

**Key updates: February-March 2023:** please share this briefing of updates with any relevant colleagues working across safeguarding and child protection.

Dear Colleagues,

I wanted to give you an update on the work of the Committee and information on other key areas and publications you might find useful. There are a few issues I need to specifically mention to you as follows:

1. I expect that most of you are aware of the [Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel briefing on Bruising in non-mobile infants](#) which was published in September 2022. The RCPCH did submit evidence on this topic to the panel. It is important to note the recommendation that whilst not all marks on a non-mobile infant necessarily require a Section 47 enquiry, any paediatric assessment of the infant needs to be carried out in the context of both information sharing and a multi-agency discussion.
2. The RCPCH is aware that the joint guidance the [radiological investigation of suspected physical abuse in children](#) is due for revision. Our radiology colleagues will be leading on this. Until the guidance is revised, it still stands. There have been some concerns that not all skeletal surveys are being completed with follow up films. As with all guidance, it has to be applied by clinicians with knowledge and experience who may deviate from it following discussions with radiology colleagues, if they can justify this and the justification is fully documented.
3. You may be aware that there is a plan for patients to have direct electronic access to their GP health records. This is currently only partially implemented. The degree of access that parents have, when their access is turned off and when a young person's access is turned on is currently under discussion. There are some sensitive documents that paediatricians share with GPs that may require in-person explanation and communication or may not be shared until court proceedings allow this. The RCPCH are therefore recommending that sensitive documents such as child protection reports, LAC assessments and adoption reports are marked clearly 'NOT FOR ELECTRONIC ACCESS' on the front page when being shared with primary care. It is important to note that this does not necessarily guarantee that reports will not be shared electronically, but in most cases we expect GP practices to follow this recommendation. If a report is particularly sensitive, how to proceed may need to be discussed with the GP practice safeguarding lead and your organisational safeguarding lead.

This will be my last communication to you as RCPCH Officer for Child Protection as my 5-year term has come to an end. We have appointed a new Officer for Child Protection, Professor Andrew Rowland. Andrew is a Consultant Paediatrician in Manchester and an Honorary Professor (Children's Rights, Law, and Advocacy) at the University of Salford. Find out more about him [here](#).

Thank you all for your hard work and dedication in safeguarding vulnerable children.

Best wishes

*Alison*

Alison Steele, previous RCPCH Officer for Child Protection.

## **Work of the RCPCH Child Protection Standing Committee**

Below is a summary of some of the other pieces of work that are currently being discussed and undertaken by the Committee:

- The Committee is continuing to develop the College's position statement on mandatory reporting following the publication of the [IICSA report](#).
- Workforce issues
- Bone pathology in child protection
- Safeguarding in private practice
- NHS 111
- Healthcare standards for children and young people in secure settings
- [AESAC report- assessing age in unaccompanied asylum-seeking children](#). Our response to this report can be found [here](#).

## **RCPCH Recent and Upcoming publications**

We have responded to the proposed 'Illegal Migration Bill' which can be found on our website [here](#)

We have understandably received messages of concern from some of our members, particularly those who carry out health assessments for children and young people arriving in the UK to seek asylum. These paediatricians may be given information by the young person about their journey and mode of entry, which will be recorded in the child's medical records. It is unlikely to be relevant or necessary for the ongoing safeguarding and wellbeing for that child to have those details repeated in the following medical report, and the only obligation on you as a paediatrician is to record the specific health needs that arise from the information a child or young person provides you with.

### **Child Protection Portal**

A range of our publications and other child protection resources including the Child Protection Companion can be found on the RCPCH [Child Protection Portal](#).

RCPCH members can access the portal. Options for access by non-members and organisations can be found [here](#). To find out more about subscribing for a team or organisation, please contact [child.protection@rcpch.ac.uk](mailto:child.protection@rcpch.ac.uk)

### **Latest updates to the Child Protection Evidence reviews:**

The Child Protection Evidence Systematic Reviews on Oral Injuries, Bites and Dental Neglect are due to be updated. Updating of the head/spinal injuries systematic review will begin in soon. These reviews are part of the [Child Protection Evidence systematic review series](#).

### **Updates to the Child Protection Companion**

The following chapter of the Child Protection Companion has been updated:

- Chapter 9 Recognition of Physical Abuse

The [Child Protection Companion](#) can be accessed via the RCPCH [Child Protection Portal](#).

## **Education**

[Supporting named and designated doctors for looked after children – Online course](#). This one-day online course, and accompanying pre-course eLearning, aims to equip named and designated doctors (namely paediatricians) working with looked after children with a comprehensive understanding of their role, and develop the skills needed to fulfil their wide-ranging responsibilities as leads in both their organisations and the multi-agency arena.

A full range of virtual and eLearning Safeguarding courses can be found on our [website](#).

## **Stay in touch**

The Child Protection Standing Committee meets three times a year and these summaries of our work are made available on the RCPCH Child Protection Portal. An email linking to these summaries is sent to all those who have updated their contact preferences on the RCPCH website to receive updates about child protection.

For further information please contact: [health.policy@rcpch.ac.uk](mailto:health.policy@rcpch.ac.uk).