

## 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](http://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