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BACKGROUND

Bruising in immobile babies is rare. Literature highlights “Sentinel” injuries; apparently minor injuries which may precede more serious assault / death. A review of severely injured babies showed learning identical to that in a previous review (Alice). Despite local/national reviews professionals continue to underestimate the significance of minor injuries in infants and poorly assess their risk. [NSPCC SCR Repository](#)



7 Minute Briefing – Bruising in Non-mobile Children

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WHY IT MATTERS

Bruising is strongly related to mobility. It is unusual in a baby who is not mobile and should prompt suspicion of abuse.

Abuse to babies also has implications for the future. Reviews of complex abuse/exploitation show that this often follows earlier physical abuse/neglect. Good early attachment reduces vulnerability

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Why do we not to learn from previous reviews?

We are not sure why the same issues recur but we can suggest some areas to help. This is complex and difficult work and can be draining. Good support and self-reflection is important. Do emotional factors in your approach to work block your assessment? Are you over optimistic or missing disguised compliance? Seek appropriate supervision. **Keep the baby safe. Keep yourself safe.**

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KNOW PREVIOUS LEARNING

Previous lessons about risks to babies were not known to workers. Learning points from previous case reviews are available. It is good practice for new workers / managers to familiarise themselves with Bradford’s recent learning.

Learning from previous case reviews is available for planning training / supervision (see Resources below).

[Safer Bradford Website](#)



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RESPONSE - Follow child protection procedures

Possible serious harm - call 999. Any injury or mark which may be an injury, bruise or burn, in a immobile baby should result in an immediate referral to The IFD (<https://www.bradfordcft.org.uk/talk-to-us-about-a-child/practitioners/>)

Advise carers that a referral to Children’s Social Care and an urgent medical is protocol for all babies with injuries. Provide leaflet. Be open and honest, unless this may put the child at further risk. [Injuries to Non-mobile children leaflets](#)

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RESOURCES

West Yorkshire Procedures protocol – [Non-Mobile Babies with Injuries Joint Protocol](#)

Pre-birth Assessment Guidance - [Pre-birth assessments](#)

NSPCC Core Information bruising [Bruises on children: Core info leaflet | NSPCC Learning](#)

Bradford Continuum of Need - [Continuum of Need](#)

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ASSESSMENTS

Robust analysis is critical in assessing risk to a baby. Consider: 1. Cumulative risk; this episode in the context of previous, not as a single isolated episode. 2. All in the home; invisible males, other adults / children. 3. Other agencies e.g. adult mental health services. 4. Voice of the baby; consider their lived experience, needs, feelings, ability to form attachments. 5. Appropriate documented challenge if you are concerned about a baby. [Professional Disagreements](#)