

WORKING TOGETHER TO TACKLE

# Child Sexual Abuse



Norfolk Safeguarding  
Children Board

# What is Child Sexual Abuse?

It involves **forcing or enticing** a child or young person to **take part in sexual activities**, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening.

"The activities may involve:

## PHYSICAL CONTACT

includes assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing.

## 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 (including via the internet).

"Sexual abuse is **not solely perpetrated by adult males**. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children."

(HM Government, 2015)

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Research from the Children's Commissioner in 2015 suggests that nationally there were **425,000 victims of Child Sexual Abuse in the United Kingdom** between 2012 and 2014.

In 2011, The NSPCC published research that revealed **11% of 18 – 24 year olds** had reported they were **victims of contact sexual abuse at some point during their childhood**.

The same research indicates that over **90%** of sexually abused children were **abused by someone they knew**.

**Children with Disabilities** are **three times** more likely to be the victims of sexual abuse (Sullivan and Knutson 2000).

At the last census **there were 167,714 children up to the age of 18 living in Norfolk**.

It happens to boys, girls and children of **all ages from all communities**. Most of these children don't tell anyone or will not get any help until they are adults.

Two-thirds of cases of sexual abuse happen **within the direct family** and it can be really difficult to tell someone about this kind of abuse.

**Younger children might not understand** that what's happening to them is abuse or that it's wrong. Older children might be **worried they won't be believed or scared about what will happen if they tell**.

Therefore it is **really important that adults spot the signs of sexual abuse** so it can be stopped.

Whether you work with children or are a parent, the following information has been put together to help you:

- prevent children being sexually abused,
- recognise the signs when sexual abuse might be happening, and
- stop child sexual abuse.

It also provides links to **resources and support** for those affected by child sexual abuse.

WHEN CHILDREN AREN'T HELPED, THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE ABUSE  
CAN BE LONG-TERM AND SEVERE, INCLUDING THE INABILITY TO BUILD  
HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS, POOR MENTAL HEALTH AND PHYSICAL ILLNESS.

# Prevention

We need to keep children safe from abuse before it happens

## LEARN THE UNDERWEAR RULE



NSPCC

The below link has resources for schools, teachers and parents about The Underwear Rule that is great to help safeguard children you know. Available are lesson plans, teaching guidance, a PANTS presentation, leaflets and guidance - including the underwear rule in five languages. Find out more and download here: <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/keeping-children-safe/underwear-rule/>

## TALK PANTS

When children get older, it is normal for them to be inquisitive about sex. Sometimes children use the internet to find out information but this can lead to them accidentally accessing online porn which is damaging to them. This information can help you talk to children about porn.

Find out more: <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/keeping-children-safe/online-porn/>

## RISKS OF EXPLICIT ONLINE MATERIAL

This guide for parents gives useful advice about signs and symptoms of child sexual abuse and also gives advice about how to spot a potential abuser.

Find out more: <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/services-and-resources/research-and-resources/pre-2013/what-can-i-do>

### YOU MIGHT BE WORRIED IF ANOTHER PERSON:

refuses to allow your child sufficient privacy or to make their own decisions on personal matters	displays physical affection such as kissing, hugging or wrestling even when the child clearly does not want it	takes too much interest in the sexual development of your child or teenager
wants time alone with your child with no interruptions	wants to spend most of their spare time with your child or has little interest in spending time with people their own age	regularly offers to babysit the children for free or take children on overnight outings alone
buys your children expensive gifts or gives them money for no apparent reason	frequently walks in on your children or teenagers in the bathroom	treats a particular child as a favourite, making them feel 'special'

## WHAT CAN I DO? PROTECTING A CHILD FROM SEXUAL ABUSE



# Recognition

We need to understand signs and symptoms of child sexual abuse

## Signs, Symptoms and Effects

IF YOU'RE WORRIED THAT A CHILD IS BEING ABUSED, WATCH OUT FOR ANY UNUSUAL BEHAVIOUR SUCH AS THE BELOW AS ADVISED BY NSPCC:

- withdrawn
- suddenly behaves differently
- anxious
- clingy
- depressed
- aggressive
- problems sleeping
- eating disorders
- wets the bed
- soils clothes
- takes risks
- misses school
- changes in eating habits
- obsessive behaviour
- nightmares
- drugs
- alcohol
- self-harm
- thoughts about suicide

Find out more: <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/child-abuse-and-neglect/child-sexual-abuse/signs-symptoms-effects/>

## Children who are sexually abused may...

### STAY AWAY FROM CERTAIN PEOPLE

- they might avoid being alone with people, such as family members or friends
- they could seem frightened of a person or reluctant to socialise with them.

### HAVE PHYSICAL SYMPTOMS

- anal or vaginal soreness
- an unusual discharge
- sexually transmitted infection (STI)
- pregnancy.

### SHOW SEXUAL BEHAVIOUR THAT'S INAPPROPRIATE FOR THEIR AGE

This is classed as Harmful Sexual Behaviour, more on page 15.

# Children With Disabilities

## What makes children with disabilities more vulnerable to abuse?

1

Wider circle of carers

2

May not understand they are being abused

3

Dependence leading to reluctance to disclose adverse circumstances

4

Low self-worth leading to desire to please

5

The child may not be deemed as a credible witness

6

Often living away from family & supportive network

7

Abusive practices may go unrecognised

8

Less able to express that sexual abuse is taking place

9

Limited communication skills

10

The impact of disability on attachment and therefore a parent's ability to protect

11

Disabled children more likely to be compliant

12

Abusers perceive a lower chance of their actions being detected

13

Often require intimate care

14

Abusers more likely to justify actions to themselves

15

Practitioners speak with adults around the child rather than to the child





## Issues to consider:

### SIMILAR SYMPTOMS

Expect to see similar symptoms as with other children

### RELUCTANCE

Reluctance to challenge carers – especially if an alternate placement is hard to find

### UNDERSTANDING

It can be harder to understand

### MORE RESOURCES

More time, expertise and effort may be required to gather information from a disabled child

### MINDFUL

Be mindful of parents and carers speaking on behalf of the child

### SUBTLETY

Signs and symptoms can be more subtle

### PROFESSIONALS

Consider the views of professionals who have an in depth knowledge of the child's situation

### OTHER FACTORS

There are more possible explanations for signs and symptoms

### ASSISTANCE

Consider assistance of such professionals when building rapport with a child

### COMPLEXITIES

Signs and symptoms can be harder to untangle - especially with communication differences

## Children With Disabilities







# Harmful Sexual Behaviour

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WHO DEVELOP HARMFUL SEXUAL BEHAVIOUR HAVE OFTEN EXPERIENCED ABUSE AND NEGLECT THEMSELVES.



Children and young people who develop harmful sexual behaviour **harm themselves and others.**

Sexual behaviour between children is also considered harmful **if one of the children is much older** – particularly if there is more than two years' difference in age or if one of the children is pre-pubescent and the other isn't (Davies, 2012).

However, a younger child can abuse an older child, particularly if they have power over them – for example,

if the older child is disabled (Rich, 2011).

A study by Hackett et al (2013) of children and young people with harmful sexual behaviour suggests that **two-thirds had experienced some kind of abuse or trauma** such as physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, severe neglect, parental rejection, family breakdown, domestic violence, and parental drug and alcohol abuse. **Around half of them had experienced sexual abuse.**

Find out more: <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/child-abuse-and-neglect/harmful-sexual-behaviour/>

Davies, J. (2012) Working with sexually harmful behaviour. Counselling Children and Young People, March 2012: 20-23.





# Brook Sexual Behaviours Traffic Light Tool

THIS IS A TOOL TO HELP YOU IDENTIFY HARMFUL SEXUAL BEHAVIOUR AND BEHAVIOURS THAT ARE NORMAL IN RELATION TO THE CHILD'S AGE.

By identifying sexual behaviours as **GREEN**, **AMBER** or **RED**, professionals across different agencies can work to the same criteria when **making decisions** and **protect children** and young people with a **unified approach**.

This tool lists **examples of presenting sexual behaviours within four age categories**.

All green, amber and red behaviours **require some form of attention and response**, but the type of intervention will vary according to the behaviour.

Find out more: <https://www.brook.org.uk/our-work/the-sexual-behaviours-traffic-light-tool>

AGE 0-5

AGE 5-9

AGE 9-13

AGE 13-17

**Green behaviours reflect safe and healthy sexual development.**

**Amber behaviours have the potential to be outside of safe and healthy behaviour.**

**Red behaviours are outside of safe and healthy behaviour.**



# “I saw your willy”



We teach our children to share...

But does your child know the risks of sharing online?

The be **#ShareAware** campaign aims to help you if you are worried about your child:

- taking and sharing inappropriate pictures
- sharing personal information
- looking at porn online
- being bullied online
- bullying others online
- spending too much time online

## Grooming

GROOMING IS WHEN SOMEONE BUILDS AN EMOTIONAL CONNECTION WITH A CHILD TO GAIN THEIR TRUST FOR THE PURPOSES OF SEXUAL ABUSE OR EXPLOITATION.

Children and young people can be groomed **online or in the real world, by a stranger or by someone they know.**

Groomers may be **male or female.** They could be **any age.**

Many children and young people **don't understand** that they have been groomed, or that what has happened is abuse.

Groomers will **hide their true intentions** and may spend a long time **gaining a child's trust.**

They may also try to gain the trust of the whole family so they can be alone with the child.

Groomers do this by:

- pretending to be **someone they are not**, for example saying they are the same age online
- offering **advice or understanding**
- **buying gifts**
- giving the child **attention**
- using their **professional position or reputation**
- taking them on **trips, outings or holidays.**

The NSPCC have launched a '**Be Share Aware**' campaign working with Norfolk Constabulary to educate parents on how to talk about what's OK, and not OK, to share online. Find out more: <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/keeping-children-safe/share-aware/>

## Online Grooming

### A groomer may:

Use social media sites, instant messaging, dating apps or online gaming platforms

Spend a long time learning a child's interests from online profiles

Hide their identity online

### Groomers may look for:

User names or comments that are flirtatious and/or may have a sexual meaning

Public comments that suggest a child has low self-esteem or is vulnerable

**Groomers no longer need to meet children in real life to abuse them. Increasingly, groomers are sexually exploiting their victims by persuading them to take part in online sexual activity.**



# Report and Support

I was the teacher who was worried

I was the coach who noticed at practice

I was the family member who was concerned

I was the neighbour who felt uneasy

## CHILD ABUSE. IF YOU THINK IT, REPORT IT.

[gov.uk/tacklechildabuse](http://gov.uk/tacklechildabuse)

**TOGETHER  
WE CAN TACKLE  
CHILD ABUSE**



Department  
for Education

**If you're worried that a child or young person is being sexually abused:**

**You must talk to a safeguarding lead** within your organisation or phone the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) for a consultation. For more information see the Norfolk Threshold Guide: [www.norfolkscb.org](http://www.norfolkscb.org)

If the **child is at risk of significant harm**, do not delay in phoning the MASH on: 0344 800 8020. If it's an emergency situation then call the police on 999

**If you or another adult wants to talk about being sexually abused during childhood**

**Call the police on 101 or in an emergency on 999.** If you are not ready to talk to the police contact the **Harbour Centre** (see below)

THE  
HARBOUR  
CENTRE

The Harbour Centre is a Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) which provides a range of services for people who are victims of rape, attempted rape or assault by penetration. It aims to empower victims by allowing them to report their abuse and undergo medical examinations without prompting a police investigation.

From January 2015 the centre also officially opened its doors to children aged under 13 who are in need of round-the-clock help as well as support from a dedicated Child Advocate.



01603 276381



[www.theharbourcentre.co.uk](http://www.theharbourcentre.co.uk)

CHILDLINE

The trained helpline counsellors at ChildLine are there to talk through any worries with children. They won't judge and are not easily shocked. Instead, they listen to children and help them talk through their options.



0800 1111



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





The Lucy Faithful campaign STOP IT NOW provides help and support, including a helpline for:

- adults worried about the behaviour of other adults or children and young people
- those worried about their own sexual thoughts or behaviour towards children, including those with concerns about their online behaviour
- friends and relatives of people arrested for sexual offending, including internet offending
- any other adult with a concern about child sexual abuse – including survivors and professionals.

 **0808 1000 900**  
 **Help@stopitnow.org.uk**  
 **www.stopitnow.org.uk**

STOP  
IT  
NOW

You can contact the NSPCC if you are worried about the safety or welfare of a child. Their trained helpline counsellors are ready to offer expert help, advice and support 24/7.

They can also take action on your behalf if you are concerned that a child is being abused or is at risk of abuse.

It's free to contact them and you don't have to say who you are.

 **0808 800 5000 24 hours a day**  
 **Text: 88858**  
 **help@nspcc.org.uk**  
 **www.nspcc.org.uk**

NSPCC

## SARAH'S LAW

CHILD SEX OFFENDER DISCLOSURE SCHEME

If you have concerns about an adult who has access to a child you are responsible for, you can make an application under the Child Sex Offender Disclosure Scheme (also known as Sarah's Law). This may provide further information to help you safeguard the child. You just need to dial 101 and explain that you wish to make an application.





# Other support for those affected by child sexual abuse:

## **MOSAC**

Provides support for non-abusing parents and carers whose children have been sexually abused.

☎ 0800 980 1958 🌐 [www.mosac.org.uk](http://www.mosac.org.uk) ✉ [enquiries@mosac.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@mosac.org.uk)

## **Survivors UK**

Provides information, support and counselling for men who have been raped or sexually abused.

☎ 0845 122 1201 (see website for opening hours as they may vary)

🌐 [www.survivorsuk.org](http://www.survivorsuk.org) ✉ [info@survivorsuk.org](mailto:info@survivorsuk.org)

## **NAPAC**

Supports survivors of childhood abuse, and supporters of survivors. Its helpline is open Monday to Thursday, 10am to 9pm and Friday 10am to 6pm.

☎ 0800 085 3330 for free from landlines, 3, Orange and Virgin mobile phones.

☎ 0808 801 0331 for free from O2, T-Mobile and Vodafone mobile phones.

🌐 [www.napac.org.uk](http://www.napac.org.uk) ✉ [support@napac.org.uk](mailto:support@napac.org.uk)

## **One in Four**

Provides a range of services for the one in four people who have experienced sexual abuse before the age of 18. It is run for and by people who have experienced sexual abuse.

☎ 020 8697 2112 🌐 [www.oneinfour.org.uk](http://www.oneinfour.org.uk) ✉ [admin@oneinfour.org.uk](mailto:admin@oneinfour.org.uk)

## **CHILDREN'S SAFETY ONLINE : CEOP**

This website is managed by the police and offers a place to report concerns about online activities but also offers help and advice to children and parents about safe internet use.

🌐 [www.ceop.police.uk](http://www.ceop.police.uk)

## **UK Safer Internet Centre**

A parents' guide to the technology that children use, highlighting the safety tools available and empowering parents with the knowledge they need to support their children to use these technologies safely and responsibly.

🌐 [www.saferinternet.org.uk/advice-and-resources/parents-and-carers/parents-guide-to-technology](http://www.saferinternet.org.uk/advice-and-resources/parents-and-carers/parents-guide-to-technology)