

# Our approach to safeguarding

How you can identify signs of abuse  
and report your concerns.



# Safeguarding

This document is for customers to outline Places for People’s approach to safeguarding. It explains what safeguarding means, as well as how to spot signs of abuse and what to do if you have any safeguarding concerns.

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If you want to report a safeguarding incident, contact information can be found on page 6 of this document.



Please be aware this document contains details of abuse which some people may find triggering. For support please speak to the Samaritans or for children NSPCC.

## What is Safeguarding?

Safeguarding means to protect the health, wellbeing and human rights of individuals, which allow people – especially children, young people and ‘at risk’ adults – to live free from abuse, harm and neglect.



## Where can harm and abuse take place?

\*\*Please note these lists are examples only and are not exhaustive\*\*

### Abuse can take place anywhere, for example:

- at home
- in the street
- in an educational setting
- at a community centre
- at a day centre
- in a hospital.

## Who can abuse be caused by?

### Abuse can be caused by anyone, for example:

- a stranger
- a friend
- a family member
- a colleague
- a carer.

## Safeguarding adults

### Who is an adult at risk?

Anyone aged 18 and over who:

- has care and support needs, whether or not the local authority is meeting any of those needs
- is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect, and
- as a result of those needs is unable to protect themselves against abuse, neglect or the risk of it.

### What are care and support needs?

A person with care and support needs may:

- be elderly, with poor health, a physical disability or cognitive impairment
- have learning disabilities or an acquired brain injury
- have a physical disability and/or a sensory impairment
- have mental health needs including dementia
- have a long-term illness/condition
- be dependent on substances or alcohol to an extent that it has a serious impact on their ability to cope with day-to-day living.

### What factors may put people at a greater risk of harm and abuse?

- they may be socially isolated which could provide an opportunity for exploitation
- they may be unsure of who to trust
- they may be dependent on others to manage their finances or to withdraw or collect money for them
- they may be subject to domestic abuse, unable to escape abuse or ‘tolerate it’ because they rely on care from the abuser or there is lack of suitable alternative accommodation and care provision.

### What factors may decrease a person’s ability to protect themselves?

- not having mental capacity at that point in time to make decisions about their own safety
- complex health needs and/or communication difficulties
- being physically reliant on others for personal care and activities in daily life
- being in a coercive, controlling relationship with no access to money or support.

## Safeguarding children

All children and young people have the right to live in a safe environment, be safe from harm and be able to live free from fear of abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

Safeguarding children relates to the action taken to promote the welfare and protect a child or young person under the age of 18 from harm.

### **Safeguarding children is everyone's responsibility and is defined as:**

- protecting children from mistreatment
- preventing impairment of children's health and development
- ensuring that children grow up in circumstances that provide safe and effective care
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

Abuse can happen to any child or young person, but research shows that some children who have experienced abuse share similar characteristics, vulnerabilities and risk factors.

Known factors to increase the risk of harm and abuse include disability or sensory impairment, as well as children who live in families where one or more of the following high-risk factors are present:

- parental domestic abuse
- parental substance abuse
- parental mental health issues

Research shows that children in these families are at greater risk of serious injury or death.



# Our commitment



## Safeguarding is of paramount importance to Places for People.

We are committed to raising awareness and empowering everyone we engage with, to create safer environments and report concerns.

### Places for People intend to:

- Create an environment in which everybody feels welcome and safe by embedding respect and equality within our culture, codes of conduct, policies and procedures
- Empower our colleagues to use their unique knowledge of customers and those engaging with our services to ensure that early indicators of abuse, neglect or exploitation are flagged
- Provide support and signposting to children and adults at risk of harm, neglect and abuse.

These commitments extend to everyone engaging with Places for People, be they part of a family living in one of our homes or neighbourhoods, or someone who uses our sports and leisure centres.

**These commitments are shared by everyone, from our colleagues and contractors to the consultants we work with.**

## What do Places for People do to help prevent harm and abuse from taking place?



- We ensure that our colleagues and volunteers commit to the Safeguarding Policy.
- We raise customer awareness of what constitutes abuse - and how to report it.
- We educate people on how to recognise abuse, neglect and exploitation.
- We empower people to seek support from the Local Authority, social care, voluntary support agencies and health services.
- We work with perpetrators of anti-social behaviour to minimise risk.
- We work with agencies across the board to ensure adequate support for carers.
- We have systems in place to identify families and individuals who have support needs or may be at risk.
- We know how to identify people who may pose a risk to themselves or others.
- We seek to address social exclusion and isolation through working in partnership with other organisations.
- We collaborate with outside organisations to help keep customers safe.
- We help customers who may be vulnerable to abuse.
- We conduct DBS (Disclose and Barring Service) and background checks on colleagues, where appropriate to their job role.
- We educate and empower colleagues by offering effective training and continuous professional development opportunities, in line with national standards.
- We respect and promote the rights, wishes and feelings of children, young people and adults at risk.
- We ensure that customers and colleagues are provided with information about our safeguarding policy, what it does, and what they can expect from Places for People.
- We ensure customers and colleagues are provided with clear information and pathways to voice their concerns or lodge a complaint if they feel unsure or unhappy about anything.
- We commit to, and lead on the continuous development, monitoring and review of our safeguarding policies and procedures.



# How to report harm and abuse

If you have any doubts or concerns about a person’s welfare, raise your concerns. It’s always better to raise a concern and find out there is no safeguarding issue than miss an opportunity to protect someone from harm and abuse.



## Emergency situation

In situations where a criminal offence is suspected or there is an immediate risk of harm to a person, **You should contact the emergency services immediately by dialing 999.**

Please remove yourself from the situation if potentially dangerous.

## Non-emergency situation

**Where there is not an immediate risk of harm and abuse, please follow one of the below contact options:**

### 1) Speak to one of our colleagues

You can raise your concerns, with any of our colleagues. Whether that be one of our Customer Service Advisors, your Property Manager or a member of staff on site.

Please see the following list for the contact details of all our companies:

Housing	
Places for People	01772 667002
Cotman	01772 667075
Derwent Living	01332 346477
Places for People Scotland	0131 657 0600
Chorus Homes	0345 266 9760
Places for People Living Plus	01772 667003

Property Management	
Touchstone	England 01225 838490
	Scotland 0131 657 5139
RMG	0345 002 4444
Derwent FM	01135 311000

Developments	
Homes to buy	England 020 7429 0400
	Scotland 0131 559 2200
ZeroC	01305 250427
Millwood Designer Homes	01732 770991
Design your home	Please contact your local site

Retirement	
Brio Retirement	07435 995071

Leisure	
Places Leisure	Please contact your local site
Places Gym	Please contact your local site

Financial	
PfP Capital	02074 290436

### 2) Speak to your local authorities safeguarding team

Please visit your local authorities’ website, to find the contact details of their social care team.

Alternatively, you can call your local authority and advise you wish to report your safeguarding concerns, they will then help to put you in contact with their social care team.



**If there is an immediate risk of further harm, please call 999.**

## What will happen if I report a concern to Places for People?

We will follow our safeguarding Policy and Procedures. Which involves the following:

We will raise your concern with the most appropriate member of staff. This will most likely include; Property Managers or colleagues working in support roles. These members of staff are well placed to use their local knowledge, to support customers.

The most appropriate member of staff will then investigate the concern and decide if any further action needs to be taken. In some instances the concern may need to be escalated to the staff members line manager or to one of our Designated Safeguarding Leads.

If further action is needed, we will take steps to safeguard the individual. Places for People have a number of internal teams, that are able to support with safeguarding concerns.

Where a safeguarding concern is more complex we may need to make a referral to an external agency such as the Local Authorities Social Care Team.

### We will ALWAYS:

- ensure safeguarding concerns are only shared with the necessary people. All safeguarding concerns will be stored confidentially for an appropriate length of time
- try to make safeguarding personal and ensure the individual who may be at risk is always able to provide their own opinion. We will listen to the views of the individual and try to work with them to ensure they feel empowered to make their own decisions
- Ask the individual's permission to share information with external agencies. Sometimes we may need to share information with the local authority without the individuals permission, if we feel it will help protect the individual or others from further harm or abuse. But we will always keep the individual informed as to what we are doing and why.



# Child abuse – Types of abuse and recognising the signs



Child abuse is when anyone under the age of 18 is either being harmed or not properly looked after. There are four main categories of child abuse:

**\*\*Where any signs of abuse have been listed, these lists are examples only and not exhaustive\*\***

## Physical abuse

Physical abuse is when a child is deliberately hurt, causing injury. It's also physical abuse if a parent or carer makes up or causes the symptoms of illness in children.

### Signs and indicators of physical abuse:

- bruises on babies who are not yet crawling or walking
- burns or scalds
- multiple injuries inflicted at different times
- an explanation that doesn't match the injury
- frequently injured.

## Neglect

Neglect is when a child's basic needs are continually not met, usually resulting in serious damage to their health and development. Neglect is the most common type of child abuse, often happening at the same time as other types of abuse.

### Signs and indicators of neglect:

- parent's or carers failure to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter and access to appropriate health/dental care
- children who live in an unsuitable home environment, a dirty and unsafe house or evidence of substance misuse or violence
- children with poor language, communication or social skills for their stage of development
- children who are left alone or unsupervised
- Failure to make sure the child receives a suitable education
- Failure to meet the child's basic emotional needs.



## Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse is forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities. It does not necessarily involve violence and the child may not be aware that what is happening is abuse.

Child sexual abuse can involve contact abuse and/or non-contact abuse, and occurs when the abuser makes physical contact with the child. Non-contact abuse involves non-touching activities. It can happen online or in person.

**There may be physical signs that a child has suffered sexual abuse. These include:**

- anal or vaginal soreness or itching
- bruising or bleeding near the genital area
- discomfort when walking or sitting down
- an unusual discharge
- sexually transmitted infections (STI)
- pregnancy.

Changes in the child's mood or behaviour may also cause concern; they may want to avoid spending time with specific people, show sexual behaviour or use sexual language that is inappropriate for their age.

## Child sexual exploitation (CSE)

CSE is a type of sexual abuse. Young people in exploitative situations and relationships receive things such as gifts, money, drugs, alcohol, status or affection in exchange for taking part in sexual activities. They may be tricked into believing they're in a loving, consensual relationship. They can also be groomed and exploited online.

### Signs and indicators of sexual abuse

Sexual exploitation can be very difficult to identify, with warning signs easily mistaken for 'normal' teenage behaviour. Young people who are being sexually exploited may:

- go missing from home, care or education
- hang out with groups of older people, or anti-social groups, or with other vulnerable peers
- have older boyfriends or girlfriends
- spend time at places of concern, such as hotels or known brothels
- have access to drugs and alcohol
- have new things such as clothes and mobile phones which they can't or won't explain
- have unexplained physical injuries.

## Emotional abuse

Persistent emotional abuse severely damages a child's emotional health and development. Examples of emotional abuse could involve humiliating, putting down or constantly criticising a child, shouting at or threatening a child or calling them names, constantly blaming or scapegoating a child for things which are not their fault and being cold and emotionally unavailable during interactions with a child.

### Signs and indicators of emotional abuse

Obvious physical signs of emotional abuse are rare, but you may notice changes in a child's actions or emotions. Be alert to behaviours which appear to be out of character.

### Babies and pre-school children who are being emotionally abused may:

- be overly-affectionate towards strangers or people they haven't known for very long
- lack confidence or become wary or anxious
- be unable to play
- be aggressive or nasty towards other children and animals.

### Older children may:

- use language, act in a way or know about things that you wouldn't expect for their age
- struggle to control strong emotions or have extreme outbursts
- seem isolated from their parents
- lack social skills or have few, if any, friends
- self-harm.



# Adult abuse – Types of abuse and recognising the signs



The Care Act recognises 10 categories of adult abuse:

**\*\*Where any signs of abuse have been listed, these lists are examples only and not exhaustive.\*\***

## Physical abuse

Physical abuse may include assault, hitting, slapping, punching, kicking, hair-pulling, biting, pushing, rough handling, scalding and burning, physical punishments, inappropriate or unlawful use of restraint, making someone purposefully uncomfortable, involuntary isolation or confinement, misuse of medication, forcible feeding or withholding food, unauthorised restraint, restricting movement.

### Signs and indicators of physical abuse:

- frequent injuries or no explanation for injuries or inconsistency with the account of what happened
- injuries are inconsistent with the person's lifestyle
- bruising, cuts, welts, burns and/or marks on the body or loss of hair in clumps
- subdued or changed behaviour in the presence of a particular person
- signs of malnutrition
- failure to seek medical treatment or frequent changes of GP.



## Domestic violence or abuse

Domestic abuse is defined as behaviour that is abusive, between two people who are aged 16 or over and are personally connected to each other.

### Behaviour is “abusive” if it consists of the following but is not limited to:

1. physical or sexual abuse;
2. violent or threatening behaviour;
3. controlling or coercive behaviour;
4. economic abuse
5. psychological, emotional or other abuse

Other types of abuse that would be considered domestic abuse include; honour based violence, female genital mutilation and forced marriage. It does not matter whether the behaviour consists of a single incident or a course of conduct.

### Signs and indicators of domestic abuse:

- physical evidence of violence such as bruising, cuts, broken bones
- verbal abuse and humiliation in front of others
- fear of outside intervention
- damage to home or property
- isolation – not seeing friends and family
- limited access to money.

### Coercive or controlling behaviour is also a core part of domestic violence and behaviour can include:

- acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation
- harming, punishing, or frightening the person
- isolating the person from sources of support
- exploitation of resources or money
- preventing the person from escaping abuse
- regulating everyday behaviour.

## Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse is any sexual activity, where a person has been forced or persuaded to take part or does not understand. Types of sexual abuse include rape, attempted rape or sexual assault, inappropriate touching anywhere, any sexual activity where the person lacks the capacity to consent and sexual harassment.

### Signs and indicators of sexual abuse:

- bruising, particularly to the thighs, buttocks and upper arms and marks on the neck
- torn, stained or bloody underclothing
- unusual difficulty in walking or sitting
- pregnancy in a woman who is unable to consent to sexual intercourse
- the uncharacteristic use of explicit sexual language or significant changes in sexual behaviour or attitude
- self-harming
- poor concentration, withdrawal, sleep disturbance
- excessive fear/apprehension of, or withdrawal from relationships
- reluctance to be alone with a particular person.

## Psychological or emotional abuse

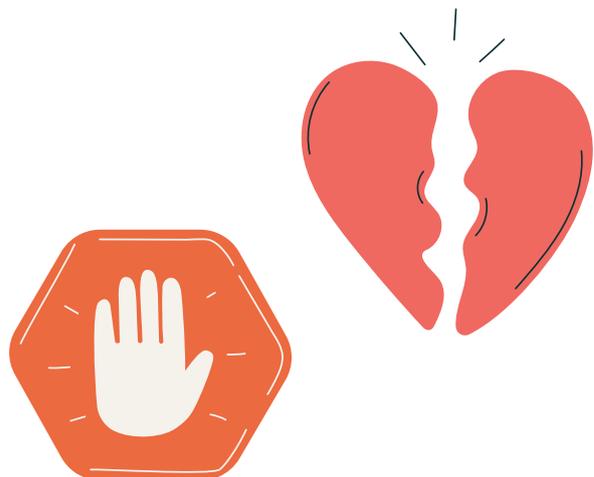
Psychological or emotional abuse is emotional maltreatment.

### It is sometimes called psychological abuse and can include:

- enforced social isolation
- preventing the expression of choice and opinion
- failure to respect privacy
- intimidation, coercion, harassment, use of threats, humiliation, bullying, swearing or verbal abuse
- threats of harm or abandonment
- cyber bullying.

### Signs and indicators of psychological abuse:

- an air of silence when a particular person is present
- withdrawal or change in the psychological state of the person
- low self-esteem
- uncooperative and aggressive behaviour
- signs of distress, for example tearfulness or anger.



## Financial or material abuse

Theft or misuse of money, property or personal belongings, taken without consent or under pressure.

### Types of financial or material abuse include:

- theft of money or possessions
- fraud and scamming
- preventing a person from accessing their own money, benefits or assets
- employees taking a loan from a person using the service
- someone moving into a person's home and living rent free without agreement or under duress
- misuse of a power of attorney, deputy, appointeeship or other legal authority

### Signs and indicators of financial or material abuse:

- missing personal possessions
- unexplained lack of money or inability to maintain lifestyle
- unexplained withdrawal of funds from accounts
- power of attorney or lasting power of attorney (LPA) being obtained after the person has ceased to have mental capacity
- the family or others show unusual interest in the assets of the person
- rent arrears and eviction notices
- failure to provide receipts for shopping or other financial transactions carried out on behalf of the person.

## Modern slavery

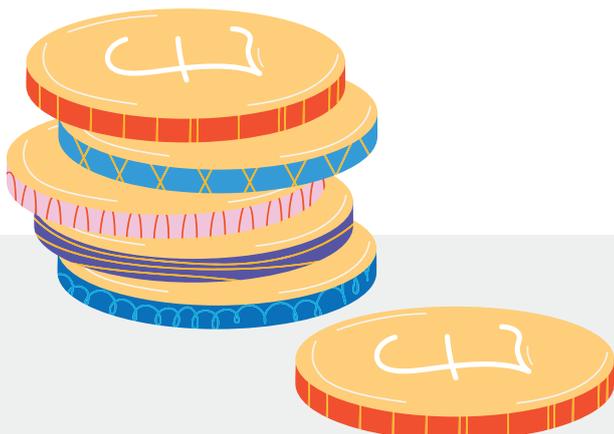
Modern slavery is the severe exploitation of other people for personal or commercial gain.

### The main types of modern slavery are:

- human trafficking
- forced labour
- domestic servitude – work performed in private residences as a cover for exploitation and control
- sexual exploitation, such as escort work, prostitution, and pornography
- debt bondage – being forced to work to pay off debts that realistically they never will be able to.

### Signs and indicators of modern slavery:

- signs of physical or emotional abuse
- appearing to be malnourished, unkempt or withdrawn
- isolation from the community, seeming under the control or influence of others
- living in dirty, cramped or overcrowded accommodation and or living and working at the same address
- lack of personal effects or identification documents
- always wearing the same clothes
- avoidance of eye contact, appearing frightened or hesitant to talk to strangers
- fear of law enforcers. For more information on modern slavery and reporting any concerns of modern slavery please visit: [www.gov.uk/government/collections/modern-slavery](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/modern-slavery)



## Discriminatory abuse

Discriminatory abuse is where an individual is treated differently because of one or more of the following protected characteristics (under the Equality Act 2010):

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race, religion and belief
- sex or sexual orientation

### The main types of discriminatory abuse are:

- unequal treatment based on protected characteristics.
- verbal abuse or inappropriate use of language related to a protected characteristic
- denying access to communication aids e.g. an interpreter
- 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.

### Signs and indicators of discriminatory abuse:

- the 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.



## Organisational or institutional abuse

Organisational abuse is the inability to provide a good level of care to an individual or group of people in a care setting.

### Organisational or institutional abuse could include:

- a run-down or overcrowded establishment
- lack of leadership and supervision
- abusive and disrespectful attitudes towards people using the service
- inappropriate use of restraints
- not providing adequate food and drink, or assistance with eating
- not offering choice or promoting independence
- misuse of medication
- not taking account of individuals' cultural, religious or ethnic needs
- interference with personal correspondence or communication.

### Signs and indicators of organisational abuse:

- lack of flexibility and choice for people using the service
- inadequate staffing levels
- people being hungry or dehydrated
- poor standards of care
- lack of adequate procedures and management overview
- absence of visitors
- public discussion of personal matters.

## Neglect and acts of omission

Neglect is the ongoing failure to meet basic needs. The individual may be left hungry or dirty, without adequate clothing, shelter, supervision, medical/health care, and access to aids or equipment. They may not get the love, care and attention they need from their family or carers.

### Signs and indicators of neglect:

- poor environment – dirty or unhygienic
- poor physical condition and/or personal hygiene
- pressure sores or ulcers
- malnutrition or unexplained weight loss
- untreated injuries and medical problems
- inconsistent or reluctant contact with medical and social care organisations
- accumulation of untaken medication
- uncharacteristic failure to engage in social interaction
- inappropriate or inadequate clothing.

## Self-neglect

Self-neglect is the lack of self-care; lack of care for one's environment; and/or the refusal of services, to an extent that it threatens personal health and safety.

### Signs and indicators of self-neglect:

- very poor personal hygiene
- unkempt appearance
- lack of essential food, clothing or shelter
- malnutrition and/or dehydration
- living in squalid or unsanitary conditions
- hoarding
- collecting a large number of animals in inappropriate conditions
- non-compliance with health or care services
- inability or unwillingness to take medication or treat illness or injury.

## Other forms of abuse

There are forms of abuse not listed above, but covered in our safeguarding policy and relevant to safeguarding adults these include:

### Forced marriage

A marriage in which one or both of the parties are married without their consent or against their will is a forced marriage. It differs from an arranged marriage, in which both parties' consent to the assistance of a third party in identifying a spouse. The Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 make it a criminal offence to force someone to marry.

### Honour based abuse

In many communities an 'honour' is deemed to be extremely important; compromising a family's 'honour' can have severe consequences, resulting in punishments ranging from emotional abuse, physical abuse, family disownment and in some cases even murder.

## Female genital mutilation (FGM)

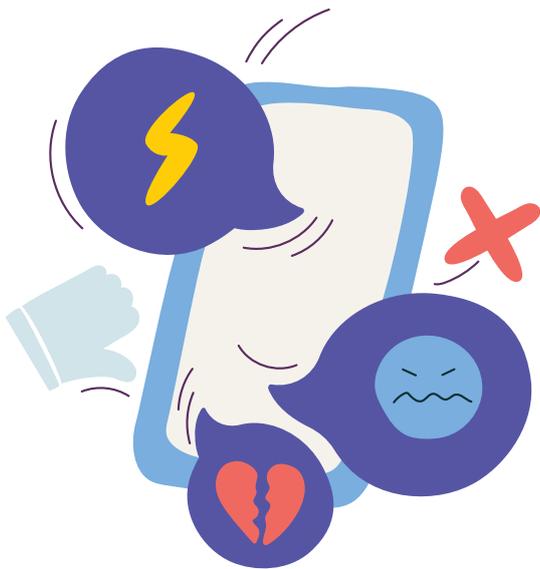
FGM is a process which alters or injures female genital organs for non-medical reasons, with no health benefits for girls and women. The Female Genital Mutilation Act makes it illegal to practice FGM in the UK or to take women and girls who are British nationals or permanent residents of the UK abroad for FGM whether or not it is lawful in another country.

### Bullying

Bullying is repeated behaviour intended to intimidate or upset someone and/or make them feel uncomfortable or unsafe. For example, name calling, exclusion or isolation, spreading rumours, embarrassing someone in public or in front of their peers, threatening to cause harm, physically hurting someone or damaging their possessions.

### Cyber bullying

Cyber bullying is repeatedly making fun of another person online or picking on another person through emails, text messages, or online forums with the intention of harming, damaging, humiliating or isolating is classed as cyber bullying. It can include racist bullying, homophobic bullying, or bullying related to special educational needs and disabilities.



## Criminal exploitation through 'County lines'

County lines is a form of criminal exploitation in which gangs organise the distribution of drugs from big cities into smaller towns and rural areas using children, young people and adults at risk. Gangs recruit children, young people and adults at risk through deception, intimidation, violence, debt bondage and/or grooming. Gangs also use local property as a base for their activities, and this often involves taking over the home of an adult at risk who is unable to challenge them.

County line gangs pose a significant threat to children, young people, and adults at risk as they rely on them to conduct or facilitate such criminality.

## Mate Crime & 'Cuckooing'

A 'mate crime' or 'cuckooing' can be defined as 'when vulnerable people are befriended by members of the community who go on to exploit and take advantage of them. It may not be an illegal act but still has a negative effect on the individual.'

Mate crime is carried out by someone the adult knows and often happens in private.

Cuckooing is a term often linked to county lines. Cuckooing is when gangs establish a base location they are targeting for drug dealing, often taking over the homes of adults at risk by force or coercion, to operate their criminal activity from.

People exploited in this way will quite often be exposed to physical, mental and sexual abuse, and in some instances will be trafficked to areas a long way from home as part of the network's drug dealing business. Victims of 'cuckooing' are often drug users but can include older people, those with learning disabilities, those suffering from mental or physical health issues, sex industry workers, lone parents and those living in poverty. Victims may suffer from other forms of addiction, such as alcoholism.

## Hazing

Hazing is any rituals, initiation activities, actions or situations, with or without consent, which recklessly, intentionally or unintentionally endangers the physical or emotional wellbeing of children, young people and adults at risk.

## Peer-on-peer abuse

Children, young people and adults at risk can be taken advantage of or harmed by their peers. Peer-on-peer abuse is any form of physical, sexual, emotional and financial abuse, and coercive control, exercised between individuals and within relationships (both intimate and nonintimate).

## Radicalisation

This can be defined as the process by which people come to support terrorism and violent extremism, and in some cases participate in terrorist groups and activities. Violent extremists often use a persuasive rationale and charismatic individuals to attract people to their cause. This may be direct through a relationship, or through social media. There is no clear profile of a person who is more likely to become radicalised, but there are some factors that may make an individual more susceptible to exploitation by violent extremists. For example identity or personal crisis, unemployment or underemployment, family or friends involved in extremism and relevant mental health issues.



## Report your concerns



If you are concerned you or someone you know is experiencing any form of harm or abuse, please report this.

**In an emergency situation please call 999.**

In a non-emergency situation please contact us. Contact details for each of our companies can be found on page 6.

Alternatively please contact your Local Authorities Social Care Team.



**If you need support after reading this document, please contact the Samaritans, free on 116 123.**

**For support for children, please call the NSPCC on 0808 800 5000.**