

LEAD ANAESTHETIST FOR CHILD PROTECTION/ SAFEGUARDING



The Royal College of Anaesthetists and the Association of Paediatric Anaesthetists recommends that an anaesthetist must safeguard and protect the health and wellbeing of vulnerable people (including children, young people, the elderly and those with learning difficulties).¹ It also recommends that anaesthetists have a responsibility to take appropriate action when maltreatment or neglect is suspected, and in the case of those who have undergone advanced training in paediatric anaesthesia, that they demonstrate leadership in Child Protection issues.²

We recommend that there should be a minimum of one paediatric anaesthetist with level 3 core competencies in all centres where children are managed. In many District Hospitals the anaesthetist with level 3 training will be the Lead Paediatric anaesthetist (LPA), whereas in a Children's hospital or specialist children's unit within a University hospital there may be a nominated lead anaesthetist for Child Protection/Safeguarding (who may not necessarily be the LPA). This role should be recognised as an additional responsibility for the purposes of job planning.

ROLE DESCRIPTION ■ ■ ■

Lead Anaesthetists should act as a link between the Anaesthetic department and Child Protection services within hospitals and Trusts. Although they will have no formal responsibilities to train colleagues, they will act as a source of knowledge within the department, will ensure that updates on Safeguarding issues are passed on to colleagues, and should be able to answer questions about training requirements. All cases of actual or suspected maltreatment or neglect should be discussed initially with the consultant paediatrician on call and/or with the Named and Designated professionals for Safeguarding/Child Protection.³ The lead anaesthetist may be asked to provide a liaison role, when there are particularly difficult cases which require the input of the theatre team, e.g. forensic investigation of Child Sexual abuse.

It is expected that anaesthetists fulfilling this role undertake regular level 3 training as outlined in the 2014 Intercollegiate document on roles and competencies for health care staff.⁴

REFERENCES ■ ■ ■

- 1 The Good Anaesthetist. *RCoA*, London 2010 (www.rcoa.ac.uk/node/1955).
- 2 CCT in Anaesthetics – Intensive Care Medicine (Annex F). *RCoA*, London 2010 (www.rcoa.ac.uk/node/1427).
- 3 Child Protection and the anaesthetist: safeguarding children in the operating theatre. Intercollegiate Document. *RCoA*, London 2014 (www.rcoa.ac.uk/node/17805).
- 4 Safeguarding Children and Young people: roles and competencies for health care staff. Intercollegiate Document (3rd Edition). *RCPCH*, London 2014 (www.rcoa.ac.uk/node/16273).

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