

Information Leaflet for Parent/Carers

Resource: child protection medical assessment

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Children's Services

Information Leaflet for Parent/Carers

Child Protection Medical Assessment

Introduction

Your child has been referred to us by Children's Social Care for a child protection medical assessment because concerns have been raised that they may have suffered harm or be at risk of harm. We understand at Newcastle Hospitals that this is a difficult time for parents, carers and children, but please be assured we will always act in the best interests of your child. This leaflet is intended to help you as parents, carers and children understand what a medical assessment is, where it takes place, who you will see and what you can expect.

We understand it is important that:

- You understand what is happening.
- You and your child's views are listened to.

What is a Child Protection Medical and why does my child need it?

A medical examination has been requested by a social worker or police officer as concerns have been raised about your child. Your child will be examined by a senior children's doctor (Paediatrician) who has special training to assess if a child has come to harm as well as completing a full assessment of any unidentified or unmet health needs.

Consent

An adult with Parental Responsibility will be asked to give consent (permission) for the examination by the Paediatrician. If your child is old enough or has enough understanding to give consent, they can do so. The doctor leading the assessment will go through the consent form with you, and you will be asked to sign a written consent form if you agree to the assessment. If you are unable to attend, we will contact you by telephone and seek verbal consent from you over the telephone. The consent form also includes sections about clinical

photography (which may be needed to record any relevant skin findings such as rashes, marks, bruises or injuries) and any other investigations we may need to undertake.

If you (or your child, where appropriate) do not give consent to the examination and if the social worker and/or police feel an examination is in your child's best interest, they will discuss this further with you about next steps. In some situations, and depending on the level of concern, they may seek a court order to allow the assessment to proceed.

Where does the assessment take place?

The assessment takes place at the Royal Victoria Infirmary (RVI) Hospital. Usually, you will attend ward 2b of the Great North Children's Hospital (GNCH). The nursing team will notify the social worker if the assessment needs to take place on an alternative ward or department and keep you fully informed prior. When you arrive on the ward you will be met by one of the nursing team who will be expecting you.

What will happen at the assessment and who will be there?

You will attend with a social worker, and police may or may not be there as well. A nurse will welcome you on the ward in a friendly and professional way. The reason for your attendance and child's admission will be dealt with professionally and confidentially at all times.

The nurse will take your child's details and then take weight and height measurements. There will be a named paediatrician overseeing the assessment, and they will introduce themselves to you and your child. There may be a senior paediatric registrar undertaking the assessment, under supervision of the paediatrician. The nurse will remain present to assist and chaperone the assessment. The doctor will go through the consent process with you, before gaining some information from the social worker about the reasons for today's assessment, and they will then ask you and your child questions about what has happened so far before they complete their physical examination/assessment.

It is always important for us to respect your child's wishes, and depending on their age, we will ask who they would like with them in the room for the assessment, to ensure they are comfortable at all times. Sometimes with older children we will ask them if they would like to be spoken to by themselves to gain their voice and thoughts.

If you have any questions throughout the process, please feel free to ask them at any point.

What will I be asked about at the assessment?

The doctor will ask you about:

- Any relevant information and explanation about injuries or marks your child may have
- Any illnesses your child has had or regular medications
- Their birth history
- Their health and development
- Their immunisations
- Any known allergies
- Their day-to-day health
- Their behaviour and progress at school
- Who lives at home with your child
- The family history



Your child will have a full general examination (top to toe). If your child has any obvious injuries, these will be documented, measured, and drawn in the child's record.

If photography is required, the photographs will be taken by the Hospital Medical Photography team at the time of the clinical examination, provided consent has been given for this.

Sometimes, the Paediatrician may need to arrange other tests, for instance blood or urine tests, an eye examination, imaging (such as x-rays), or a dental assessment and this will be fully discussed with you if they are needed. Some investigations, like x-rays, may require further consent from you, and this would be discussed in detail with you, with additional parent information available for you.

What can I bring to the appointment?

- your child's medical records (red book)
- your child's favourite toys or books
- a snack or drink for your child
- a list of any concerns or questions you have
- a friend or family member for their support if required

Please let us know if there are any other ways we can help you throughout the appointment.

What happens afterwards?

At the end of the assessment the doctor will explain their findings and opinion to you and the social worker. The doctor will give the social worker an initial written outcome from this appointment, and then write a more detailed report of the findings from today's assessment.

Both of these may be shared with any relevant professionals such as the GP, social worker, and police, as well as being stored securely on your child's confidential health records. If you would like to receive a copy of the report from today's assessment, you will be given our contact details to request this. We do not send these reports out to parents or carers in the post but would be happy for you to pick up your copy from the hospital. Where reports are shared with other professionals, this will usually be by secure email, in line with data protection guidance (GDPR).

Please Remember...

- Ask us any questions - we will always listen and answer as we can
- Ask us to explain if you do not understand what we are doing and why
- Feeling upset and worried is natural but we are acting in the best interests of your child

For further information

Contact details

PALS (Patient Advice and Liaison Service) for help, advice and information about NHS services. You can contact them on freephone 0800 032 02 02, email pals@nhct.nhs.uk

Useful websites

If you would like further information about health conditions and treatment options, you may wish to have a look at the NHS website at www.nhs.uk

If you would like to find accessibility information for our hospitals, please visit www.accessable.co.uk

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