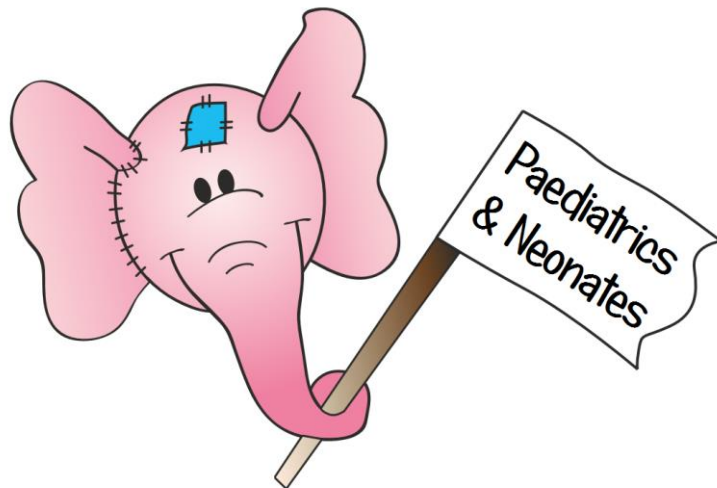


# Safeguarding children and young people

## **Children's Ward**

### **Patient Information Leaflet**



## **Introduction**

We have a duty of care to safeguard the welfare of children and young people while they are at The Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust.

If a doctor is concerned that a child or young person is at risk of abuse or neglect, they must take steps to make sure the child or young person is protected. It can be very upsetting and stressful for families when this happens and parents often have questions about what their doctor may or may not do. This leaflet will help to answer those questions.

Everyone who works with children – including teachers, GPs, nurses, midwives, health visitors, police, Accident and Emergency staff, paediatricians, voluntary and community workers and social workers – has a responsibility for keeping children safe.

No single professional can have a full picture of a child's needs and circumstances and, if children and families are to receive the right help at the right time, everyone who comes into contact with them has a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information and taking prompt action.

## **What will a doctor do if they think my child's safety is at risk?**

The steps they take will depend on the situation. Where possible, the doctor must work with you to make sure your child gets the care and support they need.

## **Why is the paediatrician, or doctor, concerned that my child's injury is not accidental?**

Children do suffer from accidental injuries; however, some injuries may be considered as non-accidental. For example:

- if a child suffers from a significant injury but there is no explanation
- the explanation does not fit the pattern of injury seen
- when the explanation does not fit the child's developmental stage
- other concerns may arise when a doctor takes down the details of the injury and/or during examination of the child

Other concerns that trigger the child protection procedure are suspected neglect, emotional harm or sexual abuse.

It is our duty to investigate, when concerns arise during the assessment of your child, and we have to follow our safeguarding procedures.

## What happens when my child is in the Children's Ward?

A doctor will see you and your child. Most likely more than one doctor will talk to you to gather detailed information. The doctors may ask to talk to your child separately, if they are old enough. Your child will be examined fully, probably more than once. All conversations will be documented and if applicable, the injuries will be drawn on a body map.

Your child may have some tests. The tests will depend on the type of injury and age of the child. Children who are under two years of age, with an injury or injuries that are suspicious of non-accidental injury, will have investigations such as:

- Blood tests to see if bruises are caused by a bleeding disorder. In cases of fracture, the blood test will check if the child has reduced bone density.
- Metabolic tests, if a child has bleeding in the brain as some rare conditions can cause bleeding in the brain.
- Skeletal survey: this is an X-ray of all the bones in the body. The radiation risk of this is minimal. This is usually carried out to see if there are old fractures. After 10 to 14 days, your child will have another X-ray of their ribs and possibly some other bones.
- CT scan of the head. This is usually only in children under one year of age.
- MRI scan of the head. If the CT scan shows bleeding in the brain, an MRI scan is usually arranged for five to seven days after CT scan. The child may have another MRI scan at a later date to monitor the bleeding.
- An eye examination to see if there is bleeding in the eye. This may happen when there is bleeding in the brain.

Children over the age of two may have some of the tests described, if your doctor feels that they are necessary. Your doctor will explain all the tests your child will have in more detail and why they are having them.

It is also sometimes necessary to take photographs, if the child has bruising and certain other injuries. Consent will be obtained from you before taking any photographs.

## **Does the doctor need my consent to tell anyone else about their concerns?**

Doctors normally need consent to share information about you or your child with anyone outside their healthcare team. They will ask for this unless there is a strong reason for not doing so; for example, because the doctor thinks that doing this would increase the risk to your child. In situations like this, the doctor can share information without asking for consent first.

Your child can give consent for the doctor to share information about them, if they have the maturity and understanding to make the decision. If not, you will be asked to give consent for both you and your child. When asking for consent, your doctor should explain:

- what information they want to share
- who they want to share it with and why
- how the information will be used

## **What happens if my child or I refuse to give consent?**

The doctor will consider the reasons why consent has been refused. The doctor will also think about the possible harm that could be caused to your child through not sharing the information. If your doctor thinks your child is at risk of significant harm, they will usually share the information with someone who is responsible for protecting children and will normally explain to you why they have done so.

## **Don't doctors have to respect confidentiality?**

Children and young people and their families have a right to receive confidential medical care and advice. However, sometimes doctors have to share information with others to protect children and young people from abuse or neglect.

## **What happens next?**

If assessment and investigations raise concerns that your child's injuries are suggestive of abuse, it is our duty to make a referral to social services. They will arrange for a joint investigation with the police. They will come and talk to you and the doctor.

You will be kept informed about all the results of investigations and assessment by a social worker. If you have other children, the social worker may request a medical examination of the other children.

## **Can I stay with my child during this time?**

Yes most of the time. However in some cases, the police and/or social workers may not allow you to stay until they complete their own investigations. In this case, they may allow you to have supervised visits.

## **Can I take my child home during this assessment?**

We value your cooperation with us; we do not advise taking your child out of hospital against medical advice. When a child is undergoing investigations because of suspected abuse, and if the parent or carer decides to take the child home, we have to contact police and social services. This is part of our safeguarding procedures.

## **What should I expect from hospital staff?**

We hope you understand that it is our responsibility to safeguard children and we have to follow our procedures when we suspect that a child is at risk of harm.

Besides looking into non-accidental injury, we also look into medical causes to explain your child's medical condition and if a medical cause is identified, we will apologise for any concerns caused.

We will keep you informed of all results and update you about your child's progress. We are aware of the distress and anxiety the parent or carer and their family experience during a child protection investigation and we will do our best to support you.

## **How long will my child stay in hospital?**

This is difficult to predict, we will try our best to complete the assessment as soon as possible. Sometimes there is delay in reporting the CT scan, MRI scan and skeletal survey as we have to send it to Birmingham Children's Hospital for a second opinion.

## Where can I go for further help and advice?

- The **NSPCC** is a national charity campaigning on behalf of children and young people. The NSPCC has helplines that children and adults can ring for advice and support. Children and young people can call ChildLine on 0800 1111. Adults can call 0808 800 5000 for help and advice. [www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk)
- The **Family Rights Group** (FRG) provides free confidential advice and support to families whose children are involved with local authority children's services. Families can call its advice service free on 0808 801 0366. FRG also has a range of free advice sheets on its website. [www.frg.org.uk](http://www.frg.org.uk)
- The **Coram Children's Legal Centre** (CCLC) provides free legal information, advice and representation to children, young people and their families, and to carers and professionals. Families can call its advice service free on 0300 330 5480 for legal advice on child law, family law and education law. [www.childrenslegalcentre.com](http://www.childrenslegalcentre.com)
- **Citizens Advice** is an independent organisation providing free, confidential and impartial advice on all subjects to anyone. There is also advice and information on its website. [www.citizensadvice.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk)
- **Family Lives** is a national charity providing help and support on all aspects of family life. It has a free and confidential helpline service on 0808 800 2222 for information, advice, guidance and support on any aspect of parenting and family life. [www.familylives.org.uk](http://www.familylives.org.uk)
- **Home-Start** is a nationwide charity supporting children and families through a network of volunteers. [www.home-start.org.uk](http://www.home-start.org.uk)
- **Family Action** is a charity providing practical, emotional and financial support to disadvantaged and socially isolated families. [www.family-action.org.uk](http://www.family-action.org.uk)
- The **Victoria Climbié Foundation** provides free, independent advice and specialist support to children, young people and families involved with social care, particularly around aspects of culture and faith. [www.vcf-uk.org](http://www.vcf-uk.org)

If you have any questions or if there is anything you do not understand about this leaflet, please contact:

Children's Ward on 01384 244271

Russells Hall Hospital switchboard number: 01384 456111

If you have any feedback on this patient information leaflet, please email [patient.information@dgh.nhs.uk](mailto:patient.information@dgh.nhs.uk)

**This leaflet can be made available in large print, audio version and in other languages, please call 0800 073 0510.**

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此宣传单可提供大字版本、音频版本和其它语言版本，请拨打电话：0800 073 0510。

Ulotka dostępna jest również w dużym druku, wersji audio lub w innym języku. W tym celu zadzwoń pod numer 0800 073 0510.

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Aceasta broșura poate fi pusă la dispoziție tipărită cu caractere mari, versiune audio sau în alte limbi, pentru acest lucru va rugăm sunați la 0800 073 0510.

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