



Responding to bruising and injuries to non-mobile babies and children

(There is supplementary guidance for Health, MASH and social care professionals which should be read alongside this protocol)

Non-mobile babies and children very rarely cause injuries to themselves and therefore must be considered at significant risk of abuse.

Definition of non- mobile:

A baby or child who is not crawling, bottom shuffling, pulling to stand, cruising or walking independently.

This includes any child with a disability who is not able to move independently is also considered non-mobile.

All bruises or injuries to non-mobile babies or children must be reported by phoning MASH (0300 456 0108).

In all cases where a bruise or injury is observed an explanation about the cause should be sought and the explanation(s) recorded. Professionals should also record exactly what has been seen (e.g. site of injury or bruise, size and shape etc). It is imperative that the professional does not suggest to the parent/carer how the injury occurred.

When you report to MASH you will be asked for your observations about the baby. The member of staff who has observed the injury also needs to be available. You will be asked to make a written referral as follow up.

Once reported, a multi-agency discussion will take place within MASH, which may involve the referring practitioner. Multi-agency information sharing allows for sensible, informed judgements regarding the child's safety to be made.

Further multi-agency checks will be made and a decision about whether a Strategy Discussion is needed. All potential injuries will be risk assessed immediately and a plan will be put in place to reflect the immediacy of the situation and location of the child. If you are in a setting where there are time limitations (e.g. child being collected from nursery in the next hour, please make MASH aware of this when you report).

Where the baby/child has an allocated social worker please contact them, or the Duty Social Worker if they are not available, to discuss concerns. If for any reason you are unable to contact the area team or are not able to speak to someone you must contact MASH for advice. DO NOT leave an answerphone message.

The parent/carer should be informed about the process and given a [leaflet for parents](#) explaining what will happen next (link).

Please note: any child who is thought to be seriously ill or injured, or in need of urgent treatment should be transported immediately to hospital. It is important to ensure that the child's medical needs are treated first. A referral should then be made to MASH and the child protection procedures followed if appropriate.

**Bruising in non-mobile babies and children is unusual
.... therefore, if you see a bruise or injury you
must report it**



Research Findings

- A bruise or injury must never be interpreted in isolation and must always be assessed in the context of medical and social history, developmental stage and explanation given. This is best done as part of a multi-agency Strategy Discussion.
- Bruising in non-mobile babies and children is unusual on any one day 6.7% of non-mobile children will have a bruise.
- National serious case reviews and local cases have indicated that **staff have sometimes underestimated the significance of the presence of bruising or minor injuries in children who are not independently mobile**. They have therefore not considered what appears to be a rather minor injury as an indicator or precursor to significant injuries or death of a child. Early recognition and action in such cases is key to preventing further injuries.
- **Severe child abuse is 6 times more common in babies aged under 1 year** than in older children
- Infants under the age of one are more at risk of being killed at the hands of another person, usually a carer, than any other age group of children in England and Wales. Non-mobile babies very rarely cause injuries to themselves and therefore must be considered at significant risk of abuse. Multi-agency information sharing allows for sensible, informed judgements regarding the child's safety to be made.
- Infant deaths from non-accidental injuries often have a history of minor injuries prior to hospital admission.
- Patterns of bruising suggestive of physical child abuse in infants include:
 - Bruising or injuries in babies or children who are not independently mobile
 - bruises to the face, back, abdomen, arms, buttocks, ears or hands
 - multiple or clustered bruising
 - imprinting and petechiae (for example pinch marks, grab marks particularly around the face)
 - bleeding from the nose or mouth

Contact details

Wiltshire MASH: 0300 456 0108

Monday – Thursday: 8:45am – 5pm

Friday: 8:45am – 4pm

Emergency Duty Service: 0300 456 0100

Weekdays: 5pm-9am

Weekends: 4pm Friday – 9am

Monday Bank Holidays: 24 Hours

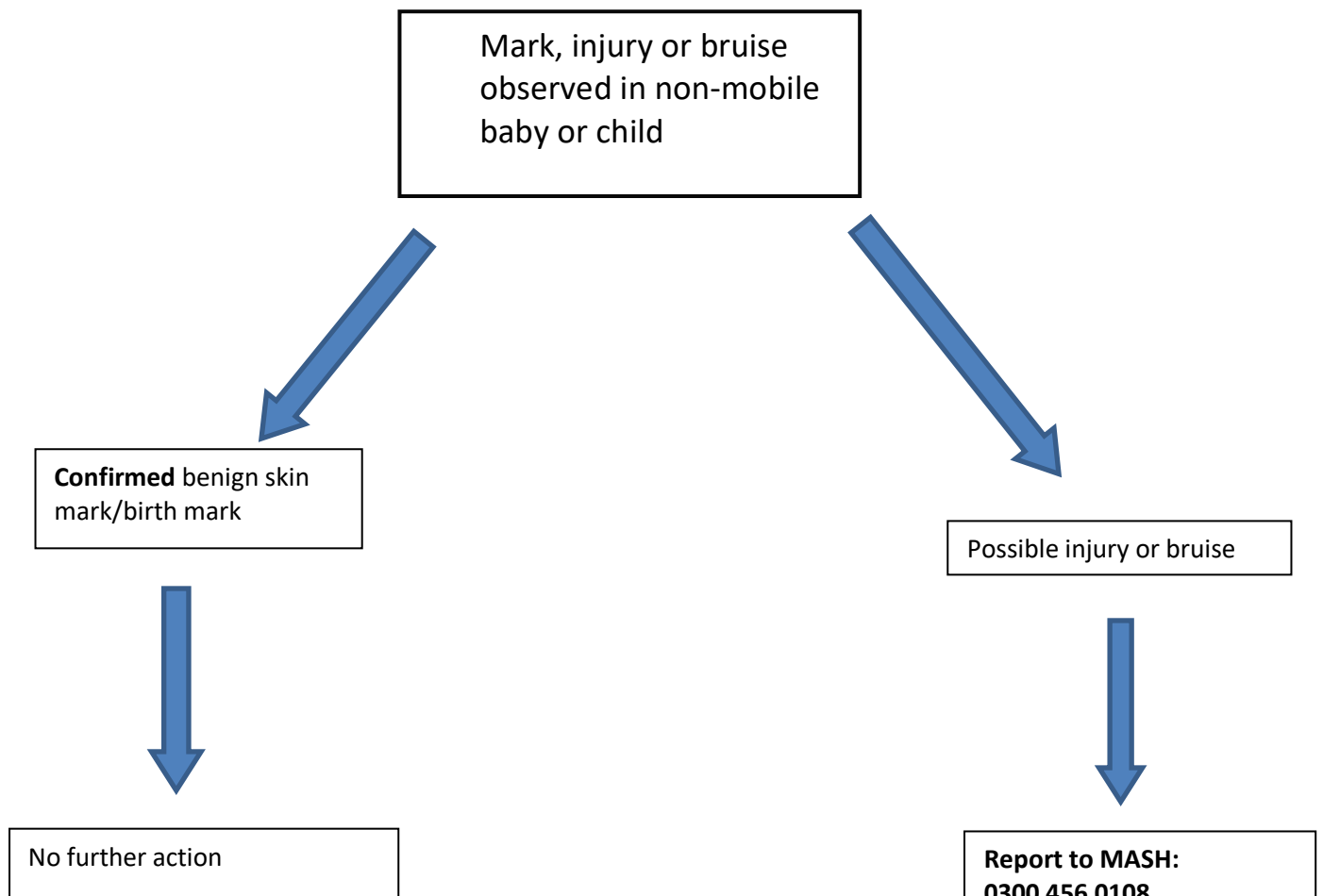
For more information:

[NSPCC Leaflet Bruising in Children](#)

[WSCB Safeguarding unborn babies and under 1s](#)

[Responding to bruising and injuries to non-mobile babies and children](#)

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