

What happens when your child has been referred for a child protection medical in the community?

Information for parents

This information leaflet will help explain what happens when a safeguarding concern has been raised about your child and a social worker has requested a **child protection medical** for them. We understand that this can be a very difficult time for you and your family, and we would like to support your family in whatever way we can. Please let us know about any concerns or questions you or your child may have.

What is safeguarding?

As professionals who work with children and young people, we have a responsibility to protect children in our care from harm. If there is a concern that a child or young person is at risk of neglect or abuse, we must take steps to ensure their safety. This is known as safeguarding.

Working in partnership to safeguard your child

Children and families are best supported and protected when everybody works together. For this reason, the doctor you will see will want to work with you. When the social worker looking after your child asks for the medical, they will tell the doctor some information about why they feel your child needs the medical. The social worker may also share some background information about your family.

It is usually beneficial to work with other agencies to safeguard children. For this reason, a copy of the report the doctor writes would usually be sent to your GP, health visitor, social worker, and sometimes the police. We will discuss this with you and your child (if they are old enough) and ask for your consent. We will not share information with parties if we do not think this would be of benefit to your child.



What if I do not give my consent?

We will always consider the reasons why you have refused consent and try our best to come to an agreement with you. However, your child is our number one priority and as such, if we feel there is a risk of harm to your child, we may proceed to share information if this is in the best interests of your child.

What is a child protection medical examination?

If your child's social worker has referred your child for a **child protection medical examination**, you will usually be offered an appointment within 24 hours. This appointment may be in several locations across east Kent (Ashford, Canterbury, Dover, Folkestone, or Margate). Your child's social worker will usually help you with transport if this is difficult.

The child protection medical can take a long time (one to two hours). If your child is young, it can be helpful if you bring a drink, snack, and something to entertain them. It is also a good idea to dress your child in loose fitting clothing, which can be easily removed for their examination.

A senior doctor will complete the child protection medical examination. This is an assessment of your child, looking for any signs of harm but also checking your child's general health and development.

The doctor will ask about the events which have caused social services to ask for a child protection medical. They will also ask questions about your child's medical history and any medical conditions they may have. If you have your red book with you, this will be very helpful. It is also useful if you bring details of your child's dentist and optician.

The doctor will also do a full physical examination of your child. This will involve looking at and noting any signs of harm and examining your child generally, including listening to their chest, feeling their tummy, and looking in their mouth and ears.

The doctor who examines your child will be very experienced. They will do their best to put you and your child at ease and make the experience as positive as possible. If you have any comments or concerns during the process, you should feel free to raise them with the doctor examining your child. A chaperone will also be present throughout your child's examination. An interpreter will be provided if you do not understand English.

What tests/investigations might my child have?

After examining your child, the doctor may think some more tests would be helpful to help us get a better understanding of what is causing the safeguarding concern. The doctor will explain these investigations to you and ask for your consent. If your child is old enough, we will ask for their consent aswell. These investigations might include the following.

- **Blood tests**

Blood tests might be arranged, particularly to check if your child is prone to bleeding or bruising. The doctor may also ask whether there is anyone with bleeding or clotting problems in your family. These tests may take a little time to come back because they may need to be sent away to different hospitals.

- **Photographs**

Sometimes we may need to take photographs of your child, especially if there are visible injuries. This is a more accurate way of keeping a record of what has happened. These will be taken by specialised medical photographers. The images will be stored very carefully in your child's notes and will only be shared when this is of benefit to your child, and preferably only with your consent and knowledge.

Sometimes the doctor may feel that your child needs more investigations, which can only be done in hospital. If this is the case, the doctor will explain this to you and arrange for your child to go to hospital.

What happens next?

Once the medical examinations and any investigations are complete, a full report will be written by the doctor who examined your child. This will document the findings from the history, examination, and investigations. This report will be stored securely in your child's notes and shared with social services and your GP.

Children's Social Care will use the information in the report to plan how best to safeguard your child. Social Care may arrange meetings which you can go to to discuss this plan. In some cases, children may have to stay with other family members or foster carers whilst the investigations are completed.

Who should I speak to if I have more questions?

If you have questions about your child's health, please talk to the doctor at your child's protection medical examination. They should be able answer any questions you may have.

If you have questions about the child protection process, you should contact the social worker assigned to your child's case.

If you are unhappy with any aspect of your child's medical care, contact the Patient Advice Liaison Service on 01227 78 31 45 or you can send an email to ekh-tr.pals@nhs.net

If you would like this information in **another language, audio, Braille, Easy Read, or large print** please ask a member of staff. You can ask someone to contact us on your behalf.

Any complaints, comments, concerns, or compliments please speak to your doctor or nurse, or contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on 01227 78 31 45, or email ekh-tr.pals@nhs.net

Patients should not bring in large sums of money or valuables into hospital. Please note that East Kent Hospitals accepts no responsibility for the loss or damage to personal property, unless the property had been handed in to Trust staff for safe-keeping.

Further patient leaflets are available via the East Kent Hospitals web site www.ekhufft.nhs.uk/patientinformation