

DEFINITIONS AND SYMPTOMS OF ABUSE – APPENDIX 2

The definitions of abuse used in this guidance are taken directly from the statutory guidance 'Working together to safeguard children' (2018, regularly updated).

Definition of physical abuse: 'a form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.'

Symptoms of physical abuse – what to look out for:

- Bruises, black eyes, broken bones.
- Unexplained or untreated injuries.
- Injuries to unusual body parts – thighs, back, abdomen.
- Bruising that resembles hand / finger marks.
- Burns or scalds.
- Human bites.
- Cigarette burns.
- Injuries that the child cannot explain or explains unconvincingly.
- Injuries in babies or non-mobile children.

Emotional abuse: 'the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate.

Emotional abuse may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.'