

Bruising in Pre-Mobile/Non-independent Mobile Children

Concerning injuries in Pre-Mobile/Non-independent Mobile Children

Protocol Summary

Bruising in pre-mobile non-independent child

A pre-mobile non-independent child is one who is not yet crawling, bottom shuffling, pulling to stand, cruising or walking independently - this includes children with disabilities.

The protocol provides multi-agency professionals with a knowledge base and action strategy for the assessment, management and referral of children who are non-independently mobile who present with bruising. Bruising is a common injury in non-abused children, **the exception to this being pre-mobile infants where accidental bruising is rare (0.6- 1.3%) (RCPCH 2020)**. [Child-Protection-Evidence-Chapter-Bruising_Update_final.pdf](#)

Any child who is found to be seriously ill or injured in whom abuse is suspected, or in need of urgent treatment or further medical investigation, should be referred immediately to hospital at the same time as referral to Gateshead Children's Social Care (front door)

Bruising is the commonest presenting feature of physical abuse in children. The younger the child the greater the risk that bruising is non-accidental. There is a substantial and well-founded research base on the significance of bruising in children – [See useful links](#)

Any bruising or a mark that might be bruising in a child of any age who is not independently mobile, should be taken as a matter for inquiry and concern and should result in an immediate referral to Children's Services and an urgent paediatric opinion. Please seek advice from safeguarding colleagues.

Where a decision to refer is made, it is the responsibility of the first professional to learn of or notice the bruising to make the referral. (See below for Children's Social Care contact numbers).

Children's Social Care will take responsibility for making an urgent referral to paediatric services. For the paediatric opinion, they will contact the duty paediatrician.

The professional making the referral and the social worker receiving the referral must reach a decision about whether or not the child can be safely transported to hospital by the child's parent/adult carer alone, or whether the child should be transported to hospital by some other method.

Non-attendance at the hospital should initiate immediate Child Protection procedures between Children's Social Care and the Police. The child's parent/adult carer must be informed of this.

All telephone referrals should be followed up within 48 hours with a written referral using the
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appropriate interagency referral form.

A bruise must never be interpreted in isolation and must always be assessed in the context of medical and social history, developmental stage and explanation given. A full clinical examination and relevant investigations must be undertaken under the care of a Consultant Paediatrician.

Accidental bruising in pre-mobile non-independent children is rare. It is the responsibility of Children's Social Care and the paediatrician to decide whether bruising is consistent with an accidental cause or not.

Other concerning physical injuries in non-mobile child

A referral to children's social care may be warranted where you suspect child maltreatment in pre-mobile non-independent children presenting with concerning physical injuries. Examples of this could include fractures, bites, burns, lacerations, intracranial injuries. Please seek advice from safeguarding colleagues and for more information see <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/cg89>

Parents and carers should be included as far as possible in the decision-making process providing this does not pose a further risk to the child. If a parent or carer is uncooperative or refuses to take the child for further assessment, this should be reported immediately to Children's Social Care.

Information should be shared between the child's GP and Health Visitor or Public Health Nurse. Professionals should seek advice from their Safeguarding Leads if they are unsure.

The importance of signed, timed, dated, accurate, comprehensive and contemporaneous records cannot be overemphasised.

For Children's Social Care (front door) telephone:

Integrated Referral Team

0191 4332653

Office hours (Monday - Friday, 8.30am to 5pm)

Emergency Duty Team

0191 4770844

Out of hours (at night, at weekends and bank holidays)

Useful Links

NICE Guidance – Updated 2017

www.nice.org.uk/Guidance/CG89

Royal college of paediatrics and Child Health

www.rcpch.ac.uk/key-topics/child-protection/evidence-reviews

Gateshead Safeguarding Children Partnership

www.gatesheadsafeguarding.org.uk