

Pan Bedfordshire Pathway for injuries and bruising in immobile babies and children

Injuries and bruising in immobile babies and children is unusual and is highly suggestive of non-accidental injuries.

Any professional who observes a bruise, mark, injury, fracture in an immobile baby or child **must suspect child maltreatment**, regardless of explanation given by parent or carer and **must follow the Pan Bedfordshire Protocol**.
If the child is seriously ill call 999 and request an ambulance.

Seek an explanation, observe the injury and record accurately including the use of a body map. This should include details of other children and family members.

Explain to carers that signs of a possible injury in an immobile baby or child requires you to follow the Pan Bedfordshire Protocol.
Give parent/carers the leaflet about what will happen next.

A referral **MUST** be made immediately to the Hospital Paediatrician and Children's Services.

Bedford Hospital	Contact the on-call Paediatrician Tel: 01234 355122 and ask for bleep 542. After 21.00hrs ask for bleep 208
Luton & Dunstable Hospital	Before 22.00hrs Contact on call Paediatric consultant via Switchboard 01582 491166. After 22.00hrs Contact on call registrar via Switchboard 01582 491166
Bedford Borough Children's Services	01234 718700 or Multi.Agency@bedford.gov.uk
Central Bedfordshire Children's Services	0300 300 8585 or cs.accessandreferral@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk
Luton Children's Services	01582 547760 or mash@luton.gov.uk
Out of hours	0300 300 8123

Once a Paediatrician has reviewed the child they will discuss with Children's Services their findings and if they have concerns about the mechanism of injury. All conversations should be recorded clearly in individual agency records for the baby/child.

When concerns are identified a Strategy meeting(s)/discussion(s) should be held
Do not discharge until safeguarding issues resolved and agreed multi agency discharge plan agreed and shared with parents/carers
Follow the Pan Bedfordshire Interagency Child Protection Procedures:
<https://bedfordscb.proceduresonline.com/>

Pan Bedfordshire Protocol for injuries and bruising in immobile babies and children

Protocol Summary

Definition of Immobile: not yet: crawling, shuffling, pulling to stand, cruising or walking independently. The protocol also applies to older immobile children, for example immobility due to disability/illness.

The protocol provides all professionals with a knowledge base and action strategy for the assessment, management and referral of immobile babies and children who present with injuries (including bruising or suspicious marks). Any child who is found to be seriously ill or injured, or in need of urgent treatment or further investigation, *should be referred immediately to hospital before referral to Children's*.

Bruising is the commonest presenting feature of physical abuse in babies and 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.

[Child Protection Evidence | RCPCH](#)

Injuries in an immobile baby or child should raise suspicion of maltreatment and should result in an immediate referral to Children's Services and an urgent Paediatric opinion as it can lead to more serious injury and in some instances results in child death.

(See NICE Clinical Guideline 89)

<http://guidance.nice.org.uk/CG89/Guidance/pdf/English>

Where a professional makes a decision to refer to Children's Services, it is the responsibility of this professional to make the referral to either of the following:

Bedford Borough Children's Services - 01234 718700 or Multi.Agency@bedford.gov.uk

Central Bedfordshire Children's Services - 0300 300 8585 or cs.accessandreferral@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

Luton Children's Services - 01582 547760 or mash@luton.gov.uk

Out of hours 0300 300 8123

All telephone referrals should be followed up within 48 hours with a written referral using the appropriate interagency referral form. This can be accessed via https://bedfordscb.proceduresonline.com/files/medical_referral.docx

An injury/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, recorded appropriately and any observed bruising, marks or abnormal findings (including medical conditions e.g. eczema) recorded on a body map.

Bruising in immobile babies and children is unusual. It is the responsibility of the Paediatrician and the Multi Agency Strategy Meeting to decide whether the bruising is consistent with an innocent cause or not. The Multi Agency Strategy Meeting will decide if threshold is met for a Section 47 Child Protection investigation and if a Child Protection Medical is required.

Parents/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/carers is uncooperative or refuses to take the baby/child for further assessment, this should be reported immediately to Children's Services.

Information should be shared between the baby/child's GP and Health Visitor and the case should be discussed with a senior colleague such as the Safeguarding Children Team.

The importance of signed, timed, dated, accurate, comprehensive and contemporaneous records cannot be over-emphasised - body maps must be used. Once a referral to Children's Services has been made, practitioners must follow the Pan Bedfordshire Interagency Child Protection Procedures: <https://bedfordscb.proceduresonline.com/>