

Child Protection (CP) Medicals

Background: A CP medical is a comprehensive medical assessment undertaken either at the request of social care or police, or when a referral has been or is about to be made by a clinician to social care in the context of concerns for the wellbeing of a child already receiving clinical care. It includes clinical history & examination & detailed documentation. It also includes obtaining any relevant investigations, arranging any necessary aftercare and writing a report with an opinion (RCPCH 2020). “The investigation and management of a case of possible deliberate harm to a child must be approached in the same systematic and rigorous manner as would be appropriate to the investigation and management of any other potentially fatal disease.” (Victoria Climbié Inquiry)

Why it Matters: CP medicals: identify a child’s health needs; help reduce the physical & psychological consequences of abuse; determine the likelihood of abuse on the balance of probability; facilitate police investigation of a possible crime by documenting clinical findings (including injuries) & taking samples that may be used as evidence. They demonstrate a holistic approach to the child, including a basic assessment of wellbeing, including mental health, development and cognitive ability and contribute to the multi-agency assessment through sharing of information.

Further Information and Resources:

[Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health Child Protection Companion \(2013\)](#)

[Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health Safeguarding children and young people – roles and competencies \(2019\)](#)

[Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health Good practice service delivery standards for the management of children referred for child protection medical assessments \(2020\)](#)

[SARC Dewberry House](#)

[CSA Pathway](#)



Information: A CP medical must always be considered when there is an allegation, suspicion or disclosure of abuse involving a suspicious injury or serious neglect. A strategy meeting or discussion will determine, in consultation with the paediatrician, the need & timing for the assessment and will bring together relevant professionals.

Consent: Consent can be obtained from: a child or young person with the maturity and understanding to make the decision; a person with parental responsibility if the child or young person does not have the capacity to give consent; the courts –eg the family courts or Royal Court. If child is on a care order, Children’s Social Care can provide consent.

Only specially trained paediatricians should physically examine the whole child for a CP medical. Other health staff should note any visible marks or injuries on a body map and document details. If sexual abuse is suspected, then follow the [CSA Pathway](#)

A medical will be necessary when there are any of the following present:

- Reasonable suspicion of significant harm to a younger or vulnerable child
- Serious injury and assault is established or considered likely
- Inconsistencies in explanations given
- evidence of previous injuries
- indications of detectable previous injuries, or neglect, or other suspicious physical presentations