



Home Office

Keeping children safe in the UK

In the UK, the law protects all children from harm.
What is allowed in some countries may be illegal here.



This leaflet explains UK law so you can keep children safe, and know how to help if you are worried about a child.



If a child is in danger now, call 999.
Contacts for helplines are available inside this leaflet.

What is child abuse?

Child abuse is when someone harms a child or does not keep them safe. In the UK, child abuse is against the law.

Abuse can happen anywhere – at home, in the community, or online.

Physical abuse

Hitting, smacking, shaking or hurting a child in any way. In the UK, using violence to discipline a child is not allowed.



Emotional abuse

Shouting at, criticising, humiliating or scaring a child regularly. This includes making a child feel worthless or unloved.



Neglect

Not giving a child enough food, clean clothes, healthcare, or a safe place to live. Neglect also includes leaving children alone without an adult to look after them.



Sexual abuse

Any sex or sexual contact with a child under 16 is a serious crime. This includes taking or sharing sexual or intimate images of children.



Child abuse is never OK, and it is never a child's fault.

Important rules for parents



**These rules apply to everyone in the UK.
They may be different from your home country.**

Do not hit children

You must not hit, smack or use violence against your child in any way. This includes using objects like belts or sticks.

Do not leave children alone

You must not leave young children alone or in the care of other children.

- Babies and toddlers must never be left alone.
- Children under 12 should not be left alone for long periods.
- Children under 16 should not be left alone overnight.

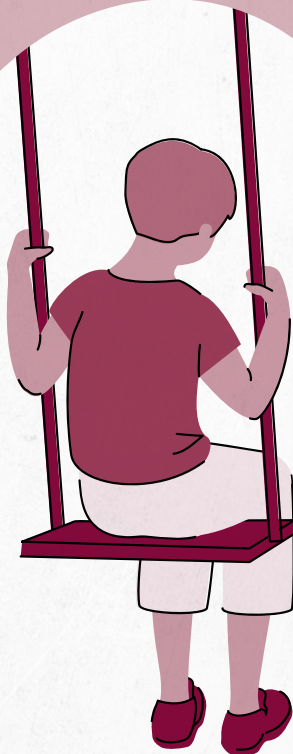
Online safety

Children can be harmed online too. Strangers may try to contact them, or they may see upsetting content. Know what apps and websites your children use. Tell them not to speak to strangers online or share personal information.

FGM and forced marriage

Female genital mutilation (FGM) and forcing a child to marry are serious crimes in the UK. If you are worried about a child, call the NSPCC FGM helpline: **0800 028 3550**

Reporting concerns about a child will not affect your asylum claim.



Signs a child may need help

These signs may mean a child is being hurt or is not safe:

- they have unexplained injuries or bruises
- they are being left alone or unsupervised
- they look hungry, dirty or uncared for
- they are very quiet, scared or withdrawn
- they say they are scared of someone
- they suddenly change their behaviour

If you are worried about a child, or need advice about caring for your own children, speak to your accommodation staff. They can help you get support. Asking for help will not affect your asylum claim.



Getting help

If a child is in danger now, call 999 and ask for the police.
You can ask for an interpreter.

If you are worried about a child

NSPCC Helpline: **0808 800 5000**

Migrant Help: **0808 8010 503** Webchat with Migrant Help Here

Email Migrant Help Here

Ask staff at your accommodation about local children's services.

If you are a child who needs help

Childline: **0800 1111** (free, confidential, open 24 hours)

For concerns about FGM

NSPCC FGM Helpline: **0800 028 3550**

For concerns about forced marriage

Forced Marriage Unit: **020 7008 0151**

Reporting a concern will not affect your asylum claim.

You will be listened to. You will be supported.

Keeping children safe is everyone's responsibility.

www.gov.uk/report-child-abuse | www.nspcc.org.uk