

What do we mean by abuse?

Easy Read

About this document

This is Easy Read information.

You can find other information on our website:

www.childabuseinquiry.scot

A friend, family member, or support person may be able to help you read this document.

What is the Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry?



- The Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry is a public inquiry.
- Sometimes we call it 'the Inquiry' for short.
- It is an official investigation into the abuse of children in care in Scotland.

What is a child?



- A child is anyone who is under 18 years of age.
- The Inquiry is investigating the abuse of children under 18 years of age.

What does 'in care' mean?

Being a child 'in care' includes anyone who was:



- in foster care



- in a children's home



- in a hospital or long-term healthcare establishment



- in a young offenders institution



- in a residential school
- at a boarding school, or
- in any similar place.



If you are not sure if you were a child in care, you can check with us.

What do we mean by abuse?



- Abuse is when someone treats you badly, hurts you, or causes you distress.



- Abuse can be physical, sexual, or emotional. Neglect can also be abuse.



- Abuse can happen just once, or it can happen many times.



- Abuse can happen in the place where you were in care.



- Abuse can also happen in other places.



- Being abused is never your fault.



- Being abused is nothing to be ashamed of.

What is an abuser?



- An abuser is someone who has abused you.
- Abusers can be all sorts of people, including:



- care workers, teachers, or doctors



- people who were supposed to help you



- foster carers



- foster carers' family members or friends



- other children or young people



- people in the community or from other places.



- You may not have known who your abuser was.

Different types of abuse



- Children in care can be abused in different ways.



- The Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry is investigating physical, sexual, and emotional abuse of children in care.



- We can investigate the exploitation of children in care.



- We can also investigate other forms of abuse. This includes neglect.

What do we mean by physical abuse?



Don't Like

- Physical abuse is when someone hurt your head or body on purpose.
- Examples of physical abuse include when someone has:
 - hit you
 - slapped you
 - kicked you
 - bitten you
 - scratched you
 - grabbed you roughly
 - pulled your hair
 - pushed you
 - forced you to eat food you did not want to eat.

What do we mean by sexual abuse?



- Sexual abuse is when someone forced or encouraged you to have sex or do sexual things when you were a child.



- Examples of sexual abuse include when someone has:



- touched your body or private parts in a sexual way



- made you touch their private parts



- said sexual things to you that made you feel uncomfortable



- watched you or took photos or made films of you without your clothes on



- made or encouraged you to watch or look at sexual things including sexual pictures, videos, and films



- sent you messages, pictures, films, or videos about sex.

What do we mean by emotional abuse?



- Emotional abuse is when someone did or said things to make you feel frightened or ashamed.



- Examples of emotional abuse include when someone has:

- bullied you and called you bad names



- shouted and sworn at you

- humiliated you



- picked on you unfairly



- threatened you



- made you do things you didn't want to do



- punished you unfairly or for things you didn't do



- left you alone or ignored you on purpose.

What do we mean by exploitation?



- Exploitation of children is a form of abuse.
- It can happen in person or online.



- You might have been exploited by a person on their own, or by a group of people.



- Exploitation can happen when you have been tricked or pressured into doing something that may cause you harm.



- You might have been threatened that something bad would happen if you didn't do what the person or group of people wanted.

- They may have tried to get you to trust them by:



- giving you food, clothes, money, or other gifts



- providing you with drugs, cigarettes, or alcohol





- giving you a place to go



- showing you affection, being your friend, or offering to protect you.

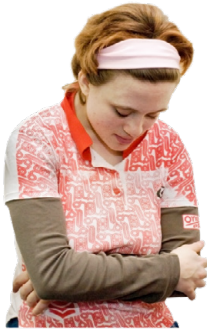
This is known as ‘grooming’. They did this to have power over you so they could control you and get you to do what they wanted.



- You might have been forced or tricked into having sex, doing sexual things, or taking part in other activities that were harmful.
- You may have been forced or encouraged to take part in criminal activities or other things that caused you harm.



- It can be difficult to recognise that you have been exploited. You might not have realised at the time.



Other forms of abuse

The Inquiry can also investigate other forms of abuse. This includes neglect.



- Neglect is when someone who was meant to look after you did not do so properly.
- Examples of neglect include when:



- you were not given enough proper food or drink



- you were not given help to stay warm enough or to cool down



- you were given the wrong medication



- you were left on your own for a long time when you needed support



- you were not given the help you needed to stay clean and healthy



- you were not given the help you needed to communicate with the people looking after you.



You can check with us if you are not sure whether what happened to you was abuse when you were a child in care.

Why should you speak to the Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry?



- We want to hear from you if you were abused in care when you were a child.



- We want to hear from you if you know that children were being abused in care.



- It is important that people tell us what they know about the abuse of children in care.



- It is important that we hear from people whose voices are not always heard.



- Telling us about your experiences and what you know may help to keep children in care safe in the future.



- If you talk to us, you will be helping to deal with a serious problem in society.

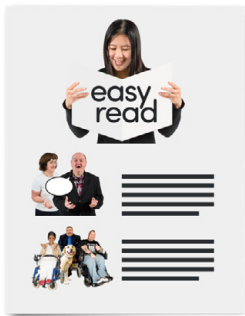
Supporting you to give evidence to the Scottish Child Abuse Inquiry



- Sharing your experience or the experiences of other children in care might be hard.



Communicate



- You may need help with communication.
- Together we can find the best way for you to provide your evidence.



- The Inquiry has a team of experienced Witness Support Officers who can help you through the process.



- We will work with you to help you feel safe when you speak to us.

How to contact the Witness Support Team



- Phone us on 0800 0929 300.



- Email us at
talktous@childabuseinquiry.scot



- Write to us at
SCAI
PO Box 24202
Edinburgh EH3 1JN

If you are deaf or hard of hearing, you can:



- use the Relay UK service at
relayuk.bt.com
- contact us through an online BSL interpreter at
www.ContactScotland-BSL.org

When you contact us, let us know if:



- you have any concerns



- you have additional support needs that might mean you need to share your experiences in a particular way



- English is not your first language



- you need special arrangements because you are in a young offenders institution, prison, or somewhere similar.