

Where Does Abuse Happen?

Abuse can happen anywhere. It can happen in our homes, on our streets, in playgrounds, at work or in our schools. It can happen within the locations where we expect a level of trust such care homes and hospitals.

Who abuses and causes harm?

Anyone can abuse. The abuser can be well known to a person such as a partner, a family member, a friend, work colleague, neighbour, acquaintance or a stranger.

Abusers can also be people in positions of trust or power such as health or social care professionals or paid or voluntary care workers.

Abusers can be someone who has never been seen or have never been in the UK. Access to the internet means that abusers can retain anonymity and never have to have met their victim.

Why do I need this information?

The victims of abuse are the friends, neighbours and colleagues across our communities. This is equally true of those who seek to inflict abuse on others.

The more we can spot the signs of abuse at an early stage, the greater our chances of protecting children and adults from being subject to harm and the devastating impact of abuse thereafter.

It is the responsibility of agencies to protect children and adults at risk of abuse and neglect. Highly trained staff can also support you in considering any concerns with you and where appropriate make decisions about what should happen next.

What should I do if I think that a child or adult is being abused or at risk of being abused?

In an emergency always call the Police on 999

- For concerns regarding children or young people, the public can contact Together for Children on **0191 561 7007**
- For concerns regarding adults, the public can contact Sunderland Council's Customer Contact Centre on **0191 520 5552** or contact the Safeguarding Adults Team using the online form at www.sunderland.gov.uk/article/14082/Report-a-safeguarding-concerns-members-of-the-public
- Police non-emergency Number : **101**

Do I have to give my name?

No, it is your choice, and you may choose to remain anonymous. However, it is important that you provide as much information as possible to enable the right decision to be made.

Other Services

- NSPCC: **0808 800 5000**
- Childline: **0800 1111**
- Crimestoppers: **0800 555 111**

For further information visit:

www.sunderlandscb.com or
www.sunderlandsab.org.uk



Concerned about a child
or adult?

Find out what you can do

“Remember keeping children and
adults safe is everyone’s
responsibility”

Keeping children safe

Most children enjoy a safe and happy childhood within their own family, but unfortunately for some, this is not the case. During difficult family times everyone has a responsibility to protect children from harm. Good care begins even before a child is born.

Keeping adults safe

Adults who are aged 18 years and over who may be unable to: take care of themselves, speak out for themselves or protect themselves against abuse or exploitation. They may depend on other people or a service to support or care for them.

What is abuse and neglect?

Abuse is a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by another person. Abuse may consist of a single act or repeated acts and can take a number of different forms. Abuse includes not taking action to protect a child or adult from harm. All abuse has a long lasting impact on victims, their families and the community.

Physical abuse

This could include hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, misuse of medication, inappropriate sanctions or restraint, as well as any potential injury like cuts, bruises, burns, scalds or broken bones that have not happened by accident. Injuries may be caused as a result of shaking babies, inducing illness in a child or a lack of appropriate care of a vulnerable adult.

Emotional abuse

This may involve constantly making a person feel worthless or unloved, frightened or in danger. It may involve serious bullying and seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may feature inappropriate expectations being imposed on persons including interactions that are beyond their capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the person participating in normal social interaction.

Domestic Abuse

Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality.

Sexual abuse and Sexual Exploitation

Sexual abuse can take many forms such as a child performing or watching sexual activity or a vulnerable adult involved in sexual abuse beyond their ability to understand or consent freely. In many cases sexual abuse is carried out by a person known to the victim. Many scenarios involve the grooming of a child or vulnerable adult so they appear to be in a consenting relationship, this could not be further from the truth and is sexual exploitation.

Neglect

This can include ignoring medical or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, social care or educational services. A person may be left alone or left with unsuitable carers. They may not be fed or clothed properly. Neglect also involves not protecting a child from danger.

Abuse however can take many other forms including features of adult abuse:

- **Financial or material** – stealing or denying access to money or possessions
- **Discrimination and Hate Crime** – abuse motivated by discriminatory attitudes towards race, religion, disability, cultural background
- **Institutional** – neglect and poor professional practice within hospitals, care and nursing homes

- **Self-Neglect** – neglecting to care for one's personal hygiene, health or surroundings and includes behaviour such as hoarding

Specific areas of criminality feature in respect of all our children, vulnerable adults and communities:

- **Slavery** – a person is held for servitude or forced labour
- **Trafficking** – a person is taken to or has arranged to attend a location where they are exploited
- **Female genital mutilation and forced marriage** – normally associated with a child being taken abroad
- **Radicalisation** – the process where someone has their vulnerabilities or susceptibilities exploited towards crime or terrorism
- **Mate Crime** – faking a friendship in order to take advantage of a vulnerable person.

How does abuse happen?

Abuse is the adverse influence of power or control over an individual. Such power and control exploits the particular aspects of children and adults which makes them vulnerable to physical, emotional and sexual abuse as well as those who neglect to protect those who need it most.

Abusers will often provide alcohol, illicit drugs or 'legal' highs to increase a person's vulnerability, they may threaten or coerce their victims through fear or even convince a victim they are in a loving relationship.