

Safeguarding children is everyone's business.

During this pandemic children and young people may be out of sight, but they might not be out of harm's way.

**Got concerns?
Don't ignore it.
Report it.**



Changes in circumstances and pressure due to COVID-19 means harm to children and vulnerable adults could increase. This might be through domestic abuse, neglect, exploitation, physical, sexual, psychological, or financial abuse, alcohol or drug misuse, or mental health issues. Children are not being seen regularly by school staff or health professionals, which means it will be harder for them to tell anyone if something is wrong.

You're the eyes and the ears of the community right now, and could be crucial in recognising a child or person who needs help.

Remember the 4 R's

Recognise - Understand the basic signs and indicators of abuse.

Respond - Be curious. If you are concerned ask general questions like are you ok? Do you feel safe? Tell me what happened?

Record - This means write it down. You might be in a role where you have a specific form to do this, if not make a note in a notebook or device with the date and time. Keep this confidential/secure and then report your concern.

Refer - Make sure you tell someone! Contact your Safeguarding Lead if you know who they are, or alternatively you can contact **03458 503503**.



What are the signs to look out for?

- House/Garden in an unsafe state. Anyone can have an untidy garden but if it is unsafe - for example broken glass, drugs, or door/windows smashed you should report.
- Children or persons looking unkempt i.e. dirty/hungry/cold/soiled.
- Children on their own at home when they seem too young to be left alone.
- Odd looking bruises that you wouldn't expect to see. Bite marks. Cigarette burns. Black eyes. Split lips. Grab marks. Marks around neck. Defence marks on arms. Cuts to wrists.
- Adults under the influence of substances (drugs or alcohol) and seemingly incapable of looking after the children properly.
- Loud arguments and conflict in front of children.
- Children who are overly affectionate to strangers - there can be different reasons for this but abuse can be one.
- Children or persons showing signs they are scared to be at home.
- A vulnerable person giving someone money inappropriately, or someone using their house inappropriately.
- Aggressive/reckless behaviour, more so than normal teenager behaviour.
- Any behaviour that indicates a breakdown of mental health.
- A young person taking on adult responsibilities on a regular basis may indicate extra support is needed in that family.

Be conscious of...

- Social media is a really powerful tool, but can at times have negative ramifications. Do not post pictures or videos of individuals receiving support e.g. food parcels, medication, or anything that could identify the house or street. Unfortunately this could lead to these individuals being targeted and exploited by others.
- Take care and look after the personal information of others just as you would like to see your personal information being treated, and be careful when handling someone else's personal information.
- It's important to keep yourself safe still at all times. Always remember appropriate boundaries and if you receive abusive behaviour please report this to your local Community Hub and/or the Police on 101 (non-emergencies).



What to do

Trust your senses. If something doesn't feel right or you have a concern don't ignore it - report it.

Call 03458 503503.

If you know your areas' Safeguarding Lead you can also contact them for further advice and to raise a concern.

Remember, for immediate risk always contact the Police.

For further child safeguarding advice, support, and to register for online training visit **wakefieldscp.org.uk**

