

HOW WILL YOU BE TREATED THROUGH THIS PROCESS?

We appreciate this can be a very upsetting time, however, the only way of identifying the cause of the bruising or injury is to investigate every case when it occurs. You will be treated with courtesy and sensitivity at all times. You will also be kept informed and be able to ask questions.



CONSIDERATIONS REQUIRED IF A BRUISE OR UNEXPLAINED MARK IS IDENTIFIED ON YOUR CHILD



THIS LEAFLET WILL EXPLAIN WHY A BRUISE OR UNEXPLAINED MARK ON A CHILD NEEDS FURTHER ASSESSMENT

It is extremely rare for children who are not yet crawling, cruising or walking independently to sustain a bruise or injury. Therefore, when an injury or bruise is identified it is important to find out why. It may have happened accidentally, non-accidentally or have a medical explanation.

Therefore, where a professional identifies bruising or injury on a child that cannot yet move around on their own, they have a duty to make a referral to the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) in order to comply with Wales Safeguarding Procedures 2019.

WHY IS BRUISING IN CHILDREN THAT CANNOT MOVE AROUND SUCH A CONCERN?

Unlike children who are crawling or walking and can often get bruises, it is difficult to cause bruising in children who are not able to move around by themselves, even with all the daily activities undertaken with them, such as feeding, nappy changing and normal handling. However, there are also some important causes of bruising which may seriously affect the child's health. For example, the child may bruise easily due to an infection, a **blood disorder** or other illness. Very occasionally bruising may be due to deliberate injury. Even when there is an apparent simple explanation it is important to rule out these more serious conditions. It is also sometimes **difficult** to tell the difference between a bruise and certain types of birthmark.

WHAT IS THE MULTI AGENCY SAFEGUARDING HUB (MASH) AND WHAT HAPPENS WHEN THEY RECEIVE A REFERRAL?

MASH is a single point of contact for professionals to raise safeguarding concerns and consists of staff from the Health, Children's Services, Education, and Police. On receipt of a referral where a child has a bruise or unexplained mark, the above agencies will discuss the information they have received and they will also seek advice from a Paediatrician to help them decide if a medical examination is required.

WHY DO I NEED TO BE REFERRED TO THE MULTI AGENCY SAFEGUARDING HUB AND NOT A DOCTOR?

Although rare, bruising is occasionally caused by deliberate injury. It is important that where this occurs, it is acted upon as soon as possible to support the family and protect the child. A referral to MASH allows professionals to work together to explore the possible causes of bruising or injury.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN NEXT?

If your health visitor, GP, doctor or midwife (multi agency team) identifies a bruise or unexplained mark and needs to make a referral to MASH, they will stay with you. You will be fully supported throughout the process. A professional from children's services, normally a social worker, will contact you to talk about your child and explain what will happen next. Arrangements may be made for your child to be seen by a paediatrician the same day. The paediatrician will talk to you about your child and with your consent examine your child fully, they will then decide whether to undertake further investigations such as blood tests or x-rays which may mean your child being admitted to hospital. The outcome of any investigation will be discussed between the relative agencies and you will be kept informed.