Types of Abuse and Neglect – child and adult

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Children

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child.

Physical harm may also be caused when a parent lies about the symptoms of, or deliberately causes illness in a child.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or tempting a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether the child is aware of what is happening or not. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (e.g., rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing, and touching outside of clothing.

Sexual abuse includes non-contact activities. For example involving children in looking at, including online and with mobile phones, or in the making of pornographic materials, watching sexual activities or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not only done by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

In addition, sexual abuse includes abuse of children through sexual exploitation. Penetrative sex where one of the partners is under the age of 16 is illegal, although prosecution of similar age, consenting partners is not usual. However, where a child is under the age of 13, it is classified as rape under §5 Sexual Offences Act 2003.

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is any type of abuse that involves the continual emotional mistreatment of a child. It's sometimes called psychological abuse. Emotional abuse can involve deliberately trying to scare, humiliate, isolate or ignore a child.

Emotional abuse is often a part of other kinds of abuse, which means it can be difficult to spot the signs or tell the difference, though it can also happen on its own.

It may involve

- making a child believe that they are worthless or unloved, not good enough, or only valued if they meet the needs of another person
- not giving the child opportunities to express their views
- deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate
- placing expectations on children that are not appropriate for their age or developmental stage
- seeing or hearing the poor treatment of another
- serious bullying (including cyber bullying), causing children regularly to feel frightened or in danger, or using or manipulating children for the benefits of others

Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of mistreatment of a child, though it may also happen alone.

Neglect

Neglect happens when a child's basic physical and/ or psychological needs are not met on a regular basis. This is likely to cause serious negative effects to child's health or development.

Neglect may happen during pregnancy because of maternal substance misuse, maternal mental ill health or learning difficulties or several of these issues. Where there is domestic abuse and violence towards a carer, the needs of the child may be neglected.

It may also include neglect of, or a lack of interest in responding to, a child's basic emotional, social, and educational needs.

Bullying including cyberbullying

Bullying is behaviour that hurts someone else. It includes name calling, hitting, pushing, spreading rumours, threatening, or putting others down.

It can happen anywhere – at school, at home or online. It's usually repeated over a long period of time and can hurt a child physically and emotionally.

Cyberbullying is bullying that happens online. Unlike bullying in the real world, online bullying can follow the child wherever they go, on their social media pages, gaming, and mobile phone.

Child Criminal Exploitation

Where an individual or group takes advantage of having power over a child by forcing, controlling, manipulating or tricking a child or young person under the age of 18 into any criminal activity

- by offering something the child needs or wants if they do the crime
- when the individual or group will get financial or other benefits from the child doing crime act
- when the individual or group is violent or threatens violence

The child may have been forced to do the crime, even if they seemed to have agreed to do the criminal act. Child criminal exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also happen when using technology.

Child Sexual Exploitation

Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It happens when an individual or group takes advantage of having power over a child by forcing, manipulating or tricking a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity

- by offering something the child needs or wants if they do the sexual act
- when the individual or group will get financial benefits or increased status from the sexual act

The child may have been sexually exploited even if they seemed to have agreed to the sexual act. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also happen when using technology. Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) is a type of sexual abuse.

Children or young people may be tricked into believing they're in a loving, consenting relationship. They might be invited to parties and given drugs and alcohol. They may also be groomed and exploited online.

Some children and young people are trafficked into or within the UK for the purpose of sexual exploitation. Sexual exploitation can also happen to young people in gangs. Child sexual exploitation is a hidden crime. Young people often trust their abuser and do not understand that they're being abused. They may depend on their abuser or be too scared to tell anyone what's happening.

It can involve violent and humiliating sexual assaults, including oral and anal rape. In some cases, young people are persuaded or forced into doing sexual activity for money, drugs, gifts, affection, or status. Child sexual exploitation doesn't always involve physical contact and can happen online.

County Lines

A term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs into one or more areas within the UK, using dedicated mobile phone lines or other type of 'deal line'. They are likely to use children and adults at risk to move and store the drugs and money, and they will often use force, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons.

Peer on Peer

Peer on peer abuse is any form of physical, sexual, emotional, and financial abuse, and forceful control, exercised between children and within children's relationships both intimate and non-intimate.

There are many ways it can happen, including serious bullying (including cyber bullying), relationship abuse, domestic abuse, child sexual exploitation, youth and serious youth violence, harmful sexual behaviour and/or gender-based violence.

Extremism

Extremism is where people have political views and ideals which are far from the mainstream. Extremism goes beyond terrorism and includes people who target vulnerable people – including young people – by seeking to divide communities based on race, faith or denomination. They may justify discrimination towards women and girls, persuade others that minorities are inferior, or argue against the primacy of democracy and the rule of law in our society.

Children who are at risk of radicalisation may have low self-esteem or be victims of bullying or discrimination. Extremists might target them and tell them they can be part of something special, later brainwashing them into cutting themselves off from their friends and family.

However, these signs do not necessarily mean a child is being radicalised – it may be normal teenage behaviour or a sign that something else is wrong.

Extremism is defined in the Counter Extremism Strategy 2015 as the vocal or active opposition to our fundamental values, including the rule of law, individual liberty and the mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. We also regard calls for the death of members of our armed forces as extremist.

PREVENT is the government counter-terrorism strategy.

Forced Marriage

A forced marriage is where one or both people do not (or in cases of people with learning disabilities or those who have limited ability to understand or be aware of what is happening, cannot) agree to the marriage as they are pressurised, or abuse is used, to force them to get married.

It is recognised in the UK as a form of child abuse. It is illegal to take someone to another country to force them to marry. A Forced Marriage Protection Order (FMPO) can be applied for to protect a child.

Adults

There are many ways that abuse and neglect can happen. The following examples are a guide and not intended to be a full and complete list as to the sort of behaviour which would alert a safeguarding concern.

Financial abuse

Includes having money or property stolen, being defrauded (being cheated) or 'scammed', being put under pressure in relation to money or other property or having money or other property misused.

Things to look out for include changes in living conditions, lack of heating, clothing or food, unable to pay bills or being short of money for no reason.

Other things to watch out for include money being taken out of a bank account which was not expected, financial documents go missing or are found in unexpected places, recent addition of authorised signers on a signature card, or sudden or surprising changes in a will or other financial documents. There may, of course, be other reasons that could explain the situations listed above.

If you are concerned about financial abuse by a lawyer or a court-appointed deputy for someone who lacks mental capacity, contact the RNID Safeguarding Lead via your Manager for advice.

Physical abuse

Includes assault, hitting, slapping, pushing, misuse of medication, restraint, or the use of physical punishments.

Psychological abuse

Includes emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, not allowing or reducing their contact with others, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, using force, and harassment. Can also include verbal abuse, cyber bullying, and isolation, stopping access to services or supportive networks without having a good reason for doing this.

Sexual abuse

Includes rape, inappropriate touching, indecent exposure, and sexual acts to which the adult has not consented or was forced to do.

Discriminatory abuse

A disability hate crime is a criminal offence that was done because of hatred or prejudice towards a person because of their actual or perceived disability. It is common and a regular part of the lives of many people with disabilities.

Discriminatory abuse includes harassment, insults or similar treatment because of race, gender and gender identity, age, disability, sexual orientation, religion. These are 'protected characteristics' under the Equality Act 2010.

Organisational abuse

Includes neglect and poor care practice within an organisation or specific care environment or when care is provided in a person's own home. This includes one off incident as well as regular poor treatment. It can happen because of neglect or poor professional practice because of the structure, policies, processes and practices within an organisation.

Neglect and acts of omission

Includes ignoring medical, emotional, or physical care needs; not providing access to appropriate health or care and support; or stopping the person getting things they need, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating.

Domestic abuse

Includes violence, psychological, sexual, financial, emotional abuse, and patterns of forceful and controlling behaviour during a relationship between intimate partners, previous partners who still live together, or family members, and honour-based violence.

Self-neglect

Most forms of neglect or abuse are done by another person and the law usually assumes there is a person committing the act as well as a victim. However, this is not the case with self-neglect, which is included as an example of abuse and neglect in statutory guidance.

Self-neglect is a difficult area because of the basic human right to private life. If someone chooses to live in a particular way, however worrying that is, there are limited circumstances when the law can get involved. This consideration must be balanced with the right to safeguarding, which is also based on human rights protections.

Self-neglect covers a range of behaviour related to neglecting to care for one's personal hygiene, health or home environment and can include behaviour such as hoarding. Evidence of self-neglect may not start a formal safeguarding enquiry. An assessment must be made on a case-by-case basis.

The decision on whether a safeguarding response is needed depends on the adult's ability to protect themselves by controlling their own behaviour. There may come a time when they can no longer do this without support from others.

If someone you know is not looking after themselves, perhaps not eating or washing properly, or hoarding and living in very disorganised and filthy conditions, then a safeguarding concern must be made to the RNID Safeguarding Lead. The Safeguarding Lead can then consider the concern and if necessary, contact the local authority who should contact the person. They may assess and provide care or support.

Female Genital Mutilation

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is a procedure where the female genital organs are injured or changed, but there is no medical reason for this. It can seriously harm the health of women and girls in the long term. It can happen to children and adults.

For more information see the World Health Organisation factsheet.

Human Trafficking and modern slavery

Human trafficking is a type of abuse and neglect. It is defined as a process that is a combination of three basic parts:

1) Movement (including within the UK)
2) Control, through harm/threat of harm or fraud
3) For the purpose of exploitation

Examples of how people are trafficked:

- Sexual exploitation
- Domestic servitude
- Criminal exploitation
- Organ harvesting
- Forced labour
- Slavery

Mate Crime

When a person is harmed or taken advantage of by someone they thought was their friend. The adult at risk can suffer financial, physical, sexual, and emotional abuse at the hands of a 'mate'.

Controlling and Coercive behaviour in an intimate or family relationship

Section 76 of the Serious Crime Act 2015 creates the new offence of controlling or coercive behaviours in an intimate relationship. It applies to children as well. Coercive behaviour means forceful behaviour. The types of behaviour are:

- Isolating a person from their friends and family
- Stopping a person receiving their basic needs
- Keeping track of their time
- Keeping track of a person by using online apps, software or spyware
- Taking control over parts of their everyday life, such as where they can go, who they can see, what to wear and when they can sleep
- Stopping them from accessing support services, such as specialist support or medical services
- Repeatedly putting them down such as telling them they are worthless
- Forcing the victim to take part in criminal activity such as shoplifting, neglect or abuse of children so that they blame themselves afterwards and don't tell authorities
- Financial abuse including control of finances, such as only allowing a person to have a low amount of allowance money as a way of punishing them
- Control ability to go to school or place of study
- Threats to share or publish private information (e.g., threatening to 'out' someone)
- Criminal damage (such as ruining household goods, such as furniture or a television)
- Stopping a person from having access to transport or from working
- Stopping a person from being able to attend school, college or University
- Family 'dishonour'
- Announcing of sexual orientation
- Limiting access to family, friends and finances

Non-recent (Historical) Abuse

All cases of non-recent abuse must be reported to the RNID Safeguarding Lead and to a statutory agency.

Non-recent abuse (also known as historical abuse) is an allegation of neglect, physical, sexual, or emotional abuse made by or on behalf of someone who is now 18 years or over, relating to an incident which took place when the alleged victim was under 18 years old. (Independent Inquiry Child Sexual Abuse)

Allegations of child abuse are sometimes made by adults and children many years after the abuse happened. There are many reasons for an allegation not being made at the time including fear of revenge, the amount of control the abuser has, shame or fear that the allegation may not be believed. If the person knows the abuser is being investigated for a similar offence, or they suspect the abuse is continuing against other children, they may choose to report it.

Reports of non-recent allegations of abuse may be complex. The alleged victims may no longer be living in or attending the same place where the incidents occurred. Alleged perpetrators may no longer be linked to the place setting or employment role. Such cases must be responded to in the same way as any other concerns.

It is important to urgently work out if the alleged perpetrator is still working with, or caring for, children. Children's Social Care may not become directly involved initially if the person is known not to have current access to children or be likely to have access in the future.

Organisational responses to allegations by an adult of abuse experienced as a child must be of as high a standard as a response to current abuse because:

- There is a significant likelihood that a person who abused a child/ren in the past will have continued and may still be doing so
- Criminal prosecutions can still take place even though the allegations are non-recent in nature and may have taken place many years ago.

PREVENT – Radicalisation

The UK government's strategy to reduce the risk from terrorism identifies the need not only to stop terrorist attacks but also to PREVENT people becoming terrorists. The UK Government's strategy for preventing international terrorism is CONTEST and the PREVENT strategy is a part of this.

The UK government has defined extremism as:

'Extremism is the vocal or active opposition to our fundamental values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and the mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. We also regard calls for the death of members of our armed forces as extremist'.

Children and young people can be radicalised in different ways:

- Either online or in person by people trying to encourage them to get involved in extremist activity.
- Older children or young people might be radicalised over the internet or through the influence of their peer network – in this situation their parents might not know about this or feel powerless to stop their child's radicalisation
- By family members who have harmful, extreme beliefs, including parents/carers and siblings who live with the child and/or person(s) who live outside the family home but have an influence over the child's life
- They can experience or see violent, anti-social, extremist images, persuasive speaking and writings which can lead to the development of a different world view in which radical beliefs seem reasonable. In this way they are not being individually targeted but are the victims of seeing or hearing misleading formation which aims to persuade them to support these radical views.

The child or young person does not usually recognise that they are being groomed or exploited.

The harm children and young people can experience ranges from a child accepting or obeying these extreme views which limits their social interaction and full involvement with their education, to young children being taken to war zones and older children being groomed for involvement in violence.