

APPENDIX 3

SIGNS OF ABUSE – CHILDREN

The following signs could be indicators that abuse has taken place but should be considered in context of the child's whole life.

AP3.1 PHYSICAL

- Injuries not consistent with the explanation given for them.
- Injuries that occur in places not normally exposed to falls, rough games, etc.
- Injuries that have not received medical attention.
- Reluctance to change for, or participate in, games or swimming.
- Repeated urinary infections or unexplained tummy pains.
- Bruises on babies, bites, burns, fractures etc which do not have an accidental explanation.*
- Cuts/scratches/substance abuse.*

AP3.2 SEXUAL

- Any allegations made concerning sexual abuse.
- Excessive preoccupation with sexual matters, detailed knowledge of adult sexual behaviour.
- Age-inappropriate sexual activity through words, play or drawing.
- Child who is sexually provocative or seductive with adults.
- Inappropriate bed-sharing arrangements at home.
- Severe sleep disturbances with fears, phobias, vivid dreams or nightmares, sometimes with overt or veiled sexual connotations.
- Eating disorders – anorexia, bulimia.*

AP3.3 EMOTIONAL

- Changes or regression in mood or behaviour, particularly where a child withdraws or becomes clingy.
- Depression, aggression, extreme anxiety.
- Nervousness, frozen watchfulness.
- Obsessions or phobias.
- Sudden under-achievement or lack of concentration.
- Inappropriate relationships with peers and/or adults.
- Attention-seeking behaviour.
- Persistent tiredness.
- Running away/stealing/lying.

AP3.4 NEGLECT

- Under nourishment, failure to grow.
- Constant hunger.
- Stealing or gorging food.
- Untreated illnesses.
- Inadequate care, etc.

*These indicate the possibility that a child or young person is self-harming. Approximately 20,000 are treated in accident and emergency departments in the UK each year.