

01 BACKGROUND:

Child abuse is when a child (aged 0-18 including an unborn child) is harmed by an adult or another child/young person. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm.

The Children Act 1989 outlines **Significant Harm** as the threshold which justifies compulsory intervention in family life in the best interests of children. Section 47 of the Act places a duty on local authorities to make enquiries, or cause enquiries to be made, where it has reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer significant harm.

'Harm' means ill-treatment or the impairment of health or development, including that suffered from seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another.

WHY IT MATTERS:

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All children have a right to protection and live their life free from abuse or harm. All adults in contact with children and young people have a duty to protect children and young people from harm (sometimes termed 'safeguarding')

Some key Legal Guidance & legislation references:

- Children Act 1989 & 2004.
- The Human Rights Act 1998
- Family Law Act 1996
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Children and Social Work Act 2017
- Information Sharing Guidance 2018
- Working together to safeguarding children 2018

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WHAT TO DO

Any concern about child abuse can be referred to the Complex Early Help and Safeguarding Hub
0300 303 0440 (Office hours)
0300 303 8875 (Other times)
E mail:
ehash@rochdale.gov.uk

If anyone is in immediate danger
Contact Police on 999
Call Police on 101 if you think a crime has been committed
See also <https://www.rbscp.org/>

CONCERN ABOUT A PROFESSIONAL OR VOLUNTEER?

If you have concern about a professional or volunteer who is working or volunteering with children or young people you can speak to the Local Authority Designated Officer
LADO@rochdale.gov.uk or telephone 0300 3030 350.

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INFORMATION:

It is important to get advice if you have a concern about child abuse or neglect whether it is taking place now or happened historically. Procedures outline that we can contact Children's Social Care, Police or the NSPCC with a concern.

Anyone can make a referral or discuss a worry.

(see section 7 What to Do)

Guidance & procedures can be found [HERE](#)

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WHAT IS ABUSE?

Child abuse / significant harm can occur over a period of time but can also be a one-off action.

The main categories of abuse are **Physical, Emotional, Sexual & Neglect.**

To read the full definitions look [HERE](#)

There are further definitions & indicators advice [HERE](#)

IMPACT OF ABUSE & NEGLECT

Abuse or neglect of children can have long-term effects on the child's health, development & well-being. It can impact on a child's self-esteem, emotional & behavioural development.

The effects can extend into adult life leading to difficulties in forming & sustaining relationships & affect parenting ability.

Physical abuse can lead to neurological damage, physical injuries, disability or death.

It is important to support families via Early Help systems before situations escalate into abusive situations wherever possible. In Rochdale the Complex Early Help and Safeguarding Hub will advise and support those with concerns.

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What to do if you are worried about Child abuse or neglect