

Child Protection Procedure for Independent Day Care Providers



Children and Young People's Services Early Years and Childcare Service

Working in partnership for children and families

This leaflet gives advice and guidance on child protection matters for:

- Childminders
- Pre – School Playgroup providers
- Private and voluntary Day Nursery and Crèche organisers and staff
- Personnel working in family centres and child and family resource centres operated by voluntary organisations
- Out of school providers

Non-specific abuse

In September 2001 the responsibility for registering and inspecting childminders and day care providers passed to Ofsted (Offices for Standards in Education) Telephone 0845 640 4040

Please keep this leaflet in an accessible place. Put it in a place in your home or establishment where you can find it quickly if needed.

All childminders and day care providers who are registered are required to comply with the guidance in this leaflet.

What is child abuse?

An abused child is a boy or girl under the age of 18 who has suffered from or is believed to be at significant risk of neglect, physical injury, emotional or sexual abuse.

Child abuse may be caused by any adult who has a position of trust or authority with respect to a child. These adults may be the parents or carers of the child or any other person known to the child or family who may have contact with the child. A child may also be the victim of abuse where the abuser is another child, or a stranger.

Child abuse may be the result of direct acts towards the child by any of those mentioned above, or by the failure of those who have responsibility for the child to provide reasonable care, or both.

The Department of Health defines the following categories of child abuse:

- **neglect** is the persistent or severe neglect of a child, or the failure to protect a child from exposure to any kind of danger, including cold and starvation, or failure to carry out important aspects of care, resulting in the significant impairment of the child's health or development, including failure to thrive;

Sometimes carers become concerned about a child without any specific incident having occurred. This can be a vital time in alerting officers to pre-disposing factors which could lead to child abuse if not identified early enough. Even if you are in doubt it is better to mention your concern than to keep silent. In these circumstances contact the Children and Young People's Services (formerly Social Services) to talk through your concerns. They will advise you about what should happen next, including any action which they are proposing to take.

It is possible to ask for a 'consultation' with a social worker without naming the child. Should you then be advised to make a full referral, you should then do this, so it is important that you have all the details to hand.

Relationship with parents and carers

If you see an injury which you have suspicions about or you have concerns about a child's behaviour or welfare, you should ask the parent for an explanation. If your concerns remain after an explanation is offered, you should contact the Children and Young People's Services (formerly Social Services) Department.

Telling the parent that you are going to report your concern (or, in an emergency, that you have reported your concern) to the Children and Young People's Services (formerly Social Services) Department can be difficult, especially if you have a close relationship with the child's parent. You may feel unsure of yourself, uncertain about reporting the matter, nervous about how the parent will react, worried whether what you have seen is really child abuse or not.

Please remember this. The child, especially a baby or small child, is very vulnerable. She/he may have no-one to take steps to ensure his/her safety and protection. In many instances, parents, particularly young parents, need help with the many problems inherent in bringing up children. The injury to the child which you have found may represent very vividly the parents' need for help. Your telephone call to the Children and Young People's Services (formerly Social Services) Department will be the means by which that help is arranged.

Alternatively parents may be so overwhelmed by their own difficulties that they are unable to give of themselves in order to meet their children's essential needs.

Emotionally abused children may be neglected or rejected. The emotionally neglected child may be enuretic and present with poor basic hygiene. They may crave adult attention and affection inappropriately, may persistently seek physical contact and compensatory eating may be a feature. Such children may also have great difficulty in developing relationships with their peers, may be destructive and aggressive, and have poor concentration and learning skills. Global developmental delay and 'failure to thrive' are often associated with neglect and emotional abuse. Emotional abuse may involve seeing or hearing the ill treatment of another.

Sexual Abuse

In recent years there has been an increasing recognition that children may be sexually exploited by adults, and even by other children.

Boys and girls of all ages, from infancy to adolescence, may be abused and the abuse may carry on for several years before it comes to light.

A child's statement that she/he has been sexually abused should be taken seriously.

Your suspicions about sexual abuse may be awakened by one or more of the following factors. **This is not an exhaustive list.**

- bruises or bleeding in the genital or rectal areas;
- underclothing stained or bloody;
- the child may have difficulty in walking or sitting;
- knowledge of sexual matters far in excess of chronological age, evidenced in play, words or drawings. The child may hint at family secrets;
- sudden changes in mood or behaviour. Regression in behaviour. Recurrence of bedwetting - day or night. Soiling/smearing may occur;
- marked lack of trust in adults.

Early Years & Childcare Service
Children and Young People's Services

Tel: 0117 9037993

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- **Physical injury** is the actual or likely physical injury to a child, or failure to prevent physical injury (or suffering) to a child;
- **Sexual abuse** is the actual or likely sexual exploitation of a child or young person.
- **Emotional abuse** is the actual or likely severe adverse effect on the emotional and behavioural development of a child caused by persistent or severe emotional ill treatment or rejection. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill treatment of another (e.g. domestic violence).

How is child abuse recognised?

It is not possible to give a comprehensive answer. This leaflet includes some possible signs which may help you to recognise if a child is being abused. In brief -

- you may see or find an injury which arouses your suspicions;
- your observations of the child at play or your interactions with the child may give you reason to suspect that the child has been abused;
- a slow but definite change in the child's behaviour, for example, from an outgoing happy child to a withdrawn, passive personality, possibly with regressive toilet habits and/or poor eating, may cause you to be suspicious;
- if the parent, when asked, is unable to give a reasonable explanation for injuries, you may still have cause for concern.

If you are concerned about possible child abuse, what should you do?

How do you ensure that children and families get the help they need in these circumstances?

If you think a child is in immediate danger you should telephone the police on 999.

In all other circumstances :

You need to refer the matter to the Children and Young People's Services Department (formerly Social Services). By doing this you have then passed the problem to an agency with statutory responsibility in law for the protection of children. The Children and Young People's Services Department, the Police and NSPCC are the agencies who have a statutory duty to make enquiries into any notification of child abuse.

Contact details are given at the end of this booklet

RECORDING

Remember to keep a record of any concerns you have, including a gradual build up of concerns, noting the date and time. Also make a record of any conversations you may have with a parent or any other significant person.

In an emergency

In some instances you may be the first person to recognise child abuse and the child may need immediate medical attention. This may need to be your first action. Depending on the circumstances you may need to -

- telephone for an ambulance
- ask a doctor to call
- ask the parent to take the child to the doctor or to the hospital at once
- offer to take the parent and the child to the hospital/surgery/clinic for immediate medical attention
- take the child yourself to hospital/surgery/clinic

Further information/guidance

'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused'
Department of Health May 2003

Available from Department of Health Publications, PO Box 77 London SE1
6XH

Tel: 08701 555 455

[Www.doh.gov.uk/safeguardingchildren/index.htm](http://www.doh.gov.uk/safeguardingchildren/index.htm)

NSPCC

[Www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk)

If you need more copies of this leaflet please contact:

Children and Young People's Information Service for Bristol
0845 129 7217

Concerned about a child?

Everyone has a part to play in children's welfare and keeping them safe from abuse or neglect. If you have concerns that a child may be being neglected or abused—don't keep it to yourself, no-one will criticise you for reporting genuine concerns. Speak to one of our duty teams at the following numbers.

South	Broadwalk,	Tel: 0117 9031414
Hartcliffe	Symes House	Tel: 0117
North	Ridingleaze House	Tel: 0117 9038700
East/Central	Welsman	Tel: 0117 9036500

Email (all Bristol) childprotection@bristol-city.gov.uk

Our offices are open Monday to Thursday 8.30am to 5pm and Friday 8.30am to 4.30pm.

In an emergency outside office hours contact our Emergency Duty Team on **Tel: 01454 615 165**

Or you can contact:

Police Child Protection Team	0117 945 4320
NSPCC 24 Hour help Line	0800 800 5000

In an emergency dial 999 or contact you local Police Station

Thank you for reading this leaflet. Please be alert to the possibility of child abuse - for the sake of the child or children for whom you are caring and the parents involved.

The child is the legal responsibility of the parent or care-giver and that person must be involved in the matter as soon as practicable. Having taken the necessary emergency action it is important that you make immediate contact with the Children and Young People's Services Department (see details at the back of the booklet).

Specific suspected abuse

Where no emergency medical treatment is required but a specific incident gives you cause for concern, you should make immediate contact with the Children and Young People's Services (formerly Social Services) see contact details at the back of the booklet.

In Bristol all calls are taken by 'Referral and Information Assistants' who will take the basic information which will then be passed to the duty social worker.

It is good practice to seek an explanation from parents and inform them of any referral to another agency you need to make, unless you consider that to do so would put the child or others at risk.

If you know the name of the child's social worker ask for that person or their Manager.

Otherwise ask for the Duty Child Protection Team saying that you wish to report child protection concerns:

- Clearly state who you are, your role and your reason for telephoning and your contact details
- Have the following details at hand to give when asked for:
- Child's name and date of birth; parent's or carer's names; address where parents or carers can be contacted
- Information about the injuries or circumstances which cause you concern, and any explanation or comment the child or his/her parents or carer may have made, and the wording used by them.
- Make a note of who you spoke to, name, date and time.
- The Children and Young People's Services should keep you informed as to the outcome of your referral and do so within 48 hrs.

What is your responsibility in caring for children on the Bristol Child Protection Register?

You may have some children placed with you through an arrangement with the Children and Young People's Services (formerly Social Services) Department where known or suspected abuse has already occurred, you will normally have been told of this by the Social Worker arranging the placement. Or you may have children placed via the Supported Day Care Scheme. In this case the Placement Officer will have told you of any existing concerns.

In such circumstances please be extra vigilant. In particular if the child fails to come to your home or to your centre when expected, please notify the named social worker or Placement Officer. If he/she is not available, contact their office and ask to speak to their line manager.

Prompt action needs to be taken in all instances in which child abuse has been discovered or is strongly suspected. Delay can be dangerous. Speedy action can bring about rapid protection for the child.

Guidance on possible signs of Child Abuse

The following guidance has to be read with caution. A single mark or injury may or may not be significant. It may represent abuse or it may be quite accidental. All individual items highlighted in this section therefore need to be viewed in the context of your knowledge of the child and his or her parents.

In cases where there are allegations against a member of staff or child-minder, follow the Child Protection Procedure as before. In addition, Ofsted as the regulator of Children's Day Care must be informed as soon as possible by telephoning 0845 640 40 40 (see details on page 1).

Allegations against staff to be reported to Bristol City Council Development Manager, on 0117 9036191.

NB It has been acknowledged that abuse can be organised, involve more than one adult and be carried out by a person who uses their position of authority to abuse.

You will also need to contact the Safeguarding Lead in the Early Years & Childcare Service within Bristol City Council, Dawn Butler, Commissioning Manager on Tel: (0117) 9036191 email: dawn.butler@bristol.gov.uk

If you are telephoning from a call box or mobile phone you can ask the Referral and Information Assistant to make a note of the telephone number and call you back.

It is good practice as a child care provider for you to follow up your telephone call with a written report within 48 hours.

It is suggested that childminders on the Supported Day Care Scheme run by the Children and Young People's Services, should use the Childminders Child Protection Referral Form designed by the Placement Officers to make their report. It is good practice for childminders on the scheme to keep their Placement Officer informed and this provides a further opportunity to discuss any concerns.

Tell the parents that you are concerned. Say that injuries to children particularly small children, must be investigated. Say that as a registered day care provider there is a Child Protection Policy which you must follow. Tell the parent the Child Protection Policy is designed to provide protection for children and help for parents. But in general you must make it clear to parents/carers that you are going to make a referral to Children and Young People's Services (formerly Social Services), before you do so, unless you consider that informing the parent/carer may place yourself or the child at risk.

Physical Injury

Bruising and Scratch Marks

When bruising is observed it should be considered in the context of the age and developmental level of the child. Bruises on the shins and other bony parts of a young active child are very common but **any bruising** in a small non-mobile infant is suspicious and potentially dangerous.

Head and Facial Bruising and Bruised Eyes

Any facial bruising or abrasion in young babies should be treated with suspicion. There may be punch marks with or without associated scratch marks around the mouth, cheeks or chin, or bruising around the side of the head, forehead or ears.

Facial bruising and bruised eyes are uncommon even in active toddlers and young children.

Limb and Trunk Bruising

Accidental bruising is usually confined to the shins and outer sides of thighs and arms. Non-accidental bruising may show characteristic patterns such as fingertip grip marks in groups on the upper arms, on the thighs or legs of infants, around the trunk or on the shoulders or neck. There may be several sets of fingers marks. The abused child often has many unexplained bruises of the body or limbs.

Any scratch marks on the inner thighs, inner part of the arms, or other well protected parts of the body should be viewed with suspicion.

Bruises from Beating with Sticks or Belts

Any bruise which has straight edges or an unusual well-defined shape should be carefully noted. They are usually seen on the buttocks, back or lower legs and may be raised into weals.

Bites

Human bite marks may show a clear outline of two sets of teeth or may appear as a circular bruise. Advice is needed to distinguish an adult bite from the more common bite inflicted by another child.

Burns and Scalds

Many scalds in young children are caused by accident but in every case explanations need to be carefully considered.

Typical of non-accidental injuries are:

- unusual distribution which does not fit the explanation;
- scalds to the buttocks caused by dunking in hot water;
- cigarette burns on limbs, trunk or face;
- burns to buttocks and limbs caused by holding the child on a hot object, eg stove or radiator, often as punishment for wetting or soiling

Bone and Joint Injuries

Any fracture or joint injury in a young baby should be brought to the attention of a doctor immediately

Fractures may go unnoticed in a baby or small child. The injury may not be obvious but should be suspected if the baby is reluctant to move the limb, cries when handled, or when there is a swelling around a limb or joint. Fractures heal quickly in young children but the swelling may remain for several weeks.

Skull fractures should always be suspected if there is bruising to the head of a young baby. A doctor should see the child quickly. Unusual drowsiness, fits or vomiting may indicate intracranial damage.

Rib fractures are often overlooked and only come to light when a skeletal survey is undertaken.

Limb fractures The affected limb is painful and the child will be reluctant to use it. She/he will cry when being handled for bathing or dressing. There may be no outward signs of injury at first; later a swelling may be apparent. The injury may be a fractured bone or a "pull" injury of the elbow or shoulder. Finger joint injuries may show tapering swellings.

Internal Injuries

Intracranial Haemorrhage Serious damage may be caused to a baby by shaking injuries. There may be no external evidence of injury but fingertip bruising may be seen on the chest, shoulders and upper arms. The injured child may be drowsy and may vomit or have convulsions.

Abdomen or Chest Violent shaking or poking injuries can cause haemorrhage or rupture of internal organs. There may be little evidence of external injury but the child may appear shocked with pallor, sweating and a weak pulse.

Poisoning

Poisoning of children by their parents or carer is unusual but sometimes parents or carers do give their children tablets, medicine or tranquillisers. If poisoning occurs it may give rise to puzzling, often recurrent, episodes of illness.

Physical and Nutritional Neglect

Failure to grow properly may indicate serious neglect. The child may be generally undersized or of average height but seriously underweight. Health Visitor advice should be sought.

Emotional Abuse

Children may exhibit difficult and disturbed behaviour which may be evidence of emotional abuse.

Parental behaviour can interfere with the self-esteem and movements towards competence which are part of the child's growth. These behaviours include over-protection and exploitation by the parents for their own emotional needs.