

**Types of abuse**

What is abuse??

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child either directly by inflicting harm, or indirectly, by failing to act to prevent harm.

Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting; by those known to them; or, more rarely, by a stranger. They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.

In this document you will find an explanation of all types of abuse and neglect and what different signs and symptoms to look for including the physical harms of each abuse and the emotional harms that may be caused by each type of abuse.

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Physical abuse

Important indicators of physical abuse are bruises or injuries that are either unexplained or inconsistent with the explanation given, or visible on the ‘soft’ parts of the body where accidental injuries are unlikely, e g, cheeks, abdomen, back and buttocks. A delay in seeking medical treatment when it is obviously necessary is also a cause for concern, although this can be more complicated with burns, as these are often delayed in presentation due to blistering taking place sometime later.

Physical abuse may involve

* Shaking
* Throwing
* Poisoning
* Burning or Scalding
* Drowning
* Suffocating
* Hitting
* Otherwise causing physicalharm to a child
* Fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child

The physical signs of abuse may include:

* unexplained bruising
* marks or injuries on any part of the body
* multiple bruises- in clusters, often on the upper arm, outside of the thigh
* cigarette burns
* human bite marks
* broken bones
* scalds, with upward splash marks,
* Multiple burns with a clearly demarcated edge.
* Changes in behaviour that can also indicate physical abuse:
* fear of parents being approached for an explanation
* aggressive behaviour or severe temper outbursts
* flinching when approached or touched
* reluctance to get changed, for example in hot weather
* depression
* withdrawn behaviour
* Running away from home.

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child’s emotional development.

It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or ‘making fun’ of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child’s developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another.

It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Emotional abuse can be difficult to measure, as there are often no outward physical signs.

There may be a developmental delay due to a failure to thrive and grow, although this will usually only be evident if the child puts on weight in other circumstances, for example when hospitalised or away from their parents’ care. Even so, children who appear well-cared for may nevertheless be emotionally abused by being taunted, put down or belittled. They may receive little or no love, affection or attention from their parents or carers. Emotional abuse can also take the form of children not being allowed to mix or play with other children.

Changes in behaviour which can indicate emotional abuse include:

* Neurotic behaviour e.g. sulking, hair twisting, rocking
* Being unable to play
* Fear of making mistakes
* Sudden speech disorders
* Self-harm
* Fear of parent being approached regarding their behaviour
* Developmental delay in terms of emotional progress

Sexual Abuse

Adults who use children to meet their own sexual needs abuse both girls and boys of all ages, including infants and toddlers. Usually, in cases of sexual abuse it is the child’s behaviour that may cause you to become concerned, although physical signs can also be present. In all cases, children who tell about sexual abuse do so because they want it to stop. It is important, therefore, that they are listened to and taken seriously. It is also important to remember that it not just adult men who sexually abuse children – there are increasing numbers of allegations of sexual abuse of children against women and sexual abuse can also be perpetrated by other children or young people.

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening.

Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

The activities may involve

* Physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex)
* Non-penetrative acts such as masturbation
* Kissing
* Rubbing and touching outside of clothing

They may also include non-contact activities, such as children

* Looking at, or in the production of, sexual images
* Watching sexual activities
* Encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways
* Grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet)

Changes in behaviour can indicate sexual abuse include:

* Sudden or unexplained changes in behaviour e.g. becoming aggressive or withdrawn
* Fear of being left with a specific person or group of people
* Having nightmares
* Running away from home
* Sexual knowledge which is beyond their age, or developmental level
* Sexual drawings or language
* Bedwetting
* Eating problems such as overeating or anorexia
* Self-harm or mutilation, sometimes
* Leading to suicide attempts
* Saying they have secrets they cannot tell anyone about
* Substance or drug abuse
* Suddenly having unexplained sources of money
* Not allowed to have friends (particularly in adolescence)
* Acting in a sexually explicit way towards adults

The physical signs of sexual abuse may include:

* Pain or itching in the genital area
* Bruising or bleeding near genital area
* Sexually transmitted disease
* Vaginal discharge or infection
* Stomach pains
* Discomfort when walking or sitting down
* Pregnancy

Neglect

Neglect can be a difficult form of abuse to recognise, yet have some of the most lasting and damaging effects on children.

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child’s basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairmentof the child’s health or development.

Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result ofmaternal substance abuse

Neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

* Provide adequate food
* Provide adequate clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment)
* Protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger
* Ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers)
* Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment
* It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child’s basic emotional needs.

Neglect

The physical signs of neglect may include:

* Constant hunger, sometimes stealing food from other children
* Constantly dirty or ‘smelly’
* Loss of weight, or being constantly underweight
* Inappropriate clothing for the conditions.

Changes in behaviour which can also indicate neglect may include:

* Complaining of being tired all the time
* Not requesting medical assistance or failing to attend appointments
* Having few friends
* Mentioning being left alone or unsupervised.

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

CSE is a form of sexual abuse in which a child or young person is forced or manipulated into sexual activities, often in exchange for alcohol, drugs, attention of or gifts.

The offender is normally outside of the home or family, children form all kinds of backgrounds and communities are equally as vulnerable by virtue of their age. It can happen to any age of child mainly ranging from 4 to 19, boys and young men are also sexually exploited, sexual exploitation of any child under the age of 18 is child abuse.

Grooming refers to actions deliberately aimed at establishing an emotional connection and trust with the child or young person in order to increase the likelihood in them engaging in sexual behaviour and exploitation. Types of grooming include the boyfriend model, the party model, the gangs and groups model, online, peer model.

Signs to look for:

* Truanting form school
* Erratic and aggressive behaviour
* Change in appearance
* Secretive and increased use of mobile phone
* Sudden involvement in crimes
* Staying out all night
* Unexplained gifts
* Sexual problems such as STD or Pregnancy

We can try and prevent this happening to any children in our care by:

* Passing on any possible sources to the police
* Listen to the children
* Set boundaries for online use

Parents can also:

* Keep up to date with your child’s friends
* Keep up to date with the online world
* Talk openly about healthy relationships

Any information about CSE must be referred to:

* Refer to police
* Social care
* Local safeguarding children’s board

More information can be found:

* PACEuk.info
* [www.safegaurdingchildreneu.co.uk](http://www.safegaurdingchildreneu.co.uk)

**Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)**

**Female genital mutilation (FGM) (sometimes referred to as female circumcision female genital cutting) refers to procedures that intentionally alter or cause injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons. The practice is illegal within the UK and to preform FGM on any UK resident outside of the UK is also illegal.**

**This may happen because of tradition with in communities and religions, women are lead to believe it is right of passage, it upholds the family honor, it cleanses and purifies the girl.** FGM is carried out on a range of ages from newborn to adolescence (13-19 years) or before marriage and even during pregnancy. FGM is often carried out by the grandmother of the child or even an aunt.

**There are four types of FGM these are:**

**Clitoridectomy where all of partial part of the clitoris is removed**

Excision partial or complete removal of clitoris and labia minora

Infibulation narrowing of the virginal opening through the creation of a covering.

Other procedures include, stretching, pricking piercing, pulling and scrapping

FGM has many health consequences both long and short term including:

* Difficulty walking or standing
* Spending longer in the bathroom or toilet
* Lengthy absence from class
* Noticeable behaviour changes
* Infection such as HIV
* Post-traumatic stress disorder
* Server pain and shock
* Infertility and mensuration obstruction
* Painful intercourse
* Substance misuse
* Difficulty with child birth
* Depression
* Death

For any help or advise you can contact the FGM helpline: 08000283550

Peer-on-peer abuse

Children are vulnerable to abuse by their peers. Peer-on-peer abuse is taken seriously by staff and will be subject to the same child protection procedures as other forms of abuse. Staff are aware of the potential uses of information technology for bullying and abusive behaviour between young people.

Staff will not dismiss abusive behaviour as normal between young people. The presence of one or more of the following in relationships between children should always trigger concern about the possibility of peer-on-peer abuse:

* Sexual activity (in primary school-aged children) of any kind, including sexting
* One of the children is significantly more dominant than the other (e.g. much older)
* One of the children is significantly more vulnerable than the other (e.g. in terms of disability, confidence, physical strength)
* There has been some use of threats, bribes or coercion to ensure compliance or secrecy.

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