

What is abuse and neglect?

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or 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 others (e.g. via the internet).

They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.

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. 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 (including via the internet).

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

Signs that MAY INDICATE Sexual Abuse:

- Sudden changes in behaviour and school performance
- Displays of affection which are sexual and age inappropriate
- Self harm, self mutilation or attempts at suicide
- Alluding to secrets which they cannot reveal
- Tendency to cling or need constant reassurance
- Regression to younger behaviour for example thumb sucking, playing with discarded toys, acting like a baby
- Bed wetting / incontinence
- Unexplained gifts or money
- Depression and withdrawal
- Fear of undressing for gym activities
- Sexually Transmitted Disease
- Fire setting

IT IS ALSO IMPORTANT TO NOTE THAT THERE MAY BE NO SIGNS

CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

Sexual exploitation is where a young person under 18 receives 'something' (e.g. food, accommodation, drugs, gifts, money) as a result of performing, and/or others performing on them, sexual activities.

Child sexual exploitation can occur through use of technology, for example the persuasion to post sexual images on the internet/mobile phones with no immediate payment or gain.

In all cases the person exploiting the young person has power over them by virtue of age, gender, intellect, physical strength and/or economic or other resources.

Violence, coercion and intimidation are common, involvement in exploitative relationship being characterised in the main by the child or young person's limited availability of choice resulting from their social/economic and/or emotional vulnerability.

Dept for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) Safeguarding Children & Young People from Sexual Exploitation (2009)

Signs that MAY indicate Child Sexual Exploitation:

- Going missing from school/home/care placement
- Associating with older people/adults
- Isolation from family/friends/peer group
- Physical symptoms including bruising/STI's
- Substance misuse
- Mental health
- Unexplained possessions, goods and or money

The indicators can be spotted when speaking to the young person themselves or family/friends

Physical Abuse

- May involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning or 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

Head injuries tend to involve the parietal bone, occiput or forehead

Forehead

Nose

Chin

Palm of hand

Elbows

Knees

Shins

REMEMBER

Accidental injuries typically:

- involve bony prominences
- match the history
- are in keeping with the development of the child

Typical Accidental Injuries

Ears – especially pinch marks involving both sides of the ear

The “triangle of safety” (ears, side of face, and neck, top of shoulders): accidental injuries in this area are unusual

Inner aspects of arms

Back and side of trunk, except directly over the bony spine

Black eyes, especially if bilateral

Soft tissues of cheeks

Intra-oral injuries

Forearms when raised to protect self

Chest and abdomen

Any groin or genital injury

Inner aspects of thighs

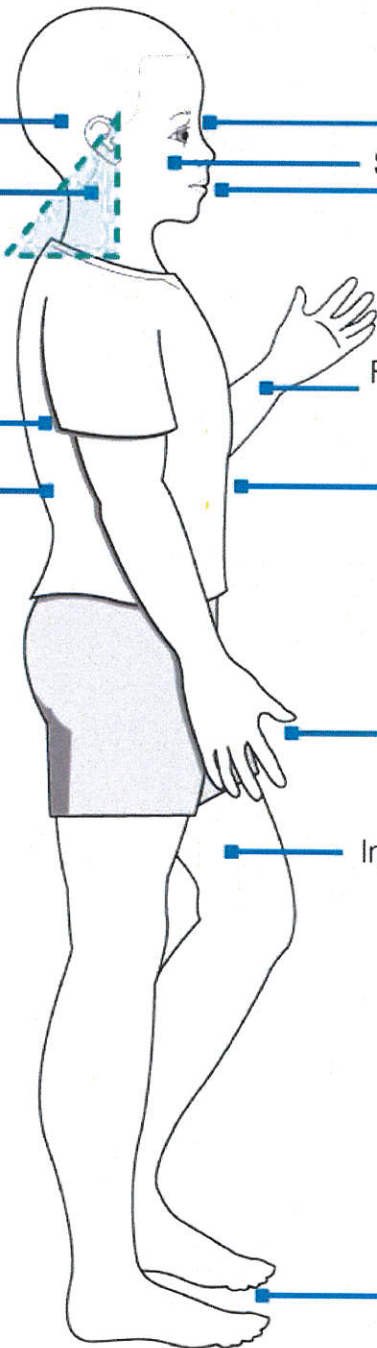
Soles of feet

REMEMBER

Concerns are raised by:

- injuries to both sides of the body
- injuries to soft tissue
- injuries with particular patterns
- any injury that doesn't fit the explanation
- delays in presentation
- untreated injuries

Typical Abusive Injuries



Neglect

Neglect 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 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

Signs that MAY INDICATE Neglect:

- Excessive hunger
- Poor personal hygiene
- Frequent tiredness
- Inadequate clothing
- Frequent lateness or non attendance at school
- Untreated medical problems
- Poor relationship with peers
- Compulsive stealing and scavenging
- Rocking, hair twisting and thumb sucking
- Running away
- Loss of weight or being constantly underweight (the same applies to weight gain, or being excessively overweight)
- Low self esteem
- Poor dental hygiene

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.

Signs that MAY INDICATE Emotional Abuse:

- Over reaction to mistakes
- Lack of self confidence / esteem
- Sudden speech disorders
- Self harming
- Extremes of passivity and /or aggression
- Compulsive stealing
- Drug, alcohol, solvent abuse
- Fear of parents being contacted
- Unwillingness or inability to play
- Excessive need for approval, attention and affection

New Definition - Domestic Abuse

Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those **aged 16 or over** who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. This can encompass but is not limited to the following types of abuse: psychological; physical; sexual; financial or emotional