

Dog bite injury requiring treatment:

Protocol for managing a child's care.

Legal Issues in relation to dog bites:

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

1. There is an offence which relates to the dog being dangerous and out of control in a public place causing injury to a person, this does not apply in a private dwelling unless it is in the list of dangerous dogs.
2. In a situation where harm to a child has occurred by dog bite in which the injury is significant and requires assessment and treatment this is a potential child protection matter e.g. has the parent/carer been neglectful in preventing the child from being injured?

Actions by Staff:

1. It is important to feel assured that actions taken by the family safeguard against incident happening again. Staff should ask the family where the dog is and what they plan to do to protect the child in future.
2. Families should also be informed that because significant harm has been caused to their child a safeguarding check is required. This includes sharing the information about the incident with social care and the police. There may be some follow up by either one of these authorities.
3. Call the police on 101. Telling the operator- there is a Child Protection concern, that a dog bite has caused significant harm requiring hospital treatment. This should be referred to the Protection Vulnerable People (PVP) referral centre to make a decision about whether the police need to be involved.
4. Make a referral to the JR Child and Family Assessment Team (Ext 21236 in hours or 0800 833408) telling them there is a Child Protection concern, that a dog bite has caused significant harm requiring hospital treatment. It is likely that this will lead to a consultation with duty social worker and more than likely an assessment of family, especially if the dog bite has necessitated surgical intervention.
5. Write a report for the social work team and the police describing the history given, the nature of the injuries, the treatment required, any discussions with carers (e.g. their plans re future safety for the child) and any observations or discussions in relation to the carers interaction and responses.