

ROYSTON COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

Working with and supporting the community since 1976 – Registered Charity Number 1171548

COOMBES COMMUNITY CENTRE
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Safeguarding Policy 2025/26

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Introduction

Purpose

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and adults at risk from abuse or neglect.

This policy defines how Royston Community Association (RCA) operating Coombes Community Centre operates to safeguard children, young people and adults at risk of abuse or neglect.

We have a duty of care and are committed to the protection and safety of everyone who enters our premises including children, young people and adults at risk involved as visitors and/or as participants in all activities and events. We also have a duty to safeguard and support our trustees, volunteers, and staff.

Definitions

Child / Children

Child and Children is defined by The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child as any person or persons who have not yet reached their eighteenth birthday. While we recognise the importance of and use the term 'children and young people' in practice, it is essential to understand the definition of a Child in the context of Safeguarding and this Policy.

Adult at Risk

Adult at Risk means any person aged eighteen or over who has needs for care and support (whether or not the local authority is meeting any of those needs) and is experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect and as a result of those care and support needs is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of abuse or neglect. This may include people with learning disabilities, sensory impairments, mental health needs, older people and people with a physical disability or impairment. It may also include people who are affected by the circumstances that they are living in, for example, experiencing domestic abuse. An individual's level of vulnerability to harm may vary over time depending on the circumstances they are in and their needs at that time.

Safeguarding Adults at Risk means protecting an adult's right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect. It is about people and organisations working together to prevent and stop both the risks and experience of abuse or neglect, while at the same time making sure that the adult's wellbeing is promoted. Abuse of adults links to the circumstances rather than the characteristics of the people experiencing the harm. An individual's level of vulnerability to harm may vary over time depending on the circumstances they are in and their needs at that time. Labelling groups of people (such as people with learning disabilities or older people) as inherently 'vulnerable' is seen to be disempowering. Instead, the Care Act

describes adults potentially 'at risk' from harm or abuse.

Persons affected

- All trustees, volunteers, and staff
- All those attending any activity or service that is being delivered at Coombes Community Centre
- All visitors and contractors

Section 1: RCA approach and commitment to safeguarding

Policy principles

There can be no excuses for not taking all reasonable action to protect adults at risk of abuse, exploitation, radicalisation, and mistreatment. All citizens of the United Kingdom have their rights enshrined within the Human Rights Act 1998. People who are eligible to receive health and community care services may be additionally vulnerable to the violation of these rights by reason of disability, impairment, age, or illness.

Royston Community Association operating Coombes Community Centre through its management committee has a zero-tolerance approach to abuse. It recognises that:

- under the Care Act 2014, it has a duty for the care and protection of adults who are at risk of abuse
- it has responsibilities for the safety and care of children under the Children Act 1989 and 2004

Royston Community Association operating Coombes Community Centre through its management committee is committed to promoting wellbeing and harm prevention; to responding effectively if concerns are raised; and to the following principles:

- The welfare of the child, young person or adult at risk is paramount
- All children, young people and adults at risk have the right to protection from abuse
- Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility: for services to be effective each professional and organisation should play their full part; and
- All suspicions and allegations of abuse must be properly reported to the relevant internal and external authorities and dealt with swiftly and appropriately.

Royston Community Association operating Coombes Community Centre through its management committee is aware of the work of their local safeguarding Board/Partnership and other support organisations on the development and implementation of procedures for the protection of adults vulnerable from abuse. The policy is about stopping abuse where

it is happening and preventing abuse where there is a risk that it may occur.

The Royston Community Association Safeguarding Lead is the Centre Manager, Zoe Miles, or a delegated person during manager holidays, who can be contacted between 09:30 – 13:30 Monday to Friday: **01763248081** info@coombescommunitycentre.co.uk

Section 2: Standards of practice and behaviour for Staff and Hirers

Staff, Trustees and Hirers must adhere to the standards of practice and behaviour set out in this section and any safeguarding protocol or guidance issued from time to time in relation to specific Activities they are involved with.

This Policy does not provide an exhaustive list of expected and prohibited behaviours. Where no policy of guidance exists, Staff and Hirers are expected to always act in the best interests of Children and Adults at Risk and ensure that their safety, welfare and wellbeing is a primary consideration.

The expectations set out in this section aim to:

- Provide a framework of expected standards of practice and behaviour that contribute to a safe
- and inclusive environment and culture.
- Support Staff and Hirers with fulfilling their responsibilities to keep Children and Adults at Risk safe from potential harm.
- Support Staff and Hirers with fulfilling their responsibilities to promote the welfare and wellbeing of Children and Adults at Risk.
- Reduce the possibility of unfounded allegations being made against Staff and Hirers.

Staff and Hirers are expected to:

- Ensure that the safety, welfare of and wellbeing of Children and Adults at Risk underpins their behaviour and actions.
- Avoid favouritism and treat Children and Adults at Risk equally, without prejudice or discrimination.
- Ensure that the same professional standards are applied regardless of ethnic origin, nationality, race, religion or belief, gender identity, sexual orientation, age or disability.
- Maintain professional boundaries by ensuring that all contact, interactions and communications (face-to-face/in person and online) with Children and Adults at Risk take place in line with this Policy.
- Foster a culture where everyone feels comfortable to raise concerns about

inappropriate attitudes or behaviour towards Children or Adults at Risk.

- Promote an environment where poor practice is challenged and low-level concerns are reported.
- Complete and/or attend regular safeguarding training, including safeguarding induction and refresher training.
- Ensure that any safeguarding concerns, alleged or suspected abuse is taken seriously and acted on in line with this policy and training received.
- Be aware that breaches of the law or this policy may result in criminal and/or disciplinary action
- being taken against them.

Staff and Hirers must never:

- Abuse, harm or exploit Children and Adults at Risk or neglect their basic needs.
- Use their position or influence to form or promote inappropriate relationships with the Children and Adults at Risk they work with.
- Use their position to gain access to information relating to Children and Adults at Risk for their own or others' advantage. Such information should only be used or shared to protect Children and Adults at Risk and to meet their needs.
- Carry out their duties whilst under the influence of alcohol, solvents or drugs, nor smoke or vape at activities.
- Engage in any sexual or related activities, or have discussions about such activities, in the presence of Children and Adults at Risk.
- Use RCA equipment to access pornography or access pornography on personal devices when on duty.
- Access, make or distribute illegal or indecent content or images of Children or Adults at Risk.

Hirers and commissioned services

Staff are expected to share our commitment to implementing effective safer procurement procedures by:

- Working with the RCA's Safeguarding Lead to actively communicate safeguarding standards and expectations to prospective and current hirers and commissioned services.
- Ensuring that no organisation or individual works with or has access to Children and/or Adults at Risk through any Activity by or in the name of the RCA before:

(i) Due diligence and/or suitability checks have been undertaken by the RCA's Safeguarding Lead, including where necessary, evidence of hirer organisation safeguarding policies and procedures.

(iii) Ensure that no regular hirer delivers services without a contractual agreement in place with RCA.

Recruitment and Selection

Staff Recruitment

Staff are expected to share our commitment to implementing effective safer recruitment procedures by:

- Adhering to Royston Community Association's Safeguarding and Recruitment and Selection Policies.
- Ensuring that our commitment to safeguarding is included in all job and role descriptions and
- that no person is permitted to work with or have access to Children and/or Adults at Risk before:

(i) suitability checks have been undertaken by Royston Community Association based on an assessment of the role;

(ii) they have attended Royston Community Association new starter safeguarding training if appropriate to their role.

Trustee Recruitment

All members of the management committee will have signed a Trustee Statement of Eligibility form for trustees which includes a declaration that they have no convictions in relation to abuse.

All members of the management committee will familiarise themselves with safeguarding responsibilities, undertake training on safeguarding issues including whistleblowing where it is available and offered by their local safeguarding board/partnership or other local support organisation and ensure that they understand the principles set out in this policy.

All members of the management committee will work together to promote a culture that enables issues about safeguarding and promoting welfare to be addressed.

All members of the management committee, helpers or other volunteers will not have unsupervised access to children or adults at risk unless appropriately vetted.

The management committee will follow safe recruitment practices outlined in the Recruitment and Selection Policy.

A member of the management committee will be appointed to be responsible for child and adult at risk safeguarding matters. This person will have responsibility for reporting concerns that arise, as a matter of urgency, to the relevant safeguarding agency.

The person responsible is the current Manager (most senior employee) of Coombes Community Centre.

Any suspicions, allegations or complaints concerning the Manager will be dealt with under the management committee's disciplinary procedure.

Section 3: Safeguarding Children

Safeguarding Children is the action that is taken to promote the welfare of Children and protect them from harm.

This means:

- Providing help and support to meet the needs of Children as soon as problems emerge;
- Protecting Children from maltreatment, whether that is within or outside the home, including online;
- Preventing the impairment of children's mental and physical health or development;
- Ensuring they grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and
- Taking action to enable all Children to have the best outcomes.

Recognising Abuse and Other Harms

Indications that a Child is or may be being abused can be difficult to recognise. Some individuals may have additional vulnerability, for example, due to their age, disability, mental health, language, culture or sexual orientation, gender identity or care experience.

Some signs and indicators may be explained by something plausible, for example, bereavement, sudden absence of a parent, adolescence or accidental injury. The presence of one or more of the signs and indicators outlined in this section should not be taken as proof that abuse has or is taking place, however you do not need evidence to share your concerns. A person may be at increased risk of harm if you fail to share your concerns.

It is important to recognise the impact of adultifying children and the use of adultifying language which can lead to a failure to consider childhood vulnerability and a child's rights as a child.

The definitions, possible signs and indicators detailed in appendix 1.1 are not exhaustive, however they can assist in identifying abuse and other issues that impact on the safety, welfare and wellbeing of Children.

Categories of child abuse include:

- Physical Abuse
- Emotional Abuse
- Sexual Abuse
- Neglect
- Bullying
- Grooming
- Online abuse
- Child sexual exploitation
- Child criminal exploitation
- Child-on-child abuse

- Radicalisation
- Online behaviour
- Female genital mutilation ("FGM")
- Hazing

Low-level concerns

A low-level concern is any concern that an individual has acted in a way that:

- Is inconsistent with our values and/or which breaches our code of conduct, policies and procedures; and/or
- Causes concern (no matter how small and even if no more than causing a sense of unease or a nagging doubt about their suitability to work with children and/or adults at risk, including outside of work/in their private life).

The term 'low-level concern' does not mean the issue is insignificant; it means that the concerning behaviour does not meet the harm threshold requiring referral to statutory agencies.

Environments that encourage, ignore or facilitate this behaviour risk creating an environment for children and adults at risk to be harmed. Whilst some behaviour may be inadvertent or thoughtless, a misunderstanding or lack of awareness, it could be deliberate and intended to enable abuse at a later stage.

Underpinning Principles, Legislation and Guidance

- The welfare of the child is paramount (Children Act 1989).
- It is the responsibility of all adults to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people. This responsibility extends to a duty of care for those adults employed, commissioned or contracted to work with children and young people.
- Adults who work with children are responsible for their own actions and behaviour and should avoid any conduct which would lead any reasonable person to question their motivation and intentions.
- Adults should work and be seen to work, in an open and transparent way.
- The same professional standards should always be applied and should be sensitive to differences expressed through culture, disability, gender identity, language, racial origin, religious belief and/or sexual orientation.
- Adults should continually monitor and review their practice and ensure they follow the guidance contained in this document.

RCA's approach to safeguarding children is based on legislation, statutory and best practice guidance, including amongst others:

- The Children Act 1989 and 2004
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025
- The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child 1992
- The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Protections of Freedoms Act 2012
- Equality Act 2010
- The Human Rights Act 1998
- Children and Families Act 2014
- GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Online Safety Act 2023

Visit the NSPCC's website for more information:
www.nspcc.org.uk

Section 4: Safeguarding Adults at Risk

Recognising Abuse and Other Harms

Abuse and neglect could be carried out by anyone in contact with adults, for example but not limited to: paid staff, volunteers, spouses, friends, family and neighbours, carers and strangers.

The definitions, possible signs and indicators detailed in appendix 1.2 are not exhaustive, however they can assist in identifying abuse and other issues that impact on the safety, welfare and wellbeing of adults.

The Care Act recognises ten categories of abuse that may be experienced by adults:

- Self-neglect
- Modern slavery
- Domestic abuse.
- Discriminatory abuse
- Organisational/Institutional abuse
- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Financial/Material abuse
- Neglect and acts of omission
- Emotional/Psychological abuse

There are additional types of harm that are not included in The Care Act, but they are also relevant to adult Safeguarding:

- Sexual exploitation
- Cyber bullying
- Forced marriage
- 'Honour'-based abuse (HBA)
- Mate crime
- Cuckooing
- Radicalisation

Low-level concerns

A low-level concern is any concern that an individual has acted in a way that:

- Is inconsistent with our values and/or which breaches our code of conduct, policies and procedures; and/or
- Causes concern (no matter how small and even if no more than causing a sense of unease or a nagging doubt about their suitability to work with children and/or adults at risk, including outside of work/in their private life).

The term 'low-level concern' does not mean the issue is insignificant; it means that the concerning behaviour does not meet the harm threshold requiring referral to statutory agencies.

Environments that encourage, ignore or facilitate this behaviour risk creating an environment for children and adults at risk to be harmed. Whilst some behaviour may be inadvertent or thoughtless, a misunderstanding or lack of awareness, it could be deliberate and intended to enable abuse at a later stage.

Underpinning Principles, Legislation and Guidance

The Care Act 2014 sets out six principles that underpin adult safeguarding:

- Empowerment: People being supported and encouraged to make their own decisions and informed consent.
- Prevention: It is better to take action before harm occurs.
- Proportionality: The least intrusive response appropriate to the risk presented.
- Protection: Support and representation for those in greatest need.
- Partnership: Local solutions through services working with their communities. Communities have a part to play in preventing, detecting and reporting neglect and abuse.
- Accountability: Accountability and transparency in delivering safeguarding.

Our approach to adult safeguarding is based on legislation, statutory and best practice guidance, including amongst others:

- The Care Act 2014
- Mental Capacity Act 2005
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims (Amendment) Act 2012
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Equality Act 2010
- Making Safeguarding Personal Guide 2014

Visit the Ann Craft Trust's website to learn more about adult safeguarding:

www.anncrafttrust.org/resources/types-of-harm

Section 5: Responding to disclosures, allegations and concerns

Responding To a Disclosure

A disclosure is the process by which a person starts to share with others that they have been abused. It is important to recognise that it takes extraordinary courage for someone to go through the journey of disclosing abuse. Staff and Hirers must respond in accordance with the RCA's Safeguarding Policy and training to reduce the risk of increased trauma and/or compromising an investigation.

Listen

- Give your full attention to the person disclosing.
- Respect pauses and do not interrupt the person disclosing.
- Limit any questioning to the minimum necessary to seek clarification only. When seeking clarification, use the language of the person disclosing to show that it is their experience.

Reassure

- Provide reassurance that the person disclosing is being taken seriously and that they are not to blame.

Views and wishes

- Engage the person disclosing as far as possible about how best to respond to their safeguarding situation.

Take action

- Always act in the best interests of Children and Adults at Risk.
- Explain to the person disclosing what action you will be taking and that you will support them through the process. There may be circumstances where it is not appropriate to explain the action you will be taking, for example, a child's age and understanding or if doing so would place the person at greater risk of harm.
- Where it is suspected that a crime has been committed, the police should be contacted immediately, and physical, forensic and other evidence must be preserved.
- Once the person's immediate needs have been met, ensure the information is shared with the RCA Safeguarding Lead.

- Record the information by using an RCA incident form available on www.coombescommunitycentre.co.uk or in print at Coombes Community Centre Burns Road, Royston, SG8 5PT.

Staff and Hirers must never:

- Make ambitious promises or promise confidentiality.
- Seek details beyond those the person willingly discloses.
- Ask leading questions.
- Give the impression that the person disclosing is to blame.
- Approach the alleged perpetrator of abuse or person whose behaviour and/or actions there are concerns about.

How To Raise a Concern or Report Allegations or Suspicions of Abuse

- Staff and Hirers must contact the RCA Safeguarding Lead without delay if they witness, suspect, or receive information about harm, abuse, or exploitation of a Child or Adult at Risk.
- This includes non-recent abuse and allegations against deceased individuals.
- Anyone can contact emergency services or statutory agencies if there is immediate risk or if the Safeguarding Lead cannot be reached. Notify the Safeguarding Lead once immediate needs are met.
- Low-level concerns must be reported in the same way; normalising poor practice or not reporting risks creating unsafe environments.
- All concerns, including those in hirer activity settings, should be reported as soon as possible.
- Where safe, take action or discuss to mitigate risk quickly.
- RCA will support anyone who raises concerns in good faith; no detrimental treatment for genuine concerns.
- All disclosures, allegations, or suspicions of abuse must be taken seriously.

Contacts

The RCA Safeguarding Lead can be contacted by emailing info@coombescommunitycentre.co.uk or by calling **01763248081** for advice, to raise a concern or to report an incident.

Contact Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership by dialling **0300 123 4043** to report concerns about a child

Contact the NSPCC helpline by dialling **0808 800 5000** or by emailing help@nspcc.org.uk to get advice or share your concerns about a Child.

Contact the Ann Craft Trust Safeguarding Adults at Risk helpline by calling **0115 951 5400**

Hiring Agreements

The RCA management committee will ensure that all hirers of the centre have signed a hiring agreement. This will require all hirers who wish to use the centre for activities which include children and adults at risk, other than for hire for private parties arranged for invited friends and family, to produce a copy of their Safeguarding Policy and evidence that they have carried out relevant checks through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).

Recording Information

Good record keeping is essential safeguarding practice. Staff and Hirers must make a written record as soon as possible after reporting information to the RCA Safeguarding Lead.

- Staff should use the safeguarding incident form
- Hirers should report a concern using the www.coombescommunitycentre.co.uk or by completing a hard copy form at the centre.

Staff and Hirers must:

- Provide clear, concise and relevant information.
- Record information objectively and professionally.
- Record factual information, not assumptions.
- Use actual words and language; avoid rephrasing or omitting details.
- Record observations (e.g. visible bruising or injuries). Never ask someone to remove or adjust clothing to observe injuries.
- Contact the RCA's Safeguarding Lead if unsure about recording requirements.

If more information is recalled later, add it as an addendum. Do not change the original record.

Records may be used as evidence for investigations, court proceedings, disciplinary procedures, or quality assurance.

Confidentiality

All disclosures, safeguarding incidents and allegations must be taken seriously. Confidentiality must be maintained by only sharing information with those who need to know—those with specific responsibilities to support and protect the Child or Adult at Risk, and others who may be at risk (e.g. statutory agencies, RCA).

Other key information

Policy adopted:

Next Policy review date:

Related documents/policies:

Policy signed off by:

Name _____

Role _____

Date _____

Appendices

1.1 – Safeguarding Children: definitions, possible signs and indicators

Physical abuse

Any deliberate act causing injury or trauma to another person, for example: hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, burning, giving a person medicine that they do not need and/or that may harm them or application of inappropriate restraint measures.

Possible signs and indicators of physical abuse:

- Unexplained marks, injuries, burns or scalds, bite marks, loss of hair in clumps, broken or fractured bones.
- Untreated or recurrent injuries.
- A history of unexplained falls, or minor injuries.
- Inconsistent accounts for the cause of injuries.
- Injuries not consistent with the explanation given for them.
- Injuries found at different stages of healing.
- Injury shape similar to an object.
- Refusal to discuss injuries.
- Arms and legs kept covered in hot weather.
- Fear of medical help.
- Delays in physical development.
- Drowsiness due to too much medication or lack of medication.

Emotional abuse

Any act or other treatment which may cause emotional damage and undermine a person's sense of wellbeing, including persistent criticism, denigration or putting unrealistic expectations on children, isolation, verbal assault, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation or use of threats.

Possible signs and indicators of emotional abuse:

- Isolation
- Fear of making mistakes
- Over meticulous
- Becoming withdrawn, agitated and/or anxious
- Tearfulness
- Unexplained paranoia or excessive fears
- Low self-esteem
- Struggling to control their emotions
- Difficulty making or maintaining relationships
- Lack of growth or development
- Unexplained speech disorders
- Lack of social skills
- Having few or no friends
- Acting or dressing inappropriately for age, gender and/or culture

Sexual abuse

Any act which results in the exploitation of children, whether with their consent or not, for the purpose of sexual or erotic gratification. This includes non-contact activities, such as indecent exposure, involving children in witnessing sexual acts, looking at sexual images/pornography, or grooming them in preparation for abuse (including via the internet).

Children may not always understand that they are being sexually abused. Sexual abusers can also groom protective adults and organisations in order to create opportunities for abuse to take place.

Possible signs and indicators of sexual abuse:

- Genital and stomach pain, itching, bruising, discharge and bleeding, pregnancy, incontinence, repeated urinary infections and sexually transmitted infections.
- Difficulty walking or sitting.
- Having inappropriate knowledge of sexual behaviour for their age.
- A preoccupation with anything sexual.
- Inappropriate or unusual changes in the way affection is shown.
- Displaying inappropriate sexualised behaviour, such as dressing in a sexualised manner or sending sexualised images by mobile phone ("sexting").
- Having nightmares.
- Bed-wetting.

Neglect

Ongoing failure to meet the basic needs of children. Neglect may involve failing to provide adequate food or shelter, including exclusion from home or abandonment, failing to protect them from physical and emotional harm or danger, or failing to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, basic emotional needs.

Possible signs and indicators of neglect:

- Poor hygiene.
- Looking unkempt.
- Being smelly or dirty.
- Frequent tiredness.
- Being hungry or not given money for food.
- Malnutrition.
- Having unwashed clothes.
- Ill-fitting or inappropriate clothing, such as no warm clothes in winter.
- Stealing food and/or money.
- Being left alone for a long time.
- Being withdrawn, depressed or anxious.
- Finding it hard to concentrate or take part in activities.
- Untreated injuries and medical problems.
- Parents or carers absent, unsupportive or disengaged.

Bullying

Repeated behaviour intended to intimidate or upset someone and/or make them feel uncomfortable or unsafe, for example: name calling, exclusion or isolation, spreading rumours, embarrassing someone in public or in front of their peers, threatening to cause harm, physically hurting someone or damaging their possessions.

Possible signs and indicators of bullying:

- Sudden loss of friends or avoidance of social situations.
- Being frightened of certain people, places or situations.
- Unexplainable injuries.
- Lost or destroyed clothing or property.
- Frequent headaches or stomach aches, feeling sick or faking illness.
- Changes in eating habits, like suddenly skipping meals or binge eating.
- Difficulty sleeping or frequent nightmares.
- Declining grades, loss of interest in schoolwork, or not wanting to go to school.

Grooming

The process of developing a relationship with and the trust of an individual, and sometimes their family, to exploit, abuse or traffic them. Grooming can happen both online and in person.

Possible signs and indicators of grooming:

- Being very secretive about how they're spending their time, including when online.
- Isolation – not seeing friends and family.
- Having money or new things like clothes and mobile phones that they can't or won't explain.
- Being upset, withdrawn or distressed.
- Sexualised behaviour, language or an understanding of sex that's not appropriate for their age, understanding and/or culture.
- Spending more time away from home or going missing for periods of time.
- They start talking about a new friend, girlfriend, boyfriend or partner and it's not clear who they are or how they met them.
- A child having an older boyfriend or girlfriend.
- Underage drinking or drug taking.
- Grooming can also lead to radicalisation.

Online abuse

Online abuse is any type of abuse that happens on the internet. It can happen across any device that's connected to the web, like computers, tablets and mobile phones. And it can happen anywhere online including: social media, text messages and messaging apps, emails, online chats, online gaming, and live-streaming sites.

Children can be at risk of online abuse from people they know or from strangers. It might be part of other abuse which is taking place offline, like bullying or grooming. Or the abuse might only happen online. Children and young people might experience different types of online abuse, such as: cyberbullying, emotional abuse, grooming, sexting, sexual abuse and sexual exploitation.

Possible signs and indicators of online abuse:

- Spending more or less time online or on their devices.
- Spending a lot more or a lot less time than usual online, texting, gaming or using social media.
- Seeming 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.
- Having lots of new phone numbers, texts or email addresses on their mobile phone, laptop or tablet.
- Appearing controlled by their phone.
- Switching to a new screen when someone comes near the computer.
- Upset or frustrated after going online or gaming.

Child sexual exploitation

A form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance in power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into sexual activity in exchange for something the victim needs or wants and/or for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may be exploited even when sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation can also take place through the use of technology.

Possible signs and indicators:

- Unexplained gifts, money or possessions they can't or won't explain.
- Going missing for periods of time or regularly returning home late.
- Skipping school or being disruptive.
- Genital and stomach pain, itching, bruising, discharge and bleeding, pregnancy, incontinence, repeated urinary infections and sexually transmitted infections.
- Having inappropriate knowledge of sexual behaviour for their age.
- A preoccupation with anything sexual.
- Inappropriate or unusual changes in the way affection is shown.
- Being frightened of certain people, places or situations.
- Being secretive.
- Sudden changes in their appearance and wearing more revealing clothes.
- Signs of unexplained physical harm, such as bruising and cigarette burns.

Child criminal exploitation

This occurs when an individual or a group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child into any criminal activity. Child criminal exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology. Criminal exploitation often happens alongside sexual or other forms of exploitation.

Possible signs and indicators:

- Unexplained gifts, money or possessions they can't or won't explain.
- Going missing for periods of time or regularly returning home late.
- Persistently going missing from school or home.
- Being found out-of-area.
- Starting to use new or unknown slang words.
- Starting to adopt certain codes of group behaviour, e.g. ways of talking and hand signs.
- Unexplained physical injuries, and/or refusal to seek or receive medical treatment for injuries.
- Excessive receipt of texts and/or phone calls.
- Graffiti style 'tags' on possessions.
- Carrying weapons.
- Constantly talking about another person who seems to have a lot of influence over them.
- Breaking contact with old friends and hanging around with one group of people.
- Gang association.
- Associating with known or suspected gang members, closeness to siblings or individuals in the family who are gang members.
- Expressing aggressive or intimidating views towards other groups, some of whom may have been friends in the past.
- Being frightened of certain people, places or situations.
- Relationships with controlling individuals or groups.

Child-on-child abuse

Children can be taken advantage of or harmed by their peers. Child-on-child abuse can take many forms. This form of abuse occurs when there is any kind of physical, sexual, emotional or financial abuse or coercive control exercised between children. It includes, but is not limited to: bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying), abuse in intimate personal relationships between children, sexual violence, sexual harassment and sexting/youth produced sexual imagery, upskirting, initiation/hazing type violence and rituals. It should be recognised that the behaviour in question is harmful to both parties.

Radicalisation

The process by which a person comes to support terrorism and forms of extremism leading to terrorism. Anybody from any background can become radicalised. The grooming of children for the purposes of involvement in extremist activity is a serious safeguarding issue.

Possible signs and indicators:

- Becoming increasingly argumentative.
- Refusing to listen to different points of view.
- Unwilling to engage with children who are different.
- Becoming abusive to children who are different.
- Embracing conspiracy theories.
- Feeling persecuted.
- Changing friends and appearance.
- Distancing themselves from old friends.
- No longer doing things they used to enjoy.
- Converting to a new religion.
- Being secretive and reluctant to discuss their whereabouts.
- Sympathetic to extremist ideologies and groups.

Online behaviour:

- Changing online identity.

- Having more than one online identity.
- Spending a lot of time online or on the phone.
- Accessing extremist online content.
- Joining or trying to join an extremist organisation.

Female genital mutilation (“FGM”)

Involves procedures that intentionally alter or injure female genital organs for non-medical reasons. The procedure has no health benefits for girls and women. The Female Genital Mutilation Act makes it illegal to practise FGM in the UK or to take women and girls who are British nationals or permanent residents of the UK abroad for FGM whether or not it is lawful in another country.

Possible signs and indicators of FGM:

- Difficulty walking, sitting or standing.
- Spending longer than normal in the bathroom or toilet.
- Difficulties urinating or incontinence.
- Unusual behaviour after a lengthy absence.
- Reluctance to undergo normal medical examinations.
- Asking for help, but may not be explicit about the problem due to embarrassment or fear.

Possible warning signs that FGM might be about to take place are:

- A planned summer trip to a country known to practise FGM.
- Talk about visiting relatives for a special procedure, ceremony or event.
- Mention of a female relative coming to visit.
- Asking for help from a trusted adult if she feels at risk of danger.
- A holiday that includes additional time away before, or at the end of, the summer holidays, encroaching on school time.
- The family making preparations to take the girl abroad ‘on holiday’ (e.g. arranging vaccinations or requesting a prolonged absence from school).
- Referencing FGM, female circumcision, cutting or its other alternative names listed in the National FGM Centre’s guidance: nationalfgmcentre.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/FGM-Terminology-for-Website.pdf

Hazing

Any rituals, initiation activities, actions or situations, with or without consent, which recklessly, intentionally or unintentionally endanger the physical or emotional wellbeing of children. Hazing can be an arranged, usually team-based form of bullying, often as part of dangerous or unsafe initiation of new members.

Appendix 1.2: Safeguarding adults at risk: definitions, possible signs and indicators

Self-neglect

This covers a wide range of behaviour neglecting to care for one’s personal hygiene, health or surroundings. Examples of self-neglect include:

- A refusal or inability to cater for basic needs, including personal hygiene and appropriate clothing.
- Neglecting to seek assistance for medical issues.
- Not attending to living conditions, for example, letting rubbish accumulate in the garden, or dirt to accumulate in the house.
- Hoarding items or animals.

Possible signs and indicators of self-neglect:

- Very poor personal hygiene.
- Unkempt appearance.
- Lack of essential food, clothing or shelter.
- Malnutrition and/or dehydration.
- Living in squalid or unsanitary conditions.
- Hoarding.
- Neglecting household maintenance.
- 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

This encompasses slavery, human trafficking, forced labour and domestic servitude. Traffickers and slave masters use whatever means they have at their disposal to coerce, deceive and force individuals into a life of abuse, servitude and inhumane treatment.

Possible signs and indicators of modern slavery:

- Appearing to be malnourished, unkempt or withdrawn.
- Isolation from the community, seeming under the control or influence of others.
- Living in dirty, cramped or overcrowded accommodation and/or living and working at the same address.
- Signs of physical or emotional abuse.
- Lack of personal effects or identification documents.
- Always wearing the same clothes.
- Avoidance of eye contact, appearing frightened or hesitant to talk to strangers.
- Fear of law enforcers.

Domestic abuse

Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged sixteen or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. This can encompass but is not limited to the following types of abuse: physical, emotional, sexual and financial. It also includes so-called “honour” based violence and victims are not confined to one gender or ethnic group.

Possible signs and indicators of domestic abuse:

- Low self-esteem.
- Fear of outside intervention.
- Damage to home or property.
- Isolation – not seeing friends and family.
- Limited access to money.
- Physical evidence of violence such as bruising, cuts, broken bones.
- Verbal abuse and humiliation in front of others.

Discriminatory abuse

Discrimination is abuse that centres on a difference or perceived difference, particularly with respect to race, gender identity, disability, sexual orientation or any of the protected characteristics of the Equality Act.

Possible signs and indicators of discriminatory abuse:

- The person appears withdrawn and isolated.
- Expressions of anger, frustration, fear or anxiety.
- Activities not taking account of the person’s individual needs in terms of a protected characteristic.

Organisational/Institutional abuse

This includes 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. Organisational abuse can range from one-off incidents to ongoing ill-treatment. It can be through neglect or poor professional practice as a result of the structure, policies, processes and practices within an organisation.

Possible signs and indicators of organisational/institutional abuse:

- Authoritarian management or rigid regimes.
- Lack of leadership and supervision.
- Insufficient staff or high turnover resulting in poor care.
- Inappropriate use of restraints.
- Lack of respect for dignity and privacy.
- Failure to respond to complaints and abuse appropriately.
- Not providing adequate food and drink.
- Not taking account of individuals' cultural, religious or ethnic needs.
- Not offering choice or promoting independence.
- Interference with personal correspondence or communication.

Physical abuse

This includes hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, restraint, and misuse of medication. It can also include inappropriate sanctions.

Possible signs and indicators of physical abuse:

- No explanation for injuries or inconsistency with the account of what happened.
- Injuries are inconsistent with the person's lifestyle.
- Bruising, cuts, welts, burns and/or marks on the body or loss of hair in clumps.
- Frequent injuries.
- 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 abuse

This includes rape, indecent exposure, sexual harassment, inappropriate looking or touching, sexual teasing or innuendo, sexual photography, subjection to pornography or witnessing sexual acts, indecent exposure and sexual assault, or sexual acts to which the adult has not consented or was pressured into consenting.

Possible signs and indicators of sexual abuse:

- The uncharacteristic use of explicit sexual language or significant changes in sexual behaviour or attitude.
- Incontinence not related to any medical diagnosis.
- Self-harming.
- Poor concentration, withdrawal, sleep disturbance.
- Excessive fear or apprehension of, or withdrawal from, relationships or activities.
- Reluctance to be alone with a particular person.

Financial/Material abuse

This includes theft, fraud, internet scamming, and coercion in relation to an adult's financial affairs or arrangements, including in connection with wills, property, inheritance or financial transactions. It can also include the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions, or benefits.

Possible signs and indicators of financial/material abuse:

- Signs of financial hardship in cases where the person's financial affairs are being managed by someone else.
- Disparity between the person's living conditions and their financial resources, e.g. insufficient food in the house.

- Missing personal possessions.
- Unexplained lack of money or inability to maintain lifestyle.
- Unnecessary property repairs.
- Unexplained withdrawal of funds from accounts.
- The person allocated to manage financial affairs is evasive or uncooperative.
- The family or others show unusual interest in the assets of the person.
- Recent changes in deeds or title to property.

Neglect and acts of omission

This includes ignoring medical or physical care needs and failing to provide access to appropriate health, social care or educational services. It also includes the withdrawing of the necessities of life, including medication, adequate nutrition, and heating.

Possible signs and indicators of neglect and acts of omission:

- Poor environment – dirty or unhygienic.
- Poor physical condition and/or personal hygiene.
- Pressure sores or ulcers.
- Malnutrition or unexplained weight loss.
- Untreated injuries and medical problems.
- Inconsistent or reluctant contact with medical and social care organisations.
- Accumulation of untaken medication.
- Uncharacteristic failure to engage in social interaction.
- Inappropriate or inadequate clothing.

Emotional/Psychological abuse

This includes threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, isolation, or withdrawal from services or supportive networks.

Possible signs and indicators of emotional/psychological abuse:

- Withdrawal or change in the psychological state of the person.
- Change in behaviour when a particular person is present.
- A change of appetite, weight loss/gain.
- Signs of distress: tearfulness, anger.
- Low self-esteem.
- Uncooperative and aggressive behaviour.

Additional types of harm not included in The Care Act but relevant to adult safeguarding:

Sexual exploitation

Sexual exploitation is a subset of sexual abuse. It involves exploitative situations and relationships where people receive 'something' (e.g. accommodation, alcohol, affection, money) as a result of them performing, or others performing on them, sexual activities. It can also involve serial abusing in which the perpetrator seeks out and 'grooms' individuals. Grooming is defined as developing the trust of an individual at risk of abuse and/or their family in order to engage in illegal sexual conduct.

Cyber bullying

This occurs when someone repeatedly makes fun of another person online, or repeatedly picks on another person through emails or text messages. It can also involve using online forums with the intention of harming, damaging, humiliating, or isolating another person. It includes various different types of bullying, including racist bullying, homophobic bullying, or bullying related to additional learning needs and disabilities. The main difference is that, instead of the perpetrator carrying out the bullying face-to-face, they use technology as a means to do it.

Forced marriage

This is a term used to describe a marriage in which one or both of the parties are married without their consent or against their will. A forced marriage differs from an arranged marriage, in which both parties consent to the assistance of a third party in identifying a spouse. The Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 made it a criminal offence to force someone to marry.

‘Honour’-based abuse (HBA)

‘Honour’-based abuse (HBA) is abuse motivated by the belief that someone in the family has brought shame or dishonour to the family or community, and the abuse is committed to protect or defend the ‘honour’ of the family or community. It’s estimated that around 76% of victims of ‘honour’-based abuse are female, but boys and men are also at risk.

Mate crime

A “mate crime” is when vulnerable people are befriended by members of the community who go on to exploit and take advantage of them. It may not be an illegal act, but it still has a negative effect on the individual. A mate crime is carried out by someone the adult knows, and it often happens in private. In recent years there have been a number of Serious Care Reviews relating to people with a learning disability who were seriously harmed, or even murdered, by people who purported to be their friend.

Cuckooing

Cuckooing is a form of criminal exploitation and the term used when criminals use or take over a person’s home for criminal purposes such as to cut, prepare, store or deal drugs or storing firearms and money relating to drugs. Criminals will often target and exploit adults who have vulnerabilities.

Radicalisation

The aim of radicalisation is to inspire new recruits, embed extreme views and persuade vulnerable individuals to the legitimacy of a cause. This may be direct through a relationship, or through social media.