

Responding to Safeguarding Concerns

RECOGNISE – RESPOND – RECORD – REFER

Recognise the signs that could indicate that abuse is happening

Potentially anyone could be an abuser. Children are abused by adults or other children. Adults can be abused by other adults or children. Abuse happens in families from every social, religious and cultural setting and can involve leaders, teachers and workers. We should not think, 'It could never happen here', because it might!

What do we mean by Abuse?

	Children	Adults
Physical abuse	Including hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, scalding, drowning or suffocating	Includes hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, misuse of medication, restraint or inappropriate sanctions
Emotional abuse	Including conveying to a child that they are inadequate, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, verbal abuse, isolation, seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying)	Including threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, isolation or withdrawal from services or supportive networks
Sexual abuse	Including assault by penetration (for example rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. It may include involving children in looking at, or in the production of sexual images, watching sexual activities, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse	Including rape and sexual assault or sex acts to which the vulnerable adult has not consented or could not consent or was pressurised into consenting

	Children	Adults
Neglect	Including failure to provide adequate food, clothing and shelter, to protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger, to provide adequate supervision and/or access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may occur in pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse	Including ignoring medical or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, social care or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating
Financial abuse		Including theft, fraud, exploitation, pressure in connection with wills, property or inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits

Other forms of abuse include discriminatory abuse (racist, sexist or based on a disability); domestic abuse; organisational abuse within an institution or care setting, such as a hospital or care home; and modern slavery.

Respond sensitively and listen

Do:

- Remain calm, approachable and receptive
- Take what is said seriously
- Listen carefully without interruption
- Acknowledge you understand how difficult this may be.
- Offer reassurance that this is the right thing to do
- Tell the child or adult what you are going to do next
- Make a written record of what has been said and when.

Do not:

- Make promises that cannot be kept (e.g. that you won't share the information)
- Make assumptions or offer alternative explanations
- Investigate
- Contact the person about whom allegations have been made.
- Do a physical examination
- Discuss with people who do not need to know.

Record what you been told

Make some very brief notes at the time, if appropriate, and write them up in detail as soon as possible.

Do not destroy your original notes in case they are required by the DSA or statutory authorities.

Record the date, time, place and actual words used, including any swear words or slang.

Record facts and observable things, not your interpretations or assumptions.

Don't speculate or jump to conclusions.

Refer

If there is immediate danger to a child or adult, contact the police.

Otherwise, report your concerns to the person in charge of the activity, or the person you have been told to contact if you have a safeguarding concern.