Physical Abuse

Physical abuse is any abuse which has a physical impact on that individual, this includes:

* Hitting, slapping, kicking, shaking, pinching, dragging, hair pulling, pulling or pushing
* Burning or scalding
* Force feeding, withholding or tampering with food
* Misuse or mal administration of medication
* Inappropriate restraint or treatment\*
* Inappropriate moving and handling/rough handling
* Inappropriate isolation or confinement
* Withdrawal of sensory or mobility aids.
* Honour based violence.

**\*Restraint**

Inappropriate use of restraint or physical interventions and/or unlawful deprivation of liberty is physical abuse. In extreme circumstances unlawful or inappropriate use of restraint may constitute a criminal offence. Someone is using restraint if they use force, or threaten to use force, to make someone do something they are resisting, or where a person’s freedom of movement is restricted, whether they are resisting or not. Restraint covers a wide range of actions. It includes the use of active or passive means to ensure that the person concerned does something or does not do something they want to do. Appropriate use of restraint can be justified to prevent harm to a person who lacks capacity if it is a proportionate response to the likelihood and seriousness of the harm. Providers of health and social care must have in place internal operational procedures covering the use of physical interventions and restraint incorporating best practice guidance and the Mental Capacity Act, Mental Capacity Act *Code*and the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLs) Please note appropriate use of restraint can be justified to prevent harm to a person who lacks capacity as long as it is a proportionate response to the likelihood and seriousness of the harm. Such practice should be clearly documented, stating who the decision maker is and how the less restrictive option was determined.

**Possible Indicators**

* Injuries inconsistent with or not fully explained by the account given.
* Different accounts of the injuries given to different people.
* Injuries inconsistent with the person’s lifestyle
* History of unexplained injuries or falls.
* Bruising on the torso, back, buttocks or thighs or in well protected areas such as the inside of the leg or upper arm or on each side on soft parts of the body.
* Bruising clustered from repeated striking.
* Injuries or bruising at different stages of healing.
* Marks on the body in the shape of an object.
* Finger mark bruising.
* Fractures, especially if these are in different stages of healing.
* Multiple or spinal injuries.
* Burns, including scald marks, rope burns, carpet burns, electrical appliance burns.
* Unexplained hair loss in clumps.
* Cuts or abrasions to the mouth, lips, gums, eyes or external genitalia.
* History of changes of GP or social care agencies.
* Signs of misuse of medication such as over or under medication.
* Frequent injuries
* Subdued or changed behaviour in the presence of a particular person
* Signs of malnutrition
* Failure to seek medical treatment

<https://www.scie.org.uk/safeguarding/adults/introduction/types-and-indicators-of-abuse>

[What is Physical Abuse? - Ann Craft Trust](https://www.anncrafttrust.org/resources/what-is-physical-abuse/)