

9 MINUTE BRIEFING

This Pan-Sussex briefing is aimed at professionals who work with children and families in Brighton and Hove, East and West Sussex



SAFER SLEEPING FOR BABIES

#EverySleepMustBeASaferSleep

Why are we having this briefing?

This briefing is as a result of research, and cases across Sussex involving unsafe sleeping environments and young babies.

Safer Sleep Messages

Social workers, Early Help and other professionals should be repeating and reinforcing the messages about safer sleeping that Midwives and Health Visitors give to parents, as part of their work with families. See Page 2 for key messages for staff, parents, carers, and anyone caring for young babies.



Unplanned Sleeping Situations: How to minimise risk

Unplanned sleeping arrangements (i.e., where the baby is not sleeping in an approved cot or Moses' basket) are highlighted as a risk in research.

All staff should be addressing unplanned sleeping scenarios with parents and anticipating they might be needed. For example, what will a parent do if they are awake in the night with the baby, have been drinking alcohol, or have taken drugs? Where will they put the baby? How will they avoid falling asleep with the baby in an unsafe place? These 'What If' issues should be discussed with parents and incorporated into all children's plans.

Continued on the next page...

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For more information and Safer Sleep advice contact –
[The Lullaby Trust - Safer sleep for babies, Support for families](#)

Remember to consider older siblings and carers in safer sleeping messages –
Where do they sleep?
Are they involved in the care of the baby?
Tell others who care for the baby about safer sleep guidance (i.e., grandparents, babysitters) and ask they follow this.

Consider the risks of temporary sleeping arrangements, e.g., families sleeping in the living room.

Buggies Babies should not be left to sleep in buggies - there are emerging concerns about the danger of buggies not being safe places to place a baby to sleep.

ICON Message

Staff should also be reinforcing messages about ICON and helping parents and carers to manage crying babies. Plans should address crying babies, and how the parent or carer will deal with this situation, who will they call for support etc.

ICON is all about helping people who care for babies to cope with crying.

ICON: Babies Cry You Can Cope

ICON stands for:

- * I – Infant crying is normal
- * C – Comforting methods can help
- * O – It's OK to walk away
- * N – Never, ever shake a baby

Key Messages

Please note these key messages about dangerous sleeping practices:

1

Parents must never sleep in the same bed as their baby if they smoke (even if they don't smoke in the bedroom), have drunk alcohol or taken drugs, if they think they might fall asleep, or if the baby was born prematurely or was of low birth-weight.

2

Parents, carers, and older children must never sleep on a sofa or armchair with the baby, as this can increase the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) by 50 times.

Useful Links to further Information

[Out of routine: A review of sudden unexpected death in infancy \(SUDI\) in families where the children are considered at risk of significant harm](#)

ICON

