

Irish Table Tennis Association Ltd

ULSTER BRANCH



Types of Abuse

(Co-operating to Safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland Updated August 2017).

Harm from abuse is not always straightforward to identify and a child or young person may experience more than one type of harm or significant harm. Harm can be caused by:

- Physical
- Sexual
- Emotional
- Neglect
- Exploitation.

Explanatory notes

You will notice the additional definition of exploitation to the original four definitions, please see the more detailed definition at the end of this document. Although 'exploitation' is not included in the categories of registration for the Child Protection Register (CPR1), professionals should recognise that the abuse resulting from or caused by the exploitation of children and young people can be categorised within the existing four categories as children who have been exploited may have suffered from physical abuse, neglect, emotional abuse, sexual abuse or a combination of these forms of abuse.

The focus for professional judgements should be on the harm children may experience and the threshold for decision making is evidence based. The new definitions have a preventative approach which allows for earlier response.

The term "young people" has been included in the amended title to reflect that young people also require protection from harm and abuse – this is a

'considered' change as, although the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995 defines 'child' as anyone under 18 years of age, young people in their response to the Marshall Inquiry consultation emphatically 'advised' that referring to them as children distanced them and encouraged them to distance themselves from their identification as 'children' and diminished the relevance of the key issue/messages for them.

Physical Abuse is deliberately physically hurting a child. It might take a variety of different forms, including hitting, biting, pinching, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning or suffocating a child.

Old definition: Physical abuse is the deliberate physical injury to a child, or the wilful or neglectful failure to prevent physical injury or suffering. This may include hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, confinement to a room or cot, or inappropriately giving drugs to control behaviour.

Sexual Abuse occurs when others use and exploit children sexually for their own gratification or gain or the gratification of others. Sexual abuse may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape, or oral sex) or nonpenetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside clothing. It may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in the production of sexual images, forcing children to look at sexual images or watch sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via e-technology). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Old definition: Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at or the production of pornographic material or watching sexual activities or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

Emotional Abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child. It is also sometimes called psychological abuse and it can have severe and persistent adverse effects on a child's emotional development.

Emotional abuse may involve deliberately telling a child that they are worthless, or unloved and inadequate. It may include not giving a child opportunity to express their views, deliberately silencing them, or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. Emotional abuse may involve bullying – including online bullying through social networks, online games or mobile phones – by a child's peers.

Old definition: Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may involve causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Smothering a child's development through over-protection can also be a form of abuse. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill treatment of a child, though it may occur alone. Domestic violence, adult mental health problems and parental substance misuse may expose children to emotional abuse.

Explanatory note

In relation to the inclusion of 'bullying' DHSSPS are clear that bullying is an act (an 'abuse' of one person by another or a group) and that the impact /consequence for the bullied child is one of 'harm' (including emotional 'harm'). The intention of including this term was to more clearly delineate between the act (abuse) and the impact/consequence for the child (harm). There was no intention to introduce an additional category of Child Protection Registration on the basis that appropriate 'registration' can be completed within the current registration criteria of – neglect, physical, sexual, emotional, and multiple abuse – and the three statuses – potential, suspected and confirmed.

Neglect is the failure to provide for a child's basic needs, whether it be adequate food, clothing, hygiene, supervision or shelter that is likely to result in the serious impairment of a child's health or development. Children who are neglected often also suffer from other types of abuse.

Old definition: Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's physical, emotional and/or psychological needs, likely to result in significant harm. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate foods, shelter and clothing, failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger, failing to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment, lack of stimulation or lack of supervision. It may also include non-organic failure to thrive (faltering growth).

Explanatory note

Note that the use of the term "persistent" has been removed from the definition of Neglect. This has been done to reflect that the neglect of a child does not have to be persistent for that neglect to be serious, life-threatening or in some instances result in the death of a child from a single incident of neglect (of attending to the child's welfare needs).

This is reflective of a number of high-profile cases, heavily reported in the media where examples include; -

- A mother abandoning her young children in the care of their 12-year-old sibling before going off on holiday abroad for a fortnight with her new boyfriend
- A mother leaving a child in a car on an extremely hot day while she went to the pub drinking with a male friend; police had to break the window into the car to rescue the child effectively saving its life.
- A mother taking a drinks-and-drugs cocktail before falling asleep with an infant baby in front of her adjacent to a gas fire.

Such instances have 'educated' the thinking that a multi-disciplinary Case Conference should not need to prove 'persistence' to be able to include a child's name on the CPR in an effort to identify them as a child at risk of abuse. It is for the Courts to determine the level and extent of 'abuse' that needs to be proved on-the-balance-of-probabilities to reach the threshold for the

making of an Order in Public Law proceedings or for a criminal court to decide that a case has been established beyond-reasonable-doubt to secure a conviction.

Exploitation is the intentional ill-treatment, manipulation or abuse of power and control over a child or young person; to take selfish or unfair advantage of a child or young person or situation, for personal gain. It may manifest itself in many forms such as child labour, slavery, servitude, engagement in criminal activity, begging, benefit or other financial fraud or child trafficking. It extends to the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of children for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation can be sexual in nature.

<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/co-operating-safeguard-children-and-youngpeople-northern-ireland>