## C01e

## Abuse of children and young people: factors, types and indicators (WALES)

This document is provided to Carers Trust Crossroads West Wales (now referred to as ‘the organisation’) as a Network Partner of Carers Trust.

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The content applies to ALL children and young people aged 17 and under, including (but not limited to) those who:

* have an illness, disability or additional needs.
* are young carers
* are in challenging family circumstances (including substance abuse, adult mental health issues, domestic violence)
* are drawn into anti-social or criminal behaviour, including gangs / organised crime
* are frequently missing from home
* are at risk of modern slavery, trafficking or exploitation
* are at risk of being radicalised or exploited
* have recently returned home from care.

# 

# 1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment and a person may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm.

1.2 As well as threats to children and young people of sexual, physical and emotional abuse and neglect, they are also at risk from possible exploitation by criminal gangs and organised crime; the impact of domestic abuse within the household; trafficking; online abuse; sexual exploitation and the influences of extremism leading to radicalisation, as set out below. These are not mutually exclusive and a child or young person may be subject to more than one form of abuse.

# 2.0 GENERAL SIGNS OF ABUSE IN CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

2.1 The warning signs and symptoms of abuse or neglect can vary from child to child, and parental behaviours (including drug or alcohol abuse), may also contribute to warning signs. By understanding and being alert to warning signs, all those working with children or young people in community settings as well as those working with families in their own homes, are in a position to recognise the signs and respond promptly to any suspicions or concerns they have, as set out in the safeguarding and child protection guidance for staff (C01c) and guidance for volunteers (C01d) to ensure timely action is taken.

2.2 Staff should be on the alert for any child or young person who presents with any of the general signs listed below as they can be indicators of the different types of abuse and neglect discussed in this document:

* displaying behaviour changes, becoming aggressive, challenging, withdrawn, having difficulty sleeping, nightmares or wetting the bed
* have inconsistent regulation of emotions, including becoming distressed, upset or angry
* displaying signs of anxiety or depression
* having physical symptoms such as stomach ache or headaches.
* self-harming
* presenting with consistently poor hygiene and with ill-fitting or dirty clothing
* making strong efforts to avoid specific family members or friends
* are reluctant to be left alone with a particular person/s
* displaying subdued or changed behaviour in the presence of a particular person/s
* don’t want to change clothes in front of others or take part in physical activities
* have sudden problems at school, reduction in attainment, truancy, poor attention or hunger
* talking about being left alone or with inappropriate carers
* are reaching developmental milestones late, with no medical reason
* are regularly missing from home, school or care
* have parents who are dismissive and non-responsive to practitioners’ concerns
* drink alcohol regularly from an early age
* show concern for younger siblings without explaining why
* constantly express a wish to leave, or to live elsewhere
* talk about running away
* shy away from being touched or flinch at sudden movements.

2.3 As well as threats to children and young people of sexual, physical and emotional abuse and neglect, they are also at risk from possible exploitation by criminal gangs and organised crime; the impact of domestic abuse within the household; trafficking; online abuse; sexual exploitation and the influences of extremism leading to radicalisation, as set out below. These are not mutually exclusive and a child or young person may be subject to more than one form of abuse.

2.4 **Contextual safeguarding**

Children and young people may be vulnerable to neglect and abuse or exploitation in their homes from family members, friends and neighbours. However, they may also be at risk in situations outside of their immediate family environment, such as in institutional or community settings (for example educational facilities, community groups, day centres, internet cafes etc). Any of these settings may use restrictive practice. These are ' activities that stop people from doing the things they want to do or encourages them to do things they don’t want to do'[[1]](#footnote-1). These practices can be obvious or subtle.

People carrying out abuse in such settings could include:

* those who work or volunteer in them
* the child or young person’s peer groups
* people they know or strangers.

Tackling such issues is referred to as ‘contextual safeguarding[[2]](#footnote-2)’; this is an approach to understanding, and responding to children’s experiences of significant harm beyond their family and home. This approach recognises the different relationships children have in their schools, peer groups, internet and in their local community.

This makes the **context** associated with the abuse the subject of assessment and intervention, in order to render the extra-familial environments in question safer for the children and young people who access them.

2.5 Children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) may find it difficult to express their feelings, especially if they are non-verbal. Distress could be presented in different ways, including through challenging behaviour. The individual needs of the child must be taken into consideration to support them to communicate in a way they feel comfortable.

# 3.0 PHYSICAL ABUSE

## 

3.1 Physical abuse is defined as pain or injury that is either caused deliberately or through lack of care. It can include

* hitting, kicking, pinching, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning or suffocating.
* a parent or carer fabricating the symptoms of, or deliberately inducing illness.
* corporal punishment[[3]](#footnote-3)
* use, or threats of use, of ‘weapons’ including knives and irons.
* Violence against family members or pets

3.2 Evidence shows that babies and disabled children have a higher risk of suffering physical abuse. As a result of their increased vulnerability (see Appendix 1), they may experience the following additional forms of physical abuse:

* force feeding
* forcible administration of medication
* misuse of medication (for example, to sedate)
* inappropriate moving and handling
* force used when they are resisting, other than in an emergency
* ill-fitting equipment
* rough or careless handling
* clinical procedures or behaviour management being carried out by staff without the necessary training and skill
* the use of inappropriate methods of control and restraint
* unwillingness to try to learn their means of communication
* lack of stimulation
* induced illness

3.3 Possible Indicators of physical abuse

Bruises that are:

* present on babies or on children or young people who are not independently mobile
* located away from bony prominences, for example on the face, back, stomach, arms, buttocks, ears and hands
* multiple and located in clusters
* of uniform shape
* in the shape of an implement, handprint or fingertips

Injury such as:

* cigarette burns
* adult bite marks
* broken bones
* scalds
* unexplained injury or where the explanation does not fit.
* A history of unexplained falls or minor injuries.
* Injuries may be suspected of being non-accidental if they are on a part of the body not usually associated with accidental injury, unusually symmetrical, or if they suggest attack (hand prints, bite marks, small round bruises suggesting grabbing – see Common Sites for Injury Chart (CT08).

# 4.0 SEXUAL ABUSE

4.1 Sexual abuse is any sexual activity with a child, and many children and young people who are victims of sexual abuse do not recognise themselves as such. Sexual abuse is not only perpetrated by adult males, as women can commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

4.2 Sexual abuse may involve

physical contact, including assault by penetration, or non-penetrative acts,

non-contact activities such as forcing children to look at sexual images,

grooming a child or young person in preparation for abuse.

encouraging sexually inappropriate behaviour.

4.3 Sexual abuse and child sexual exploitation damages children and, like any form of abuse, can have long lasting consequences that impact on every part of their life and future outcomes.

**4.4 Possible indicators of sexual abuse**

* Children who display knowledge or interest in sexual acts inappropriate to their age.
* Children who use sexual language or have sexual knowledge you wouldn’t expect them to have.
* Children who ask others to behave sexually or play sexual games.
* Children with physical sexual health problems, including soreness in the genital and anal areas, sexually transmitted infections or underage pregnancy.
* Reluctance to be alone with a particular person

# 5.0 CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION (CSE)

5.1 Child sexual exploitation is the coercion or manipulation of children or young people into taking part in sexual activities. It is a form of sexual abuse involving an exchange of some form of payment which can include money, mobile phones and other items, drugs, alcohol, a place to stay, ‘protection’ or affection. The vulnerability of the young person and the grooming process employed by perpetrators renders them powerless to recognise the exploitative nature of relationships and unable to give informed consent. It can involve violent, humiliating and degrading sexual assaults.

5.2 CSE is complex and can be difficult to identify and assess. Indicators can sometimes be mistaken for “normal” adolescent behaviour. Issues of consent, even when the young person is old enough to consent to sexual activity, are complex as the law says consent is only valid where the young person makes a choice and has the freedom and capacity to make that choice.

5.3 Young people may be offered money or drugs and alcohol in exchange for sexual activity. Sexual exploitation doesn’t always involve physical contact and can happen on line. There is clearly a link to trafficking, and it is important to remember that sexual exploitation can occur in all areas of the country and in all ethnic groups. It can be linked to other forms of abuse in the life of the child or young person, and to criminal activity in the wider community.

**5.4 Possible indicators of child sexual exploitation**

Children or young people who:

* appear with unexplained amounts of money, unexplained gifts or new possessions.
* are associating with others involved in exploitation.
* have older boyfriends or girlfriends.
* are suffering from sexually transmitted infections or becoming pregnant.
* are suffering changes in emotional wellbeing.
* misuse drugs or alcohol.
* go missing from school or care or who regularly come home late.
* are seen entering and/or leaving vehicles driven by unknown adults
* physical injury without plausible explanation
* frequenting areas known for sex work

# 6.0 EMOTIONAL ABUSE

6.1 Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child or young person such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on their emotional development. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may also occur alone.

6.2 It may involve:

conveying to child or young person that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person

age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on them, including interactions that are beyond the child or young person’s developmental capability

overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning

preventing the child participating in normal social interaction such as playing / mixing with other children

lack of stimulation

seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another

bullying[[4]](#footnote-4), causing the child or young person frequently to feel frightened or in danger

fabricated illness

* online bullying and use of social media sites to intimidate.
* Requirement to undergo ‘Conversion Therapy’

**6.3 Possible indicators of emotional abuse**

Children who are excessively withdrawn, fearful, or anxious about doing something wrong.

Parents or carers who withdraw their attention and affection from their child, giving them the “cold shoulder”.

* Parents or carers manipulating a child’s anxieties or beliefs.

Parents or carers blaming their problems on their child.

Parents or carers who humiliate their child, for example by name-calling or making negative comparisons.

* This includes insulting a child or young person about their race, gender, sexual orientation, disability, and faith.
* repeatedly being belittled.
* Unwillingness of parents or carers to try to learn a child’s means of communication.
* keeping a child awake/preventing them from sleeping.

# 7.0 NEGLECT

7.1 Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child or young person’s basic physical and / or psychological needs and is likely to result in serious impairment of their health or development.

7.2 Children who are neglected often also suffer from other types of abuse and it may occur if a parent becomes physically or mentally unable to care for a child. A parent may have addiction to alcohol or drugs, which could impair their ability to keep a child safe or prioritise their needs.

Neglect can also apply to an unborn child during pregnancy because of maternal substance abuse.

**7.3 Possible indicators of neglect**

Children or young people who:

* are living in a home that is indisputably dirty or unsafe
* are constant hunger, sometimes stealing food from other children
* are constantly dirty or smelly
* loss of weight, or are constantly under or overweight.
* wear inappropriate dress for the conditions
* whose parents or carers do not request medical assistance and / or fail to attend appointments
* complain of being tired all the time
* are angry, aggressive or self-harming
* have few friends
* mention they are being left alone or unsupervised
* are living in dangerous conditions (such as being around drugs, alcohol or violence).

# 8.0 DOMESTIC VIOLENCE OR ABUSE

8.1 The definition of domestic abuse is set out in the Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015 as:

'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.

Controlling behaviour is a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and / or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape and regulating their everyday behaviour. Coercive behaviour is an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim.'

8.2 The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 states that: 'behaviour of a person (“A”) towards another person (“B”) is “domestic abuse[[5]](#footnote-5)” if A and B are each **aged 16 or over** and are personally connected to each other, and the behaviour is abusive'.

8.3 The behaviour may consist of a single incident or a course of conduct.

8.4 “Economic abuse” means any behaviour that has a substantial adverse effect on B’s ability to:

* acquire, use or maintain money or other property, or
* obtain goods or services.

A’s behaviour may be behaviour “towards” B even though it consists of conduct directed at another person (for example, B’s child).

Two people are “personally connected” to each other if:

* they are, or have been, married to each other or they are, or have been, civil partners of each other or
* they have agreed to marry one another (whether or not the agreement has been terminated) or
* they have entered into a civil partnership agreement (whether or not the agreement has been terminated) or
* they are, or have been, in an intimate personal relationship with each other or
* they each have, or there has been a time when they each have had, a parental relationship in relation to the same child) or
* they are relatives.

8.3 Witnessing domestic violence is child abuse, and teenagers can suffer domestic abuse in their relationships. Domestic abuse can seriously harm children and young people.

8.4 Coercive or controlling behaviour is a core part of domestic abuse and is now considered an offence in law.

8.5 Perpetrators of domestic abuse may target and undermine parents’ relationships with their children, using power and control dynamics, for example using vexatious applications to the family court to prolong proceedings (sometimes referred to as “parental alienation”). Perpetrators of domestic abuse can also use contact with children as a form of abuse.

8.6 Young people can also experience domestic abuse in their own relationships. young people who experience domestic abuse do so at a particularly vulnerable point in their lives.

8.7 Young people commonly experience abuse through new technologies and social media, which can be used as a monitoring or harassment tool by the domestic abuse perpetrator.

8.8 Domestic abuse can include the child or young person:

* seeing the abuse
* hearing it from another room
* seeing a parent’s injuries or distress afterwards
* being hurt by being nearby or trying to stop the abuse.

**8.9 Possible indicators of domestic violence or abuse**

See general indicators of abuse and neglect at 2.0 above.

# 9.0 FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION (FGM)

9.1 This is variously classed as a form of physical, sexual and domestic abuse. Anyone who observes physical signs which appear to indicate that an act of FGM have been carried out on a girl aged under 18 years has a personal, mandatory responsibility to report it to the police. Visit [NSPCC website](https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/child-abuse-and-neglect/female-genital-mutilation-fgm/) for further information on FGM.

9.2 See also the [Multi Agency Statutory Guidance on FGM 2018 HM Govt](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/multi-agency-statutory-guidance-on-female-genital-mutilation)

# 10.0 SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE FROM RADICALISATION

10.1 The 2011 Prevent Strategy has been updated to deal with all forms of terrorism and with non-violent extremism. See [Prevent duty guidance: for England and Wales -](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/prevent-duty-guidance/revised-prevent-duty-guidance-for-england-and-wales), HM Govt updated 6.3.24.

10.2 Terrorist threats to the UK include not just organisations involved in Middle Eastern conflicts but also those involved with the extreme right in the UK. One of the specific objectives of the Prevent Strategy includes work with all sectors and organisations where there might be risk of radicalisation for children, young people or adults. The emphasis is on working in partnership with the police and local authorities through multi agency forums, and this includes local Adults and Children’s Safeguarding Boards.

10.3 [Prevent and Channel panel factsheet](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/counter-terrorism-and-border-security-bill-2018-factsheets/prevent-and-channel-panel-factsheet-accessible-version) . Channel Panels are established under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, to ensure multi-agency assessments and support plans for individuals are in place.

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# 11.0 ONLINE ABUSE

11.1 For children and young people, the Internet and the increasing number of digital devices they use to connect to it, are an integral part of their everyday lives. While digital technology provides a wealth of opportunities, the [UK Council for Child Internet Safety (UKCCIS)](https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/uk-council-for-child-internet-safety-ukccis) defines the risks that children and young people might be exposed to in relation to:

* **Content**

Harmcan arise from exposure to age inappropriate, distasteful or illegal content.

* **Conduct**

Harm can arise from how children and young people behave online.

* **Contact**

Harm can arise from interactions with other individuals.

11.2 Online abuse is any type of abuse that happens on the web, whether through accessing social network sites, playing online games or using mobile phones or other devices. It includes:

* **Cyberbullying**

This can take the form of mean text messages or emails, rumors sent by email or posted on social networking sites, and embarrassing pictures, videos, websites, or fake profiles.

* **Grooming**

This comprises actions deliberately undertaken with the aim of befriending and establishing an emotional connection with a child or young person, to lower their inhibitions in order to [sexually abuse](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Child_sexual_abuse) them.

* **Sexual abuse**

This occurs when children or young people are forced or persuaded to take part in sexual activities. This doesn't have to be physical contact, and it can happen online.

* **Sexual exploitation**

This can occur through the use of the internet or on mobile phones. In all cases, those exploiting the child or young person have power over them because of their age, gender, intellect, physical strength and / or resources.

* **Sexting**

Sexting or sending nudes is when someone shares a sexual message, naked or semi-naked image, video or text message with another person. Some young people experiencing online grooming or abuse may also be sending or receiving nudes or explicit content from people they don’t know. Young people can have their photos, messages or videos shared without their consent or be bullied about them. This can lead to them feeling distress or embarrassment and shame.

* **Emotional abuse**

This includes non-physical behaviors such as threats, insults, constant monitoring or “checking in,” excessive texting, humiliation, intimidation, isolation or [stalking.](http://www.loveisrespect.org/is-this-abuse/types-of-abuse/what-is-stalking)

For further information and guidance, visit:

* + [Social care Wales (safeguarding.wales)](https://safeguarding.wales/chi/c6/c6.p6.html)
  + [UK Council for Internet Safety (UKCIS)](https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/uk-council-for-internet-safety) (September 2020)
  + [Online Harms White Paper](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/online-harms-white-paper/online-harms-white-paper) (December 2020)

# 12.0 TRAFFICKED CHILDREN, MODERN SLAVERY AND COUNTY LINES

12.1 Child trafficking is defined as ‘recruiting, moving, receiving and harbouring children for the purpose of exploitation. It is a form of modern slavery.

12.2 Children may be trafficked for:

* child sexual exploitation
* criminal activity (such as street crime, ‘County Lines’ activity)
* forced marriage
* domestic servitude (such as cleaning, childcare, cooking)
* forced labour
* illegal adoption.

12.3 Trafficked children may suffer other forms of abuse that impact on their physical and mental health, and on their social and emotional development, including:

* sexual abuse and exploitation
* physical abuse
* emotional abuse
* neglect.

12.4 Indicator of trafficked children may include that the child or young person

* has entered the country illegally
* has no passport or other means of identification
* has false documentation
* is unable to confirm the name and address of the person meeting them on arrival
* does not appear to have money but does have a mobile phone
* possesses money and goods not accounted for
* receives unexplained/unidentified phone calls whilst in placement/temporary accommodation
* is withdrawn and refuses to talk
* is required to earn a minimum amount of money every day
* works in various locations
* has limited freedom of movement
* is being cared for by adult/s who are not their parents. the quality of the relationship between the child and their adult carers is not good
* is permanently deprived of a large part of their earnings by another person
* is excessively afraid of being deported

12.5 There is growing awareness of the risk to young people and children, of their exploitation by criminal gangs who supply drugs to county towns, seaside towns and rural areas. To establish drug routes and bases, gangs from cities may manipulate vulnerable people by, for example, moving into their homes, and this abuse can also involve sexual exploitation and abuse. This can result in prosecutions and the police and relevant authorities should be involved by the usual referral routes if this kind of activity is suspected.

See also

[County lines expoitation - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/criminal-exploitation-of-children-and-vulnerable-adults-county-lines/criminal-exploitation-of-children-and-vulnerable-adults-county-lines" \l ":~:text=%E2%80%9CCounty%20lines%E2%80%9D%20is%20a%20violent,locally%20or%20in%20other%20counties.)

Modern Slavery: Statutory Guidance for England and Wales (under s49 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015)

[Protecting children from trafficking and modern slavery | NSPCC Learning](https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/child-abuse-and-neglect/child-trafficking-and-modern-slavery#heading-top)

[Modern slavery awareness and victim identification guidance](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/655504/6.3920_HO_Modern_Slavery_Awareness_Booklet_web.pdf)

# 13.0 DISCRIMINATORY ABUSE

13.1 This includes unequal treatment based on age, disability, race, religion and belief, sex or sexual orientation, gender reassignment (known as [“protected characteristics”](https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/equality/equality-act-2010/protected-characteristics?return-url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.equalityhumanrights.com%2Fsearch%3Fkeys%3Dprotected%2BCharacteristics) under the Equality Act 2010)

It can include:

* verbal abuse, disrespect, derogatory remarks, or inappropriate use of language related to a protected characteristic.
* denying access to communication aids, not allowing access to an interpreter, signer, or lip-reader
* harassment or deliberate exclusion on the grounds of a protected characteristic
* denying basic rights to healthcare, education, employment, and criminal justice relating to a protected characteristic
* substandard service provision relating to a protected characteristic.

13.2 **Possible indicators of discriminatory abuse**

* the young person appears withdrawn and isolated
* expressions of anger, frustration, fear, or anxiety
* the support on offer does not take account of the person’s individual needs in terms of a protected characteristic.

# 14.0 ORGANISATIONAL OR INSTITUTIONAL ABUSE

14.1 This may be defined as the mistreatment or neglect of a child or young person at risk by a regime or individuals within settings or service, that violate the person’s dignity, resulting in lack of respect for their human rights. It occurs when services are focused on the needs of the organisation rather than on the needs of the individual receiving the services.

It includes neglect and poor standards of care resulting from the structure, processes, policies, and practices of the organisation, including for example:

* lack of leadership and management overview
* lack of staff learning, development and support
* insufficient staff or high turnover resulting in poor quality care
* failure to respond to abuse appropriately.
* failure to respond to complaints.

14.2 **Indicators of organisational / institutional abuse**

* lack of flexibility concerning when and how young people receive care and support.
* lack of choice for young people
* absence of individual care and support plans
* individual care and support plans not being followed.
* poor, inadequate record-keeping and missing documents
* public discussion of personal matters
* unnecessary exposure during bathing or using the toilet
* leaving children in an unsafe situation
* care and support team not kept up to date
* abusive and disrespectful attitudes towards children using the service.
* lack of respect for dignity and privacy
* misuse of medication
* restrictive practice
* inappropriate use of restraints
* not taking account of the child’s cultural, religious, or ethnic needs
* failure to respond to abuse appropriately
* failure to respond to complaints.

# APPENDIX 1 RECOGNISING THE VULNERABILITY OF DISABLED CHILDREN

Based on research, it is generally agreed that disabled children and young people are at significantly greater risk of physical, sexual and emotional abuse and neglect than their non-disabled peers. See the NSPCC publication ‘[We have the right to be safe’ – protecting disabled children from abuse](https://www.nspcc.org.uk/globalassets/documents/research-reports/right-safe-disabled-children-abuse-summary.pdf)’.

All children and young people who have a disability or illness deserve the opportunity to achieve their full potential. They have the same human rights and needs as all other children and should be treated primarily as children first. This means:

* valuing each child or young person as an individual
* treating each child or young person with dignity and respect
* giving each child or young person choices, encouraging them to communicate and taking their responses seriously
* ensuring each child or young person is safe, loved and adequately cared for.

Disabled children are at increased vulnerability of suffering significant harm because they are likely to;

* be in contact with more service providers than non-disabled children
* be in receipt of intimate care
* spend more time away from their families in short break care, residential care etc
* experience social isolation
* be subjected to abusive practices that go unrecognised, such as poor behaviour management models, neglect and inadequate care
* not be consulted or listened to.

Examples of abusive practices towards disabled children or young people include:

* misuse of medication
* lack of stimulation
* unwillingness to try to learn their means of communication
* ill-fitting equipment
* the inappropriate use of restraint to control behaviour
* clinical procedures or behaviour management being carried out by staff without the necessary training and skill
* neglect and inadequate care.

# APPENDIX 2 YOUNG CARERS

A young carer is a child or young person under the age of 18 who provides regular and ongoing practical, personal care and / or emotional support to a family member (including adults and children) who has a physical, learning or mental disability, or who misuses substances or where there are issues of domestic violence.

A young carer becomes vulnerable when the level of care-giving and responsibility to the person in need becomes excessive or inappropriate for that child, having regard to all the circumstances (in particular their age, sex, wishes and feelings), risking impacting on their physical or emotional wellbeing.

In general, if the caring role and responsibilities are having an adverse effect on the young care’s education or ability to form friendships or undertake social activities and pursuits, this would be an indicator that the situation is inappropriate.

They may, for example be looking after a brother or sister who has a disability or one of their parents may have a mental or physical illness or be misusing drugs or alcohol and you notice it is having a bad effect on them, for example:

* their caring responsibilities seem to be getting too much for them
* they are carrying out potentially dangerous tasks and are at risk of getting hurt
* they are doing things that are not appropriate for their age or gender, for example intimate care.

This could affect their normal health and development and could also result in them regularly missing school or being socially isolated.

1. Positive Approaches to Reduce Restrictive Practice<https://socialcare.wales/positive-approaches-to-reduce-restrictive-practices> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. [Definition of Contextual Safeguarding](https://www.safeguardingchildren.co.uk/beaware-professionals/contextual-safeguarding/#:~:text=What%20is%20Contextual%20Safeguarding%3F,online%20and%20in%20their%20community.) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. [The Children (Abolition of Defence of Reasonable Punishment) (Wales) Act became law in Wales on 20 March 2020](https://www.gov.wales/children-abolition-defence-reasonable-punishment-wales-act-2020-first-data-release-html#:~:text=Background-,The%20Children%20(Abolition%20of%20Defence%20of%20Reasonable%20Punishment)%20(Wales,force%20on%2021%20March%202022.) [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Bullying is deliberately hurtful, often repeated over a period of time and difficult for victims to defend themselves against. Bullying may include verbal forms such as name calling and teasing, physical attacks and indirect forms, for example spreading malicious rumours. It can also occur online. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. [Statutory definition of domestic abuse factsheet - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/domestic-abuse-bill-2020-factsheets/statutory-definition-of-domestic-abuse-factsheet) [↑](#footnote-ref-5)