

01 Background

Serious case reviews together with other research findings show that children under 1 year of age and babies, in particular, are extremely vulnerable. Recent deaths in babies in Stockport have led to a review of practice in respect of safe sleep advice and guidance to families.

02 Why it matters

Managing how babies are sleeping may prevent some unexpected deaths. It is essential for early identification of modifiable risk factors such as parental substance misuse (alcohol and/or drug use) in order for parents to be aware of the heightened risk and to be supported in reducing the risk to their baby.

07 Further reading

Caring for your baby at night. Safer Sleep For Babies: A Parent Guide.
Safer Sleep. Saving babies Lives. A Guide For Professionals. www.lullabytrust.org.uk
NSPCC. Protecting Babies and Toddlers: Handle with Care. A Guide to Keeping your Baby Safe.
NSPCC. Handle with Care. A Guide to Keeping Your Baby Safe.
Children's Commissioner. Silent Voices. Supporting Children and Young people affected by parental alcohol Misuse. 2012.
Children's Commissioner. Estimating the Number of vulnerable babies. May 2018.



03 What to do

No-one wants to think about this happening to a family they work with, but there are things you can advise and talk to parents & carers about to help them reduce the risks:

- Remind parents of the risks associated with unsafe sleep practices.
- If parents choose to bed-share discuss with them how they can minimise the risks.

06 Open conversations

- Help parents and carer to make an informed choice.
- It is more helpful to have open discussions to ensure that they have the information.
- Consider Grandparents, babysitters, foster carers and others who care for the baby reiterating the same safe sleep advice.

05 Things to avoid

- Never sleep on a sofa or in an armchair with baby
- Don't sleep in the same bed as baby if you smoke, drink or take drugs or are extremely tired, if your baby was born prematurely or was of low birth-weight
- Avoid letting baby get too hot
- Don't cover baby's face or head while sleeping or use loose bedding.
- The aim of safer sleep advice is to ensure that baby can breathe and regulate their temperature (does not become overheated) at all times.)

04 Tips for safer sleep

- Always place baby on their back to sleep
- Keep baby smoke free during pregnancy & after birth
- Place baby to sleep in a separate cot or Moses basket in the same room as baby's carer for the first 6 months
- Breastfeeding baby reduces risk
- Use a firm, flat, waterproof mattress in good condition