

The Child Protection Medical

Information for patients and carers

This article explains the Child Protection Medical process we follow to ensure that children are kept safe where there are concerns around possible neglect or abuse.

We understand that you may be concerned about this process and we will try our best to explain everything and listen to any concerns you or your child/ren may have.

Because safeguarding is a legal process, it is very important that you understand what we are doing and why, so please ask questions – we are all here to help.

Professional responsibility for safeguarding babies children and young people

All professionals including healthcare practitioners, have a legal duty to promote the health and welfare of all children to make sure they grow up in environments which support them to be happy and healthy.

This duty requires all professionals to protect children under 18 from the risk of harm. To find out more about this duty please see the document in the link below, or ask one of the staff to show you the relevant sections.

[Working together to safeguard children - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

How do we protect Babies Children and Young People?

When someone raises a concern to Childrens Social Care that your child has or may have been abused there are clear procedures that need to be followed by all agencies; you can find all these procedures on this website. [Welcome \(proceduresonline.com\)](http://www.proceduresonline.com). Hospitals and clinics also have their own clear policies and procedures for keeping children safe and responding to any concerns about a child's welfare.

If the concerns raised are around your child being physically abused, sexually abused or neglected, a Social Worker will review the information and decide (sometimes with the Police) whether to arrange a meeting (known as a Strategy Meeting). This meeting is held as soon as possible to discuss the concerns and to share relevant information from agencies relating to your child and family.

This meeting always includes a Social Worker, a Police representative, a health/medical professional and sometimes a representative from any agency who has significant information about your child or family which would contribute to a better understanding of any concerns and to decide what the next steps should be.

Keeping you informed

You will always be informed of the outcome of the Strategy meeting, and you may be asked to take your child to the hospital or community clinic for a Child Protection Medical Examination; This does not mean that your child has been abused and following the examination it may be concluded that there are no concerns about possible neglect or abuse.

Sometimes the Social Worker or Doctor will also ask for other children who live with your child to also be examined.

Consent

You will be asked to confirm that you have legal responsibility for your child, and then to agree (consent) to any medical examinations and investigations which may be necessary. The paediatric and nursing team will always make sure you and your child understand what is happening every step of the way and why.

The team may also ask your child for their consent and check their understanding. The team will make sure that your child is comfortable with their understanding before the examination proceeds.

PLEASE NOTE: You or your child can change your mind and ask for the examination to stop at any point.

If you or your child feel unable to give consent for the Child Protection Medical at any point, then this may need to be discussed with colleagues in Children's Services and/or the Police in order to ensure your child's safety.



Your Child and the Child Protection Medical

Working in partnership to safeguard your child.

We understand that it is upsetting to have concerns raised about your child's safety and wellbeing. The paediatric team and colleagues from other agencies will always try to work closely with parents and carers and children/young people to offer support at this difficult time and we ask that you work with medical and nursing staff, and the other agencies involved, in the best interests of your child.

Where do Child Protection Medicals take place.

There are two Child Protection Medical units in Hertfordshire, and you will usually be asked to attend the unit which is nearest to you. A leaflet is available for each of the individual units below with more information.

<p>The Brambles Clinic Lister Hospital Stevenage.</p>	<p> ENHT Bramble Suite CP Medical 2021.pdf</p>
<p>Peace Children’s Centre Community Clinic</p>	<p> HCT Leaflet for CP medical Oct 2023.pd</p>

The Child Protection Medical Assessment

Arrangements will be made for an experienced children’s doctor to see you and your child as soon as possible at a community or hospital clinic. If your child has a special toy or comforter, it would be helpful to bring this with you to the hospital or clinic as it can be really reassuring for your child during these procedures.

The Doctor will take a history of events and do a physical examination. A chaperone (another member of the team and or a person with parental responsibility) should always be present during these examinations.

Your allocated Social Worker will be able to talk to you about the child protection process and any decisions which may need to be made about your child’s safety, including plans for discharge from the hospital

Medical Assessments and Investigations

These can include:

- **Blood and urine tests** – these may be needed to look for any other medical cause for the concerns. Sometimes there is a bit of a delay in the results coming back as the tests may need to go to another hospital to be looked at.
- **X-rays** – there may be different sorts of X-rays taken or even a special X-ray survey of your child’s body. The consultant paediatrician will explain the examination that your child needs, and there will be an opportunity for you to ask any questions. It may be possible for you to be present, and you may be asked to help your child to remain still in order that the pictures we take are clear. You will be asked to wear a protective apron to protect yourself from the X-rays. If you have any concerns regarding radiation risk, please discuss these with the doctor.
- Some images X-rays have to be repeated after a number of days – this is to help radiographers identify any healing fractures. You will be given an information leaflet with more details on the process and will have the opportunity to ask any questions after reading through this before you consent.
- **CT Head scan** – in this investigation, special X-ray pictures are taken of the skull and brain. These scans are done to check for any signs of brain injuries

or damage. Whilst this usually only takes about 10 minutes, it is really important that your child stays very still so it may be necessary for your child to have some medication to help them relax.

- **Eye examinations** – sometimes a specialist eye doctor may be asked to examine the back of the child's eye (the retina) which will help determine if there is any injury.
- **Medical photography** – Sometimes your child's doctor may request specialist medical photographs to document any injuries seen, this will be discussed with you. All images taken this way are stored securely on the hospital's IT systems. The doctor will discuss what images are going to be taken and will ask for written consent before they are done.
- **Intimate examination** – a senior doctor may need to look at your child's genital area as part of the routine Child Protection Medical Assessment, however, if it is suspected or has been disclosed that your child has been sexually abused, they will need to be seen by doctors and nurses with additional training. Arrangements for such examination at a specialist clinic will be discussed with you. (Please see section below)

Child protection sexual abuse medical assessments

Should you or someone else mention that they are worried that your child may have been sexually abused or hurt in some way it may be requested that your child has a specialist examination at a specific clinic called the SARC (Sexual Assault Referral Centre).

The SARC has specialist doctors and nurses who are specially trained to examine your child and they will explain each step of the process with you

The same process for gaining consent applies, and as mentioned earlier, you or your child can stop any part of the process at any time.

Some more information around the SARC can be found in the link below:

[Herts – SARC \(hertssarc.org\)](http://hertssarc.org) or tel 0330 223 0099 (24 Hours)

Information sharing and storage

In order to collect information about your child and their carers, the paediatric team may also talk to your GP, Health Visitor, School Nurse or other agencies which may help.

The Child Protection Medical Report, photographs, videos and any forms completed as part of the assessment are stored securely within your child's Hospital or clinic medical records. A written report is shared with your child's GP, the School Nurse or Health Visitor, the Social Worker (and the Police if necessary.)

If you need more information about how confidential health information is managed, please ask one of the doctors or nurses in the hospital/clinic.

Who do I speak to if I need more information?

Please speak to the medical or nursing staff looking after your child.

If you need more information about the child protection process, please speak to your child's allocated Social Worker or see the websites for the Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership ['What is Going on'](#) leaflet

Please remember...

- There is no such thing as a 'silly question' – we will always listen, so just ask.
- If you don't understand what we are doing, or why, keep asking us to explain until you do
- Feeling upset is only natural, but please remember our staff are only doing their job
- We all want the best for your child