

The United Reformed Church

Signs and symptoms of abuse



Signs and symptoms of abuse can be broadly grouped into three areas:

- physical indicators
- behavioural indicators
- emotional indicators.

Some indicators may be common to different types of abuse, others may be more specifically linked to one particular kind of abuse. Observing any of the signs or symptoms does not necessarily mean that a person is being abused; there could be a perfectly ordinary explanation. However, the observation of multiple signs and symptoms, together with explanations which are inconsistent or do not 'ring true', should give more cause for concern.

As in Section 4.2 of Good Practice 6, abuse defined in statutory guidance or procedures is covered first here, followed by additional detail on some other safeguarding concerns which combine these different types of abuse.

1. Definitions used in statutory guidance or procedures

England: Children

- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Neglect.

England: Adults

- Physical
- Sexual abuse
- Psychological abuse
- Neglect and acts of omission
- Financial or material abuse
- Domestic abuse
- Organisational abuse
- Self-neglect
- Modern slavery
- Discriminatory abuse.

Wales: The Wales Safeguarding Procedures set out five categories of abuse for both children and adults: physical, sexual, psychological, emotional or financial abuse.

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|-------------------------------------|--------|----------|
| • Physical abuse: | Adults | Children |
| • Sexual abuse: | Adults | Children |
| • Psychological and emotional abuse | Adults | Children |
| • Financial abuse | Adults | Children |

2. Other types and examples of abuse

- Child sexual exploitation (CSE)
- Child criminal exploitation (CCE)
- Child-on-child abuse
- Domestic abuse experienced by children
- Child abuse linked to faith or belief
- Radicalisation
- Spiritual abuse
- Mate crime.

1. Definitions used in statutory guidance or procedures

England: Children

For children, there are four main types of abuse (taken from Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023, Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018).

Physical abuse

Bumps and bruises don't always mean a child is being physically abused. However, signs of particular concern include:

- if a child regularly has injuries
- there is a pattern to the injuries
- the injury has not received medical attention or proper care
- the explanation given doesn't match the injuries.

What it includes	Signs you may see
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hitting, slapping and beating • Shaking, pinching, throwing and pushing • Kicking, biting, burning, drowning and hair pulling • Squeezing, suffocating, poisoning • Parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child (or misuses medication) • Inappropriate use of restraint techniques or other physical sanctions • Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is also a form of physical abuse. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cuts, puncture wounds, open wounds, welts • Bruising and discolouration: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) particularly if there is a lot of bruising of different ages and in places not normally exposed to falls, rough games etc b) in unusual places (eg the mouth), in unusual patterns (eg symmetrical) or in particular shapes (eg fingertip bruising or belt marks). • Black eyes, burns, broken bones, bite marks • Loss of hair, loss of weight, loss of appetite • Flinching away from others • Keeping fully covered, even in hot weather • Head injuries in babies and toddlers can be signs of abuse and visible signs may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) swelling, bruising, fractures b) being extremely sleepy or unconscious c) breathing problems, seizures, vomiting d) unusual behaviour, such as being irritable or not feeding properly.

Sexual

Knowing the signs of sexual abuse can help give a voice to children. Sometimes children won't understand that what's happening to them is wrong. Or they might be scared to speak out.

What it includes	Signs you may see
<p>The activities may involve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. • they may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse. • sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. • sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoiding being alone with or frightened of people or a person they know • Language or sexual behaviour you wouldn't expect them to know • Having nightmares or bed-wetting • Self-harm • Changes in eating patterns • Alcohol or drug misuse. <p>If the abuse is online, a child might:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • spend a lot more or a lot less time than usual online, texting, gaming or using social media • seem distant, upset or angry after using the internet or texting • be secretive about who they're talking to and what they're doing online or on their phone • have lots of new numbers, texts or email addresses on their phone, laptop or tablet. <p>Children and young people might also drop hints and clues about the abuse.</p>

Emotional

There might not be any obvious physical signs of emotional abuse and a child might not tell anyone what's happening until they reach a 'crisis point'. As children grow up, their emotions change and this may also make it difficult at times to tell if they're being emotionally abused.

What it includes	Signs you may see
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as 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 • Age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children • Overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning • Preventing the child participating in normal social interaction • Seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another • Serious bullying (including cyber bullying) • Causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger. 	<p>Children who are being emotionally abused might:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • seem unconfident or lack self-assurance • struggle to control their emotions • have difficulty making or maintaining relationships • act in a way that's inappropriate for their age. <p>Babies and pre-school children who are being emotionally abused or neglected might:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be overly-affectionate to strangers or people they don't know well • seem unconfident, wary or anxious • not have a close relationship or bond with their parent • be aggressive or cruel towards other children or animals. <p>Older children might:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use language or know about things you wouldn't expect them to understand at their age • act in a way or know about things you wouldn't expect them to know for their age • have extreme outbursts • seem isolated from their parents • lack social skills • have few or no friends.

Neglect

Neglect can be difficult to spot but is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development.

Having one of the signs doesn't necessarily mean a child is being neglected. But if you notice multiple signs that last for a while, they might show there's a serious problem.

What it includes	Signs you may see
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. <p>Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment)protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger ensure their child is provided with educationensure adequate supervision (eg by using of inadequate care-givers)ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.	<p>Poor appearance and hygiene:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">being smelly or dirtybeing hungry or not given money for foodhaving unwashed clothes or having the wrong clothing (such as no warm clothes in winter)frequent and untreated nappy rash in infants. <p>Health and development problems:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">regular illness, infections or dental issuesmissed medical appointments (eg for vaccinations)poor language or social skillstirednessrepeated accidental injuries (eg due to lack of supervision)skin issues, such as sores, rashes, flea bites, scabies or ringworm. <p>Housing and family issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">living in an unsuitable home environment, such as having no heatingbeing left alone for a long time.

What it includes	Signs you may see
	<p>Changes in behaviour:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• becoming clingy• becoming aggressive• being withdrawn, depressed or anxious• changes in eating habits• displaying obsessive behaviour• finding it hard to concentrate or take part in activities• missing school• showing signs of self-harm• using drugs or alcohol.

England: Adults

For adults, Government guidance on the Care Act 2014 indicates ten main types of abuse.

Physical

Physical injuries don't always mean someone is being physically abused, but signs of particular concern include:

- the injuries are regular or recurring
- there is a pattern to the injuries
- the injury has not received medical attention or proper care
- the explanation given doesn't match the injuries.

What it includes	Signs you may see
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assault, hitting, slapping, punching, kicking, hair-pulling, biting, pushing• Rough handling• Scalding and burning• Physical punishments• Inappropriate or unlawful use of restraint• Making someone purposefully uncomfortable (eg opening a window and removing blankets)• Involuntary isolation or confinement• Misuse of medication (eg over-sedation)• Forcible feeding or withholding food.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bruising, cuts, welts, burns and/or marks on the body or loss of hair in clumps, broken bones• Flinching away from others• Always covering up, even in warm weather• No explanation for injuries or inconsistency with the account of what happened• Injuries are inconsistent with the person's lifestyle• Frequent injuries or unexplained falls• Subdued or changed behaviour in the presence of a particular person• Signs of malnutrition• Failure to seek medical treatment or frequent changes of GP.

Sexual

What it includes	Signs you may see
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rape • Indecent exposure • Sexual harassment • Inappropriate looking or touching • Sexual teasing or innuendo • Sexual photography or filming, • “Revenge porn” • Subjection to pornography or • Witnessing sexual acts • Sexual assault • Sexual acts to which the adult has not consented or was pressured into consenting. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excessive fear/apprehension of, or withdrawal from, relationships • Fear of receiving help with personal care • Reluctance to be alone with a particular person • Self-harming • Poor concentration, withdrawal • Sleep disturbance • The uncharacteristic use of explicit sexual language or significant changes in sexual behaviour or attitude • Bruising, particularly to the thighs, buttocks and upper arms and marks on the neck • Pregnancy in someone who is unable to consent to sexual intercourse.

Psychological

What it includes	Signs you may see
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Enforced social isolation – preventing someone accessing services, educational and social opportunities and seeing friends• Removing mobility or communication aids or intentionally leaving someone unattended when they need assistance• Preventing someone from meeting their religious and cultural needs• Preventing the expression of choice and opinion• Failure to respect privacy• Preventing stimulation, meaningful occupation or activities• Intimidation, coercion, harassment, use of threats, humiliation, bullying, swearing or verbal abuse• Addressing a person in a patronising or infantilising way• Threats of harm or abandonment• Cyber bullying.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• An air of silence when a particular person is present• Withdrawal or change in the psychological state of the person• Insomnia• Low self-esteem• Uncooperative and aggressive behaviour• A change of appetite, weight loss/gain• Signs of distress: tearfulness, anger• Apparent false claims, by someone involved with the person, to attract unnecessary treatment.

Neglect and acts of omission

What it includes	Signs you may see
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ignoring medical, emotional or physical care needs• Failure to provide access to appropriate health, care and support or educational services• The withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• An out of character failure to engage in social interaction and activities• Inconsistent or reluctant contact with support, such as medical and social care organisations• Poor personal hygiene• Inappropriate or inadequate clothing• Poor state of home environment• Malnutrition or unexplained weight loss• Untreated injuries and medical problems• Accumulation of untaken medication.

Financial or material abuse

What it includes	Signs you may see
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Theft of money or possessions • Fraud, scamming • Preventing a person from accessing their own money, benefits or assets • Employees taking a loan from a person using the service • Undue pressure, duress, threat or undue influence put on the person in connection with loans, wills, property, inheritance or financial transactions • Arranging less care than is needed to save money to maximise inheritance • Denying assistance to manage/monitor financial affairs • Denying assistance to access benefits • Misuse of personal allowance in a care home • Misuse of benefits or direct payments in a family home • Someone moving into a person's home and living rent free without agreement or under duress • False representation, using another person's bank account, cards or documents • Exploitation of a person's money or assets, eg unauthorised use of a car • Misuse of a power of attorney, deputy, appointeeship or other legal authority • Rogue trading – eg unnecessary or overpriced property repairs and failure to carry out agreed repairs or poor workmanship. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Missing personal possessions • Unexplained lack of money or inability to maintain lifestyle • Unexplained withdrawal of funds from accounts • Power of attorney or lasting power of attorney (LPA) being obtained after the person has ceased to have mental capacity • Failure to register an LPA after the person has ceased to have mental capacity to manage their finances, so that it appears that they are continuing to do so • The person allocated to manage financial affairs is evasive or uncooperative • The family or others show unusual interest in the assets of the person • Signs of financial hardship in cases where the person's financial affairs are being managed by a court appointed deputy, attorney or LPA • Recent changes in deeds or title to property • Rent arrears and eviction notices • A lack of clear financial accounts held by a care home or service • Failure to provide receipts for shopping or other financial transactions carried out on behalf of the person • Disparity between the person's living conditions and their financial resources, eg insufficient food in the house • Unnecessary property repairs.

Domestic abuse

What it includes	Signs you may see
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any incident 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 • It includes psychological, physical, sexual, financial and emotional abuse, as well as ‘honour’-based violence and forced marriage • It can happen inside and outside the home over the phone, on the internet and on social networking sites. It can continue even after a relationship has ended • Both men and women can be abused or be abusers. 	<p>Physical signs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • visible bruising or single or repeated injury with unlikely explanations • change in the pattern or amount of make-up used • change in the manner of dress: for example, clothes that do not suit the climate which may be used to hide injuries • substance use/misuse • fatigue/sleep disorders. <p>Changes in behaviour or demeanour:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • conduct out of character with previous employment history or social engagement • changes in behaviour: for example, becoming very quiet, anxious, frightened, tearful, aggressive, distracted, depressed • isolating themselves from colleagues or friends • obsession with timekeeping • secretive regarding home life • worried about leaving children at home. <p>Productivity signs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • change in the person’s working patterns: for example, frequent absence, lateness or needing to leave work early • reduced quality and quantity of work: missing deadlines, a drop in usual performance standards

What it includes	Signs you may see
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • change in the use of the phone/email: for example, a large number of personal calls/texts, avoiding calls or a strong reaction to calls/texts/emails • spending an increased amount of hours at work for no reason. <p>Other signs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • partner or ex-partner following employee in or around the workplace or Church setting or repeatedly turning up at the workplace or Church setting • partner or ex-partner exerting unusual amount of control or demands over work schedule or social activities • flowers/gifts sent to employee for no apparent reason • isolation from family/friends.

Organisational abuse

What it includes	Signs you may see
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Including neglect and poor care practice within an institution or specific care setting such as a hospital or care home, or in relation to care provided in one's own home • Insufficient staff or high turnover resulting in poor quality care • Abusive and disrespectful attitudes towards people using the service • Failure to manage residents with abusive behaviour • Not offering choice or promoting independence • Inappropriate use of restraints • Misuse of medication. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An unsafe, unhygienic or overcrowded environment • A strict or inflexible routine • Lack of adequate procedures, poor record-keeping or missing documents • Lack of privacy, dignity, and respect for people as individuals • Withdrawing people from community or family contacts • No choice offered with food, drink, dress or activities • No respect or provisions for religion, belief, or cultural backgrounds • Treating adults like children, including arbitrary decision-making.

Self-neglect

What it includes	Signs you may see
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lack of self-care to an extent that it threatens personal health and safety• Neglecting to care for one's personal hygiene, health or surroundings• Inability to avoid self-harm• Failure to seek help or access services to meet health and social care needs• Inability or unwillingness to manage one's personal affairs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Very poor personal hygiene, wearing the same clothes every day• Unkempt appearance• Lack of essential food, clothing or shelter/heating• Malnutrition and/or dehydration• Living in squalid or unsanitary conditions. Neglecting household maintenance• Hoarding• Collecting a large number of animals in inappropriate conditions• Non-compliance with health or care services, Inability or unwillingness to take medication or treat illness or injury.

Modern slavery

What it includes	Signs you may see
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human trafficking, where people are moved from one place to another into a situation of exploitation, using deception, coercion and violence • Forced labour • Domestic servitude • Criminal exploitation – pick pocketing, shoplifting, drug trafficking • Sexual exploitation • Organ removal, forced begging, forced marriage and illegal adoption • Removal of travel and identity documents. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shows signs of physical or psychological abuse and untreated injuries • Looks malnourished or unkempt, or appears withdrawn and neglected • Seems under the control or influence of others • Wears the same clothes every day • Wears no safety equipment even if their work requires it • Living in dirty, cramped or overcrowded accommodation • Living and working at the same address • Appears unfamiliar with their neighbourhood or where they work • Rarely allowed to travel on their own • Collected and dropped off on a regular basis early in the morning or late at night in a crowded minibus with other workers • Has no control of their identification documents such as their passport • Reluctant to seek help and avoids eye contact • Appears frightened or hesitant to talk to strangers • Fear of police, don't know who to trust or where to get help • Afraid of deportation, and risk of violence to them or their family.

Discriminatory abuse

What it includes	Signs you may see
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Unequal treatment based on age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex or sexual orientation (known as 'protected characteristics' under the Equality Act 2010)• Verbal abuse, derogatory remarks or inappropriate use of language related to a protected characteristic• Denying access to communication aids, not allowing access to an interpreter, signer or lip-reader• Harassment or deliberate exclusion on the grounds of a protected characteristic• Denying basic rights to healthcare, education, employment and criminal justice relating to a protected characteristic• Substandard service provision relating to a protected characteristic.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Overhearing harassment or abuse• A person appearing to be excluded from activities or groups for discriminatory reasons• The support on offer does not take account of the person's individual needs in terms of a protected characteristic• The person appears withdrawn and isolated• Expressions of anger, frustration, fear or anxiety.

Wales

The Wales Safeguarding Procedures set out five categories of abuse for both children and adults: physical, sexual, psychological, emotional or financial abuse. Although the number of categories is different, the signs and symptoms are essentially the same as those outlined above.

Physical abuse

Children

Adults

Sexual abuse

Children

Adults

Psychological and emotional abuse

Children

Adults

Financial abuse

Adults

Children: this category will be likely be less prevalent for a child but indicators could be:

- not meeting their needs for care and support which are provided through direct payments
- complaints that personal property is missing.

2. Other types of abuse

In addition, there are other types of harm that may not be specifically mentioned in legislation or statutory guidance, but which are relevant for safeguarding children and adults at risk. These often combine elements of the different types of abuse listed above.

Child sexual exploitation

What it includes	Signs you may see
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. • The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual • Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through use of technology. Exploitation can take place between a child and an adult as well as between one child and another • When a child is sexually exploited online they might be persuaded or forced to: send or post sexually explicit images of themselves film or stream sexual activities, have sexual conversations. Once an abuser has images, video or copies of conversations, they might use threats and blackmail to force a young person to take part in other sexual activity. They may also share the images and videos with others or circulate them online. <p>Gangs use sexual exploitation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to exert power and control • for initiation • to use sexual violence as a weapon. 	<p>Sexual exploitation can be difficult to spot and sometimes mistaken for “normal” teenage or pre-teen behaviour. Signs include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • signs of sexual abuse and grooming • unhealthy or inappropriate sexual behaviour • being frightened of some people, places or situations • being secretive • sharp changes in mood or character • having money/things they can’t/won’t explain • physical signs of abuse, like bruises • alcohol or drug misuse • sexually transmitted infections • pregnancy. <p>Other signs may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • having an older boyfriend or girlfriend • staying out late or overnight • having a new group of friends • missing from home or stopping going to school or college • hanging out with older people, other vulnerable people or in antisocial groups. • involved in a gang • involved in criminal activities like selling drugs or shoplifting.

Child criminal exploitation

What it includes	Signs you may see
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into any criminal activity: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or b) for the financial or other advantage of the perpetrator or facilitator and/or c) through violence or the threat of violence. • Victim may have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears consensual • Child criminal exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology • It also includes ‘County Lines’, a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs into the UK, using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of ‘deal lines’. They are likely to exploit children and vulnerable adults to move and store the drugs and money, and they will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frequently absent from and doing badly in school • Going missing from home, staying out late and travelling for unexplained reasons • In a relationship or hanging out with someone older than them • Being angry, aggressive or violent. Being isolated or withdrawn • Having unexplained money and buying new things • Wearing clothes or accessories in gang colours or getting tattoos • Using new slang words • Spending more time on social media and being secretive about time online • Making more calls or sending more texts, possibly on a new phone or phones • Self-harming and feeling emotionally unwell • Taking drugs and abusing alcohol • Committing petty crimes like shop lifting or vandalism • Unexplained injuries and refusing to seek medical help • Carrying weapons or having a dangerous breed of dog.

Child on child/peer on peer abuse

What it includes	Signs you may see
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This can include physical, sexual, emotional (including coercive control) or financial abuse directed at a child by another child. The signs and symptoms of these are described in the relevant sections above • It can also include bullying which is intentional behaviour to hurt someone. This includes name calling, hitting, spreading rumours, threatening or undermining someone. It can happen anywhere – at school, at home, online, at work or in church. <p>Cyberbullying can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sending threatening or abusive text messages • creating and sharing embarrassing images or videos • trolling – the sending of menacing or upsetting messages on social networks, chat rooms or online games • shaming someone online • encouraging someone to self-harm • revenge porn. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being afraid to go to school or youth groups (or work or church) • Being mysteriously ‘ill’ each morning, or skipping school/youth group • Being nervous, losing confidence, or becoming distressed and withdrawn • Problems with eating or sleeping • Belongings getting ‘lost’ or damaged • Spending a lot more or a lot less time than usual online, texting, gaming or using social media • Seem distant, upset or angry after using the internet or texting • Being secretive about who they’re talking to and what they’re doing online or on their mobile phone • Physical injuries, such as unexplained bruises • Not doing as well at school • Asking for, or stealing, money (to give to whoever’s bullying them) • Bullying others.

Domestic abuse experienced by children

What it includes	Signs you may see
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 now recognises that children are victims of domestic abuse as well as their parents. <p>This can occur:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• due to witnessing domestic abuse between family members• for 16-17 year olds, within their own intimate relationships.	<p>It may be harder to detect in children than adults, but signs you might see include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• aggression or bullying• anti-social behaviour• anxiety, depression or suicidal thoughts• attention seeking• bed-wetting, nightmares or insomnia• constant or regular sickness, like colds, headaches and mouth ulcers• drug or alcohol use• eating disorders• problems in school or trouble learning• withdrawal.

Child abuse linked to faith or belief

What it includes	Signs you may see
<p>This can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • abuse as a result of a child being accused of being a ‘witch’ • abuse as a result of a child being accused of being possessed by ‘evil spirits’ • ritualistic abuse which is prolonged sexual, physical and psychological abuse • satanic abuse which is carried out in the name of ‘satan’ and may have links to cults • any other harmful practice linked to a belief or faith. <p>A range of factors can contribute to the abuse of a child for reasons of faith or belief, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • belief in evil spirits that can ‘possess’ children is often accompanied by a belief that a possessed child can ‘infect’ others • A child could be singled out as the cause of misfortune within the home, such as financial difficulties, divorce, infidelity, illness or death • Sometimes bad behaviour is attributed to spiritual forces, or a child could be singled out for having a physical difference or disability • If a child has a particular skill or talent, this can sometimes be rationalised as the result of possession or witchcraft. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical injuries, such as bruises or burns (including historical injuries/scaring) • A child reporting that they are or have been accused of being ‘evil’, and/or that they are having the ‘devil beaten out of them’ • The child or family may use words such as ‘kindoki’, ‘djin’, ‘juju’ or ‘voodoo’ – all of which refer to spiritual beliefs • A child becoming noticeably confused, withdrawn, disorientated or isolated and appearing alone amongst other children • A child’s personal care deteriorating (eg rapid loss of weight, being hungry, turning up to school without food or lunch money, being unkempt with dirty clothes) • The child’s parent or carer does not have a close bond with the child • A child’s attendance at school or college becomes irregular or there is a deterioration in a child’s performance • A child is taken out of a school altogether without another school place having been arranged • Wearing unusual jewellery/items or in possession of strange ornaments/scripts.

Radicalisation

What it includes	Signs you may see
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Religious extremism • Political extremism (including far-right and far-left groups) • Single issue extremism • Other eg Incel ideology is recognised as an extremist ideology by the Metropolitan Police. <p>Those most 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. Some of the causes that lead to an individual becoming radicalised are no different to other factors that can lead vulnerable individuals towards concerning activity such as substance misuse, child sexual exploitation, or gangs. Other factors may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the need for belonging • looking for a cause or reward • isolation • a sense of injustice or grievance • access to extremist material online • a desire for power, respect or status. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Isolating themselves from family and friends • Talking as if from a scripted speech • Unwillingness or inability to discuss their views • A sudden disrespectful attitude towards others • Increased levels of anger • Increased secretiveness, especially around internet use • Changes in mood, patterns of behaviour or secretive behaviour • Possession of violent extremist literature or use of inappropriate language/speech • The expression of extremist views or sympathy to their causes • Seeking to engage or recruit others to extremist ideologies, extreme groups, literature, online social media groups • Preaching or imposing their views on others • Change in language or use of words • Fixation on a new subject or person.

Spiritual abuse

What it includes	Signs you may see
<p>Spiritual abuse is a form of emotional and psychological abuse. It is characterised by a systematic pattern of coercive and controlling behaviour in a religious context. Spiritual abuse can have a deeply damaging impact on those who experience it and can be experienced in a variety of different relationships. This abuse may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • manipulation and exploitation • enforced accountability • requirements for secrecy and silence • coercion to conform, for example, seeking to enforce rather than encourage behavioural changes; failing to allow an individual autonomy to make their own choices • exercising control through using sacred texts or teaching to coerce behaviour • requirement of obedience to the abuser • the suggestion that the abuser has a 'divine' position • isolation as a means of punishment • superiority and elitism. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of scripture to justify abusive behaviour • Use of scripture to manipulate or force a person into acts they would not wish to consent to • A warning sign of spiritual abuse can be exercising control through invoking fear of spiritual consequences for disobedience. The issue is not the discussion of spiritual consequences as provided in the Bible, but the exercise of control over another person through instrumentalising their fear • Exercising control through the suggestion that obedience to the abuser is equivalent to obedience to God • Emotional manipulation in the guise of righteousness • Being manipulated or feeling pressured into service or conformity • Feeling unable to say no to increasing demands for time, service and obedience • Pressure to conform to expectations and believe exactly the same as others in the church.

Mate crime

What it includes	Signs you may see
<p>This can include financial, physical, sexual, and emotional abuse.</p> <p>Those who are more vulnerable to Mate Crime include people:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • with a learning disability • experiencing mental health issues • with no close family or friends • with a physical disability • with verbal communication constraints • who are isolated from the community • who have low self-worth or esteem. <p>Mate Crime:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • starts with people saying they are their target's friend • does not start with bullying but can become bullying • often happens in private where it is not seen by others. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes in routine, behaviour, appearance, finances or household (eg new people visiting or staying over, lots of new 'friends', lots more noise or rubbish than there normally is) • Unexplained injuries • Sudden sexualised behaviour • Losing weight/gaining weight • A 'friend' who does not respect them, bullies or undermines the person • Bills not being paid, suddenly short of money, losing possessions or changing their will • 'Doing what they are told' by a 'friend' • Showing signs of mental ill health • Not being with usual networks of friends/ family or missing regular activities • Goods or packages arriving at a person's house (then collected by someone else soon after) • People coming around when benefits are paid, taking their target out to spend their money • Being secretive • Alcohol/drug use.