Lead poisoning is a serious health hazard that can lead to severe health problems, especially in young children. Lead is naturally present in the environment in small amounts and in a number of other potential sources including industry, leaded petrol, older paint, water piping and hobbies that use lead.

At high levels, lead poisoning in children can cause anaemia, damage to internal organs, seizures, coma and death. Low levels of lead within the environment may cause developmental and behavioural problems. Children are at higher risk of lead poisoning.

The aim of screening would be to identify those children at risk before physical, developmental and behavioural problems occur.

Key findings supporting the UK NSC recommendation

A national screening programme for elevated blood lead levels is not recommended in the UK because:

- it is not known how many children in the UK are affected
- an acceptable screening test is not available
- it is not known how well treatment works in children identified through screening

The UK NSC regularly reviews its recommendations on screening for different conditions in the light of new research evidence becoming available.

To find out more about the UK NSC’s recommendation on screening for elevated blood lead levels in children aged 1 to 5, please visit:

[legacyscreening.phe.org.uk/leadpoisoning](legacyscreening.phe.org.uk/leadpoisoning)