

# What signs indicate a child may be at risk?

## 1 The behaviour of children

While these signs do not necessarily mean a child has/is being abused, they indicate a need to pay more attention to the situation:

- Mood swings, becoming withdrawn, depression, sudden anger or aggression.
- Running away from home or going missing for long periods.
- A change in their school performance or missing school without reason.
- Unexplained money, gifts, mobile phones.
- Substance abuse (including drugs and alcohol).
- Inappropriate sexualised behaviour for their age.
- Children that are labelled as 'troublemakers'.

## 2 The behaviour of other persons

Be aware of the behaviour of adults around children. This behaviour can include: excessive attention, giving gifts, excessive affection, requests to spend time alone and unsupervised visits.

## 3 Physical signs and symptoms

Physical signs and symptoms include pregnancy, physical injuries or those related to infections (such as sexually transmitted infections and diseases).

## 4 Disclosure by the child

Sometimes when children do not feel comfortable to speak with a parent or carer, they will disclose abuse to another adult they trust.

## 5 Community warning signs

When children are living in difficult circumstances, they are vulnerable to abuse. At the community level, look out for: children begging, not going to school, living and/or working on the streets, without adequate parental supervision, living in vulnerable families, addicted to internet/gaming. Also look out for an increase in adult or night entertainment venues or tourism services linked to the sex industry.