectiveness of interventions	Independent Scrutineer	2027	Audit findings show improved outcomes	Ensure sustainable change
	Develop and embed a monitoring & evaluation framework	KPIs on toolkit usage and impact	Partnership Board	Quarterly reviews (2025–2028)	Quarterly KPI reports; reduction in repeat CP plans	Demonstrate impact and continuous improvement

Appendix 2

Strategy Impact and Effectiveness Measures

Quantitative Key Performance Indicators (KPI)

Prevention Level	KPI	Intended Impact
Primary Prevention	% of children identified at risk of neglect pre-birth or under five and their ethnicity	Demonstrates success in early identification and universal screening
	% increase in Early/Family Help assessments due to emerging neglect	Reflects proactive engagement and timely intervention
	% of Practitioners trained in Bolton's neglect toolkit	Builds shared understanding and confidence across agencies
	% of parents accessing parenting support resources and their ethnicity	
Secondary Prevention	Reduction in re-referrals to social care for neglect-related concerns	Shows improved effectiveness of early help and targeted support
	% of neglect cases involving poverty or disability and by ethnicity	Provides insight into systemic factors and informs resource allocation
	% of children with disabilities receiving tailored support and their ethnicity	Ensures equity and inclusion for vulnerable groups
	% of families reporting that services understood and respected their cultural background.	Ensures equity and inclusion for vulnerable groups
	Ethnicity in referrals, assessments and Child Protection Plans monitored annually, with action taken where disparities are identified.	Ensures identification of any over or under-representation of vulnerable groups
Tertiary Prevention	% of children reporting feeling safer following intervention	Captures the impact of restorative and trauma-informed practice
	Improvement in school attendance and attainment	Links safeguarding to educational outcomes and resilience
	% of neglect cases with multi-agency involvement	Measures collaboration and shared accountability
	Reduction in repeat Child Protection Plans under neglect	Indicates sustainable change and reduced cumulative harm
	% of Practitioners using Bolton's neglect toolkit	Supports evidence based and trauma informed practice

In addition to tracking agreed KPI's the partnership will also implement an annual cycle of qualitative indicators to test the effectiveness of the strategic approach. As a minimum these are: -

- **Children's feedback** on feeling heard, safe, and supported
- **Parents' experience** of accessing help and being treated with respect

- **Practitioner reflections** on trauma-informed practice and its impact on outcomes
- **Case studies** demonstrating improved family resilience and reduced risk factors

Appendix 3

Performance and Accountability Framework

This appendix sets out the detailed evaluation matrix for the Respond, Nurture, Thrive; Bolton Multi-Agency Tackling Child Neglect Strategy (2025–2028). It includes criteria, indicators, baselines, targets, review frequency, ownership, and RAG thresholds for Primary, Secondary, Tertiary Prevention, and Governance.

Primary Prevention – Preventing Neglect Before It Occurs

Criterion	Indicator	Baseline	Target	Review	Owner	RAG
Universal awareness & resources	% practitioners aware of toolkit	Baseline Q4 2025	>85% by 2028	Quarterly	Neglect T&F Group	R<60%; A60-85%; G>85%
Toolkit adoption	Usage across agencies	Post-launch 2026	>75% by 2028	Quarterly	Training Coordinator	R<40%; A40-70%; G>70%

Secondary Prevention – Early Identification & Targeted Support

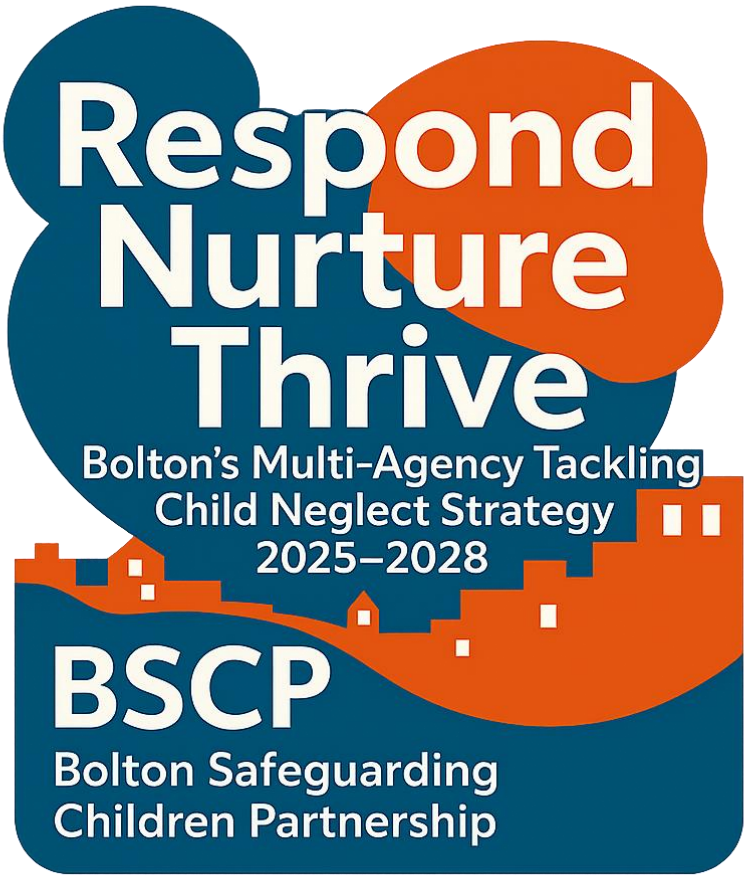
Criterion	Indicator	Baseline	Target	Review	Owner	RAG
Timely identification	Assessment Tools usage rate	Audit 2025	>85% by 2028	Quarterly	Safeguarding Effectiveness Group	R<50%; A50-75%; G>75%
Early Help pathways	% increase in Early Help	Baseline 2025	+35% by 2028	Quarterly	Early Help Leads	R<15%; A15-30%; G>30%

Tertiary Prevention – Responding to Entrenched Neglect

Criterion	Indicator	Baseline	Target	Review	Owner	RAG
Children's safety & voice	% children reporting feeling safer	Baseline 2025	>85% by 2028	Quarterly	Engagement Lead	R<65%; A65-80%; G>80%
Repeat CP plans	Reduction in repeat plans	Baseline 2025	-35% by 2028	Quarterly	CSC Performance	R<10%; A10-25%; G>25%

Governance & Continuous Learning

Criterion	Indicator	Baseline	Target	Review	Owner	RAG
Strategic oversight	Six-monthly progress reviews	Cycle initiated 2025	100% compliance	Six-monthly	Delegated Safeguarding Partners	R<75%; A75-99%; G100%
Scrutiny & challenge	Independent Scrutineer reports	Report due 2026	>80% recommendations implemented	Annual	Independent Scrutineer	R<60%; A60-80%; G>80%



For further information about the strategy or to get involved in the work we do, contact: -

Phone: **01204 337479**

Email: **boltonsafeguardingchildren@bolton.gov.uk**

Website: https://www.boltonsafeguardingchildren.org.uk/

This document is available in alternative formats, please contact 01204 337974 to request a copy.

Are you worried about a child?

If you are worried about the safety and wellbeing of a child, it is important to act.

To discuss your concerns, contact a member of our team on 01204 331500 or visit https://www.boltonsafeguardingchildren.org.uk/worried-child .