



Signs of sexual abuse



Sexual abuse is where an individual is forced, pressured, or tricked into taking part in sexual activity with another person. Sexual abuse includes rape, indecent exposure, inappropriate looking or touching, sexual harassment, teasing or innuendo, sexual photography or subjection to pornography or witnessing sexual acts that the adult has not consented to or was pressured into consenting to. Sexual abuse can occur in relationships – for example, if somebody rapes their partner or regulates their access to birth control. The person may have expressed that they didn't want to be involved, may not be able to give consent or may not have the capacity to understand what is happening.

Signs of sexual abuse may include:

- Bleeding, pain, itching or sores around the genitals
- Pain or discomfort when walking or sitting
- Bruising, especially on the thighs, buttocks, upper arms and neck
- Torn, blooded or stained clothing
- Sexually transmitted infections or incontinence that is unrelated to a medical diagnosis
- Unexplained pregnancy, for example in a woman who is unable to consent to intercourse
- Not wanting to receive help with personal care
- Exploitation of an adult into sex working

If you recognise any of these signs and are concerned an adult is the victim of abuse, then it's essential you act on your concerns. 'Speaking out' about abuse could save somebody's life. If you are worried that an adult may be at risk of abuse or harm, please contact:



023 8083 3003
southampton.gov.uk/speakout

If there is an immediate threat to their safety, contact the police by calling 999.