

APPENDIX A1 – Definitions, signs and indicators of abuse (Children/under 18’s)

Statutory definitions of abuse

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

Child protection legislation throughout the UK is based on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Each nation within the UK has incorporated the convention within its legislation and guidance.

England: The four definitions (and a few additional categories) of abuse below operate in England based on the government guidance ‘Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018)’.

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 a stranger for example, via the internet. They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.

Physical abuse

Physical abuse may involve 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.

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. Children living in households where domestic abuse/violence exists will be subject to emotional abuse.

Sexual abuse

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.

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); or
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.
- it may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Further definitions relating to abuse

Extremism

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.

Significant Harm

Significant harm relates to the degree of harm that triggers statutory action to protect a child. It is based on the individual child's health or development compared to that which could reasonably be expected of a similar child. E.g. severity of ill treatment, degree and extent of physical harm, duration and frequency of abuse and neglect, premeditation. Department of Health guidance suggests that 'significant' means 'considerable, noteworthy or important.'

Children in whom illness is fabricated or induced (formerly known as Munchausen's Syndrome by proxy)

This is a form of child abuse in which the parents or carers give false accounts of symptoms in their children and may fake signs of illness (to draw attention to themselves). They seek repeated medical investigations and needless treatment for their children. The government guidance on this is found in 'Safeguarding Children in whom Illness is Fabricated or Induced' (2002).

Investigating complex (organised or multiple) abuse

This abuse may be defined as abuse involving one or more abusers and a number of children. The abusers concerned may be acting in concert to abuse children, sometimes acting in isolation, or may be using an institutional framework or position of authority to recruit children for abuse.

Complex abuse occurs both as part of a network of abuse across a family or community, and within institutions such as residential homes or schools. Such abuse is profoundly traumatic for the children who become involved. Its investigation is time-consuming and demanding work, requiring specialist skills from both police and social work staff. Some investigations become extremely complex because of the number of places and people involved, and the timescale over which abuse is alleged to have occurred. The complexity is heightened where, as in historical cases, the alleged victims are no longer living in the setting where the incidents occurred or where the alleged perpetrators are also no longer linked to the setting or employment role. (Working Together 2010 Sections: 6.10 – 6.11).

Sexually exploited children and young people

The Sexual Offences Act 2003 introduced a number of new offences to deal with those who sexually exploit children and young people. The offences protect children up to the age of 18 and can attract tough penalties. They include:

- paying for the sexual services of a child;
- causing or inciting child prostitution;
- arranging or facilitating child prostitution; and
- controlling a child prostitute
- child sexual exploitation.

Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It 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.

With regards to the addressing sexual exploitation of children at a more international level, the Interpol has also specified as list of appropriate terminology when referring to sexual crimes against children. The details for the same can be accessed [here](#).

Female genital mutilation (FGM)

The World Health Organization defined FGM as all procedures involving partial or total removal or stitching up of the female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs whether for cultural or other non-therapeutic reasons. Working Together (2010) stated that:

“Female genital mutilation (FGM) is a collective term for procedures which include the removal of part or all of the external female genitalia for cultural or other nontherapeutic reasons. The practice is medically unnecessary, extremely painful and has serious health consequences, both at the time when the mutilation is carried out and in later life. The procedure is typically performed on girls aged between four and thirteen, but in some cases FGM is performed on new born infants or on young women before marriage or pregnancy. A number of girls die as a direct result of the procedure from blood loss or infection, either following the procedure or subsequently in childbirth.”

FGM has been a criminal offence in the UK since the Prohibition of Female Circumcision Act 1985 was passed. The Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 replaced the 1985 Act and made it an offence for UK nationals or permanent UK residents to carry out FGM abroad, or to aid, abet, counsel or procure the carrying out of FGM abroad, even in countries where the practice is legal.

A mandatory reporting duty for FGM requires regulated health and social care professionals and teachers in England and Wales to report known cases of FGM in under 18-year-olds to the police. The FGM duty came into force on 31 October 2015.

Spiritual abuse

Linked with emotional abuse, spiritual abuse could be defined as an abuse of power, often done in the name of God or religion, which involves manipulating or coercing someone into thinking, saying or doing things without respecting their right to choose for themselves. Some indicators of spiritual abuse might be a leader who is intimidating and imposes his/her will on other people, perhaps threatening dire consequences or the wrath of God if disobeyed. He or she may say that God has revealed certain things to them and so they know what is right. Those under their leadership are fearful to challenge or disagree, believing they will lose the leader's (or more seriously God's) acceptance and approval.

In 2013 spiritual abuse was defined as “Spiritual abuse is coercion and control of one individual by another in a spiritual context. The target experiences spiritual abuse as a deeply emotional personal attack. This abuse may include:-manipulation and exploitation, enforced accountability, censorship of decision making, requirements for secrecy and silence, pressure to conform, misuse of scripture or the pulpit to control behaviour, requirement of obedience to the abuser, the suggestion that the abuser has a ‘divine’ position, isolation from others, especially those external to the abusive context.”(Oakley & Kinmond, 2013).

Domestic violence

The shared Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO), Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) and government definition of domestic violence is: ‘any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) between adults, aged 18 and over, who are or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender and sexuality.’ (Family members are defined as mother, father, son, daughter, brother, sister and grandparents, whether directly related, in-laws or step-family.)

In 2004 the Government’s definition of domestic violence was extended to include acts perpetrated by extended family members as well as intimate partners. Consequently, acts such as forced marriage and other so-called ‘honour crimes’, which can include abduction and homicide, can now come under the definition of domestic violence. The Government revised its definition of domestic violence and abuse in March 2013 as:

“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*
- *emotional*

“Controlling behaviour is a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependant by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour.”

“Coercive behaviour is: an act or a pattern of acts of assaults, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim.”

The Home Office (2009) What is Domestic Violence? London: Home Office defines domestic violence as:

“Any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) between adults who are or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality”

Nearly a quarter of adults in England are victims of domestic violence. Although both men and women can be victimised in this way, a greater proportion of women experience all forms of domestic violence, and are more likely to be seriously injured or killed by their partner, ex-partner or lover. Forced marriage and honour-based violence are human rights abuses and fall within the Government’s definition of domestic violence.

Signs of Possible Abuse

The following signs could be indicators that abuse has taken place but should be considered in context of the child's whole life:

Physical

- injuries not consistent with the explanation given for them
- injuries that occur in places not normally exposed to falls, rough games, etc
- injuries that have not received medical attention
- reluctance to change for, or participate in, games or swimming
- repeated urinary infections or unexplained tummy pains
- bruises on babies, bites, burns, fractures etc which do not have an accidental explanation*
- cuts/scratches/substance abuse*

Sexual

- any allegations made concerning sexual abuse
- excessive preoccupation with sexual matters and detailed knowledge of adult sexual behaviour
- age-inappropriate sexual activity through words, play or drawing
- child who is sexually provocative or seductive with adults
- inappropriate bed-sharing arrangements at home
- severe sleep disturbances with fears, phobias, vivid dreams or nightmares, sometimes with overt or veiled sexual connotations
- eating disorders - anorexia, bulimia*

Emotional

- changes or regression in mood or behaviour, particularly where a child withdraws or becomes clinging.
- depression, aggression, extreme anxiety.
- nervousness, frozen watchfulness
- obsessions or phobias
- sudden under-achievement or lack of concentration
- inappropriate relationships with peers and/or adults
- attention-seeking behaviour
- persistent tiredness
- running away/stealing/lying

Neglect

- under nourishment, failure to grow, constant hunger, stealing or gorging food, Untreated illnesses,
- inadequate care, etc

(*These indicate the possibility that a child or young person is self-harming. Approximately 20,000 are treated in accident and emergency departments in the UK each year.)

APPENDIX A2 – Definitions, signs and indicators of abuse (Adults/over 18’s)

Statutory Definitions of Abuse

The following information relates to the Safeguarding of Adults as defined in the Care Act 2014, Chapter 14. Safeguarding, this replaces the previous guidelines produced in ‘No Secrets’ (Department of Health 2000). The legislation is relevant across England and Wales but on occasions applies only to local authorities in England.

The Safeguarding duties apply to an adult who;

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

Organisations should always promote the adult’s wellbeing in their safeguarding arrangements. People have complex lives and being safe is only one of the things they want for themselves. Professionals should work with the adult to establish what being safe means to them and how that can be best achieved. Professional and other staff should not be advocating ‘safety’ measures that do not take account of individual well-being, as defined in Section 1 of the Care Act.

Link: The Care Act 2014

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/23/contents/enacted>

Link: Care and Support Statutory Guidance under the Care Act 2014

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/care-act-statutory-guidance/care-and-support-statutory-guidance>

What is abuse and neglect?

This section considers the different types and patterns of abuse and neglect and the different circumstances in which they may take place.

Types of abuse:

- physical abuse
- domestic violence or abuse
- sexual abuse
- psychological or emotional abuse
- financial or material abuse
- modern slavery
- discriminatory abuse
- organisational or institutional abuse
- neglect or acts of omission
- self-neglect

Evidence of any one indicator from the following lists should not be taken on its own as proof that abuse is occurring. However, it should alert workers/volunteers to make further assessments and to consider other associated factors, which could give rise to a safeguarding concern. The lists of possible indicators and examples of behaviour are not exhaustive and people may be subject to a

number of abuse types at the same time. (Also credit: Social Care institute for Excellence: January 2015)

Types of physical abuse:

- assault, hitting, slapping, punching, kicking, hair-pulling, biting, pushing
- rough handling
- scalding and burning
- physical punishments
- inappropriate or unlawful use of restraint
- making someone purposefully uncomfortable (e.g. opening a window and removing blankets)
- involuntary isolation or confinement
- misuse of medication (e.g. over-sedation)
- forcible feeding or withholding food
- unauthorised restraint, restricting movement (e.g. tying someone to a chair)

Possible indicators of physical abuse:

- no explanation for injuries or inconsistency with the account of what happened
- injuries are inconsistent with the person's lifestyle
- bruising, cuts, welts, burns and/or marks on the body or loss of hair in clumps
- frequent injuries
- unexplained falls
- subdued or changed behaviour in the presence of a particular person
- signs of malnutrition
- failure to seek medical treatment or frequent changes of GP

Types of domestic violence or abuse:

Domestic violence or abuse can be characterised by any of the indicators of abuse outlined in this briefing relating to:

- psychological
- physical
- sexual
- financial
- emotional

Domestic violence and abuse includes 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. It also includes so called 'honour' -based violence, female genital mutilation and forced marriage.

Coercive or controlling behaviour is a core part of domestic violence.

Coercive behaviour can include:

- acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation
- harming, punishing, or frightening the person
- isolating the person from sources of support
- exploitation of resources or money
- preventing the person from escaping abuse
- regulating everyday behaviour

Possible indicators of domestic violence or abuse:

- low self-esteem
- feeling that the abuse is their fault when it is not
- physical evidence of violence such as bruising, cuts, broken bones
- verbal abuse and humiliation in front of others
- fear of outside intervention
- damage to home or property
- isolation – not seeing friends and family
- limited access to money

Types of sexual abuse:

- rape, attempted rape or sexual assault
- inappropriate touch anywhere
- non-consensual masturbation of either or both persons
- non-consensual sexual penetration or attempted penetration of the vagina, anus or mouth
- any sexual activity that the person lacks the capacity to consent to
- inappropriate looking, sexual teasing or innuendo or sexual harassment
- sexual photography or forced use of pornography or witnessing of sexual acts
- indecent exposure

Possible indicators of sexual abuse:

- bruising, particularly to the thighs, buttocks and upper arms and marks on the neck
- torn, stained or bloody underclothing
- bleeding, pain or itching in the genital area
- unusual difficulty in walking or sitting
- foreign bodies in genital or rectal openings
- infections, unexplained genital discharge, or sexually transmitted diseases
- pregnancy in a woman who is unable to consent to sexual intercourse
- the uncharacteristic use of explicit sexual language or significant changes in sexual behaviour or attitude
- incontinence not related to any medical diagnosis
- self-harming
- poor concentration, withdrawal, sleep disturbance
- excessive fear/apprehension of, or withdrawal from, relationships
- fear of receiving help with personal care
- reluctance to be alone with a particular person

Types of psychological or emotional abuse:

- enforced social isolation – preventing someone accessing services, educational and social opportunities and seeing friends
- removing mobility or communication aids or intentionally leaving someone unattended when they need assistance
- preventing someone from meeting their religious and cultural needs
- preventing the expression of choice and opinion
- failure to respect privacy
- preventing stimulation, meaningful occupation or activities
- intimidation, coercion, harassment, use of threats, humiliation, bullying, swearing or verbal abuse
- addressing a person in a patronising or infantilising way
- threats of harm or abandonment
- cyber bullying

Possible indicators of psychological or emotional abuse:

- an air of silence when a particular person is present
- withdrawal or change in the psychological state of the person
- insomnia
- low self-esteem
- uncooperative and aggressive behaviour
- a change of appetite, weight loss/gain
- signs of distress: tearfulness, anger
- apparent false claims, by someone involved with the person, to attract unnecessary treatment

Types of financial or material abuse:

- theft of money or possessions
- fraud, scamming
- preventing a person from accessing their own money, benefits or assets
- employees taking a loan from a person using the service
- undue pressure, duress, threat or undue influence put on the person in connection with loans, wills, property, inheritance or financial transactions
- arranging less care than is needed to save money to maximise inheritance
- denying assistance to manage/monitor financial affairs
- denying assistance to access benefits
- misuse of personal allowance in a care home
- misuse of benefits or direct payments in a family home
- someone moving into a person's home and living rent free without agreement or under duress
- false representation, using another person's bank account, cards or documents
- exploitation of a person's money or assets, e.g. unauthorised use of a car
- misuse of a power of attorney, deputy, appointee-ship or other legal authority
- rogue trading – e.g. unnecessary or overpriced property repairs and failure to carry out agreed repairs or poor workmanship

Possible indicators of financial or material abuse:

- missing personal possessions
- unexplained lack of money or inability to maintain lifestyle
- unexplained withdrawal of funds from accounts
- power of attorney or lasting power of attorney (LPA) being obtained after the person has ceased to have mental capacity
- failure to register an LPA after the person has ceased to have mental capacity to manage their finances, so that it appears that they are continuing to do so
- the person allocated to manage financial affairs is evasive or uncooperative
- the family or others show unusual interest in the assets of the person
- signs of financial hardship in cases where the person's financial affairs are being managed by a court appointed deputy, attorney or LPA
- recent changes in deeds or title to property
- rent arrears and eviction notices
- a lack of clear financial accounts held by a care home or service
- failure to provide receipts for shopping or other financial transactions carried out on behalf of the person
- disparity between the person's living conditions and their financial resources, e.g. insufficient food in the house
- unnecessary property repairs

Types of modern slavery:

- human trafficking
- forced labour
- domestic servitude
- sexual exploitation, such as escort work, prostitution and pornography
- debt bondage – being forced to work to pay off debts that realistically they never will be able to

Possible indicators of modern slavery:

- signs of physical or emotional abuse
- appearing to be malnourished, unkempt or withdrawn
- isolation from the community, seeming under the control or influence of others
- living in dirty, cramped or overcrowded accommodation and or living and working at the same address
- lack of personal effects or identification documents
- always wearing the same clothes
- avoidance of eye contact, appearing frightened or hesitant to talk to strangers
- fear of law enforcers

Types of discriminatory abuse:

- unequal treatment based on age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex or sexual orientation
- verbal abuse, derogatory remarks or inappropriate use of language related to a protected characteristic
- denying access to communication aids, not allowing access to an interpreter, signer or lip-reader
- harassment or deliberate exclusion on the grounds of a protected characteristic
- denying basic rights to healthcare, education, employment and criminal justice relating to a protected characteristic
- substandard service provision relating to a protected characteristic

Possible indicators of discriminatory abuse:

- appearing withdrawn and isolated
- expressions of anger, frustration, fear or anxiety
- the support on offer does not take account of the person's individual needs in terms of a protected characteristic

Types of organisational or institutional abuse:

- discouraging visits or the involvement of relatives or friends
- run-down or overcrowded establishment
- authoritarian management or rigid regimes
- lack of leadership and supervision
- insufficient staff or high turnover resulting in poor quality care
- abusive and disrespectful attitudes towards people using the service
- inappropriate use of restraints
- lack of respect for dignity and privacy
- failure to manage residents with abusive behaviour
- not providing adequate food and drink, or assistance with eating
- not offering choice or promoting independence
- misuse of medication

- failure to provide care with dentures, spectacles or hearing aids
- not taking account of individuals' cultural, religious or ethnic needs
- failure to respond to abuse appropriately
- interference with personal correspondence or communication
- failure to respond to complaints

Possible indicators of organisational or institutional abuse:

- lack of flexibility and choice for people using the service
- inadequate staffing levels
- people being hungry or dehydrated
- poor standards of care
- lack of personal clothing and possessions and communal use of personal items
- lack of adequate procedures
- poor record-keeping and missing documents
- absence of visitors
- few social, recreational and educational activities
- public discussion of personal matters
- unnecessary exposure during bathing or using the toilet
- absence of individual care plans
- lack of management overview and support

Types of neglect and acts of omission:

- failure to provide or allow access to food, shelter, clothing, heating, stimulation and activity, personal or medical care
- providing care in a way that the person dislikes
- failure to administer medication as prescribed
- refusal of access to visitors
- not taking account of individuals' cultural, religious or ethnic needs
- not taking account of educational, social and recreational needs
- ignoring or isolating the person
- preventing the person from making their own decisions
- preventing access to glasses, hearing aids, dentures, etc.
- failure to ensure privacy and dignity

Possible indicators of neglect and acts of omission:

- poor environment – dirty or unhygienic
- poor physical condition and/or personal hygiene
- pressure sores or ulcers
- malnutrition or unexplained weight loss
- untreated injuries and medical problems
- inconsistent or reluctant contact with medical and social care organisations
- accumulation of untaken medication
- uncharacteristic failure to engage in social interaction
- inappropriate or inadequate clothing

Types of self-neglect:

- lack of self-care to an extent that it threatens personal health and safety
- neglecting to care for one's personal hygiene, health or surroundings
- inability to avoid self-harm
- failure to seek help or access services to meet health and social care needs
- inability or unwillingness to manage one's personal affairs

- possible indicators of self-neglect
- very poor personal hygiene
- unkempt appearance
- lack of essential food, clothing or shelter
- malnutrition and/or dehydration
- living in squalid or unsanitary conditions
- neglecting household maintenance
- hoarding
- collecting a large number of animals in inappropriate conditions
- non-compliance with health or care services
- inability or unwillingness to take medication or treat illness or injury

In addition - Spiritual Abuse:

Linked with emotional abuse, spiritual abuse could be defined as an abuse of power, often done in the name of God or religion, which involves manipulating or coercing someone into thinking, saying or doing things without respecting their right to choose for themselves. Some indicators of spiritual abuse might be a leader who is intimidating and imposes his/her will on other people, perhaps threatening dire consequences or the wrath of God if disobeyed. He or she may say that God has revealed certain things to them and so they know what is right. Those under their leadership are fearful to challenge or disagree, believing they will lose the leader's (or more seriously God's) acceptance and approval.

In 2013 spiritual abuse was defined as "Spiritual abuse is coercion and control of one individual by another in a spiritual context. The target experiences spiritual abuse as a deeply emotional personal attack. This abuse may include:-manipulation and exploitation, enforced accountability, censorship of decision making, requirements for secrecy and silence, pressure to conform, misuse of scripture or the pulpit to control behaviour, requirement of obedience to the abuser, the suggestion that the abuser has a 'divine' position, isolation from others, especially those external to the abusive context." (Oakley & Kinmond, 2013).

APPENDIX B – How to Respond to a Disclosure of Suspected Abuse

If there is a concern that a child, young person or adult with care and support needs may have been abused or a direct allegation of abuse has been made, it is important the person receiving this information does the following:

- make notes as soon as possible (preferably within one hour of the person talking to you) including; a description of any injury/marks, its size, and if possible, a drawing of its location and shape on the child's body
- write down exactly what has been said, when it was said, what was said in reply and what was happening immediately beforehand (e.g. a description of an activity)
- write down dates and times of these events and when the record was made
- write down any action taken and keep all handwritten notes even if subsequently typed up (to be passed to the Safeguarding Coordinator). A recording form can be used but writing down on any paper is acceptable
- these notes should be passed on to the Safeguarding Coordinator to assist them should the matter need to be referred to the statutory agencies such as Adult or Children's Social Services or the police
- workers need to share concerns with the Safeguarding Coordinator as well as clear allegations made by, or about, children, young people and adults at risk. Sharing 'gut feelings' at an early stage, may assist in helping those who need it.

Effective listening

- ensure the physical environment is welcoming, giving opportunity for the child or adult at risk to talk in private but making sure others are aware the conversation is taking place
- it is especially important to allow time and space for the person to talk
- above everything else listen without interrupting
- be attentive and look at them whilst they are speaking
- show acceptance of what they say (however unlikely the story may sound) by reflecting back words or short phrases they have used
- try to remain calm, even if on the inside you are feeling something different
- be honest and don't make promises you can't keep regarding confidentiality
- if they decide not to tell you after all, accept their decision but let them know that you are always ready to listen
- use language that is age appropriate and, for those with disabilities, ensure there is someone available who understands sign language, braille etc.

Helpful responses:

- you have done the right thing in telling
- I am glad you have told me
- I will try to help you

Unhelpful responses... Do NOT say:

- why didn't you tell anyone before?
- I can't believe it!
- are you sure this is true?
- why?
- how?
- when?
- who?
- where?
- I am shocked, don't tell anyone else