

The Blackford Centre is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare and safety of all its learners.

A **child** is defined as anyone under the age of 18.

An **adult at risk** is defined as anyone who is or may be in need of community care by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness, and who is or may be unable to take care of him/her self, or unable to protect him/herself against significant harm or exploitation.

Abuse is 'a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person'.
(*Working together to safeguard children*)

Categories of abuse:

The Department of Health identifies six categories of abuse: physical, sexual, neglect, psychological/emotional, acts of omission and discriminatory.

- **Physical Abuse**

Repeatedly causing physical harm in any way. This may involve but is not limited to hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, drowning or suffocating. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent/carer feigns symptoms of, or deliberately causes, ill health to a child they are looking after (eg. Munchausen by Proxy).

- **Emotional Abuse**

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a young person or vulnerable adult that affects their emotional development. It may involve telling them they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only as far as they meet the needs of another person. Age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children, causing children to feel frightened, or the exploitation or corruption of children.

- **Psychological abuse**

Psychological abuse can include emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, isolation or withdrawal from services or support networks.

- **Sexual Abuse**

Sexual abuse, including rape and sexual assault occurs when the young person or vulnerable adult has not consented, could not consent to or was pressurised into

consenting. This involves forcing or enticing a young person or vulnerable adult to take part in sexual activities whether or not the person is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact including penetration or non-penetrative acts.

It may also include looking at, or being involved in the production of, pornographic material, watching sexual activities, or encouraging the person to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

- **Non-contact abuse**

Abusive acts which do not involve actual physical contact to the young person or vulnerable adult. This includes pornographic or violent films, sexual acts performed in front of the victim, violent acts with the abused present.

- **Neglect**

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a young person or vulnerable adult's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of their health or development. This includes failure to provide adequate shelter, food or clothing, or neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, basic emotional needs.

Neglect includes acts of omission, ignoring medical or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, social care or educational services, the withholding of medication, adequate nutrition and heating.

- **Discriminatory abuse**

Includes racism or sexism, abuse based on a person's disability, and other forms of harassment.

- **Institutional abuse**

This occurs when the routines, systems and regimes of an institution result in poor or inadequate standards of care affecting the whole setting. This form of abuse denies and restricts the dignity, privacy, choice and independence of persons at risk.

- **Risk to self and/or others**

This may include but is not exclusive to severe self-harm, suicidal tendencies or potential risk of harming others. This may be a consequence of an individual experiencing a significant level of personal/emotional trauma and/or stress.

Self-harm is a term that covers a range of behaviours used as a coping mechanism where an individual harms themselves. This could include but is not limited to cutting, over/under eating, burning the skin, hitting yourself or walls, excessive exercise, taking hazardous substances, overdose, scratching and hair pulling.

- **Financial or Material Abuse**

Financial or material abuse, including theft, fraud, exploitation, pressure in connection with property, inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.

- **Bullying: Person to person**

Bullying is a common form of abuse and must be taken seriously. For some young people/vulnerable adults, bullying can be taken to the extreme and can make their lives unbearable. There is sufficient evidence to show that the consequences of bullying can be devastating both to the victim and their family.

There are three main types of bullying:

- Physical - hitting, kicking or theft
- Verbal – racist, sexist or homophobic remarks
- Emotional - continued negative feedback

All these will include:

- Deliberate hostility and aggression towards the victim
- A victim who is seen to be weaker and less powerful than the bully/bullies
- Painful and distressing outcome for the victim

Bullying behaviour may include:

- All forms of violence
- Sarcasm, spreading rumours or persistent teasing
- Torment, ridicule and humiliation
- Racial taunts, graffiti or gestures
- Unwanted physical contact or abusive, offensive comments of a sexual nature

- **Cyber Bullying**

Cyber bullying involves the use of technology to intimidate or hurt another person including:

- Sending anonymous texts, making threats of violence
- Communicating negatively through e mails/ chat rooms/messaging services
- Sharing personal information that the young people feel embarrassed about

Sending frightening or obscene images with or without a threat

- **Domestic Violence**

Domestic violence can include psychological, emotional, physical, sexual and financial abuse. It also includes 'honour' based violence, FGM and forced marriage.

Domestic violence affects people of every class, gender, geographical location, wealth, age, race, disability and sexuality. The violence can start at any stage of a relationship. It is a pattern of controlling and aggressive behaviour that is intentional and calculated to gain power and control within a relationship.

If a learner discloses they are in an abusive relationship, we have a duty to offer them support from a relevant organisation that may be able to help them. If the learner is under 18 or a vulnerable adult, the information must be shared immediately with the CEO/DSL.

If the learner is an adult, it is important to find out if they have children under 18. If the victim does have young children a referral will need to be made to Children's Social Care, with consent from the parent.

- **Child Sexual Exploitation**

Child sexual exploitation is an illegal activity by people who have power over children and young people and use it to sexually abuse them. This can involve a range of exploitative activity, from seemingly 'consensual' relationships and exchanges of sex for attention, accommodation or gifts, through to serious organised crime.

Children and young people at risk are some of the most vulnerable in society. Many have suffered from physical and mental abuse or neglect. Sexual exploitation involves coercion, intimidation, violence or enticement, including unwanted pressure from peers to have sex, cyber-bullying and grooming.

It is important to recognise that some young people who are being sexually exploited may not exhibit external signs of this abuse. If you become aware of or suspect that a student is being sexually exploited this needs to be reported to the DSL using the safeguarding procedures outlined.

Technology is also a factor in child sexual exploitation, for example being persuaded to post sexual images on the Internet/mobile phones without immediate payment or gain. In all cases, those exploiting the child/young person have power over them by virtue of their age, gender, intellect, physical strength and/or economic resources.

Involvement in exploitative relationships is characterised by the child or young person's limited availability of choice resulting from their social/economic and/or emotional vulnerability.

- **Sexting**

Sexting is the sending of sexually explicit images via text, email, MSN or social media sites. 'Sexting' is commonplace amongst children and young people

It is a criminal offence for young people under the age of 18 to text intimate pictures of themselves via social media. It is classed as distribution of child pornography and they can face police action, even if their actions are voluntary.

- **Female Genital Mutilation**

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is illegal in the UK and staff working within education or health have a duty to report any evidence of FGM immediately to the police.

Female genital mutilation (sometimes referred to as female circumcision) refers to procedures that intentionally alter or cause injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons. FGM is usually carried out on young girls between infancy and the age of 15, usually before puberty starts. The procedure is traditionally carried out by a woman with no medical training. Anaesthetics are not generally used. Victims of FGM are likely to come from a community that is known to practice FGM.