

Royal Children's Hospital	POLICY: CLINICAL SERVICES	Policy No:
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## 1. Mission Statement

Gatehouse Centre for the Assessment and Treatment of Child Abuse (Gatehouse Centre) is committed to the rights of children and young people to be protected at all times.

Gatehouse Centre, in collaboration with other agencies, will provide best practice services to children, young people and their families where abuse has occurred or is suspected and/or where problem sexual behaviour is a concern. Gatehouse Centre will strive to achieve optimal outcomes by providing and promoting prevention programs, innovative services, education, training, advocacy and research.

## 2. Policy

Gatehouse Centre provides a range of clinical services to children and young people, their families and caregivers when child abuse is suspected and/or where problem sexual behaviour is a concern. Gatehouse Centre does not provide treatment for adult sexual offenders or adolescents 15 years and over who have perpetrated sexual assault/engaged in sexually abusive behaviour.

### Service Location

Gatehouse Centre is a department of the Royal Children's Hospital which is part of the Women's and Children's Health Service. Gatehouse Centre is located at the Royal Children's Hospital, Flemington Road, Parkville. Limited outreach services are also currently located at Dianella Community Health Centre, Broomeadows, Djerriwarah Community Health, Melton and The Action Centre, Elizabeth St & Hoppers Crossing.

## 3. Eligibility for Gatehouse Centre Clinical Services

Children and young people from 0-17 years who are clients of the Women and Children's Health Service. Up to 24 years for some outreach services.

Both males and females are eligible for all services provided by Gatehouse Centre.

Gatehouse Centre responds to referrals for children and young people and their families where there are concerns about:

- (i) Sexual Abuse
- (ii) Physical Abuse
- (iii) Suspected paediatric Factitious Disorder by Proxy/(Munchausens by Proxy)
- (iv) Neglect requiring a medical response
- (v) Children and young people at risk of the above
- (vi) Problem sexual behaviour
- (vii) Sexually abusive behaviour

Clinical services for Sexual Abuse will be provided to children and young people residing in Western Metropolitan Region, Northern Metropolitan Region to Reservoir and Inner Urban

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areas of Melbourne and to children and young people with a significant long term involvement with the hospital.

Clinical Services for Physical Abuse will be provided with the following eligibility criteria:

- (i) Child or young person has been admitted to the Women and Children's Health Service as a result of physical abuse.
- (ii) Child or young person attends Women and Children's Health Service Outpatient Services including Department of Emergency Medicine and Gatehouse Centre.
- (iii) Siblings of children admitted or seen in Outpatient Services of Women's and Children's Health Service as a result of physical abuse.
- (iv) Additional referrals from rural regions where other services are not available will be considered.
- (v) Other referrals will be considered and discussed at Intake/Allocations meeting to determine if they will be accepted.

#### 4. Clinical Responses

The clinical response may be one or more of the following:

- 4.1 Intake/Duty – telephone and face to face
- 4.2 Oncall – telephone and recall
- 4.3 Assessments
  - Short Term Assessment/Specialist Assessment to clarify a child/young person's needs where there is no clear disclosure of sexual abuse
  - assessment preceding therapy to determine impact of the alleged abuse and potential treatment needs
- 4.4 Treatment
- 4.5 Provision of Reports
- 4.6 Giving Evidence
- 4.7 Secondary Consultation
- 4.8 Advocacy
- 4.9 Professional Training and Community Education
- 4.10 Research

#### 5. Description of Clinical Responses

##### 5.1 Intake/Duty

During business hours the intake/duty system is in almost all instances the entry point for both Gatehouse Centre and clinical services. Information about services, referral to other services and some secondary consultation is provided at the Intake/Duty point.

##### 5.2 Oncall

Gatehouse Centre provides an after hours crisis response to concerns for children and young people and their families where there is suspected child abuse.

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### 5.3 Assessments

All therapeutic work is preceded by an assessment; either a short term/specialist assessment or an impact assessment. A Short Term/Specialist Assessment aims to clarify, if possible, the presenting issues. This assessment may result in a referral to the Department of Human Services – Child Protection (DHS), a Sexual Offences and Child Abuse Unit of the Victoria Police (SOCA), other appropriate agency/service, or No further action. An impact assessment is conducted where there is a clear disclosure or substantiation by either the DHS or SOCA.

#### *Eligibility Criteria for Short Term/Specialist Assessment*

- Where there is problem sexual behaviour or other behavioural changes which may indicate possible abuse in the absence of disclosure.
- Child/young person is considered at reasonable risk of sexual abuse, because of known contact with alleged offender
- Allegations of sexual abuse have been made by the child/young person and then retracted.
- Protective Services have been notified and completed their investigation. Allegations have not been substantiated but concerns still remain.
- If involved, Sexual Offences and Child Abuse Unit (SOCA) have completed initial interviews with the child/young person.

#### *Eligibility Criteria for Impact Assessment*

- Clear allegations of sexual abuse/physical abuse have been made by the child/young person
- Protective Services, where appropriate have been notified and undertaken an investigation.
- If involved SOCA have completed their initial interviews with the child/young person.

### 5.4 Treatment

The focus of treatment is to reduce the impact of the abuse by exploring the meaning of the person's experience, strengthening the person's self worth, harnessing existing strengths and coping capacities, identifying new strategies and mobilising support from the person's external systems.

One or more of a range of treatment modes may be undertaken by the client and family as appropriate. These include individual therapy, family therapy and group therapy.

### 5.5 Provision of reports

Reports are provided to Protective Services and other professionals for a number of purposes including court hearings. The reports are provided within the context of the child or young person's attendance at Gatehouse Centre.

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#### 5.6 Giving Evidence

Evidence in court is provided by Gatehouse Centre staff in relation to children and young people they have assessed or treated with regarding relation to concerns about abuse, neglect or risk.

#### 5.7 Secondary Consultation

Secondary consultation is available to professionals both within and external to the Royal Children's Hospital who are working with children or young people where abuse is suspected.

#### 5.8 Advocacy

Advocacy is provided in response to client needs at a number of levels and with a range of systems.

#### 5.9 Professional Training and Community Education

These are provided both on request and as an ongoing commitment to raising community awareness and enhancing professional skills in the area of child abuse

#### 5.10 Research

Gatehouse Centre has an active commitment to practice based research in order to further inform and enhance clinical practice.

Other Reference Documents.

- Oncall policy
- Notification to Child Protection Services policy
- Intake allocations policy