

The CARE CERTIFICATE

# Safeguarding Children

- What you need to know

Standard



# Safeguarding children



**Child protection and safeguarding** is everyone's responsibility: it is not only childcare workers that have a duty to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm.

When you come into contact with children in any way in your day to day work it is part of your job to make sure that their wellbeing is safeguarded.

Please note that in this workbook the term 'child/children' includes any child or young person up to the age of 18.



## Child protection and safeguarding

Safeguarding is preventative and involves promoting the welfare of children by protecting them from harm and recognising the risks to their safety and security.

Child protection is the activity of protecting children who are suffering or may be likely to suffer from significant harm as a result of abuse or neglect.

## What is child abuse?

Child abuse is any wrongdoing that causes, or is able to cause, significant emotional or physical harm to a child. The following signs, symptoms and behaviours or indicators do not necessarily mean that a child is being abused but may mean you have a reason to be concerned.

### Physical abuse

This is any abuse where a child is physically harmed, for example hitting, biting, and burning. Signs and symptoms might be unexplained wounds, bruises or broken bones. The child might make up stories to explain injuries or try to cover them up with clothing.

## Emotional abuse

This means a child's emotional needs are not being met. This could include being made to feel inadequate or not feeling loved and secure. A parent or carer may not be talking to them enough or giving them the attention they need. Typical signs and symptoms could include delays in development, speech disorders or a fear of making mistakes or overreacting to them.

## Sexual abuse

This could involve children or young people being involved in sexual acts, being made to watch sexual acts or being shown pornography. Child sexual **exploitation** (CSE) means that children are manipulated sexually for the abuser's benefit. Typical signs and symptoms include awareness and knowledge of sexual activities beyond what would be expected at their age as well as genital or anal pain or itching or sexually transmitted diseases (STDs).



### Exploitation

Exploitation means taking advantage of someone's vulnerability to treat them badly for the abuser's benefit.



## Neglect

This is a form of abuse where a child's basic needs are not met, for example through a lack of food, medical attention or access to education or poor clothing, housing, hygiene or parenting. Neglect could sometimes be happening as a result of a child being the carer of a family member. Typical signs and symptoms may include always being hungry, poor personal hygiene, delays in development, tiredness and looking ill and underweight.

## Radicalisation

This is where children and young people are taught extreme, often violent, ideas based on political, social or religious beliefs. Signs of exposure to radicalisation could be behaviour changes, changes in the way they speak with others or having a new circle of friends, use of extremist terminology, reading material or messages.

## Child trafficking

This means recruiting, moving or receiving a child through force, trickery or intimidation to take advantage of them. Signs and symptoms could be a **domineering** adult accompanying the child all the time and speaking for them. The child could appear withdrawn, compliant and unkempt, or show little or no use of the English language.



## Domineering

This term means to use power, influence and/or authority over others.

## Female genital mutilation (FGM)

means to remove, constrict or otherwise disfigure a girl's labia or clitoris for non-medical reasons, in most cases before they reach the age of 8. Some communities may use religious, social and cultural reasons to justify FGM, but it is a form of abuse. Signs and symptoms could range from severe pain and bleeding and chronic infections to psychological, mental health and sexual problems or damage to the reproductive system and infertility. You need to be aware of the risk of girls being taken abroad to carry out FGM and so should be aware if they are taken on extended holidays.

All forms of abuse are likely to create a change in behaviour of the victim. Behaviour changes could mean a child becomes withdrawn, timid, easily startled or maybe boisterous, aggressive, attention-seeking or wanting to please. Depression, anxiety, self-harm, eating disorders and going back to younger behaviour are other possible indicators. You might also get concerned if a child is not attending school regularly or is being admitted to several different A&E departments or GP drop-in centres. These could be ways for the abuser to cover up how often the child needs medical help. It is important to know that not all children will display the same symptoms and that usually there is more than one type of abuse happening for example, physical and emotional abuse.

## The impact of a parent's/carer's physical and mental health or domestic violence on child wellbeing

To grow up happy and safe, children need parents or carers who love, protect and care for them in a stable, safe and secure home. Physical care and daily routines are important for development so anything that upsets routines can be unhelpful. If a parent or carer's physical or mental health is poor this could be a risk to the wellbeing of their child. It may increase their vulnerability or slow their development. It is important to remember that a parent/carer's health might affect their ability to safeguard but it definitely does not mean that it will.



Examples of possible harm are:

- A parent/carer with mental health issues might feel unable to build attachments with their child, possibly causing emotional harm; or the child might be forced into decision making that they are not ready for.
- A child with a parent/carer who is blind or deaf may be at increased risk of physical harm as they might not be fully able to judge dangerous situations.

Seeing or hearing acts of domestic violence can have a similar effect on children as being emotionally abused. Apart from a feeling of helplessness, they may not feel safe. Research suggests that there is a high likelihood that aggression could turn towards children present. It also suggests that the stress of experiencing violence at home can impair the brain development of babies. Domestic violence is a risk to the child's physical, emotional and social development.

## Children's rights

As a worker, you have a duty to make sure the rights of all individuals are promoted and that includes children's rights. You may not directly care for or support children or young people but through your work you may come into contact with them. It is important that you understand their rights. The Code of Conduct states that you should 'promote and uphold the privacy, dignity, rights, health and wellbeing of people who use health and social care services and their carers': remember, children or young people can be carers too.

The Human Rights Act 1998 gives a number of fundamental rights to every person living in the UK. Some of these rights include:

- The right to life
- Freedom from torture or degrading treatment
- The right to education
- The right to liberty and security
- Protection from discrimination.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) is a worldwide agreement between countries as to the basic rights that children under 18 should have.

[www.unicef.org.uk/UNICEFs-Work/UN-Convention/](http://www.unicef.org.uk/UNICEFs-Work/UN-Convention/)

Some of the rights relating to child protection are:

- The right to life
- The right to live a healthy life
- The right to not be separated from their parents unless they are at risk of harm
- The right of protection from drugs, sexual abuse or any harm to their development.

Article 39 specifies that children who have been neglected or abused should receive specialist support to restore their self-respect such as counselling.



## Actions to take when concerns of suspected or alleged abuse have been made

Every worker who comes into contact with children or their families has a duty to safeguard even if they don't work directly with them. If you are worried about a child:

- Report your concerns to your manager immediately
- Make a record of your concerns that is factual and sign and date it
- If you feel that this process is taking too long, dial 999 and call the police; they can quickly remove a child to somewhere safe
- Follow your organisation's safeguarding policies and procedures. These will set out clearly how workers are to act when abuse is suspected or alleged.

A child might tell someone that they have been abused or a family member, friend, worker or someone else might make an **allegation** about abuse happening at the time or in the past. Policies and procedures will give information on signs and symptoms of abuse, how to respond to the victim, lines of reporting and important telephone numbers so that any worker can feel confident when dealing with an incident. Do not hesitate if you have any concerns about a child being abused. It is not your role to judge situations, that is the responsibility of the police and social workers, but if you don't alert them, they cannot act.

## 6Cs

### Courage

Workers should have the courage and confidence to do what is morally right for the protection of children and young people.



### Allegation

Making an allegation means stating that someone has done something. Allegations need to be reported and investigated so it is important that you are not judgemental.



If your concerns are not taken seriously and acted upon, you should either report them to a senior manager or to the person responsible for child protection in your workplace. Child protection records should always be shared with the parents/carers unless they themselves are the cause for concern. Advice and support can come from other workers, your manager, the child's parent/carer, the NSPCC or Children's Services. If an **allegation** is made against any volunteer, employee, child minder (or anyone living in the child minding home). Your manager will undertake the appropriate action as set out in the organisations agreed ways of working; this may mean contacting relevant agencies. This reporting of unsafe or illegal practice in the workplace is called whistleblowing and your organisation should have specific whistleblowing policies and procedures in place. If your organisation is very small and does not have policies and procedures then ask your employer about their ways of working about whistleblowing.



## OFSTED

OFSTED is the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills.

## The risks associated with the internet and online social networking

The internet, with its endless access to information, is a valuable tool but also a potential risk to safety and security. It is important to monitor or be aware of what a child sees and shares, or could become exposed to. There is a high risk of being exposed to sexual predators (for example, in chatrooms), pornography or radicalisation. Using e-technology to bully people has become an increasing problem in recent years with over a third of young people having been affected at least once. There has been a massive increase in online bullying due to the use of social media such as Twitter and Facebook, which is easily accessible through mobile devices as well as computers. Examples include posting negative comments on someone's Facebook site, taking on someone's identity on the web to humiliate them or harassing someone via their mobile phone.



## Legislation and safeguarding

When considering the welfare of children there are several pieces of **legislation** that should be taken into account, as well as your own organisation's policies and procedures and ways of working.



## Legislation

This term is used to describe laws and the process of creating statutory guidance on the legal rules that affect people in society.

**The Children Act 1989:** Legislation written to protect the welfare of children who are at risk and also children who may be in need of services. This tells you exactly what you need to do if you suspect a child or young person is at risk of harm or in need of support.  
[www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1989/41/contents](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1989/41/contents)

**The Children Act 2004:** This act covers services that children and young people may access. It places a duty on Local Authorities and their partners to cooperate and make sure that services work together and (where possible) have a joint plan developed in partnership with the parents, children and young people. This is known as the Common Assessment Framework (CAF). The act also encouraged the establishment of local Safeguarding Children Boards and joint databases.  
[www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/31/contents](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/31/contents)

**The Sexual Offences Act 2003:** This act has two parts, the first one stating what is considered a sexual offence, including physical and non-physical contact. The Act also defines sexual offences against children under 13 and under 16. The age of consent is set at 16, unless you hold a position of trust in relation to the young person, for example as their worker, teacher, trainer etc. In that case the age of consent is 18. The second part of the act deals with the sex offenders register and civil protective orders.  
[www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2003/42/contents](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2003/42/contents)

**The Care Act 2014** brings care and support legislation together into a single act with new wellbeing principles at its heart. Although the Care Act is meant for adults in need of support and their carers it also makes some provisions for children and young carers. Children who care for their parents in their own home are being made part of their parent's needs assessment in order to establish the support and help they need.

**The Children and Families Act 2014** aims to provide young carers with the same help and support as adult carers. All carers under the age of 18 have the right to have their support needs assessed and local authorities will help them caring for a family member as best as they can.