

What should you do?

- Listen to the child
- Take what the child says seriously
- Act fast
- Share your worries with CYPS, the Police or the NSPCC – they are there to help you
- Continue to offer the child support

Don't

- Put it off
- Press the child for explanations
- Leave it to someone else to help the child
- Be afraid to voice your concerns, the child may need urgent protection and help

Remember

Any child anywhere can be abused at any time. Children with disabilities are especially vulnerable. Child abuse can be committed by anyone – adults or children.

What will happen?

The person you speak to will take your concerns very seriously and refer your case to a social worker trained in child protection who will contact you. Whatever you say will be treated in confidence. The social worker will check whether the family is known to social care services already and will then discuss the case with a senior officer.

Enquiries will often begin by asking other people in contact with the child, such as teachers, health visitors or doctors, if they have any concerns for the child. In most cases there will be a discussion between the social worker and the parents and child. Sometimes it soon becomes clear that there is nothing to worry about, but if concern remains about the welfare of the child, the formal Child Protection Enquiry procedures will begin immediately. Because of the confidential nature of this work, you may not be kept informed as the enquiry continues, but your alertness will have been the important first step in protecting the child.

Important contact telephone numbers and addresses.

During office hours (8am - 8pm Monday to Friday) you can contact Children's Social Care Services at Cambridgeshire Direct on 0345 045 5203.

If you urgently need help outside these hours you can contact Cambridgeshire Children and Young People's Services on 01733 234724.

You can also speak to the: National Society of the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) 0800 800500.

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Child Abuse

Reporting to Children and Young People's Services (CYPS)



Child Abuse – What can YOU do?

Any child can be abused anywhere at any time. Children with disabilities are especially vulnerable. Children can be abused by anyone – adults or other children.

What is child abuse?

It takes many forms, for example:

- **Physical abuse**

When children are hurt or injured by others, for example by hitting, shaking or squeezing.

- **Sexual abuse**

When children are used by others to meet their own sexual needs. This might include sexual activity involving the child or showing the children pornographic material on videos or the internet.

- **Emotional abuse**

When children are persistently denied love and affection. Children will suffer if they are shouted at, made to feel stupid, rejected, used as scapegoats or live in a violent environment.

- **Neglect**

Where no one meets children's basic needs for food, warmth, protection, education and care, including health care.

How can I tell if a child is being abused or neglected?

Some of the signs to look out for are on the next page. If you see any of these, or if other things about a child make you feel uneasy, please let someone know. Telephone numbers are on the back of this leaflet.

Signs to look out for:

physical abuse

- Unexplained injuries, bruises or marks
- Fear, watchfulness, over-anxiety to please
- Small, round burns or bite marks
- Frequent absences from school

sexual abuse

- Comments about sexual activity
- Sexual knowledge or comments which are not what you would expect from a child
- Sexual behaviour which is not what you would expect from a child
- Unexpected reactions of fear or wariness to people
- Repeated urinary or genital infections
- Pregnancy/sexually transmitted diseases

emotional abuse

- Unexplained gifts of money
- Withdrawn, anxious behaviour, lack of self-confidence
- Self-harm and eating disorders
- Demanding or attention-seeking behaviour
- Unwillingness to communicate
- Repetitive, nervous behaviour such as rocking, hair twisting

neglect

- The child's clothes are often dirty, scruffy or unsuitable for the weather
- No one seeks medical help when the child is ill or hurt
- The child has poor hygiene (smelly, dirty)
- The child is left alone with unsuitable carers
- The child is thin, pale, lacking in energy
- The child has lots of accidents
- The child is exposed to risks or dangers, such as the home being unsafe or drugs or needles being left around