

## Who is responsible for looking after a child's welfare?

The simple answer is everyone. It is all our responsibility to protect children. All children have a right to grow up in a caring and safe environment. All adults have a responsibility to protect children, including;

- Parents
- Family members
- Friends
- Neighbours
- Members of the public
- Professionals

## What is child abuse?

There are different types of abuse. For example;

- Physical injury – being hit, kicked and punched
- Physical neglect – not being properly fed or clothed and poor hygiene
- Sexual abuse – inappropriate sexual behaviour, language, indecent assault or sexual activity
- Emotional abuse – constantly criticised, ignored, humiliated and exposed to family violence

## How can you tell if a child is being abused or neglected?

Children rarely tell if they are being abused. However there may be signs that concern you, that may be an indication of a child being abused or neglected. The child may;

- Have unexplained bruising or bruising in an unusual place
- Appear afraid, quiet or withdrawn
- Appear afraid to go home
- Appear hungry, tired or unkempt
- Be left unattended or unsupervised
- Have too much responsibility for their age
- Be acting in a sexually inappropriate way
- Be misusing drugs or alcohol

The adult may be;

- Acting in a violent or sexual manner towards a child
- Misusing drink or drugs while caring for a child
- Verbally abusive towards a child

## What to do if you are concerned?

If you are concerned about a child, speak to someone. This might be a health visitor, nursery or school staff, a teacher, a police officer, a social worker or a doctor.

Make sure you;

- Do not interrogate the child
- Act promptly
- Note down your concerns with dates and times
- Give as much information as you know about the child and family

## Report it to Social Services

Norfolk County Council has a special page on its web site dedicated to Child Protection.

The number to telephone to report any concerns is **0344 800 8020**

This number is manned 24 hours a day.

You should consider contacting the Police if you feel there is an immediate danger to the child.

Visit [www.norfolk.gov.uk](http://www.norfolk.gov.uk) (Child Protection from the A- Z of services).

**Safeguarding children**  
**(also known as Child**  
**Protection)**

Everybody has the right to be safe, no matter who they are or what their circumstance.

Safeguarding is about protecting children, young people and vulnerable adults from abuse or neglect.

We are all responsible for the safety of children, young people and vulnerable adults and must ensure that we are doing all we can to protect the most vulnerable members of our society.

The surgery has safeguarding policies to ensure both children and vulnerable adults are safe and our clinicians are trained to identify when people may be at risk of abuse.

This leaflet is for anyone concerned that a child may be at risk of abuse or neglect.



**Heathgate Medical Practice**

**Safeguarding**  
**Children**

**Heathgate Medical Practice**  
**The Street**  
**Poringland**  
**Norwich**  
**NR14 7JT**

**01508 494343 (T)**  
**01508 495423(F)**

**Surgeries at:**  
**The Street Poringland**  
**&**  
**The Street Rockland St Mary**

