**Safeguarding Children and Child Protection**

This guide is intended for volunteers helping during the COVID crisis to support children and young people in Rochdale, Heywood and Middleton. This is a brief guide just to give you a brief overview on safeguarding. For more information, please see [www.rbscp.org](http://www.rbscp.org) or [www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk)

**What is safeguarding?**

Safeguarding means:

* protecting children from abuse and maltreatment
* preventing harm to children’s health or development
* ensuring children grow up with the provision of safe and effective care
* taking action to enable all children and young people to have the best outcomes.

**Child abuse**

Child abuse is when a child is intentionally harmed by an adult or another child – it can be over a period of time but can also be a one-off action. It can be physical, sexual or emotional and it can happen in person or online. It can also be a lack of love, care and attention – this is neglect.

Abuse takes many forms. Here are a few examples.

**Neglect**

Neglect is the ongoing failure to meet a child's basic needs and **the most common form of child abuse**. A child might be left hungry or dirty, or without proper clothing, shelter, supervision or health care.

Types of neglect

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, educational, emotional or medical.

Signs of neglect

Children and young people who are neglected might have:

* being smelly or dirty
* being hungry or not given money for food
* having unwashed clothes or the wrong clothes for the weather
* having frequent and untreated nappy rash in infants
* medical or dental issues inc missed appointments

**Physical abuse**

Physical abuse is when someone hurts or harms a child or young person on purpose. It includes hitting with hands or objects, slapping and punching, kicking, shaking, poisoning, burning and scalding, biting and scratching, breaking bones and drowning.

Signs of physical abuse

Bumps and bruises don't always mean a child is being physically abused. All children have accidents, trips and falls. However, if a child 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. Other signs inc burns, broken bones and bite marks.

Head injuries in babies and toddlers can be signs of abuse so it's important to be aware of these. Visible signs include swelling, bruising, fractures, being extremely sleepy or unconscious, breathing problems or seizures.

**Sexual abuse**

Sexual abuse includes:

* sexual touching of any kind on any part of a child's body, whether they're clothed or not
* forcing a child to take part in sexual activities
* exposing or flashing body parts, or exposure to sexual acts
* showing pornography
* forcing a child to make, view or share child abuse images or videos
* making, viewing or distributing child abuse images or videos
* forcing a child to take part in sexual activities or conversations online or through a smartphone.

Signs of sexual abuse

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.
* Alcohol or drug misuse and / or self-harm.
* Bleeding, discharge, pains or soreness in their genital or anal area.
* Sexually transmitted infections and pregnancy.

**Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)**

Child sexual exploitation (CSE) is a type of sexual abuse. When a child or young person is exploited they're given things, like gifts, cash, drugs and affection, in exchange for performing sexual activities. Children and young people are often tricked into believing they're in a loving and consensual relationship which is called grooming.

CSE can happen in person or online. An abuser will gain a child's trust or control them through violence or blackmail before moving onto sexually abusing them. This can happen in a short period of time.

Signs of CSE include:

* Unhealthy or inappropriate sexual behaviour.
* Bring secretive
* Sharp changes in mood or character.
* Having money or things they can't or won't explain.
* See other sexual abuse signs (above)

**Domestic abuse**

Domestic abuse is any type of controlling, bullying, threatening or violent behaviour between people in a relationship. Children witnessing domestic abuse are at risk of emotional and physical harm.

Domestic abuse includes:

* kicking, hitting, punching or cutting
* sexual violence (including in a relationship)
* controlling someone's finances by withholding money or stopping someone earning/ controlling behaviour, regarding where they go and what they wear
* reading emails, text messages or letters
* threatening to kill a person or harm them/ or threatening harm to a relative

Signs of domestic abuse can include:

* physical injuries
* anxiety, depression or suicidal thoughts
* attention seeking
* drug or alcohol use
* eating disorders/ problems in school or with concentration

**Emotional abuse**

Emotional abuse includes:

* humiliating, scapegoating or constantly criticising a child
* threatening, shouting at a child or calling them names
* making a child perform degrading acts
* not recognising a child's own individuality or trying to control their lives

Signs of emotional abuse

There might not be any obvious physical signs of emotional abuse or neglect. A child 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 is acting. Check for children who:

* seem unconfident or lack self-assurance
* struggle to control their emotions
* have difficulty making or maintaining relationships

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The signs of emotional abuse can also be different for children at different ages.

**Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)**

Criminal exploitation is child abuse where children and young people are manipulated and coerced into committing crimes.

It's not illegal for a young person to be in a gang – there are different types of ‘gang’ and not every ‘gang’ is criminal or dangerous. However, gang membership can be linked to illegal activity, particularly organised criminal gangs involved in drug dealing and violent crime. Gangs may move and force children to commit crime in other areas which is trafficking.

Signs of Child Criminal Exploitation

* Frequently absent from and/or doing badly in school.
* Going missing from home, staying out late and travelling for unexplained reasons.
* Having unexplained money and buying new things. Being secretive.
* Making more calls or sending more texts, possibly on a new phone or phones.
* Unexplained injuries and refusing to seek medical help.

## **Who abuses children?**

## Children may be abused by family members, friends, people working or volunteering in organisational or community settings, people they know or, much less commonly, by strangers.

# How do I report a concern about Abuse?

**If you suspect a child is at immediate risk of harm call 999 and speak to the Police. All calls concerning worries about children are treated seriously.**

To report a non-urgent case of abuse, do report to one of the Response Hub coordinators or contact **0300 303 0440.** Out of hours (4:45pm - 8:30am, Monday - Friday and anytime on weekends and Bank Holidays) call **0300 303 8875**

You will be asked for basic information about the child you are concerned about and what you have been told, heard, seen or suspect. You will be asked to give your name so that you can be kept informed. Your name will not be shared without your permission. You will be offered advice and support. You must never assume that somebody else will recognise and report what you have seen or heard.

**If you are in any doubt about reporting your concerns don't think 'What if I'm wrong?' think What if I'm right?'**

**Remember - safeguarding is everyone's business!**

**For more information see rbscp.org or nspcc.org.uk**

*Please note: Much of the content of this pack is taken from* [*www.nspcc.org.uk*](http://www.nspcc.org.uk)