

## 2. Guidelines

### 2.1 Recognising if an Adult is Vulnerable

Sometimes it is difficult to recognise if an adult is vulnerable. An individual's health may deteriorate over a period of time for a number of different reasons (refer to the table below) and therefore, it may be impossible to immediately identify if a person is vulnerable. Some vulnerable adults can live with varying degrees of independence. However, if you have concerns about abuse, and believe the person may be vulnerable, it is essential that you follow the reporting procedures laid out in this policy.

### 2.2 Abuse

Abuse to children and vulnerable adults can be similarly defined. They can both be at risk because of the actions or behaviours of others, which may be intentional or not. However, vulnerable adults can be at risk because of self neglect or as a result of their own behaviour/lifestyle, or in view of illness such as dementia or being frail due to severe old age, or financial abuse.

Refer to the below table for the definitions of abuse and indicators about how you may become aware that somebody may be being abused.

Type of abuse	Indicator
<b>Physical</b>	Slapping, hitting, kicking, shaking, physical restraint and force. Marks in odd places and unexplained injuries. Bite marks/cigarette burns. Accidents, neglect and alcohol/drug misuse. Fear of parents/carers being approached for info. Flinching when approached. Inappropriate clothing (long sleeves, scarves in summer etc).
<b>Sexual</b>	Sexual exploitation, inappropriate use of language, sexual acts, emotional distress, guilt or shame, withdrawn behaviour, difficulties in walking or sitting with no explanations. Pains, itching in genital area. Sexual drawings. Saying they have secrets they cannot tell.
<b>Emotional (psychological/behavioural)</b>	Constant rejection, denial of affection, severe criticism, discrimination and deliberate humiliation or attention seeking. Traumas - serious accidents/sudden loss. Dramatic changes to behaviour or personality, aggravation, confused state, tearful and depression. Speech disorders. Delay in development, unable to play, self harm and fear of making mistakes.
<b>Neglect</b>	Social isolation, exploitation, antagonism, relationship/marital problems, withdrawn behaviour, prolonged loneliness, depression, unhygienic and constant hunger-often stealing from others. Inappropriately dressed. Unsupervised by their parent, carer or support worker.
<b>Mental Health</b>	Depression, dementia, fears, guilt, paranoia, suicidal tendencies, anger and verbal outbursts.
<b>Financial Abuse (Vulnerable Adults only)</b>	Material/financial exploitation, theft, not allowed access to assets, inadequate money to pay bills and losing control of financial affairs.

### 2.3 Identifying Suspicions and Allegations of Abuse

- An incident or accident has taken place during an activity or be self disclosed by the victim.
- Witnessed or made aware of allegations and suspicions of abuse via a third party.
- A parent, guardian, carer or support worker has reported stress and problems of coping.
- Evidence has been accumulated over a period of time.
- Recognising signs/symptoms of abuse in the course of the work.

### 2.4 Recommended Supervising Adults to Child Ratios

There are no official guidelines on ratios for children over 8 years old, but the NSPCC recommend at least 2 parents, carers or support workers of up to 20 children. If there is an emergency with a child and one adult had to leave, this ensures that another adult is available to stay with the remaining children. With mixed gender groups of children, it is advisable to seek to replicate the mix with the adults. Although the recommended ratios might not always be possible, you should always make every effort to achieve the best level of supervision of the children at all times.

In the UK, the recommended adults (parents, carers or support workers) to child ratios for children under the age of eight are:

Age range	Ratio of adult to children
0-2 years old	1 adult to 3 children
2-3 years old	1 adult to 4 children
3-8 years old	1 adult to 8 children