NHS
The Leeds Teaching Hospitals
NHS Trust

What happens when we have safeguarding concerns about your child

Information for patients and carers

leeds children's hospital
caring about children

This leaflet explains the safeguarding process we always follow to ensure that children in our care are kept safe where there are concerns about neglect or abuse.

We understand that this process can be worrying, but we will explain everything and listen to you and your child's concerns.

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

The Children and Midwifery Safeguarding Team and staff at the hospital are guided by the following key principles:

- Children have a right to be safe and should be protected from all forms of abuse and neglect.
- Safeguarding children is everyone's responsibility.
- It is better to help children and their families as early as possible, before issues escalate and become more damaging.
- Children and families are best supported and protected when everybody works together.

What is safeguarding?

Safeguarding is the action that is taken to promote the welfare of children and protect them from harm.

Safeguarding means:

- Protecting children from abuse
- Preventing harm to children's health or development
- Ensuring children grow up safely and well cared for.

Why do we safeguard?

The Leeds Teaching Hospital Trust is committed to protecting the children and young people using our services from harm, abuse or neglect.

Concerns about your child's safety or welfare have been raised. Our job is to help work out if there is a reason for those concerns and if we can understand or resolve that worry by asking you and other agencies for help.

What is our responsibility in safeguarding children?

The Children Act 1989 and 2004 makes it a legal duty for all Leeds Teaching Hospital staff to protect all children under 18 from the risk of significant harm. Our legal duties include safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children and young people to make sure they grow up happy and healthy.

If there is a concern about the safety or welfare of your child we will follow child protection policies and procedures as set by the Leeds Safeguarding Children Partnership (LSCP).

Consent

You will be asked to confirm you have 'parental responsibility' and then provide consent for us to undertake any assessments that are needed. We will also make sure you understand what is happening with each process and why.

We may also ask your child for their consent as long as we feel they fully understand what is involved.

However, there are occasions when your consent is not legally needed, because the law requires us to share certain information with Children Social Care or the Police if it is in the child's best interest.

The Process

An experienced children's doctor will take a history of events and may do a physical examination. The doctor might feel that further tests, or photographs are needed to help get a better understanding of what might be causing us to worry.

If there is a concern about the safety or welfare of your child we share our information with Children Social Care so with their support we can ensure that your child receives the best help or protection needed.

Child Protection

Child protection aims to keep children safe where there is a serious risk of harm.

Children Social Care are always informed if we follow this process as they have a legal duty to investigate our child protection concerns.

Child Protection Medical Examination

A senior doctor may need to complete a 'Child Protection Medical Examination' to check for any signs of harm that may have happened to your child. If a Child Protection Medical Examination is required you will be provided with further information about this process.

Working in partnership to safeguard your child

We understand that it is upsetting to have concerns raised about a child's safety and wellbeing. We always try to work in partnership with parents and carers to offer support. We ask that you cooperate with us and the other agencies involved in the best interests of your child.

The rights of the child are:

- to be safe and protected from harm, abuse or neglect
- to be heard and have their views and feelings considered
- to appropriate confidentiality
- to be protected and supported
- to be kept informed and updated according to their age and understanding
- to ask for explanations and to raise concerns
- to consent or refuse medical examinations as long as they fully understand what is involved
- to have an interpreter if needed
- to have a chaperone

Your rights:

- to be heard
- to be supported
- to be kept informed and involved
- to ask for explanations and appropriate confidentiality
- to seek legal advice and complain
- to have an interpreter if needed
- to request a chaperone

Looking after and sharing information about your child

In order to gather and share information we will ask for your consent to contact your child's GP, Health Visitor, School Nurse, or other agencies that may help.

We have updated our Privacy Notices in line with the data protection legislation (General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)/Data Protection Act 2018. For more information about how we use your personal data please visit our website at:

http://www.leedsth.nhs.uk/patients-visitors/patient-and-visitor-information/how-we-use-your-data/

Who do I speak to if I need further information?

Please speak to the nurse looking after your child who will contact the Consultant Paediatrician in charge of your child's care.

If you need more information about the child protection process, please contact the Social Worker appointed to the child's care if applicable.

If you are unhappy with the healthcare your child has received please make contact with:

Patient Advice Liaison Service

Tel: 0113 206 6261
Email: patientexperience.leedsth@nhs.net

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 understand.
- Feeling upset is only natural, but please remember our staff are just doing their job.

Useful Contacts

Leeds Children Social Work Services

Tel: 0113 222 4403

Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB)

To find your nearest CAB visit: www.adviceguide.org.uk

NSPCC

Child Protection Helpline: 0808 800 5000

Leeds Safeguarding Children Partnership (LSCP)

Website: www.leedsscp.org.uk/families

What did you think of your care? Visit **bit.ly/nhsleedsfft**
Your views matter

© The Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust • 3rd edition (Ver 1)
Developed by: Louise Barnes, Named Nurse for Safeguarding Children
Produced by: Medical Illustration Services • MID code: M20240717_008/BP

LN004735
Publication date 07/2024
Review date 07/2027