



## FACT SHEET: Section 47 Protocol: responding to concerns about injuries or abuse in infants under two years old

The protocol is for partner agencies of Sheffield Safeguarding Children Board (SSCB). The information aims to support workers, who encounter injuries or other possible types of abuse in this age group, to decide if there may be cause for concern and if so, what actions to take. All Practitioners are reminded that it is their responsibility to identify and report any concerns, not to diagnose or prove abuse. Working collaboratively and sharing information effectively is essential.

### Developmental Stages

Infants under the age of two can be divided into two groups:

- Non-mobile
- Mobile or partially mobile

This distinction is important because there are certain injuries that do not usually occur as a result of an accident by non-mobile infants. Bear in mind that Infants are vulnerable. Infants develop at different rates in their cognitive development as well as in learning how to interact with others, verbally and non-verbally, and how to play.

All developmental achievements, or lack of them, should always be recorded by staff working with the child.

### Actions to be taken

Do:

- Write down any information and history
- Record your own observations
- Complete a Body Map
- Sign, time and date all records/notes of the events
- Seek advice from a line/designated manager or specialist agency
- Record the advice given
- Refer to Children's Services
- Record the outcome of the referral and any action taken

Practitioners, employees, managers, helpers, carers and volunteers in all agencies must make a referral to Children's Social Care (See **chapter 1.1**) if it is believed or suspected that a child is suffering or is likely to suffer Significant Harm. Advice may be sought about the appropriateness of the referral from Sheffield Safeguarding Advisory Service, Children's Social Care or, if the case is open, from the allocated social worker. Alternatively advice may be sought from a Designated Senior Person or Named Practitioner from within the referrer's own agency.

### Recognition

**Chapter 1.3** in Sheffield Safeguarding Children Board procedures manual has the full details of the Protocol and explores specific signs to look out for. Some examples are set out below:

- Any injury should have a clear, acceptable and logical explanation that is consistent with the history and the infant's age and developmental abilities.
- Any delay in seeking medical advice or reporting an injury or multiple injuries is of concern
- Any admission of physical punishment from parents / carers, as no punishment is acceptable at this age
- Inconsistent or absent explanation from parents / carers and patterns of injuries/concerns
- Associated Family factors such as neglect, substance misuse, mental health problems, and domestic abuse including marital and Contact disputes
- Persistent failure by parents / carers to engage with medical and other health appointments.
- Being consistently dressed in inappropriate clothing for example, for the weather or their size
- Parents are negative or hostile towards the infant and reject them or use them as a scapegoat
- Parents have inappropriate interactions with the child, including threats or attempts to discipline them
- Sexual abuse of infants under two years old is not common but should not be discounted
- Fabricated or induced illness might be suspected when a baby's history, physical or psychological presentation leads to a discrepancy with a recognised medical condition
- Symptoms only being reported when occurring in the presence of the parent / carer
- Unexpectedly poor response to medical treatment and new symptoms occurring as old ones disappear