

Castle Cary Town Council

Forms of Abuse for information only

APPENDIX for the Safeguarding Policy

Main Forms of Abuse

a. Physical Abuse

This may involve actions such as hitting, shaking and burning as well as the use of inappropriate restraint. Physical abuse, as well as being a deliberate act, can be caused by an omission or failure to act to protect. In the case of children, it includes the giving of alcohol, inappropriate drugs or poison to them.

b. Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is a persistent lack of love and affection. A child may be constantly verbally abused, threatened, ignored or taunted. Other forms of emotional abuse include excessive overprotection and unrealistic pressure to succeed. In addition it may include intimidation, humiliation, verbal abuse, harassment or discriminatory harassment to adults.

c. Sexual Abuse

Involves forcing or enticing a child or vulnerable adult to take part in sexual activities whether or not the child or vulnerable adult is aware of or consents to what is happening. It may also involve non-contact activities such as showing pornographic material, sexual innuendo or encouraging someone to behave in a sexually inappropriate way.

d. Neglect

The persistent failure to meet a child's or vulnerable adult's basic physical and/or psychological needs. These needs include adequate food and warm clothing and also medical care, social care and educational services. Neglect may include simply being left alone or excluded.

Recognising Abuse

This is not always easy to do and it is not the responsibility of Councillors, or staff to decide whether or not abuse has taken place, or if a child or vulnerable adult is at significant risk. However the Council does have a responsibility to act and report promptly to the Named Safeguarding Person if they have any concerns or suspicions.

Indications that a child or person may be subject to abuse include:

- Unexplained or suspicious injuries such as bruises, cuts and burns particularly if situated on parts of the body not normally prone to such injuries
- Injuries for which an explanation seems inconsistent
- Fear of parents or carers being approached about such injuries
- Flinching or cowering when touched or approached
- Sudden or unexplained changes in behaviour
- Fear of being left with a specific person
- Changes in appearance - sudden loss of hair, dirtiness, weight loss etc.
- In children, a failure to grow and thrive and showing difficulties in making friends or socialising
- In adults, a loss of assets and possessions

This list is by no means exhaustive and it is important to remember that many children and people will exhibit some of these indicators at some time, and the presence of one or more should not be taken as proof that abuse is occurring.

It is crucial that Councillors, volunteers and staff realise that this is only a process of observation and that at no point should anyone actively seek out abuse or an abuser. The Town Council's responsibility is to ensure that any concern about the welfare of someone is reported to the Named Safeguarding Person and to never assume that others will do it.