

## WHAT IS ABUSE?

*Child abuse is any form of physical, emotional or sexual mistreatment or lack of care that leads to injury or harm. It commonly occurs within a relationship of trust or responsibility and represents an abuse of power or a breach of trust. Abuse can happen to a child regardless of their age, gender, race, ability, culture or sexual orientation.*

Coaches, volunteers and officials are not experts in recognising abuse, therefore, any suspicions or concerns should be discussed with/reported to the local club/league welfare officer or the ETTA's Child Protection Officer. If this is not possible then it should be reported to the person in charge of the session this may be the head coach, the club official, the head teacher or the sports centre manager, and, at the first available opportunity, to the ETTA's Child Protection Officer.

**It is the responsibility of these people to obtain appropriate advice from the local Children's Social Care (formerly Social Services), the NSPCC or the Police. If the person in charge is not available, or the concern is about the person in charge, then the person in receipt of the information should contact the statutory agencies directly.**

## THE MAIN FORMS OF ABUSE

**It is generally accepted that there are four main forms of abuse. The following definitions are based on those from Working Together to Safeguard Children (HM Government 2006)**

✓ **Neglect**

*"Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal drug abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter including exclusion from home or abandonment, failing to protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger, failure to ensure adequate supervision including the use of inadequate care-takers, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.*

✓ **Physical Abuse**

*"Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of or induces illness in a child."*

✓ **Sexual Abuse**

*Girls and boys are abused by adults, both male and female, who use children to meet their own sexual needs.*

*"Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, including prostitution, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening.*

*The activities may involve contact including penetrative acts (e.g. rape, buggery or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways."*

✓ **Emotional Abuse**

*"Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve making the child feel or believe that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying causing children to frequently feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or*

*corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone."*