

SEXUAL ABUSE

CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE



What is sexual abuse?

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening.

The activities may involve **physical contact**, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing.

They may also include **non-contact activities**, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse.

Sexual abuse can take place **online**, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse.

Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

(HM Government, Working Together to Safeguard Children, London, Stationery Office, 2023)

Examples of sexual abuse

- showing a child pornographic images
- filming or taking photos of a child in sexual poses or acts
- touching a child's genitalia
- sexual assault
- forced marriage
- children trafficked for sexual exploitation

Possible indicators of sexual abuse in children & young people

- Sexual knowledge which is inappropriate for the child's age
- Sexualised behaviour in young children
- Children hinting at sexual activity
- Evidence of grooming activity by a significant adult
- Soiling, wetting; constipation
- Frequent urinary tract infections, discharges or abdominal pain.
- Unexpected pregnancy especially in very young girls
- Lack of concentration, restlessness
- The child or young person is socially withdrawn
- The child or young person is overly compliant
- The child or young person has poor trust in significant adults
- Regressive behaviour, onset of wetting (after having been dry) – day or night
- Self-harming behaviour
- Eating disorders
- Sexually transmitted disease
- Soreness in genitalia area, anus or mouth

Your Parish Safeguarding Officer is: