

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 Children Social Care 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 numbers

Children Social Care (Mon—Fri 9am—5pm)
01733 864170 or 864180

Out of Hours Emergencies — 01733 234724

Cambridgeshire Constabulary — 101

National Society of the Prevention of
Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) — 0800 800 5000


Childline—0800 1111


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Identifying Child Abuse

And what you should do

Keeping Children Safe Together

What is Child Abuse?

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.

Child Abuse takes many forms, for example:

Physical Abuse

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

Signs to look out for

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

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

Signs to look out for:

- 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

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

- 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

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

- 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/needles being left around

What should you do?

- Listen to the child
- Take what the child says seriously
- Act fast
- Share your worries with Children Social Care, 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 help and protection

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