Identifying your concerns:

Try and sort out in your mind…

- Why are you worried?
- What have you seen?
- What have you heard from others?
- What has been said to you directly?

Try and be as clear as you can about why you are worried but do not be afraid to listen to your instinct that something just does not seem right.

<u>Always share your concerns</u>

Identifying your concerns:

It is really important that you:

- Speak to the child alone
- **Listen** carefully to what is being said.
- Allow the child to freely recall at their own pace.
- Stay calm and try to avoid looking shocked or horrified.

- **Do not** ask direct/leading questions
- **Do not** interview the child
- **Do not** examine marks and injuries
- **Do not** ask the child to remove clothing
- **Do not** take photographs
- **Do not** get the child to write anything down
- **Never** promise to keep secrets

- **Reassure the child** that they have done the right thing in telling you but remind them you will need to share information with others

- **Do not** give your opinion or talk about your own personal experiences

Identifying your concerns:

Remember ‘TED’. Good open questions allow free recall from the child, e.g.
Tell me what happened
Explain to me what happened next
Describe to me what happened/you saw/you did

Answers from a child who was asked a leading question may not be admissible as evidence in court

STAFFORDSHIRE
Safeguarding Children Board
www.staffsscb.org.uk

Signs of abuse/CSE/CCE

Sexualised risk taking including on the internet

Drugs/alcohol use

Regularly coming home late or going missing

Unaccounted for monies or goods

Gang association

Self harming

Non school attendance or excluded due to behaviour

Getting into cars with unknown or known CSE adults

Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI's)

Pregnancy/ miscarriage/ terminations

Signs To Look Out For

- Persistently going missing from school or home and/or being found out-of-area
- Unexplained acquisition of money, clothes, or mobile phones
- Excessive receipt of texts/phone calls
- Relationships with controlling/older individuals or groups
- Leaving home / care without explanation
- Suspicion of physical assault / unexplained injuries
- Parental concerns
- Carrying weapons
- Significant decline in school results/performance
- Gang association or isolation from peers or social networks
- Self-harm or significant changes in emotion well-being

County Lines

- County lines is the police term for urban gangs supplying drugs to suburban areas and market and coastal towns using dedicated mobile phones lines or “deal lines”. It involves child criminal exploitation as gangs use children and vulnerable people to move drugs and money.

- County lines is a major, cross-cutting issue involving drugs, violence, gangs, safeguarding, criminal and sexual exploitation, modern slavery and missing persons

STAFFORDSHIRE
Safeguarding Children Board
www.staffsscb.org.uk

Domestic abuse

The cross-government definition of domestic violence and abuse is: any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to: psychological; physical; sexual; financial; and emotional.

All children can witness and be adversely affected by domestic abuse in the context of their home life where domestic abuse occurs between family members. Exposure to domestic abuse and/or violence can have a serious, long lasting emotional and psychological impact on children. In some cases, a child may blame themselves for the abuse or may have had to leave the family home as a result.

Operation Encompass

Operation Encompass is a multi-agency approach to give early notification to schools, academies, colleges and nurseries that a child or young person has recently been present, witnessed or been involved in a domestic abuse (DA) incident.

Staffordshire Police in conjunction with the partners to this agreement will inform the nominated “Key Adults” within these establishments to afford them the opportunity of assessing the needs of the child or young person during the school day and, should it be deemed appropriate to do so, to provide early support.

The purpose of this agreement is to facilitate the lawful exchange of information in order to comply with the statutory duty on Chief Police Officers to safeguard children. It sets out a multi-agency procedure to identify and provide appropriate early intervention support to a child who was present, is normally present, witnessed or was involved in a DA incident.

Operation Encompass

The information to be disclosed by the Police will be limited to the following:

the fact that the police were called out in the last 24 hours to a DA incident and a child was present, is normally present, witnessed, or exposed to the DA

the police reference number;

the time and date of the event; and

the names and dates of birth of any child from that school who was present, witnessed or was involved in the DA incident when it took place.

Notification to school will be provided automatically via officer's mobile data devices following their attendance at Domestic Incidents.

Sexual Violence and Harassment between children

- Sexual violence and harassment can occur between two children of any **age and sex**.
- It can also occur through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children
- **Sexual violence** is when sexual offences are referred to:-

  rape; assault by penetration or sexual assault
- **Sexual harassment** is unwanted conduct of a sexual nature:-

  sexual comments(lewd comments and sexualised names ,sexual

  remarks about clothes and appearance). Sexual jokes/taunting.

  Physical behaviour(brushing against someone, touching clothes,

  displaying pictures, photos of sexual nature). Upskirting is now a criminal offence and KCSIE 2019 makes particular reference
- **Online sexual harassment**

Sexting and college procedure

What is ‘sexting’?

In the latest advice for schools and colleges (UKCCIS, 2016), sexting is defined as **the production and/or sharing of sexual photos and videos of and by young people who are under the age of 18**. It includes nude or nearly nude images and/or sexual acts. It is also referred to as ‘youth produced sexual imagery’.

‘Sexting’ **does not include the sharing of sexual photos and videos of under-18 year olds with or by adults**. This is a form of child sexual abuse and must be referred to the police.

Sexting and college procedure

What to do if an incident involving 'sexting' comes to your attention

- **Immediately report it to your Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or in his absence a Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead.**

- **Never view, download or share the imagery yourself,** or ask a child to share or download – **this is illegal**.
- If you have already viewed the imagery by accident (e.g. if a young person has showed it to you before you could ask them not to), **report this to the DSL**.
- **Do not** delete the imagery or ask the young person to delete it.
- **Do not** ask the young person(s) who are involved in the incident to disclose information regarding the imagery. This is the responsibility of the DSL.
- **Do not** share information about the incident to other members of staff, the young person(s) it involves or their, or other, parents and/or carers.
- **Do not** say or do anything to blame or shame any young people involved.
- **Do** explain to them that you need to report it and reassure them that they will receive support and help from the DSL.

Online Safety

- **How to evaluate what they see online -** This will enable pupils to make judgements about what they see online and not automatically assume that what they see is true, valid or acceptable.

  Schools can help pupils consider questions including:

  - is this website/URL/email fake? How can I tell?
  - what does this cookie do and what information am I sharing?
  - is this person who they say they are?
  - why does someone want me to see this?
  - why does someone want me to send this?
  - why would someone want me to believe this?
  - why does this person want my personal information?
  - what's behind this post?
  - is this too good to be true?
  - is this fact or opinion?

Online Safety

Schools can help pupils to recognise:

- online content which tries to make people believe something false is true and/or mislead (misinformation and disinformation),
- techniques that companies use to persuade people to buy something,

- ways in which games and social media companies try to keep users online longer (persuasive/sticky design); and
- criminal activities such as grooming.

Online Safety

Schools can help pupils to recognise acceptable and unacceptable behaviour by:

- looking at why people behave differently online, for example how anonymity (you do not know me) and invisibility (you cannot see me) affect what people do,
- looking at how online emotions can be intensified resulting in mob mentality,[1]
- teaching techniques (relevant on and offline) to defuse or calm arguments, for example a disagreement with friends, and disengage from unwanted contact or content online; and
- considering unacceptable online behaviours often passed off as so-called social norms or just banter. For example, negative language that can be used, and in some cases is often expected, as part of online gaming and the acceptance of misogynistic, homophobic and racist language that would never be tolerated offline.

Online Safety

Schools can help pupils to identify and manage risk by:

- discussing the ways in which someone may put themselves at risk online,
- discussing risks posed by another person's online behaviour,
- discussing when risk taking can be positive and negative,
- discussing "online reputation" and the positive and negative aspects of an online digital footprint. This could include longer-term considerations, i.e how past online behaviours could impact on their future, when applying for a place at university or a job for example,

- discussing the risks vs the benefits of sharing information online and how to make a judgement about when and how to share and who to share with; and
- asking questions such as what might happen if I post something online? Who will see it? Who might they send it to?

Online Safety

Schools can help pupils by:

- helping them to identify who trusted adults are,
- looking at the different ways to access support from the school, police, the National Crime Agency's Click CEOP reporting service for children and 3rd sector organisations such as Childline and Internet Watch Foundation. This should link to wider school policies and processes around reporting of safeguarding and child protection incidents and concerns to school staff (see Keeping Children Safe in Education); and
- helping them to understand that various platforms and apps will have ways in which inappropriate contact or content can be reported.

Key Information

Early Help Assessment – Early support from the local support team

Section 17 – Child In Need – Social Care involved (Voluntary)

Section 47 – Child Protection – Social Care involved (Compulsory)

Operation Encompass – Information to schools re: Domestic Abuse

Do you know your MyConcern log in???

Sexual Violence and Harassment in schools

Staff at Painsley have the responsibility to ensure that students fully understand the concept behind sexual violence and harassment and the importance of the following:

- Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of any age and sex.
- It can also occur through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children.
- Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur online and offline (both physical and verbal) and are never acceptable.
- It is important that **all** victims are taken seriously and offered appropriate support.
- Some groups are potentially more at risk. Evidence shows girls, children with SEND and LGBT children are at greater risk.
- Making clear that sexual violence and sexual harassment is not acceptable, will never be tolerated and is not an inevitable part of growing up;
- Not tolerating or dismissing sexual violence or sexual harassment as "banter", "part of growing up", "just having a laugh" or "boys being boys"; and
- Challenging behaviours (potentially criminal in nature), such as grabbing bottoms, breasts and genitalia, flicking bras and lifting up skirts. Dismissing or tolerating such behaviours risks normalising them.

Sexual Violence

It is important that staff at Painsley are aware of sexual violence and the fact children can, and sometimes do, abuse their peers in the following ways: Rape, Assault by penetration and sexual assault (please see definitions and details from the supplied Powerpoint).

It is important staff at Painsley know:

Consent is about having the freedom and capacity to choose. Consent to sexual activity may be given to one sort of sexual activity but not another, e.g.to vaginal but not anal sex or penetration with conditions, such as wearing a condom. Consent can be withdrawn at any time during sexual activity and each time activity occurs. Someone consents to vaginal, anal or oral penetration only if s/he agrees by choice to that penetration and has the freedom and capacity to make that choice.

Sexual Harassment

When referring to sexual harassment we mean 'unwanted conduct of a sexual nature' that can occur online and offline.

- sexual comments, such as: telling sexual stories, making lewd comments, making sexual remarks about clothes and appearance and calling someone sexualised names;
- sexual "jokes" or taunting;
- physical behaviour, such as: deliberately brushing against someone, interfering with someone's clothes (schools and colleges should be considering when any of this crosses a line into sexual violence - it is important to talk to and consider the experience of the victim) and displaying pictures, photos or drawings of a sexual nature; and
- online sexual harassment. This may be standalone, or part of a wider pattern of sexual harassment and/or sexual violence.

It may include:

- non-consensual sharing of sexual images and videos;
- sexualised online bullying;
- unwanted sexual comments and messages, including, on social media;
- sexual exploitation; coercion and threats; and
- upskirting.

The immediate response to a report

Responding to the report and effective safeguarding practice includes:

Our safeguarding practice includes:

- Not promising confidentiality at this initial stage as it is very likely a concern will have to be shared further (for example with the designated safeguarding lead or deputy safeguarding lead or children's social care) to discuss next steps.
- Only sharing the report with those people who are necessary in order to progress it.
- Listening carefully to the child, being non-judgmental, being clear about boundaries and how the disclosure will be progressed, not asking leading questions and only prompting the child where necessary with open questions – Use TED, tell me, explain to me, describe to me, where, when, what etc;
- When making a record of the disclosure we wait until the end of the disclosure and immediately write up a thorough summary and log it on My Concern (our child protection recording system) as well as speaking to the DSL or DDSL face to face. This allows us to devote our full attention to the student and to listen to what they are saying. It may be appropriate to make notes during the disclosure (especially if a second member of staff is present, this would be god practice to ensure two members of staff are present, ideally a member of the safeguarding team). However, if making notes during any disclosures we are conscious of the need to remain engaged with the student;
- Make sure to only record the facts as the student presents them. The notes should not reflect the personal opinion of the note taker. We are aware that notes of such disclosures could become part of a statutory assessment by children's social care and/or part of a criminal investigation;
- If possible, aim to manage disclosures with two members of staff present, (preferably one of them being the DSL). However this might not always be possible; and
- Inform the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) as soon as practically possible if the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) are not involved in the initial disclosure.

Reporting of sexual violence and sexual harassment.

Important considerations will include:

- The wishes of the victim in terms of how they want to proceed. Victims should be given as much control as is reasonably possible over decisions regarding how any investigation will be progressed and any support that they will be offered;
- The nature of the alleged incident(s), including: whether a crime may have been committed and consideration of harmful sexual behaviours
- The ages of the children involved;
- The developmental stages of the children involved;
- Any power imbalance between the children. For example, is the alleged perpetrator significantly older, more mature or more confident? Does the victim have a disability or learning difficulty?;
- If the alleged incident is a one-off or a sustained pattern of abuse;
- Are there ongoing risks to the victim, other children, adult students or school or college staff; and
- Other related issues and wider context.

Painsley will have four ways to manage the disclosures:

- Internally Managed
- Early Help
- Referral to social care
- Report to the police

Children and the court system
There are a number of occasions when children may be directly or indirectly involved in the court system and they will often require support through the process.

What might the impact be?

- Involvement with the courts can be stressful.
- In both criminal and civil courts the decision rests with someone else.
- The outcome of court could significantly change the child's life.
- There may be many unanswered questions.
- Court appearances may cause / entrench conflict within families or groups.
- There may be personal risk involved.

Child care proceedings ...

- **Public law** – where the local authority has concerns about the care that the parents / carers are providing for their children and feel that they need to be involved in order to share responsibility for the child and have a legal right to have a say in that child's upbringing (e.g. where they live, who they have contact with, etc.)
- **Private law** – this is often where two parents cannot agree on what should happen in terms of care for a child or where a child should live. This may also include other matters such as preventing children leaving the UK if there are concerns about female genital mutilation or forced marriage.

Children with family members in prison

Impact of having a parent in prison

When it is a parent in prison, children and young people can feel isolated and ashamed. They may have been told not to talk about the situation, or may not know the words to use in order to tell friends and others in the family what has happened and how they are feeling. If the crime was serious in nature, there is the potential that other families will know what has happened and the child / young person could have to live with the resultant embarrassment.

Children's **worries**

- Feelings of not being listened to
- Parent placed in prison a long way from home / support networks
- Poor coping mechanisms
- Additional issues around fear / anger / confusion
- Effect of 'prisoner' label on the child/young person

Always consider – how could we support this young person?

Children missing from education

All staff should be aware that children going missing, particularly repeatedly, can act as a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding possibilities. This may include abuse and neglect, which may include sexual abuse or exploitation and can also be a sign of child criminal exploitation including involvement in county lines. It may indicate mental health problems, risk of substance abuse, risk of travelling to conflict zones, risk of female genital mutilation or risk of forced marriage. Early intervention is necessary to identify the existence of any underlying safeguarding risk and to help prevent the risks of a child going missing in future. Staff should be aware of their school's or college's unauthorised absence and children missing from education procedures.

Homelessness

Being homeless or being at risk of becoming homeless presents a real risk to a child's welfare. The designated safeguarding lead (and any deputies) should be aware of contact details and referral routes in to the Local Housing Authority so they can raise/progress concerns at the earliest opportunity. Indicators that a family may be at risk of homelessness include household debt, rent arrears, domestic abuse and anti-social behaviour, as well as the family being asked to leave a property. Whilst referrals and/or discussion with the Local Housing Authority should be progressed as appropriate, and in accordance with local procedures, this does not, and should not, replace a referral into children's social care where a child has been harmed or is at risk of harm.

FGM

FGM comprises all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs. It is illegal in the UK and a form of child abuse with long-lasting harmful consequences.

Forced marriage

Forcing a person into a marriage is a crime in England and Wales. A forced marriage is one entered into without the full and free consent of one or both parties and where violence, threats or any other form of coercion is used to cause a person to enter into a marriage. Threats can be physical or emotional and psychological. A lack of full and free consent can be where a person does not consent or where they cannot consent (if they have learning disabilities, for example). Nevertheless, some perpetrators use perceived cultural practices as a way to coerce a person into marriage. Schools and colleges can play an important role in safeguarding children from forced marriage.

Preventing radicalisation

Children are vulnerable to extremist ideology and radicalisation. Similar to protecting children from other forms of harms and abuse, protecting children from this risk should be a part of a schools' or colleges' safeguarding approach.

The Prevent duty

All schools and colleges are subject to a duty under section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (the CTSA 2015), in the exercise of their functions, to have "due regard[109] to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism".[110] This duty is known as the Prevent duty.

Channel

Channel is a voluntary, confidential support programme which focuses on providing support at an early stage to people who are identified as being vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism. Prevent referrals may be passed to a multi-agency Channel panel, which will discuss the individual referred to determine whether they are vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism and consider the appropriate support required. A representative from

Peer on peer/ child on child abuse

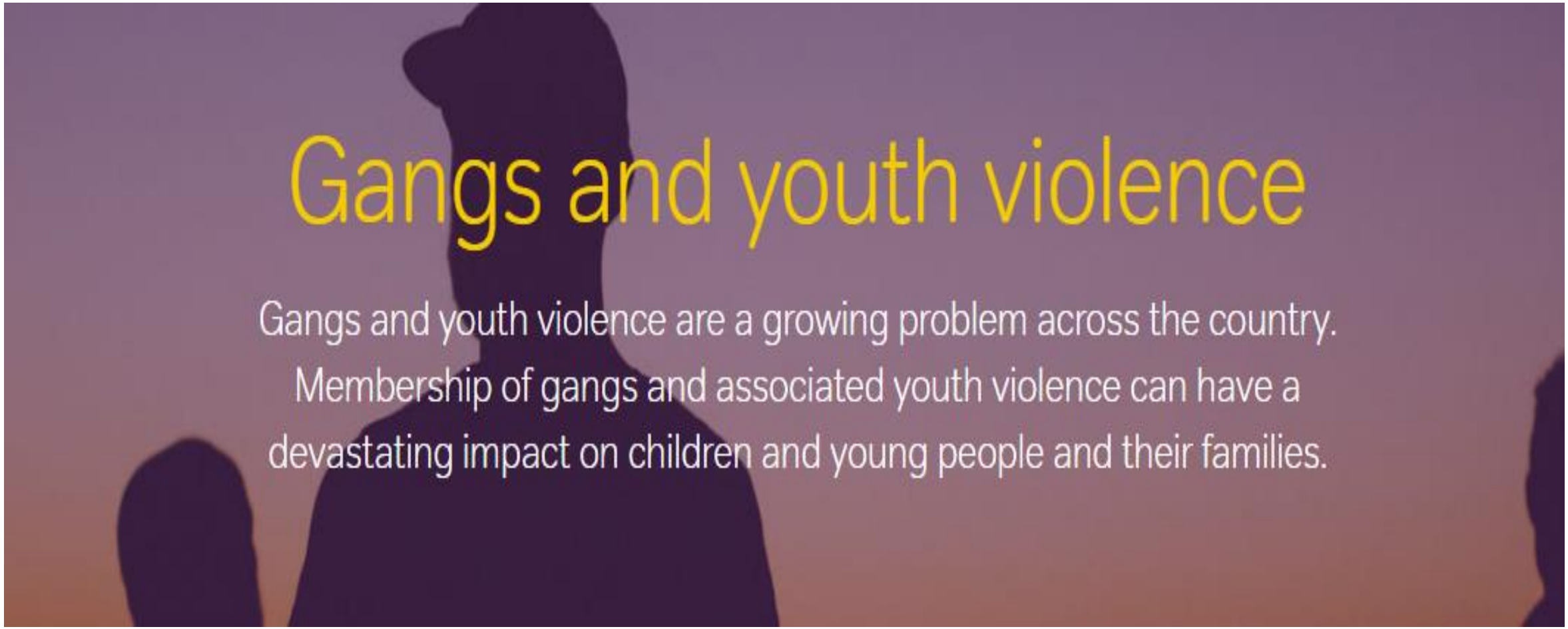
Children can abuse other children. This is generally referred to as peer on peer abuse and can take many forms. This can include (but is not limited to): abuse within intimate partner relationships; bullying (including cyberbullying); sexual violence and sexual harassment; physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm; sexting and initiation/hazing type violence and rituals.

Upskirting[115]

The Voyeurism (Offences) Act, which is commonly known as the Upskirting Act, came into force on 12 April 2019. 'Upskirting' is where someone takes a picture under a persons clothing (not necessarily a skirt) without their permission and or knowledge, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks (with or without underwear) to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm. It is a criminal offence. Anyone of any gender, can be a victim.

Human Trafficking

The Modern Slavery Act 2015 places a duty on specified public authorities to make a referral through the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) to the UK Trafficking Centre and the Home Office when agencies come into contact with a child who may have been exploited or trafficked.


Gangs and youth violence
Gangs and youth violence are a growing problem across the country.
Membership of gangs and associated youth violence can have a
devastating impact on children and young people and their families.

Vulnerable groups

- Chaotic home life where children are not priority
- Poor supervision from an early age
- Issues within home (e.g. domestic abuse, mental ill health)
- Familial history of offending
- Children with additional needs
- Poor engagement with education
- Poor self-image / self-worth
- Looked after children

Reasons for **joining a gang**

- gangs provide a sense of belonging and purpose
- to get respect / status or power
- recruited by other gang members and are pressured to join
- boredom
- poverty
- feeling they will not find a better life or good job
- financial gain (legal or otherwise)

Spotting **the signs**

- aggression and / or non-compliance
- difficulty concentrating
- difficulty developing relationships
- reduction in attendance and /or attainment / missing episodes
- low self-esteem, depression or anxiety
- self-harm
- substance misuse
- change in behaviour and appearance
- unexplained possessions
- refusal to enter certain areas

What you can do

- **Create an environment based on equality and informed choice** – provide information to allow pupils to make informed choices. It is well established that success in learning is one of the most powerful indicators in the prevention of youth crime.
- **Check young people have safe relationships** – in their family, with their peers and with your staff. Create the environment where it's ok to talk even about the most difficult things.
- **Spot the signs & know what to do** – use the checklists above, your safeguarding procedures and be confident in raising gang and youth violence as a possibility.
- **Take action** – and keep taking action until you know they're safe.

Gender based violence
Cutting across all boundaries (e.g. age, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation), gender based violence covers multiple forms of abuse against people linked directly to their gender.

Whilst gender based violence is mainly aimed at women and girls, there are also instances affecting men. There is significant under reporting of violence against boy and men in regards to domestic and sexual abuse, this is thought to be due to societal stereotyping.

Cutting across all boundaries (e.g. age, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation), gender based violence covers multiple forms of abuse against people linked directly to their gender:

- VAWG – violence against women and girls
- VAM – violence against men
- Domestic violence – based on gender
- Sexual violence – rape, forced sexual acts, forced pregnancy, abortion or sterilisation, FGM
- Psychological violence – threats, isolation, emotional abuse
- Faith abuse – forced marriage, exorcism due to sexuality, forced circumcision,
- Economic violence – controlling their access to all of the family resources: time, transportation, food, clothing, shelter, insurance, and money
- Use of children – to maintain control over a partner by not paying child support, requiring the children to spy, threatening to take children away, legal fights over custody, kidnapping or taking the children hostage to force

Spotting **the signs**

- aggression
- non-compliance at school
- difficulty concentrating
- difficulty developing relationships
- reduction in attendance and/or attainment
- eating disorder
- low self-esteem, depression or anxiety
- self-harm
- substance misuse

What you can do

Create an environment based on equality and informed choice. Schools are well placed to help...

- through prompting equality
- avoiding serotyping and dispelling societal gender stereotypes
- embracing difference
- demonstrating tolerance
- prompting equality of opportunity across the curriculum
- tackling any gender bias based language, assumptions
- addressing gender based bullying or harassment swiftly

Check young people have safe relationships – in their family, with their peers and with your staff. Create the environment where it's ok to talk even about the most difficult things.

Spot the signs & know what to do – use the checklists above, your safeguarding procedures and be confident in raising gender based violence as a possibility. Remember although the highest proportion of GBV is against women and girls, boys and men also suffer.

Take action – and keep taking action until you know they're safe

Child abuse linked to faith or belief
Faith abuse, which includes practices relating to spirit possession and witchcraft is often a hidden crime which is under-reported but can have significant impact on children.

What do we **know?**

Research has identified that in communities where child abuse linked to faith or belief is more prevalent it is likely that:

- there is a belief in the community in things such as witchcraft; or
- there may be an influential person who promotes ideas such as people being possessed whilst also promoting the solution.

Coupled with this parents / carers / abusers are more likely to have the belief that what they are doing will save the child or the wider community and therefore it is for the greater good.

It should be noted that a child can be abused as a result of faith or belief even without these factors being present.

Vulnerable groups

Children of all ages and gender can be vulnerable to this form of abuse, however children may be singled out for being different, and it is the difference that is then put down to the “illness”. Children with behavioural issues may be seen as possessed, as may children who are gifted and talented. If a child has recurring ill health or is the result of a difficult pregnancy then this may lead to them being singled out.

Children living with extended family, carers other than their parents, in particular those in private foster placements are often at increased risk of abuse linked to faith or belief.

Spotting **the signs**

Children may or may not know what is happening, however you may:

- hear children talking about being evil, having the devil beaten out of them, using specific words, e.g. kindoki, djinn, juju or voodoo.
- see children's behaviour change, for example becoming isolated, confused or withdrawn.
- see a child's appearance change, often deteriorating. They may start constantly wearing specific items to "protect them".
- notice a change in their school attendance, or suddenly going abroad for a long holiday.

As with any form of abuse, if you see something that concerns you this should be followed up

What you can do

As with all safeguarding matters, you must do something. You cannot pass it off as being "part of their culture" or worry about disrespecting the family's beliefs. If you have concerns you must act and speak with your designated safeguarding lead.

While different faiths have different practices, the definitions of physical, emotional, sexual abuse and neglect still hold true.

It may be that you do not feel that you have enough knowledge or experience of a particular faith or belief, but this should not delay your acting. There is still a duty to keep the child safe, but when dealing with any allegation of child abuse linked to faith or belief, agencies must engage with individuals, families and in some cases faith or other communities to challenge the belief that underlies the harm. You may have a role in this, however your primary focus remains the child.

Fabricated or induced illness

Fabricated or Induced Illness is based on a parent or carer's underlying need for their child to be recognised and treated as ill or more unwell/more disabled that the child actually is and may involve physical, and/or psychological health, neurodevelopmental disorders and cognitive disabilities. There are two possible motivations underpinning the parent's need:

1. The parent experiences a gain from the recognition from the recognition and treatment of their child as unwell. The parent is using the child to fulfil their needs, disregarding the effects on the child and;
2. The parent's erroneous belief, extreme concern and anxiety about their child's health.

Fabricated or induced illness

Children can experience physical harm, emotional harm and neglect as a result of this form of abuse which includes:

- The child's health – repeated and unnecessary appointments/tests, induction of illness (poisoning/suffocation);
- Effect on the child's development and daily life – including limited and interrupted school attendance and education, the child's normal activities are limited, the child assuming a sick role and the child being socially isolated;
- The child's psychological health and well-being – the child may be actively colluding with the parent's illness deception and the child may be confused and anxious.

Homelessness
With a report by the Children's Commissioner estimating that there are around 600,000 children who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless in England alone, it is important that we understand what homelessness means for children and young people.

Definition of homelessness

The definition of homelessness means not having a home. You are homeless if you have nowhere to stay and are living on the streets, but you can be homeless even if you have a roof over your head.

You count as homeless if you are:

- staying with friends or family;
- staying in a hostel, night shelter or B&B;
- squatting (because you have no legal right to stay);
- at risk of violence or abuse in your home;
- living in poor conditions that affect your health;
- living apart from your family because you don't have a place to live together.

Shelter, 2019

Temporary accommodation

Temporary accommodation can mean a number of different things.

It can include families staying in B&Bs (although this has been limited by the government), reception centres (large buildings with multiple bedsits and shared kitchen / dining facilities), converted office blocks or shipping containers to name a few.

All forms of temporary accommodation come with their own issues such as:

- Lack of space (indoor and / or outdoor)
- Poor conditions
- Issues with heat control
- Distance from “home” (i.e. where the family base is, the children go to school, etc.)
- Constantly being moved from one place to another
- Others also placed in the accommodation

Because of the nature of temporary accommodation, there is often a mix of people placed there some of which come with their own additional issues (e.g. mental health, substance misuse, criminality) potentially impacting on the safety of children.

Impact of being homeless

Being homeless can impact on many areas of a child's life. These are just some of the ways:

- Tiredness – inappropriate sleeping areas / shared rooms / long distances to travel;
- Appearance – lack of wash areas, no facilities to wash clothes, not being able to keep track of belongings;
- Physical health – exhaustion, lack of regular meals (shared or no cooking space), diet of ready meals / fast food;
- Stress and anxiety – not knowing if or when going to have to move again;
- Educational attainment – no space for homework, no access to computers;
- Self-esteem – fear of being singled out as different, not being able to join in with activities after school.

What you can do

Create an open and approachable culture in school – help pupils think about the issues and attitudes behind homelessness, particularly in relation to equality. Create aspiration and opportunity through high quality teaching, while being aware of the limits and pressures on families, children and young people.

- Be aware of the effects of child poverty;
- Support pupils and families;
- Sign-post to supportive services, ensuring that this is through as many different routes as possible (e.g. leaflets, posters, conversations, etc.);
- Raise any concerns with your designated safeguarding lead.

Consider how vulnerabilities might impact on individuals – think about the increased risk of exploitation and the barriers in place to attainment or to making safe decisions.

Consider avenues of support including local early help mechanisms.