

SAFEGUARDING INFORMATION

We aim to raise awareness of safeguarding amongst our families. If you are concerned about a child's wellbeing, safety or welfare, *you* must report it. Stepping Stones' staff can listen to your concerns but we are unable to report second-hand information. We have put together the following information - please read it and keep a note of where you can access it.

CHILD PROTECTION & ABUSE

Spot the signs

People do not always report their concerns because they're not certain of the signs, don't know where to report, or are worried about being wrong. This means that our local children's social care teams could be missing out on vital information they need to keep children safe from harm. **Abuse and neglect are always wrong and should always be reported.** Some of the signs you may spot include:

- aggressive or repeated shouting
- hearing hitting or things being broken
- children crying for long periods of time
- very young children left alone or are outdoors by themselves
- children looking dirty or not changing their clothes
- children being withdrawn or anxious.

If you spot these signs it doesn't necessarily mean a child is being abused or neglected but by raising your concerns you can make sure that children are safe and families are getting the support they need at the earliest opportunity rather than leaving it too late.

Support for parents

To help support families, the council have set up a parent advice line. The advice line offers confidential advice, guidance and emotional support on any aspect of parenting and family life. If you need support, please contact the advice line on 0800 542 02 02. Alternatively, send a message through Family Information Service – Gloucestershire [Facebook page](#). They will listen and give you the space to talk, helping you to explore your situation and find a way forward.

How to report concerns -

- Call the **Children** and Families Help Desk 01452 426 565 (Monday – Friday 08:00 to 5pm)
- OR If it is urgent, call Out of Hours Emergency Duty Team on: 01452 614194 (This is an answering machine and you will need to leave a message and your telephone number. Someone will then call you back. Please remember that this number is only for **situations that cannot wait until the next working day.**)
- OR Email: childrenshelpdesk@gloucestershire.gov.uk.

You can report abuse anonymously online at either of the following sites:

1. <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-you-can-do/report-abuse/> (They will pass info on to local authority)
 2. <https://www.actionforchildren.org.uk/how-to-help/worried-about-a-child/>
- You can also call ChildLine for advice on **0800 1111**
 - The non-emergency telephone number for the Police is **101**
 - If a child is at immediate risk of harm, call **999**

DOMESTIC ABUSE

The Government passed The Domestic Abuse Act in 2021 - exposure to domestic abuse or violence in childhood is **child abuse**. Children never just 'witness' domestic abuse; it always has an impact on them. Experience may be direct or indirect –

- hearing the abuse from another room
- seeing a parent's injuries or distress afterwards
- finding disarray like broken furniture
- being hurt from being nearby or trying to stop the abuse
- experiencing a reduced quality in parenting as a result of the abuse

Gloucestershire Domestic Abuse Support Service (GDASS) offers help and support, they can be reached at <https://www.gdass.org.uk/>
Telephone: **01452 726 570** or email support@gdass.org.uk

INTERNET SAFETY

We have separate information about Internet Safety – please check under *Information for Parents*