



Bath & North East Somerset
Local Safeguarding Children Board

Bruising or injury in babies/children who are not independently mobile



Information for parents and carers

You have been given this leaflet because a member of staff has noticed a bruise / injury on your baby/child.

Any worker who identifies bruising/injury in a child who is under 6 months old or an older child who is not yet independently mobile are required to refer the child for more investigation.

Non-mobile children are those not yet crawling, cruising or walking independently or are older children who are not mobile because of a disability.

The child will be referred to Children's Services (Children Social Services Department) who will work with a specialist child doctor to decide what needs to happen next

Q: *Why do children who are not mobile with a bruise need to see a specialist doctor?*

A: It is uncommon for children who are not able to move around by themselves to have a bruise/injury. A bruise can be a sign of a health

condition, a blood disease or an infection, so this can be ruled out or treated if required. This means it is important that a specialist child doctor (Paediatrician) see your child and discusses with you why there might be a bruise.

Q: *Why is bruising in children who are not mobile a concern?*

A: It is difficult to cause bruising/injury in non-mobile children with day-to-day activities such as feeding, nappy changing and normal handling. Even where babies fall or get knocked it is unusual for them to bruise (unlike children who are crawling or walking who often get bruises). Besides a possible medical reason, very occasionally bruising / injuries may be due to deliberate harm. Even where there is an apparently simple explanation, it is important for professionals to make further enquiries. Sometimes it takes an expert to tell the difference between a bruise and certain types of birthmarks. Investigations may include blood tests, x-rays, CT scans or skeletal surveys. After these tests the paediatrician will explain to you what they think has

caused the bruising/injury. This information will be recorded in your child's medical records.

Q: *I understand the reason for seeing a paediatrician but why do I need to be referred to Children's Services?*

A: Although rare, bruising/ injury is occasionally caused by deliberate harm. It is important that, where this occurs, it is identified as soon as possible in order to support the family and to protect the child. Referral to Children's Services is not an accusation of wrongdoing, but a way to explore the possible causes of the bruising/injury in the same way that the doctor looks for illnesses. Even where bruising is due to falls and knocks, the family may benefit from advice on accident prevention and home safety.

Q: *What will Children's Services do?*

A: They will check whether you have received social care support in the past, they may ask for information from your GP and your Health Visitor

and will make arrangements to speak to you either by phone or in person. This may be at the same time as your attendance with the child specialist or at a separate appointment and they may want to visit you at home. They will then discuss their findings with the specialist who examined your child to decide whether any further action needs to be taken or any treatment given.

Q: *My baby/child is disabled and bruising is one of the consequences of their limited mobility. Is my child's condition considered?*

Yes, the same process as previously described will be followed and any existing conditions will be considered. Disabled children, particularly those who are unable to communicate are more likely to suffer abuse from carers and so this has to be explored.

Q: *All this is very upsetting. I feel as though I am being accused of hurting my child. Why do I have to be put through this?*

A: We know this can be very upsetting, but the only way of picking

up the occasional serious cause for bruising is to investigate every case where it occurs. Please be assured that you will be treated with courtesy and sensitivity and your explanations will be listened to and discussed with you. You will also be kept fully informed at all times so that you know exactly what is going on and why. You can ask questions at any time and will be given the opportunity to discuss your concerns fully at every stage.

