

# What to do if you're concerned about a child

There's no one course of action to take – what you should do will depend on the situation. Consider taking one of these steps:

- If you feel able, ask the parent or carer what is happening.
- Talk your concerns through with a friend.
- If the family's under stress, offer the parents help. A chance to talk may be all that's needed. You could offer to provide a break so the parents can try and sort things out. Volunteer to baby sit. Offer practical help, like caring for the children or shopping.
- Suggest the parents seek help – encourage them to contact a health visitor, their doctor, a social worker or a voluntary agency that supports families, such as Home-Start. For advice on child protection, they could call the NSPCC Child Protection Helpline. For advice on parenting, parents in England and Wales could call Parentline Plus. Parents in Northern Ireland can call the Parents Advice Centre.

## Every action counts... together we can end cruelty to children

- Child abuse is serious. Learn to recognise the signs.
- Be someone to turn to for a child, vulnerable parent or carer. Offer families in difficulty practical advice and support. Being there to listen helps.
- Trust your judgement when in doubt.
- If you have serious concerns about a child, contact social services, the police, or the free 24-hour NSPCC Child Protection Helpline.
- If you are worried and don't know what to do, contact the free 24-hour NSPCC Child Protection Helpline for advice – you can call anonymously.

**Don't keep it to yourself. Do something.**

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Cruelty to children must stop. FULL STOP.

Please keep this card for future use. Put it on a notice board or keep it in your phone book.

- Raise your concerns with other agencies that can help: social services, NSPCC or the police.
- In some cases it's better to intervene directly to help a child – for example, if you see a child being violently treated. **But take care not to put yourself in danger.**
- Remember, there may be more than one child being harmed.
- Don't give up.

# Where to go for help

## NSPCC Child Protection Helpline

Helpline **0808 800 5000** (24 hour)  
Textphone for deaf and hard of hearing people  
**0800 056 0566**  
Email **help@nspcc.org.uk**  
Website **www.nspcc.org.uk**

## NSPCC Asian Child Protection Helpline

Helpline **0800 096 7719** (Mon-Fri 11am-7pm)

## NSPCC Cymru/Wales Child Protection Helpline

Helpline **0808 100 2524** (Mon-Fri 10am-6pm)

If you have concerns about a child call the NSPCC Child Protection Helpline; a free 24-hour service that provides counselling, information, and advice to anyone concerned about a child at risk of abuse. You can call anonymously.

The NSPCC offers a wide range of resources, including parenting publications and materials for young people.

## ChildLine

Helpline **0800 1111**  
Website **www.childline.org.uk**  
Address **ChildLine, Freepost 1111 London N1 0BR**

ChildLine provides a free, confidential, UK-wide phone counselling service for any child with any problem, 24 hours a day, every day. Children and young people can also write to ChildLine using the Freepost address.

## Parentline Plus

Helpline **0808 800 2222**  
Textphone **0800 783 6783**  
Website **www.parentlineplus.org.uk**

Parentline is the free, confidential helpline run by Parentline Plus for anyone in a parenting role, including step-parents and those experiencing family change. This service is available in England and Wales.

## Parents Advice Centre (Northern Ireland)

Helpline **028 9023 8800**  
Email **belfast@pachelp.org**  
Website **www.pachelp.org**  
The centre provides help, support and guidance to parents on any family problem. The service is available in Northern Ireland.

## Home-Start

Helpline **0116 233 9955**  
Website **www.home-start.org.uk**  
Volunteers offer support, friendship and practical help to families with children under five in their own homes.

## Social Services

Local authorities, and the Health and Social Services Trusts in Northern Ireland, have a general responsibility to take action to promote the welfare of children and to try and keep them with their family. They can arrange for families to receive support. They also have a duty to inquire into concerns when a child may have been abused.

Their details are available in your local telephone directory under the name of your local authority/council/trust. You can also get the details from local libraries, citizens advice bureaux and telephone helplines.

## In an emergency call the police on 999

If you have concerns, there is someone who will listen.  
**Don't keep it to yourself. Do something**

## For more information or to order further copies of this leaflet contact:

Publications and Information Unit,  
NSPCC, Weston House,  
42 Curtain Road, London EC2A 3NH  
Tel: 020 7825 2775 Email: infounit@nspcc.org.uk  
Fax: 020 7825 2763 Website: www.nspcc.org.uk

# Are you worried about the safety of a child?

Do you know a child that's always bruised?

Do you know a child that's neglected and withdrawn?

Do you hear a baby crying constantly?

Do you know a stressed parent who cannot cope?

## Every action counts.

If you have concerns there is someone who will listen.

**Don't keep it to yourself.**

**Do something**

NSPCC  
CHILD PROTECTION  
**HELPLINE**  
0808 800 5000

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Cruelty to children must stop. FULL STOP.

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# Child protection isn't just for the professionals

There's something you can do...

## If you have concerns

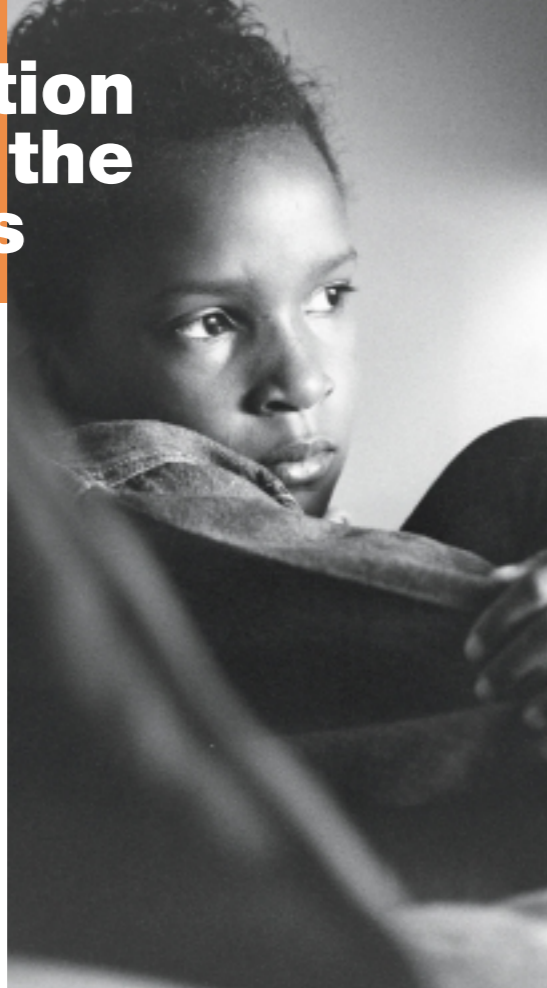
It can be difficult to know what to do for the best. There may be good reasons for how the child seems. Maybe you don't want to antagonise your neighbours or make matters worse for the child. Perhaps you're worried the family might be broken up and the children put in care (though this rarely happens). You may think the problem will resolve itself on its own. You may not know where to go for help.

**It may seem easiest to do nothing. But please don't. It is important you do something. Trust your judgement.**

## Every action counts

Together we can stop cruelty to children. All of us must be ready to act. This leaflet provides advice on what to do, however it can't cover every aspect of child abuse. If you still have concerns you can always telephone or email the NSPCC Child Protection Helpline, for free 24-hour advice.

**Do you know a child that is constantly 'put down', insulted, sworn at or humiliated?**



## Why we all need to help protect children

It's estimated that at least one child is killed each week by their parents or carers. Thousands more suffer serious harm at the hands of those who are supposed to be caring for them. We know that in two thirds of cases the child abuse goes unreported at the time and many children are forced to suffer in silence.

# What can you do?

You can help transform the protection of children in this country and cut the amount of abuse suffered by children. Here's where to start:

## All adults can...

- Try to understand the seriousness and consequences of child abuse. Recognise the signs of abuse.
- Be someone to turn to for a child, vulnerable parent or carer. Support families in difficulty. Be there to listen.
- Trust your judgement when in doubt.
- If you have serious concerns about a child, contact social services, the police or the free 24-hour NSPCC Child Protection Helpline.
- If you are worried and don't know what to do, contact the free 24-hour NSPCC Child Protection Helpline for advice – you can call anonymously.

## Parents can...

- Try to understand the seriousness and consequences of child abuse. Learn about healthy child development, and how to build strong families.
- Listen to children – try to understand what they're saying and doing, and why.
- Know what goes on in your children's school and how it responds to issues of child abuse and bullying.
- Find someone to turn to if you're under stress. All parents become stressed from time to time.
- Don't cross the line and hurt your children. Take alternative actions – for example, "count to ten and think again".

- If you find being a parent tough to handle, contact Parentline Plus. If you live in Northern Ireland, call the Parents Advice Centre.
- Seek child protection help and advice. If you're concerned about your children's safety – contact the NSPCC Child Protection Helpline, social services or the police.

## Children and young people can...

- Learn how to keep yourself safe. Ask your parents and teachers for advice on safety measures.
- Support your friends if they tell you they're being abused – encourage them to tell a trusted adult.
- Remember, being abused is never your choice and never your fault. Child abuse is never right.
- Find someone to turn to if you're being abused. Tell an adult you trust – maybe a teacher. Keep telling them until someone listens and takes action.
- Phone ChildLine or the NSPCC Child Protection Helpline if you're being abused, or know someone who is.

**Do you know a child that is left alone, dirty, hungry or inadequately dressed?**



## Four types of cruelty

**Physical abuse:** including hurting or injuring a child, inflicting pain, poisoning, drowning, or smothering.

**Sexual abuse:** including direct or indirect sexual exploitation or corruption of children by involving them in inappropriate sexual activities.

**Emotional abuse:** repeatedly rejecting children, humiliating them or denying their worth and rights as human beings.

**Neglect:** the persistent lack of appropriate care of children, including love, stimulation, safety, nourishment, warmth, education, and medical attention.

A child who is being abused may experience more than one type of cruelty.

Discrimination, harassment, and bullying are also abusive and can harm a child, both physically and emotionally.

# What is cruelty to children?

Cruelty to children, or child abuse, is behaviour that causes significant harm to a child. It also includes when someone knowingly fails to prevent serious harm to a child.

All forms of cruelty are damaging – it can be harder to recover from the emotional impact than from the physical effects.

Only a small minority of cases of child abuse involves a total stranger. It is far more likely to be carried out by someone known to the child or family – even someone close who you'd expect to trust, such as a parent, another relative or a family friend.

Abuse happens in all walks of life. Nevertheless, children growing up in a violent household, or in a home where parents misuse drugs or alcohol, are particularly at risk.

'Microsoft is proud to support this public awareness campaign. We share the NSPCC's belief that ending child abuse must be a priority for everyone.'

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