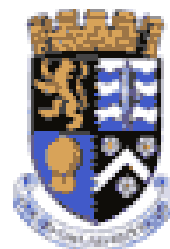


# What is Child Abuse?



...taking care to make a difference

**Large Print or other format/medium  
are available on request**

**please telephone**



**01545 574000**



**or Email**

**contact-socservs@ceredigion.gov.uk**

**Porth Gofal Office Hours:**

Monday – Thursday: 8.45 a.m. – 5.00 p.m.  
Friday: 8.45 a.m. – 4.30 p.m.

You can find information about services provided by  
Ceredigion County Council on our website at:  
**[www.ceredigion.gov.uk](http://www.ceredigion.gov.uk)**

Reviewed December 2019

## **What is Child Abuse?**

## **How can you Help?**

**A guide to understanding child abuse for members of the public**

## **This information is for you!**

### **Whether you are...**

- A child or young person
- A parent or carer
- A relative
- An employer
- A friend or neighbour
- A concerned member of the public
- Anyone who comes into contact with children

### **Because...**

**It is the responsibility of all of us to keep children safe from harm.**

### **Why should you want to know about child abuse?**

If you are a parent or somebody who cares about children it is important to know about the different kinds of child abuse so you can recognise it and help to prevent it.

It is estimated that more than 150 children die each year in England and Wales as a result of abuse and neglect. In addition thousands of children suffer long-term emotional and psychological problems because of ill treatment by their own parents.

Most abuse of children is committed by people known to them. Only a small minority of abuse involves a stranger.

### **What every child needs is...**

- To feel safe and secure
- Health and happiness
- Appropriate affection
- Lots of smiles
- Praise and encouragement
- To be able to talk to someone
- To be listened to
- To be trusted
- New experiences
- Respect for their feelings
- Rewards and treats
- Protection from harm

Sadly, cruelty to children happens in all walks of life and can take many forms, only some of which have visible signs. There are 4 main types of abuse, all are damaging to children.

## **Types of Child Abuse and some signs which may suggest Child Abuse is happening**

Children and young people suffer from harm in a number of ways. A person may abuse or neglect a child or young person by inflicting harm or by failing to prevent harm. The following information may help you decide whether a child is at risk of abuse, harm or neglect.

- **Physical Abuse** happens when someone deliberately injures a child. This includes hitting, shaking, squeezing, burning or biting. Other examples are giving a child inappropriate drugs or alcohol or poisonous substances

Physical abuse can cause bruising, burns, fractures, internal injuries and brain damage. In extreme cases it can cause death.

### **Signs which may suggest physical abuse is happening:**

- Any bruising to a baby in the pre crawling/walking stage
- Multiple bruising to different parts of the body
- Bruising of different colours indicating repeated injuries
- Small fingertip pattern bruising to the chest, back arms or legs
- Burns of any shape or size
- An injury for there is not an adequate explanation
- **Sexual Abuse** occurs when someone forces or entices a child or young person to take part in sexual activity. It also includes non-contact sexual activity, for instance exposing children to pornography.

Sexual abuse can have very damaging and long lasting effects

### **Signs of possible sexual abuse:**

- Something a child has told you
- Something a child has told someone else
- A child who shows worrying sexualised behaviour in their play or with other children
- A child who seems to have inappropriate sexual knowledge for their age
- A child who may be visiting or being looked after by a known sex offender
- **Neglect** happens when adults continually fail to meet a child's essential needs such as food, shelter, clothing, medical care, not protecting a child from danger, leaving children too young to look after themselves, and, not responding to a child's basic needs

Children who are neglected usually show signs of being unhappy in some way. They may appear withdrawn or unusually aggressive, or they may have lingering health problems.

### **Signs which may suggest neglect:**

- Squalid, unhygienic or dangerous home conditions
- Parents who fail to attend to their children's health or developmental needs
- Children who appear undersized or underweight.
- Children who continually appear tired or lacking in energy

- Children who suffer frequent injuries due to lack of supervision
- Children who are left alone
- **Emotional Abuse** happens when an adult fails to show their children sufficient love or attention, or threatens, taunts or belittles them to an extent that causes them to become nervous, withdrawn, aggressive or disturbed in their behaviour

Emotional abuse hurts children very deeply and can have serious effects on a child's personality and future relationships.

### **Signs which may suggest emotional harm:**

- Children whose behaviour is excessive, such as rocking, head banging, excessive overeating
- Children who self harm, such as cutting, scratching, taking an overdose
- Children who attempt suicide
- Children who persistently run away from home
- Children who show high levels of anxiety, unhappiness or withdrawal
- Children who usually indiscriminately seek out or avoid affection

Children and young people may be abused by a member of their family, in an institution or community setting, by people known to them, or, more rarely, by a stranger.

## **How does abuse affect children?**

Abuse has many different effects according to what has happened and depending on the individual child. However it is known that many children and young people are badly affected, physically and emotionally, and that this can last throughout their lives.

It is therefore very important that we are mindful of children's needs and problems, and that we take actions when we have concerns.

If you know or suspect that a child has suffered harm, neglect or abuse, please contact Ceredigion Social Care.

### **How to contact: -**

During the daytime telephone Ceredigion Social Care Porth Gofal on:



**01545 574000**

they are open from Monday to Thursday between 8.45 am and 5.00 pm, and on Friday from 8.45 am to 4.30 pm.

Outside these hours please phone:



**0300 4563554**

Dyfed Powys Police can be contacted on:



**101**



**Ceredigion County Council wholeheartedly supports the principle of equality and recognises the importance of fair access and actively promotes equality of opportunity for all service users and carers.**

## **Advocacy Service**

There is an Advocacy service available and where possible we will arrange for someone to help you put your point across in your dealings with us if you are not able to do this yourself and don't have family or friends to help you.

**Ceredigion Independent Professional Advocacy (CIPA)** can assist if you (or your carer) are over 18 years of age, live in Ceredigion and are currently having an assessment or review of their care and support needs or have a safeguarding concern.



**0800 206 1387**

**Advocacy West Wales** provides an Independent Mental Health Act Advocacy Service (IMHA) for both people in the community and for informal patients at Morlais Ward, Glangwilli Hospital, Carmarthen.



**01437 762935**



[www.advocacywestwales.org.uk](http://www.advocacywestwales.org.uk)



[admin@advocacywestwales.org.uk](mailto:admin@advocacywestwales.org.uk)

**TGP Cymru** provides help to children and young people to make sure that they have their rights respected and have their voices heard. They can provide information, advocacy, representation, advice and support.



**0808 1682599**



**01545 571865**



**midandwestwales@tgpcymru.org.uk**

## **Information Sharing and Confidentiality**

Any information that you give us will be kept safe and confidential. We will not disclose your information to anyone not involved in your care without your consent (unless we are obliged to do so by law or there are exceptional circumstances, such as your safety and/or the safety of others).

## **Emergencies**

If you need urgent help outside the opening times of the Porth Gofal (as stated on the inside cover of this leaflet), please contact our Out of Hours Emergency Team on:



**0300 4563554**

Other leaflets detailing the different services offered by Ceredigion Social Care are available on request from Porth Gofal. For further information please telephone:



**01545 574000**

We would welcome any comments you have with regard to the content and layout of this leaflet and/or the service you have received. Your views are important so that we can monitor and improve the quality as required. Please could you take time to complete the following:

Name: .....

Address: .....

.....

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Tel. No: ..... Date:

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Leaflet received from:

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My compliment or complaint:

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(Please continue on a separate page if you need to)



Send this page to:

The Complaints and FOI Team  
Canolfan Rheidol  
Rhodfa Padarn,  
Llanbadarn Fawr,  
Aberystwyth  
SY23 3UE

**Thank you for your comments**

