

# Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk of Abuse and Neglect

Safeguarding is Everybody's Business



## Introduction

All local authorities, including district/borough councils in England, have a responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and adults who are at risk of abuse and neglect.

Safeguarding children and adults who are at risk of abuse and neglect is everyone's responsibility. Unfortunately abuse of children and adults at risk can happen at any time, anywhere and be perpetrated by anyone. Abuse is not acceptable and must not be tolerated. Often children and adults at risk do not realise they are a victim of abuse, or are unable to protect themselves from harm.



This is why it is important that action is taken and people know what to do when they have safeguarding concerns. It is paramount that all individuals working either directly or indirectly with children and adults at risk have an understanding of safeguarding commensurate to their role, and know how to report safeguarding concerns, in relation to children or adults at risk.

## What is safeguarding?

Essentially, safeguarding means protecting children and adults at risk from ill-treatment and harm. Children are those who are under 18 years of age.

### Adults at risk:

- have care and support needs (whether or not the local authority is meeting any of those needs)
- are experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect; and
- are unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of, abuse or neglect as a result of those care and support needs

**Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility**

**This leaflet gives you more information about:**

- Types of abuse and signs to look out for
- What to do if you have safeguarding concerns

## **What do we mean by abuse?**

Abuse, including neglect, are forms of ill-treatment. Somebody may abuse a child or adult at risk by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. There are many different types of abuse; some examples are:

### **Physical Abuse**

Hitting, kicking, shoving, burning, scalding, or broken bones that have not happened by accident.

**Signs of physical abuse may include:**

- Bruises, cuts and burns
- Emotional distress
- Unusual patterns of injury

### **Emotional Abuse**

Making a child or adult at risk feel constantly worthless or unloved, frightened, intimidated or in danger. It may also involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another.

**Signs of emotional abuse may include:**

- Ignoring, imitating or mocking the child or adult
- Insulting or isolating the child or adult
- Name calling and yelling
- Swearing or threatening
- Threatening to take away something important



**It is important to act immediately if you suspect someone is being harmed or abused**

## Neglect

The child or adult at risk is not being looked after properly. This may include not being fed or clothed properly. A child may be left alone or with unsuitable caregivers, or may not be taken to the doctors when they are unwell.

Signs of neglect may include:

- Parents/ carers ignoring physical, emotional or medical care needs
- Parents/ carers withholding the necessities of life such as food, shelter and appropriate clothing
- Loss of weight for no apparent reason
- Becoming increasingly dirty and unkempt



## Sexual Abuse

This includes rape, indecent exposure, inappropriate touching encouraging a child to take part in, or watch sexual activities. In the case of an adult at risk it is any type of inappropriate sexual behaviour.

Signs of sexual abuse may include:

- Inappropriate sexual awareness
- Engaging in sexual explicit behaviour
- Distrust of adults, particularly where a close relationship would normally be expected
- Emotional distress

**Being aware of indicators may help identify that abuse could be taking place**

## Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

This is a form of sexual abuse. Children under the age of 18 are given something in return for any sexual activity, for example alcohol, drugs, accommodation, cigarettes, food, attention or money. The child being exploited may believe the abuser is their friend, boyfriend or girlfriend.

People who sexually exploit children have power over them because of age, gender, intellect, physical strength and/or resources. Violence, coercion and intimidation are common.

Signs of a child being at risk of, or involved in CSE may include:

- going missing for periods of time or regularly returning home late
- skipping school
- using drugs and/or alcohol
- appearing with unexplained gifts or possessions that can't be accounted for
- having mood swings and changes in temperament
- displaying inappropriate sexualised behaviour, such as over-familiarity with strangers, dressing in a sexualised manner or sending sexualised images by mobile phone ("sexting")
- they may also show signs of unexplained physical harm, such as bruising and cigarette burns



**CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION**  
**IT'S NOT OK**

**SEXUAL EXPLOITATION IS ABUSE**

We need your eyes and ears to help prevent it

[www.knowaboutcse.co.uk/business](http://www.knowaboutcse.co.uk/business)

*I can't believe what he made me do*

**CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION (CSE) IS A FORM OF SEXUAL ABUSE**

CSE involves perpetrators grooming children or young people to gain their trust before sexually abusing them. The child may not know this is happening.

Abusers often make use of taxis when grooming a child or to move a child to a different location. Unusual behaviour such as young people or groups of men being dropped off at the same location may be a sign of a child being groomed.

Abusers often make use of food businesses when grooming a child, including places where they can buy their victims' 'treats' such as food.

Businesses can often stop child sexual exploitation by spotting unusual behaviour such as children and young people being scared, or being under the influence of alcohol.

**DON'T KEEP YOUR CONCERNS TO YOURSELF.**

For more information, support or to report it, call:  
**0800 1313 126** (Staffordshire) or **01782 253 100** (Stoke-on-Trent)  
Police on **101** or the NSPCC on **0808 800 5000** or **999** in an emergency

[www.knowaboutcse.co.uk/business](http://www.knowaboutcse.co.uk/business)

**For more information about CSE, visit**  
**[www.knowaboutcse.co.uk](http://www.knowaboutcse.co.uk)**

## Modern Slavery

Encompasses slavery, human trafficking, forced labour and domestic servitude. Traffickers use whatever means to force individuals into a life of abuse and inhumane treatment.

### Signs of modern slavery may include:

- Physical appearance – victims may show signs of physical or emotional abuse, look malnourished, unkempt or appear withdrawn
- Isolation – victims may rarely be allowed to travel on their own, seem under the control, influence of others, rarely interact or appear unfamiliar with their neighbourhood or where they work
- Poor living conditions – victims may be living in dirty, cramped or overcrowded accommodation and/or living and working at the same address
- Few or no personal effects - victims may have no identification documents
- Restricted freedom of movement – travel documents may have been retained e.g. passports
- Unusual travel times – they may be dropped off /collected for work on a regular basis either very early or late at night
- Reluctant to seek help – victims may avoid eye contact, appear frightened or hesitant to talk to strangers, fear law enforcement for many reasons, such as not knowing who to trust or where to get help, fear of deportation, fear of violence to them or their family



**For more information about modern slavery, visit [www.modernslavery.co.uk](http://www.modernslavery.co.uk)**

## What should I do?

If you see or hear something that concerns you, or you suspect somebody is being abused, or someone tells you they are being abused, **report it without delay**. Don't think that someone else will do it. Other people might not have seen or heard something that you have, or know what to do about it.

If you believe a child or adult is at risk of immediate harm or needs medical attention, **phone 999** and report the incident.

## What should I do if I think a child is being harmed?

Telephone the First Response Team at the MASH (Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub). **0800 1313126**

Emergency Duty Service (Out of Hours) **0345 6042886**

## What should I do if I think an adult at risk is being harmed?

Telephone the contact centre on **0845 6042719**

Emergency Duty Service (Out of Hours)  
**0345 6042886**

## Do I have to give my name?

No – it is your choice, if you decide you want to remain anonymous that decision will be respected.



**For more information visit**  
**[www.tamworth.gov.uk/safeguarding](http://www.tamworth.gov.uk/safeguarding)**

**If you would like this document in an alternative format or language, please contact us on 01827 709709**



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