

## Dog Bite Injury Requiring Treatment

### Protocol for managing a child or vulnerable adult's care in OUH/Oxford Health Urgent Care settings.

#### Legal Issues in relation to dog bites

There are 2 areas of law in relation to dog bites:

Section 3 of the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 makes it an offence for someone to have a dog which is dangerously out of control such that it causes injury to a person. This encompasses any injury whatsoever up to death (which clearly for a child would come under the child death provisions) and can be anywhere. The question as to whether a dog is dangerously out of control is for the investigation/Crown Prosecution Service/a court to decide.

The police have requested all injuries caused by a dog bite towards a child or vulnerable adult if medical assistance is sought should be reported to them either online [Report a crime | Thames Valley Police](#) or by calling 101. In the case of a child this is a potential child protection matter (e.g. has the parent/carer been neglectful in preventing the dog from biting their child)

A MASH referral should be made where there are existing safeguarding concerns and a dog bite has injured a child (0-18y) or if you have significant safeguarding concerns for the child or other children.

#### Actions by Staff:

Families must be informed that because a dog has bitten a child safeguarding checks will be carried out and certain information will be shared with the police, social care and community health care. This comes under Section 3(1) of the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991 and Part 3 Section 47 of The Children's Act 1989.

#### Contact Police:

Call the police on 101 or fill in the online form and share that there is a concern that a dog bite has caused an injury that requires hospital treatment. This should be done whilst the patient is in the emergency department or minor injury unit. The police will then decide what if any course of action is needed. 999 should be called if there is imminent risk of harm to the public or a child.

This is the information that the police need to know when contacting them and so needs to be documented in the notes:

- Details of people involved, the date, time, and location etc.
- Who lives in the home where the dog lives
- Who lives in the home of the family
- Current location of dog (if known)
- Whose dog is it (if known)
- Name of dog and breed (if known)
- Include relevant medical information about current presentation

Record the police incident number on electronic records and give copy to parents/carers.

### **Contact Social Care:**

Complete MASH referral <https://www2.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/node/222403>, if the child lives in Oxfordshire, (if they live out of county, refer to the local MASH for the local area), inform parents of this. Quote the police incident number on the MASH referral if one is made.

If immediate safeguarding concerns telephone MASH on 0345 050 7666 in hours,  
Out of hours call the Emergency Duty Team (EDT) on 0800 833408 (for Oxfordshire)

### **Safeguarding Liaison:**

OUH Emergency department: ED staff must complete Safeguarding Concerns and tick 'yes' on the ED discharge summary and the paediatric assessment.

Oxford Health Minor Injuries Units: staff should complete a Ulysses and tick Safeguarding.

### **Notes:**

When taking the history, in addition to the above information that is needed by the police and social care, the following areas need to be considered, discussed and documented in the patient's electronic patient records. Consider photographing in line with organisational guidance and with consent.

- Is it suspected that the injury is not a dog bite but a form of Non Accidental Injury?
- Do we suspect that parents have failed to protect?
- Is there significant harm or was there potential for significant harm?
- Are there other children at risk of harm?
- Immediate plans for the dog, if the dog is in the family home, to ensure that the child is not being put at any further risk.
- Observations or discussions in relation to the carer's interactions and responses.

If the person bitten is a vulnerable adult, follow the same protocol as above with providing the same information, but contact adult social care and adult safeguarding. This comes under The Care Act 2014.

Please see the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board Dangerous Dogs and Safeguarding Children procedures page for more information

[Dangerous Dogs and Safeguarding \(trixonline.co.uk\)](http://trixonline.co.uk)