

Worried about a child? Information for our patients

If you are suspicious that serious harm is happening or is likely to happen to a child, you can call Children and Families Social Care

0191 424 5010 (Mon - Fri 8.30am - 5.00pm)

0191 456 2093 (Outside of the above time)

For more information and advice freephone NSPCC 0808 800 5000

What is abuse?

Physical Abuse

When an adult hurts a child on purpose such as hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, drowning or suffocating.

Emotional Abuse

For example when a child is being unfairly blamed for everything, or told they are stupid and made to feel unhappy.

Neglect

Where a child is not being looked after properly for example, not getting enough to eat or being left alone in dangerous situations.

Sexual Abuse

For example where a child has been forced to take part in sexual activities, or in the taking of rude photos.

Bullying

Some examples are; calling names, damaging property, stealing, spreading rumours, cyber bullying, hurting, getting people into trouble

Domestic Violence

When one adult in a family or relationship threatens, bullies or hurts another family member, either physically, psychologically, emotionally, sexually or financially.

You can also discuss your concerns with a health professional, for example your GP, or your health visitor.

What to look out for- signs and symptoms of abuse

Signs that a child could be suffering from neglect include:

- living in an inadequate home environment
- being left alone for a long time
- being persistently ignored by parents or carers
- poor appearance and delayed development
- taking on the role of carer for other family members

Physical effects of neglect may include:

- poor muscle tone/prominent joints
- poor skin: sores, rashes, flea bites
- thin or swollen tummy
- poor hygiene, like being dirty or smelly
- untreated health problems, such as bad teeth
- unwashed clothing
- inadequate clothing, like not having a coat in winter

Emotional and behavioural effects may include:

- difficulties with school work
- missing school
- being anxious about, or avoiding, people
- difficulty in making friends
- being withdrawn
- anti-social behaviour
- early sexual activity
- drug or alcohol misuse