

# Safeguarding Policy

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## *Children (aged 0-11)*

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# SECTION A

## Guidelines for Recognising and Responding to Potential Child Abuse

Child abuse is serious. All caregivers need to know how to respond to signs of abuse or allegations of abuse. The following guidelines are in place to meet that need.

### 1. Who is a child?

Any person under the age of 18 years.

### 2. What is abuse?

*Working together to safeguard children*<sup>1</sup> states that 'somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or 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.' Please see the appendix for definitions and signs of abuse.

The Church of England Safeguarding e-manual provides the following examples of types of abuse. This is not intended to be an exhaustive list but an illustrative guide as to the sort of behaviour which could give rise to a safeguarding concern.

1. Physical abuse
2. Domestic abuse
3. Neglect
4. Emotional abuse
5. Sexual abuse
6. Exploitation
  - a) Child sexual exploitation
  - b) Child Exploitation – Criminal, gang related
7. Modern slavery
8. Extremism and radicalisation
9. Bullying, cyberbullying and online abuse
10. Female genital mutilation
11. Spiritual abuse

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<sup>1</sup> Published by HM Government, 2013, quoted in *Policy for safeguarding in the Diocese of London*, 2015.

## Guidelines for when a child tells us they have been abused

We seek to create and maintain a safe environment for all. This includes being open and responding appropriately to concerns and allegations raised by children. Caregivers should avoid intentionally instigating a meeting with a child to receive a disclosure or take a statement from them – that is the role of local authorities' children's social care services or the police. However, if a child directly discloses about abuse happening to them, the following general guidelines should be followed:

### Respond

- Remain calm.
- Listen to the child carefully and in a manner that conveys they are being heard and taken seriously. Give the child the opportunity to tell their story in their own time.
- Ask questions only for clarification.
- Reassure the child that they have done the right thing by disclosing and that the church will work with statutory services to safeguard them.
- Do not make promises that cannot be kept – for example, that the disclosure will be kept secret.
- Explain to the child what will happen next – i.e. that you will inform the Minister in Charge ("**MiC**") or the Church Safeguarding Officer ("**CSO**") who will progress the disclosure.

### Record

- Make an accurate record of the disclosure (preferably within one hour, but always within 24 hours)
- Record dates and times of these events and when you made the record. Record what was said and when, what you said in reply and what was happening immediately beforehand (e.g. a description of the activity/situation).
- Keep all handwritten notes, even if subsequently typed. Such records should be kept in a secure place.

### Report

- **Emergency:** If you believe a child or adult is in immediate danger of significant or serious harm, contact the police. Ring 999.
- **Non-emergency:** Contact the MiC. If the allegation is against the MiC, contact the CSO. If neither are available, [contact the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor \("DSA"\)](#) directly. Contact details are also at the end of this document. The MiC/CSO will then seek advice from the DSA within 24 hours. They will act upon all directions given by the Diocese in the timescale given. They will also consider whether any additional action is required.
- You retain the right to report serious matters directly to Social Services or the police. Even so you must also contact either the MiC or CSO.
- If you are not sure whether this is a concern that needs reporting or not, it is always best still to check with the MiC or CSO. You don't need to mention names initially unless advised to do so.
- Apart from telling the MiC/CSO, the information must be treated as confidential and not shared with other church members.
- Do not investigate the concerns of abuse yourself. Do not contact anyone who may be implicated in the allegation or disclosure, even if they would normally be contacted as part of the procedure, until advice has been sought from the DSA or statutory agencies.
- Consider your own feelings and ask the MiC for pastoral support if needed.

**Please note that disclosures may be from adults regarding abuse that happened to them when they were children, or from children regarding abuse that happened to them when they were younger. Historical abuse must be treated as seriously as recent abuse, and each individual must be treated with great pastoral sensitivity.**

## SECTION B

### Safeguarding children whilst they are in our care

#### Caregiver ratios

Two caregiver rule: Two caregivers must be present in each room at all times.

It is not necessary for the two caregivers to be of opposite genders. In an emergency setting, the emergency takes priority over the ratios. However, children should not be left unattended in a room. At other times, with some planning, this scenario need not occur.

In addition to always having two caregivers present, we endorse the Church of England **minimum** requirements which are:

0-2 years	1 adult to 3 children	1:3
2-3 years	1 adult to 4 children	1:4
4-8 years	1 adult to 6 children	1:6
9-12 years	1 adult to 8 children	1:8

Each group should have at least two caregivers, even for smaller groups. Caregiver ratios for all groups should always be based on a risk assessment. For example, caregiver numbers may need to be increased for outdoor activities and more so if that activity is considered higher risk, potentially dangerous or when children with some disabilities or special needs are involved. Where more than one group meet in the same venue, and the groups can be seen by others, the total number of adults to children within the room should be within the ratio suggested but the individual group may have fewer adults.

If there are not enough caregivers on a given day, the caregivers must either:

- (1) recruit another DBS-screened individual to help or;
- (2) meet in the same venue as other screened caregivers, in full view of those caregivers.

For all groups and activities: -

1. A health and safety risk assessment must be undertaken.
2. A registration form must be completed for every child or young person who attends groups or activities. This should include up-to-date information on parents' contact numbers, medical information (e.g. allergies) and any special needs.
3. An attendance register must be kept and be available at all group meetings.
4. A first aid kit must be available on any premises that are used by children.
5. An accident and incident logbook must be available, and all accidents recorded. The logbook should be stored in a secure place. Any significant incidents must be recorded (e.g. a fight between children) and the Church Manager should be notified.
6. There should be access to a telephone, if possible.
7. Parents must sign a consent form before children are transported in a private car, and before any photography or images are taken.

In addition, when taking children offsite:

1. The church leadership must be informed and agree to the activity.
2. Details of the activity and any itinerary must be given in advance to parents and consent forms received in advance of the activity taking place.
3. Details of the activity and a list of contacts must be left with someone in the church.
4. Details of the activity and arrangements must be given to the MiC and/or CSO.
5. A risk assessment must be done, with confirmation that the activity is covered by church insurance.
6. A leader must be designated to take responsibility for First Aid.

## **Discipline**

All caregivers are responsible for providing a loving, respectful, and orderly atmosphere in which children can learn, play, and interact with others. This atmosphere should be maintained by preparing beforehand, proactively directing children towards acceptable activities, verbally encouraging positive behaviour and, when necessary, correcting or redirecting inappropriate behaviour.

Acceptable means of redirecting inappropriate behaviour include correcting the child verbally, withholding a certain privilege or activity for a brief time, or separating them from the group for a brief time (particularly if the behaviour is endangering or upsetting other children).

Caregivers should never use any form of physical punishment. If behaviour is uncontrollable or the child does not respond to the discipline measures above, the parents/guardians will be contacted. Caregivers should never yell at a young person except in circumstances where the young person is in danger or is at risk of causing danger to others.

## **Acceptable touch**

Sympathetic attention, humour, encouragement and appropriate physical contact are needed by children and adults. Some physical contact with children, particularly younger children, is appropriate. The following guidelines regarding touching are suggested:

1. Always ask permission.
2. Be mindful of your body position.
3. Keep everything public. A hug in the context of a group is very different from a hug behind closed doors.
4. Touch should be in response to a child's needs and not related to the helper's needs. It should be age appropriate, welcome and generally initiated by the child, not the church helper.
5. Avoid any physical contact that is or could be construed as sexual and/or abusive/offensive.
6. Allow the child to determine the degree of physical contact with others except in exceptional circumstances (e.g. when they need medical attention).

In addition:

1. You can allow people you support to give you brief hugs if you feel comfortable with this.
2. You can allow people you support to hold hands or link arms with you to help with travel and stability.
3. You should discourage people you support from touching your face. You can offer your hand instead.
4. You should discourage people you support from sitting on your lap. You can offer to sit side by side.
5. You should avoid using touch if the person you support is very distressed and is unlikely to tolerate it.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **Can I have a child sit on my lap when we're all sitting on the floor?**

You should discourage children above school age (usually 4+) from sitting on your lap. You can offer to sit side by side.

### **Can I play rough and tumble games with children?**

Yes you may – as long as the child is willing to play such games, it is being done in a safe/light-hearted and friendly manner, you are in public, and there is no way your actions could be misconstrued by a third party. If the child becomes distressed while playing such games, stop immediately and ensure they are adequately consoled by you or another adult. Bear in mind that the chummier you are with children in this way, the less likely you are to have any authority in their eyes. Remember too that they are not as strong as you.

### **Can I hold hands with a child?**

Yes you may, but only if there is a clear reason to do so, you are in public and there is no way your actions could be misconstrued by a third party. Reasons could include walking a child across a road, or to the bathroom, playing a game requiring hands held. For younger children this might happen frequently. For older children there will be very few occasions when this is ever appropriate.

### **Can I ever hug a child?**

Yes you may if a child is clearly distressed - as long as you are in public and there is no way your actions could be misconstrued by a third party. There may be other occasions when this might be appropriate, like congratulating them. Bear in mind your normal character – if you rarely hug anyone you should probably not ever hug a child in your care. If hugging is one way you interact with all kinds of people you might need to rein yourself in a bit but not necessarily completely. Touch should be related to the child's needs, not the caregiver's, and should be age-appropriate and generally initiated by the child rather than the caregiver. Avoid any physical activity that is, or may be thought to be, sexually stimulating to the adult or the child.

### **Can I ever tickle a child?**

It is difficult to see why a child would *need* to be tickled by a caregiver. It is best avoided when acting as a caregiver. This is not to say that a child should not be tickled but there is a time and a place.

### **Can I ever physically restrain a child?**

Yes. If a child is being a danger to themselves or to another person restraint, used in proportion to the situation, may be necessary. Outside these scenarios physical restraint should be required rarely.

### **Can I take a picture of a child in my care?**

No. Caregivers must never take any pictures of children they are caring for unless they have received explicit permission from the child's parents/guardians. For the avoidance of doubt, caregivers must also never post any pictures of the children in their care on social media platforms including but not limited to Instagram, Facebook, WhatsApp and or Snapchat.

## **Toileting**

A caregiver may change the nappy for any baby if required. Caregivers must exercise judgement about when it is appropriate to do so, prioritising the child's wellbeing and comfort.

If a preschool (typically 3+ years old) or school-aged child requires assistance in going to the toilet, it is best for assistance to be given by a caregiver of the same gender where possible. The caregiver should prepare the toilet with the child seat and step and then wait outside the closed/ajar cubicle door unless the child requires more assistance. The cubicle door must not be closed with the caregiver and child inside.

If a school-aged child needs to use the toilet, a toilet break should be organised. In situations where the group is small, it is best for leaders to take a whole group trip with all leaders and all children. If the group is too large for this and a potty cannot be used, one leader may take up to three children to the toilet if it is expected to be quick. If it is not likely to be quick, the help of another DBS cleared leader should be asked of (e.g. via a steward) to maintain ratio numbers.

## **Food**

The only foods caregivers can give to children are:

1. Cake or biscuits or fruit provided by the church.
2. Food provided by a parent/guardian for a specific child.

No other food is given. Food for a specific child must not generally be shared with any other child (except with permission of the children's parents/guardians). Some children in our care may have severe allergies to certain foods and giving them the wrong food could be serious. Therefore, even when providing permissible food to children, caregivers must check the child's allergen label.

## **Risk management/illness/accidents**

Caregivers should consider the health and safety of all children and caregivers when organising activities or planning games.

Children with infectious illnesses must be kept at home and not join the children's groups. If a young person appears ill whilst in the church's care, caregivers will use their discretion to determine whether the young person should be isolated from other young people by a caregiver, (who will remain with them) and whether parents/guardians should be contacted to collect their child.

A basic first aid kit must be readily available at all times. All caregivers should be familiar with its location. In the event of a life-threatening illness or injury, emergency medical services will be called first, and the parents will be located and informed immediately. Caregivers will report all injuries, whether major or minor to the Church Manager.

Caregivers should be familiar with evacuation procedures, including where the fire exits are located and where the meeting point is, should the fire alarm sound.



## **Safeguarding children with special educational needs and disabilities**

Safeguards for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) are essentially the same as for all children. Children with SEND have exactly the same human rights to be safe from abuse and neglect, and to be protected from harm as other children.

However, research suggests that children with SEND may be generally more vulnerable to significant harm through physical, sexual, emotional abuse and/or neglect than other children. Children with SEND can be abused and neglected in ways that other children cannot, and the early indicators suggestive of abuse and neglect can be more complicated. They face an increased risk of abuse and neglect, including bullying, for a variety of reasons including:

1. Greater dependency on parents/carers for practical assistance in their day to day lives, such as feeding or personal care.
2. Impaired capacity to recognise, resist or avoid abuse, or feeling too scared to report abuse/bullying.
3. Speech, language and communication needs/barriers which can make it more difficult to tell other adults what is happening and get them to understand.
4. Increased likelihood of social isolation, with fewer outside contacts than non-disabled children, resulting in less access to someone they trust to disclose abuse to.
5. An embedded cultural/societal assumption that abuse and neglect does not happen to disabled children, leading to a lack of vigilance, spotting of the signs of abuse and reporting of concerns.
6. Empathy on the part of professionals/practitioners with parents/carers, who are felt to be under considerable stress, leading to certain behaviour/treatment being accepted by other adults rather than concerns being raised.
7. Behavioural/physical indicators, such as (self-)injury or withdrawal, can be interpreted as part of the child's disability or condition rather than as the result of abuse/neglect (or vice versa), and therefore abuse/neglect can be missed and go unreported.
8. Being perceived as physically or behaviourally different from others, and therefore more likely to be the victim of bullying or intimidation.

Where the participants in a group or activity at SNCA includes a child with SEND, caregivers must be especially vigilant to the potential increased risk of abuse and neglect, and the additional action that will be needed to ensure this policy and procedure is enacted for that child as it would be for any other child. Reasonable attempts should be made to adapt activities/communication for children with SEND with due consideration for their wellbeing.

Caregivers must be additionally aware of the following possible indicators of abuse or neglect for a child with SEND:

1. A bruise in a site that might not be of concern on a non-disabled child, such as the shin, might be of concern on a nonmobile child.
2. Malnourishment, potentially due to not getting enough help with feeding.
3. Force feeding.
4. Unjustified or excessive use of restraint.
5. Rough handling or extreme approach to behaviour modification (e.g. withholding of liquid, food, medication, clothing).
6. Poor grasp of a child's means of communication.
7. Ill-fitting equipment, e.g. callipers, sleep boards, inappropriate splinting.
8. Misappropriation of a child's finances.
9. Invasive procedures that are unnecessary or carried out against the child's will.
10. Misuse of medication, or deliberate failure to follow medication or therapeutic programmes.
11. Age or culturally inappropriate care and support.

Even subtle changes in behaviour may be a child communicating that something is wrong and/or that they are being abused. It is vital that caregivers for children with SEND are aware of changing patterns of behaviour and potential causes. Where there are concerns about the welfare of a child with SEND, caregivers should act upon them in accordance with this policy as they would for any other child.

Where a child with SEND has communication needs, special attention should be paid to gaining a clear understanding of the child's perception of events, wishes and feelings. This may require the involvement of children's social care or speech and language clinicians for non-verbal children.

## **Supplementary Information for Specific Ministry Areas**

### **(1) Sunday Crèche & Sunday School**

#### **Safeguarding children as they arrive and depart**

The SNCA Safeguarding Policy is applied during the time period a child is in the care of the leaders of the advertised activity. This time period is clearly marked at the beginning and end by a formal system of handover between parents/guardians and the caregivers. Parents/guardians are responsible for their children before they are taken to their groups and once they have been collected from their groups or returned to them by caregivers.

#### **Transition of children from parents/guardians to caregivers**

Parents/guardians, if unaware, should be told when and where the group happens. Parents/guardians should take their Crèche and Sunday School aged children there just before the service. This marks the official start of the caregiver's responsibilities. Parents/guardians should make themselves known at drop-off so that the caregivers know who will collect them.

At the end of the service, a parent/guardian should pick up their child from the room. Other adults are not able to take someone else's child from the group unless the parent of the child has expressly given permission to the caregivers in advance. If parents/guardians are more than 10 minutes late, caregivers should try to get the attention of someone who can ask the parent to come and collect their child, e.g. another parent/staff member in the office, or caregivers can call the parent/guardian. Failing that, caregivers can together take any remaining children down to their parents as long as they deem it safe to do so. This marks the official end to the caregivers' responsibility for the child.

#### **Registering**

All children and caregivers present in each group must be registered. Completed registers will be filed and kept secure for an indefinite period. If any allegation of abuse is made in years to come then the church will be able to find out who was present on a given date.

A child registration form should be filed for each new child in Crèche/Sunday School. These forms should be completed by a parent/guardian and available in registration folders for the leaders to consult. Leaders should familiarise themselves with any health issues of the children in their specific group. This includes the allergy labels which should be stuck on each child in a clear, visible, and appropriate location (e.g. their back).

## **(2) Weekends Away**

If any weekend away advertises childcare, or if provision is made for volunteers to help in addition to parents or designated guardians, then the childcare for that weekend comes under our Safeguarding Policy and must be run accordingly, following the same procedures as Sunday Crèche & Sunday School.

All caregivers must be screened, and the same regulations concerning ratios, registration, discipline, toileting, food and accidents must be followed as in Sunday Crèche/Sunday School, with the following alterations/additions:

### **Recruitment of temporary volunteers**

On occasion, caregivers from partner churches may be recruited to support Crèche/Sunday School during weekends away. SNCA will check that they were recruited following Safer Recruitment procedures at their church, that they are currently in good standing, and the individual confirming that they have read and agree to SNCA's safeguarding policies.

### **Registering**

Children are registered for the weekend when initially signed up so no further registration is needed when their specific groups meet. However, parents must drop off and collect their children at the beginning and end of the advertised children's programme slots. This marks the official start and end of caregiver responsibilities for these children.

### **Outdoor provision**

On rare occasions and where weather permits, the group may have Sunday School outside. This will only occur with the approval of all parents. On such occasions, Sunday School will remain on-site and in full view of the public. Sunday School will return to the drop-off location before the allocated time for parents to collect their children.

*Note: Outside of the formal care that may be provided during a weekend away, families may make informal arrangements within the congregation. Such arrangements are neither organised nor managed by SNCA. Where this occurs, families are strongly encouraged to take full responsibility for assessing the suitability of the volunteer.*

## **(3) Women in the Word on Fridays (WWF)**

**WWF** meets most Fridays in homes throughout London. Women are free to bring their own children to a local group, yet they remain responsible for their own children throughout the time the group meets.

Women in a local group are free to join together amongst themselves and co-ordinate childcare for their own children whilst the group meets. This may include using an au pair or nanny, or arranging for additional volunteers to cover childcare.

This is a private arrangement happening in a home and is akin to babysitting. The women in the group must take responsibility for assessing the suitability of any volunteer.

WWF is not covered by the SNCA safeguarding policy, and as such it is not guaranteed that a volunteer from the congregation is DBS-checked (although they may be).

## **(4) Other Events/Activities**

From time to time there may be extra events where children may be present.

### **Midweek Small Groups**

Crèche-aged children are welcome to the Small Group evenings at the discretion of the Small Group evening leader, but remain in the care of their parents/guardians throughout.

### **Occasional Courses/Seminars/Training days**

(For example, Christianity Explored, Evangelism Training, Marriage/Parenting Days)

Childcare may be provided if required. All caregivers must be screened in accordance with the SNCA Safeguarding Policy. Caregiver ratios must be maintained.

A parent/guardian must drop off and collect their children at the pre-arranged venue. This marks the official start and end of caregiver responsibilities for these children.

### **Babysitting**

Babysitting is an area in which we are unable to provide formal provision. Families can make informal arrangements within the congregation and must take full responsibility for assessing the suitability of the volunteer.

### **External Events**

Some children may attend City Summer School, whose children's programme is run and covered by St Helen Bishopsgate Church and their Safeguarding policy.

## Contact Names and Details

### Safeguarding Committee

Frank Owusu-Sekyere (Chair)  
*Church Safeguarding Officer*  
safeguarding@snca.co.uk

Tom Wright  
*Assistant Minister (Ministry Leader for London Bridge Talks & Victoria Talks)*  
*Children's Coordinator; Children's and Vulnerable Adults' Champion*  
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Tricia Owusu-Sekyere  
*Trustee*

Suzie Burden  
*Church Manager and Lead Safeguarding Recruiter*  
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### SNCA Staff

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Tom Wright  
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Suzie Burden  
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Carrie Fishlock  
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Rolin Lo  
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rolin@snca.co.uk

Phyllida Stuart  
*Children's Work Administrator and Safeguarding Recruiter*  
phyllida@snca.co.uk

## **National Contacts**

### **Diocese of London**

Helpline: 02079321224

[safeguarding@london.anglican.org](mailto:safeguarding@london.anglican.org)

### **Thirtyone:Eight**

Helpline: 0303 003 11 11

<https://thirtyoneeight.org/>

### **City of London Corporation Children and Families Team**

020 7332 3621 (Monday to Friday, 9am-5pm)

020 8356 2710 (weekdays after 5pm, weekends and bank holidays)

### **City of London Social Care Services**

020 7332 1224 (Monday to Friday, 9am - 5pm)

020 8356 2300 (weekdays after 5pm, weekends and bank holidays)

### **Child Line NSPCC**

Freepost 1111, London N1 0BR Child Protection Helpline,

Tel. 0800 1111 0808 800 5000

(full number is just these 8 digits)

**Family Lives** (previously Parentline) 0808 800 222

**Domestic Violence Helpline (for females)** 0808 2000 247

**Mankind (for males)** 01823 334244

**Police non-emergency phone line** 101

## **Further resources**

'Protecting all God's children: The Child Protection Policy of the Church of England', 2010

'Policy for Safeguarding in the Diocese of London', 2015

'The Church of England, House of Bishops, Parish safeguarding handbook' – promoting a safer church, October 2018

'The Care Act 2014, and the Care and Support Statutory Guidance 2016' (Chapter 14)

London Multi Agency Safeguarding Adults Policy and Procedures 2015

**[www.london.anglican.org/support/safeguarding](http://www.london.anglican.org/support/safeguarding)**

# APPENDIX

## Definitions Of Abuse

Taken from Church of England Safeguarding e-manual

<https://www.churchofengland.org/safeguarding/safeguarding-emanual/safeguarding-children-young-people-and-vulnerable-adults/2>

### Physical abuse

#### **What it is**

Hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

#### **Signs you may see**

Bumps and bruises don't always mean someone is being physically abused. Although there isn't just one sign or symptom to look out for, it's important to be aware of the signs. If someone regularly has injuries, there seems to be a pattern to the injuries or the explanation doesn't match the injuries, then this should be reported.

Symptoms may include: bruises, flinching away from others, wearing clothes that cover up, even in warm weather, burns or scalds, broken or fractured bones, bite marks.

Head injuries in babies and toddlers can be signs of abuse so it's important to be aware of these. Visible signs may include: Swelling, bruising, fractures, being extremely sleepy or unconscious, breathing problems, seizures, vomiting, unusual behaviour, such as being irritable or not feeding properly.

### Domestic Abuse

#### **What it is**

Domestic abuse is any type of controlling, bullying, threatening or violent behaviour between people in a relationship. It can seriously harm children and young people and witnessing domestic abuse is child abuse.

It's important to remember domestic abuse:

- can happen inside and outside the home.
- can happen over the phone, on the internet and on social networking sites.
- can happen in any relationship and can continue even after the relationship has ended and that both males and females can be abused or abusers.

#### **Signs you may see**

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 now recognises that children are victims of domestic abuse as well as their parents. It may be harder to detect in children, but signs you might see include:

- aggression or bullying, anti-social behaviour, like vandalism
- anxiety, depression or suicidal thoughts
- attention seeking
- bed-wetting, nightmares or insomnia
- constant or regular sickness, like colds, headaches and mouth ulcers
- drug or alcohol use
- eating disorders
- problems in school or trouble learning
- tantrums or withdrawal.

## **Neglect**

### **What it is**

The persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- provide adequate food, 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 caregivers)
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

The NSPCC adds: Neglect can be a lot of different things, which can make it hard to spot. But broadly speaking, there are 4 types of neglect.

- Physical neglect: A child's basic needs, such as food, clothing or shelter, are not met or they aren't properly supervised or kept safe.
- Educational neglect: A parent doesn't ensure their child is given an education.
- Emotional neglect: A child doesn't get the nurture and stimulation they need. This could be through ignoring, humiliating, intimidating or isolating them.
- Medical neglect: A child isn't given proper health care. This includes dental care and refusing or ignoring medical recommendations.

### **Signs you may see**

Neglect can be really difficult to spot. Having one of the signs doesn't necessarily mean a child is being neglected. But if you notice multiple signs that last for a while, they might show there's a serious problem. Children and young people who are neglected might have:

- Poor appearance and hygiene: being smelly or dirty, being hungry or not given money for food, having unwashed clothes, having the wrong clothing, such as no warm clothes in winter, having frequent and untreated nappy rash in infants.
- Health and development problems: regular illness, infections or dental issues, missed medical appointments, such as for vaccinations, poor language or social skills, tiredness, repeated accidental injuries, often caused by lack of supervision, skin issues, such as sores, rashes, flea bites, scabies or ringworm.
- Housing and family issues: living in an unsuitable home environment, such as having no heating, being left alone for a long time, taking on the role of carer for other family members.
- Change in behaviour: becoming clingy, becoming aggressive, being withdrawn, depressed or anxious, changes in eating habits, displaying obsessive behaviour, finding it hard to concentrate or take part in activities, missing school, showing signs of self-harm, using drugs or alcohol.



## **Emotional abuse**

### **What it 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 a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person.
- not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate.
- age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children, interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability.
- overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction.
- seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying),
- 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.

### **Signs you may see**

There might not be any obvious physical signs of emotional abuse. A child or young person might not tell anyone what's happening until they reach a 'crisis point'. That's why it's important to look out for signs in how a child or young person is acting.

As children grow up, their emotions change. This means it can be difficult to tell if they're being emotionally abused. But children who are being emotionally abused might:

- seem unconfident or lack self-assurance.
- struggle to control their emotions.
- have difficulty making or maintaining relationships.
- act in a way that's inappropriate for their age.

Babies and pre-school children who are being emotionally abused or neglected might:

- be overly affectionate to strangers or people they don't know well.
- seem unconfident, wary or anxious.
- not have a close relationship or bond with their parents.
- be aggressive or cruel towards other children or animals.

Older children/young people might:

- use language you wouldn't expect them to know for their age.
- act in a way or know about things you wouldn't expect them to know for their age.
- struggle to control their emotions.
- have extreme outbursts.
- seem isolated from their parents.
- lack social skills and have few or no friends.

## Sexual abuse

### **What it is**

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. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing.

They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse.

Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse.

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

### **Signs you may see**

Knowing the signs of sexual abuse can help give a voice to children and young people. Sometimes children won't understand that what's happening to them is wrong. Or they might be scared to speak out. Some of the signs you might notice include:

- avoiding being alone with or frightened of people or a person they know.
- language or sexual behaviour you wouldn't expect them to know.
- having nightmares or bed-wetting.
- self-harm.
- changes in eating habits or developing an eating problem.
- alcohol or drug misuse.

If a child is being or has been sexually abused online, they might:

- spend a lot more or a lot less time than usual online, texting, gaming or using social media.
- seem distant, upset or angry after using the internet or texting.
- be secretive about who they're talking to and what they're doing online or on their mobile phone.
- have lots of new phone numbers, texts or email addresses on their mobile phone, laptop or tablet.
- Children and young people might also drop hints and clues about the abuse.

## Exploitation

### **a) Child sexual exploitation**

#### **What it is**

Occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity:

- a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or
- b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator.

The victim may have been sexually **exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual**. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology. Exploitation can take place between a child and an adult as well as 'peer on peer' (for example between one young person and another).

The NSPCC adds, when a child/young person is sexually exploited online they might be persuaded or forced to send or post sexually explicit images of themselves, film or stream sexual activities or have sexual conversations. Once an abuser has images, video or copies of conversations, they might use threats and blackmail to force a young person to take part in other sexual activity. They may also share the images and videos with others or circulate them online.

Gangs use sexual exploitation to exert power and control, for initiation or to use sexual violence as a weapon. Children or young people might be invited to parties or gatherings with others their own age or adults and given drugs and alcohol. They may be assaulted and sexually abused by one person or multiple perpetrators. The sexual assaults and abuse can be violent, humiliating and degrading.

## **b) Child Exploitation – Criminal, gang related**

### **What it is**

As set out in the Serious Violence Strategy, published by the Home Office, where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into any criminal activity:

- a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or
- b) for the financial or other advantage of the perpetrator or facilitator and/or
- c) through violence or the threat of violence.

The victim may have been criminally exploited **even if the activity appears consensual**. Child criminal exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

This includes 'County Lines', a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs into one or more importing areas within the UK, using dedicated mobile phone lines or other forms of 'deal lines'. They are likely to exploit children and vulnerable adults to move and store the drugs and money, and they will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons. Exploitation can take place between a child and an adult as well as 'peer on peer' (for example between one young person and another).

### **Signs you may see**

- Frequently absent from and doing badly in school.
- Going missing from home, staying out late and travelling for unexplained reasons.
- In a relationship or hanging out with someone older than them.
- Being angry, aggressive or violent.
- Being isolated or withdrawn.
- Having unexplained money and buying new things.
- Wearing clothes or accessories in gang colours or getting tattoos.
- Using new slang words.
- Spending more time on social media and being secretive about time online.
- Making more calls or sending more texts, possibly on a new phone or phones.
- Self-harming and feeling emotionally unwell.
- Taking drugs and abusing alcohol.
- Committing petty crimes like shoplifting or vandalism.
- Unexplained injuries and refusing to seek medical help.
- Carrying weapons or having a dangerous breed of dog.

## **Modern Slavery**

### **What it is**

- Slavery
- Human trafficking
- Forced labour and domestic servitude
- Traffickers and slave masters using whatever means they have at their disposal to coerce, deceive and force individuals into a life of abuse, servitude and inhumane treatment.

### **Signs you may see**

- Shows signs of physical or psychological abuse and untreated injuries
- Looks malnourished or unkempt, or appears withdrawn and neglected.
- Seems under the control or influence of others.
- Wears the same clothes every day.
- Wears no safety equipment even if their work requires it.
- Living in dirty, cramped or overcrowded accommodation.
- Living and working at the same address.
- Appears unfamiliar with their neighbourhood or where they work.
- Rarely allowed to travel on their own.
- Collected and dropped off on a regular basis early in the morning or late at night.
- In a crowded minibus with other workers.
- Has no control of their identification documents such as their passport.
- Reluctant to seek help and avoids eye contact.
- Appears frightened or hesitant to talk to strangers.
- Fear of police, don't know who to trust or where to get help.
- Afraid of deportation, and risk of violence to them or their family.

## **Extremism and Radicalisation**

### **What it is**

Radicalisation is the process through which a person comes to support or be involved in extremist ideologies. It can result in a person becoming drawn into terrorism and is in itself a form of harm.

Extremism goes beyond terrorism and includes people who target the vulnerable – including the young – by seeking to sow division between communities on the basis of race, faith or denomination; justify discrimination towards women and girls; persuade others that minorities are inferior; or argue against the primacy of democracy and the rule of law in our society. This can include harmful minority religions (“cults”).

### **Signs you may see**

- Isolating themselves from family and friends
- Talking as if from a scripted speech
- Unwillingness or inability to discuss their views
- A sudden disrespectful attitude towards others
- Increased levels of anger
- Increased secretiveness, especially around internet use.

Children who are at risk of radicalisation may have low self-esteem or be victims of bullying or discrimination. Extremists might target them and tell them they can be part of something special, later persuading them into cutting themselves off from their friends and family. However, these signs don't

necessarily mean a child is being radicalised – it may be normal teenage behaviour or a sign that something else is wrong.

## **Bullying, cyberbullying and online abuse**

### **What it is**

Bullying can include many different forms of abuse, including physical and emotional abuse, and typically (but not exclusively) takes place between peers.

Bullying is behaviour that hurts someone else. It includes name calling, hitting, pushing, spreading rumours, threatening or undermining someone.

It can happen anywhere – at school, at home, online, at work or in church. It's usually repeated over a long period of time and can hurt a child both physically and emotionally.

Cyberbullying can include:

- sending threatening or abusive text messages
- creating and sharing embarrassing images or videos
- trolling – the sending of menacing or upsetting messages on social networks, chat rooms or online games.
- shaming someone online
- setting up hate sites or groups about a particular child
- encouraging young people to self-harm
- revenge porn
- trolling.

### **Signs you may see**

- Being afraid to go to school or youth groups (or work or church), being mysteriously 'ill' each morning, or skipping school/youth group.
- Being nervous, losing confidence, or becoming distressed and withdrawn
- Problems with eating or sleeping.
- Belongings getting 'lost' or damaged.
- Spending a lot more or a lot less time than usual online, texting, gaming or using social media
- Seeming distant, upset or angry after using the internet or texting.
- Being secretive about who they're talking to and what they're doing online or on their mobile phone.
- Physical injuries, such as unexplained bruises.
- Not doing as well at school.
- Asking for, or stealing, money (to give to whoever's bullying them).
- Bullying others.

## **Female Genital Mutilation**

### **What it is**

Female genital mutilation (FGM) is when a female's genitals are deliberately altered or removed for non-medical reasons. It's also known as 'female circumcision' or 'cutting' but has many other names. The practice is not required by any religion and is medically unnecessary, painful and has serious health consequences at the time it is carried out and in later life.

The procedure is typically performed on girls of any age but is also performed on newborn infants and on young women before marriage/ pregnancy.

FGM may be practised illegally by doctors or traditional health workers in the UK, or girls may be sent abroad for the procedure. FGM is illegal in the UK, under the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 (as amended).

### **Signs you may see**

Signs FGM might happen:

- A relative or someone known as a 'cutter' visiting from abroad.
- A special occasion or ceremony takes place where a girl 'becomes a woman' or is 'prepared for marriage'.
- A female relative, like a mother, sister or aunt has undergone FGM.
- A family arranges a long holiday overseas or visits a family abroad during the summer holidays.
- A girl has an unexpected or long absence from school.
- A girl struggles to keep up in school.
- A girl runs away – or plans to run away - from home.

Signs FGM might have taken place:

- Having difficulty walking, standing or sitting.
- Spending longer in the bathroom or toilet.
- Appearing quiet, anxious or depressed.
- Acting differently after an absence from school or college.
- Reluctance to go to the doctors or have routine medical examinations.
- Asking for help – though they might not be explicit about the problem because they're scared or embarrassed.

## **Spiritual Abuse**

### **What it is:**

Spiritual abuse is the inappropriate use of religious belief or practices to attempt to 'force' religious values or behaviours onto vulnerable people. It applies to occasions when any of the above types of abuse are purportedly done in God's name.

### **Signs you may see:**

- The misuse of the authority of leadership
- Penitential discipline
- Oppressive teaching
- Intrusive healing and deliverance ministries, which may result in physical, emotional, or sexual harm.