

This leaflet explains the duty of health workers (including doctors and nurses) in safeguarding children and young people under the age of 18 years.

Who is this leaflet for?

This leaflet is for children, young people and their families. This includes children and young people under the care of Queen Victoria Hospital (QVH) whether visiting the minor injuries unit, attending an outpatient clinic or staying in hospital.

Why do we need to safeguard children and young people?

All children have the right to grow up safely. QVH is committed to providing a high standard of service for the health and well-being of every child and young person seen by its staff.

The law places a duty on all NHS staff to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and protect them from significant harm. There are policies and procedures that QVH staff must follow if they are worried a child is being abused, neglected or put at risk of harm or if children and young people:

- present with unexplained injuries
- are not brought in for appointments
- do not complete their treatment

What does this mean if a child or young person has an injury?

Children and young people often have accidental injuries. However, some children are not kept safe and may suffer injuries which could have been prevented or are not accidental.

Injuries can occur in many ways. Whenever doctors, nurses and other health professionals see children and young people with injuries, they have a legal duty to consider how the injuries happened. During assessments at QVH staff will ask the following questions about the injury.

- What happened?
- Was it witnessed?
- What first aid was given?
- What health services advised you or saw your child?
- Can you write down what happened?

If it is unclear how a child or young person was injured, or if there are concerns about their safety, staff may ask more questions or ask for photographs to help them consider what has happened and help them decide what to do next.

What does it mean if a child or young person is not brought for an appointment or not completed their treatment?

If a child or young person is not brought to clinical appointments they may be at risk of harm because

- there is a lack of engagement with NHS clinicians to assess medical needs, or
- treatment has not been undertaken or
- treatment is incomplete.

The needs and risks for each child or young person are considered by a consultant before any decisions are made about next steps.

Sharing information and confidentiality

Sometimes a nurse or doctor will seek advice or information from someone else in QVH such as a burns consultant, paediatrician, orthodontist, therapist, plastic surgeon, senior nurse or safeguarding nurse.

Staff may come back to you and ask for more information to help them better understand what has happened.

We may need to talk about your child and family with people who know you such as your GP, health visitor, school nurse, children and

adolescent mental health services (CAMHS), social worker or police, if they are involved. We will keep you informed and offer help and support.

The information we collect about your child and family will be stored in written records and on a secure NHS computer system.

When a child is discharged from QVH we always write to their GP and health visitor/school nurse to let them know what healthcare has been provided.

The safety of your child is the most important thing and this is always our first concern. We will work with you to achieve this goal.

What happens next?

This will depend on the outcome of the assessments at QVH. QVH treatment and advice will be provided and, in addition, it may be agreed that liaison with or referral to other services may be required to support you and your child.

Who can I talk to about my child's care at QVH?

We appreciate and encourage feedback. If you need advice or are concerned about any aspect of care or treatment please speak to a member of staff.

If you are unhappy with your child's care or the process we have followed, talk it over with your child's nurse, doctor, or the nurse in charge of the minor injuries unit, peanut ward or clinic. You may also speak confidentially to the hospital's

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS). You can ask your nurse to contact them or get in touch directly on 01342 414355 or qvh.pals@nhs.net

Safeguarding Children and Young People

A guide for families

Please ask if you would like this leaflet in larger print or a different format.

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