WHEN TO SUSPECT CHILD MALTREATMENT - QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE

Using this guidance - Flowchart

Listen and Observe

Take into account the whole picture of the child or young person.
Sources of information that help to do this include:

- symptom
- physical sign
- result of an investigation
- interaction between the parent or carer and child or young person
- any history that is given
- report of maltreatment, or disclosure from a child or young person or third party
- child's appearance, demeanour or behaviour

Seek an Explanation

Seek an explanation for any injury or presentation from both the parent or carer and the child or young person in an open and non-judgemental manner.

An **unsuitable explanation** is one that is:

- implausible, inadequate or inconsistent:
  - with the child or young person's presentation, normal activities, medical condition (if one exists), age or developmental stage, or account compared with that given by parent and carers
  - between parents or carers
  - between accounts over time
- based on cultural practice, because this should not justify hurting a child or young person.

Record

Record in the child or young person's clinical record exactly what is observed and heard from whom and when. Record why this is of concern.

CONSIDER child maltreatment

If an alerting feature prompts you to consider child maltreatment:

- look for other alerting features of maltreatment in the child or young person's history, presentation or parent – or carer–child interactions now or in the past.

And do one or more of the following:

- Discuss your concerns with a more experienced colleague, a community paediatrician, child and adolescent mental health service colleague, or a named or designated professional for safeguarding children.
- Gather collateral information from other agencies and health disciplines.
- Ensure review of the child or young person at a date appropriate to the concern, looking out for repeated presentations of this or any other alerting features.

At any stage during the process of considering maltreatment the level of concern may change and lead to exclude or suspect maltreatment.

SUSPECT child maltreatment

If an alerting feature or considering child maltreatment prompts you to suspect child maltreatment refer the child or young person to children's social care, following Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures.

Exclude child maltreatment

Exclude child maltreatment if a suitable explanation is found for the alerting feature.

This may be the decision after discussion of the case with a more experienced colleague or gathering collateral information as part of considering child maltreatment.

Record

Record all actions taken and the outcome.