

HILLINGDON SAFEGUARDING PARTNERSHIP

7-MINUTE BRIEFING

SAFER SLEEP

2. Key Statistics:

- On average 4-6 babies a week die due to SUDI in the UK
- 88% of SUDI happens in the first six months of life
- Sleeping on a sofa increases the chance of SUDI by up to 50 times
- A baby placed on their front to sleep increases the risk by 6 times
- A baby with low birth weight is at increased risk
- In 2017 it was found that babies of parents under 20 were at 5 times increased risk

1. Sudden Unexpected Death in Infancy (SUDI)

There are around 300 unexplained infant deaths in the UK every year. This briefing will assist you to recognise and address factors in parent and infant care that reduce the risks of SUDI. Reducing SUDI risk is the responsibility of **all** practitioners working with children and families, irrespective of role.

3. Sleep Space

Babies should sleep in the same room as their parent/carer for the first six months, day and night – this halves the risk of SUDI

Babies need a firm, flat mattress with a clear sleep space No pillows, quilts, pods or nests

Babies' heads should be uncovered so they don't get too hot

4. National Review

A National Review of SUDI in families where there were previous safeguarding concerns has been completed in 2020

The Review found that babies can face additional risks due to the impact of multiple adversities, including: domestic abuse, substance misuse, poor accommodation, and neglect.

Parents can be difficult to engage and benefit from a relationship with a trusted professional to understand the parental perspective and challenge where needed. You can access the full review here: [Out of Routine](#)

5. Parental factors

Research has identified key parental factors that increase the risk of SUDI linked to hazardous co-sleeping:

- drinking alcohol
- they or their partner smoke, including in pregnancy
- they have taken any drugs that make them feel sleepy or reduce awareness

Think Family. What about other people who have care of the baby – for example overnight stays with grandparents?

7. What Next?

Talk about safer sleep in contact with parents; be open and encourage honest discussion. Are there barriers? Do parents have all of the information?

See the baby's sleep area – is it clear, flat and safe? What about when they stay with relatives? Don't forget dads!

Revisit these conversations regularly – has anything changed? Are there new risks? Is the risk of SUDI addressed in the social work assessment or CIN/CP plan?

You can access further information/guides here: [The Lullaby Trust](#)

6. Key Messages

Babies should be placed on their back for EVERY sleep

Babies should sleep in a clear, flat, space

Babies should be kept free from secondhand smoke at ALL times.

