

FURTHER READING FOR VOLUNTEERING WITH CHILDREN COURSE STUDENT-LED VOLUNTEERING PROGRAMME

Identifying different types of abuse

(FGM, Bullying, Domestic Violence, Forced Marriage, Honour Based Violence)

This information sheet is not a replacement for the Volunteering Service's Volunteering with Children Training but rather should be read as an accompaniment to this training. All volunteers working with children or young people **MUST** attend our Volunteering with Children Training, before they undertake any volunteering activity. This applies to both face-to-face and remote volunteering activities.

1. Safeguarding Children Basics

- Child abuse is when a child (anyone under the age of 18) is intentionally harmed by an adult or another child.
- A person might abuse a child by inflicting harm or failing to act to prevent harm.
- Child Abuse can happen once or extend over a period of time, children can be abused by people known to them or by strangers.

2. The six principles of safeguarding

The UK government has established some principles of safeguarding in health and social care to help anyone working directly with children and young people to understand how best to act to protect these groups.

These principles have been set out originally for safeguarding vulnerable adults, but can be applied when supporting children and young people too.

- 1) Empowerment: Any individual who has been a victim of abuse or maltreatment should be empowered to make their own decisions and have control over their situation.
- 2) Accountability: Transparency is necessary when it comes to safeguarding. If a child or a young person discloses to you any information that could indicate that abuse took place, you need to be clear with the individual that you will record and report what you've heard.
- 3) Prevention: if you know the indicators and signs of abuse, you can notice when something is not right and you need to take action before harm occurs.
- 4) Proportionality: This principle states that those responsible for safeguarding (the Safeguarding Lead at the partner organisation) should provide the least intrusive response appropriate to the risk presented. This ensures that any decision takes the child, young person into account when dealing with abuse.

Your role as a volunteer is just to report and share any concern related to safeguarding but not to investigate it.

- 5) Protection: safeguarding is designed to protect everyone from harm, however, those in greatest needs (like previous abuse victims) require our support and protection.
- 6) Partnership: all agencies, professions community organisations and groups must work together to assist in preventing, detecting and reporting abuse.

3. Understanding and Identifying abuse

The four main types of abuse are:

- Sexual Abuse
- Physical Abuse
- Emotional Abuse
- Neglect

Other types of abuse include:

Bullying, FGM, Domestic Abuse, Forced Marriage and Honour Based Violence

3.1 Bullying

Bullying is the abuse and/or intimidation by a person, people or an organisation against another or others. Bullying is repeated or has a high potential to be repeated over time.

It is an abuse of real or perceived power imbalance (children can also bully other children). This imbalance of power between the bully and the victim doesn't need to be physically, instead, it can come from different sources such as; being more popular, being smarter, being stronger or have a higher social status.

Bullying may include verbal abuse and intimidation, acts of physical or sexual abuse and coercion, e-bullying, through texting, filming on mobiles and posting on social networks. Whatever its form it is unacceptable.

The three main types of bullying are:

Physical Bullying: is using one's body to exert power over peers to intimidate/harm them, the effects of this type of bullying are easy to spot and detect.

Relational/Social Bullying: it's a form of bullying that is most common amongst youth. It involves a bully trying to hurt a peer or the peer's standing within a particular group, and it's mostly used by the bully to improve their social standing and exert control over others.

Unlike physical bullying, social bullying is not obvious and can happen for a long time without being spotted.

Verbal Bullying: is when a bully uses verbal language like insults or teasing to gain power over his peers. It's harder to notice verbal bullying and it usually happens when adults are not around.

All types of bullying are unacceptable, they can be very damaging and have long term psychological and physical effects on the victim.

Some possible indicators of bullying:

- Tearfulness, depression, erratic emotions, loss of concentration.
- Shortage of money, frequent loss of possessions.
- Stomach aches, headaches, difficulty in sleeping, bed-wetting, bruising.
- Reluctance to attend activities previously enjoyed.

3.2 Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

FGM is defined as “all procedures (not operations) which involve partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or injury to the female genital organs whether for cultural or other non-therapeutic reasons”. FGM is culturally accepted in some countries, however, it's a criminal offence in the UK. It's also illegal to take a child abroad to undergo FGM.

FGM is mostly carried out on young girls between infancy and the age of 15, most commonly before puberty starts. It's very painful and causes immediate complications such as infections, wound healing problems, shock and, in the worst-case scenario, it leads to death. It also has long term physical and emotional complications on the victim.

The World Health Organisation has published a [Fact Sheet](#), where they provided full information on FGM; short-term and long-term implications, who is at risk, cultural and social factors for performing FGM along with key facts and figures relating to this behaviour.

3.3 Domestic Violence

The National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) has defined domestic abuse as “any type of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between people who are, or who have been in a relationship, regardless of gender or sexuality. It can include physical, sexual, psychological, emotional or financial abuse”

The main characteristic of domestic violence is that the behaviour is intentional and aims to exercise power and control within a relationship. It can include; rape, punching, withholding money, forcing the person to stay at home, reading emails or text messages, threatening to harm the partner or another family member, and taking control over where the partner goes or what they wear, etc.

Children and young people may either be witnesses or victims of the conflict. Exposure to or witnessing domestic abuse in childhood is considered an “abuse” due to its serious impact on children. Children may experience domestic abuse

directly or indirectly like they might hear abuse from another room, noticing a parent's injuries afterwards, being hurt from being nearby or trying to stop the abuse, or experience neglect due to the abuse.

Domestic abuse can have a negative effect on a child's development, education outcomes, mental health and emotional wellbeing.

NSPCC has put together a [guide](#) which outlines how to recognise if a child is witnessing domestic abuse (signs and indicators), how to respond and prevent, and what impact this will have on child's development

3.4 Forced Marriage

Forced marriage, is where one or two parties don't or can't (in case of people with learning difficulties) consent to the marriage and where "duress" is a factor. The pressure put on people to marry can be physical (physical or sexual abuse), psychological (making them feel that they're bringing shame on their family) or financial factor (earning wages.)

Some signs that a child is being forced into marriage involve:

- A family history of older siblings or cousins leaving education and marrying early.
- Poor mental health and self-harming behaviour.
- Being forced by their parents to stay at home or to stop their education.
- A child is being always accompanied and supervised by their parents in an obsessive way.
- A child being worried and stressed about upcoming family holiday abroad.
- A child may fail to return home from a visit to the family's country of origin.
- A child directly disclosing that they are worried they will be forced to marry.

Where a suspicion or allegation of forced marriage or intended forced marriage is raised, there may be only one opportunity to speak to the child, so an appropriate and quick initial response is vital.

3.5 Honour Based Violence

The Metropolitan Police definition of so-called honour- based violence is 'a crime or incident, which has or may be committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or community'.

The victims of such incidents are predominantly woman, perceived to have behaved immorally, for example; putting inappropriate makeup or dress, the existence of a boyfriend, kissing or intimacy in a public place, rejecting a forced marriage, pregnancy outside of marriage, being a victim of rape, interfaith relationships, leaving a spouse or seeking a divorce.

There are a series of events that may precede an honour-based violence incident including: house arrest, denial of access to the telephone, internet, passport and friends and threats to kill.

A child who is at risk of honour-based violence is at significant risk of physical harm, and may also suffer significant emotional harm through witnessing violence directed towards a sibling or other family member.

More information on “safeguarding children and young people from Honour Based Violence” can be found [here](#).

As a volunteer, if you suspect that a child is at risk of harm or abuse, or if you have any concerns about a child’s welfare or wellbeing, you’re expected to follow the 5 R’s of safeguarding procedure and share your concern with the Safeguarding Lead at the partner organisation as soon as possible. If the matter is an emergency, then you should call the Police on 999.