Life can be hard

If you've got a problem or are worried about someone you know, it can be hard to know what to do to make the situation better. You don't have to manage on your own. This booklet is designed for you and gives you information about services and people that are there to help.

You might not want to talk to anyone about your worries because you are embarrassed, you might think people won't take you seriously or understand you, or that they might tell someone else. You might think adults have let you down, so find it hard to trust them. It can be very difficult to talk about your feelings and what's happening in your life, but some problems won't go away if you try to sort them out yourself or ignore them.

TALKING TO SOMEONE CAN MAKE YOU FEEL BETTER AND HELP YOU FIND A SOLUTION.

NEED SOME HELP?

ARE YOU WORRIED ABOUT...?
- Fear of violence
- Relationships and arguments with friends and family
- Abuse – physical, sexual, emotional, neglect
- Bullying
- Family problems and family break-up
- Feeling unhappy, depressed or suicidal
- Alcohol and drugs
- Sex and sexuality
- Violence at home
- Racism
- Being in local-authority care (looked after)
- Anything else

If you feel unhappy, confused or bewildered, you might not understand why. You don’t need to know why you feel this way to ask for help.
Know your RIGHTS

You have rights, including a right to:

- say what you think, be listened to and be taken seriously in all matters that affect you
- have an education
- grow up healthy
- a good enough standard of living including a place to live, food and clothing
- not be discriminated against
- have your best interests put first when decisions are made about you
- be protected from harm, abuse and violence.

Do you know?

Adults and organisations that work with young people should promote these rights. No-one should harm you in any way, and if you are hurt then adults must do something about it. In England and Wales there is a law called the Children Act, and in Northern Ireland there is the Children Order, which says that some professionals have a responsibility for your safety. This includes social services, the police and teachers.

No-one should harm you in any way.
What is abuse?

Abuse is never your choice and is never your fault.

GET THE FACTS

Sometimes when you turn on the TV or look in a newspaper or magazine, there are news stories, documentaries, agony-aunt letters and even story lines in your favourite soap which talk about abuse. It seems that abuse is a word that people use more and more. So obviously everybody must know what abuse means - right?

No, not everyone knows what abuse is. Most people talk about physical or sexual abuse. Actually, there are four kinds of abuse - as well as physical and sexual abuse there's emotional abuse and neglect. So, things can be a bit more complicated than they first seem.

IT'S OK if you are not exactly sure what abuse is. It's also OK to want to find out more about it so you can keep yourself safe.

BULLYING AND DISCRIMINATION

Young people may be hurt by an adult or another young person in many ways. Abuse can be any of the following:

PHYSICAL - this includes being kicked, beaten or punched.

EMOTIONAL - this includes constant name-calling, being threatened, being made fun of or made to feel small, and often seeing violence between the people who care for you.

SEXUAL - this includes being touched in a way you don't like, being forced to have sex, or made to look at sexual pictures or videos, or anything else that makes you feel uncomfortable.

NEGLECT - when you don't have somewhere to stay, enough food to eat, clothes to keep you warm, or if you are not looked after properly.

Turn the page and test your knowledge on what's abuse and what's not...
Know the Score

Is it **SEXUAL** abuse if your mum gives you a good-night kiss or hurt yourself?
- NO
- YES

Is it **SEXUAL** abuse if an adult tries to touch you around your private parts?
- NO
- YES

Is it **PHYSICAL** abuse if your mum slaps you on the back or grab you to keep them quiet?
- NO
- YES

Is it **EMOTIONAL** abuse if your mum and dad shout at you in the morning to try to wake you up so you can get ready for school?
- NO
- YES

Is it **NEGLECT** if, when you come home from school, the people who care for you have gone out for the evening and left you alone at the end of the street?
- NO
- YES

Is it **NEGLECT** if you have to look after your little brother and baby sister on your own?
- NO
- YES

Remember that abuse is never your choice and is never your fault.

For more information on sexual abuse, you can read Hands Off magazine.

Above are some examples of abuse. If something is worrying you or making you scared, it's important to talk to someone you trust. Or, get in touch with one of the services listed in this booklet, and tell them what has happened.