

Safeguarding Children Week 2021

Coping with infant crying

All babies cry, some cry more than others. Crying is the baby's way of communicating that they need comfort and care.

The stress of a crying baby can impact on parenting ability and can have a potentially negative impact on parental and child welfare.

Nationally, Abusive Head Trauma (AHT) affects up to 25 children per 100,000 in the UK. A well-documented trigger is infant crying and evidence suggests male caregivers are responsible for inflicting AHT in about 70% of cases.

The highest category of fatal physical abuse is a non-accidental head injury.

Local picture

Abusive Head Trauma has been a factor in 1 Serious Case Review (now known as Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews) and 4 Rapid Reviews (one of which will be progressing to a Child Safeguarding Practice Review) in the Rochdale Borough since 2017.

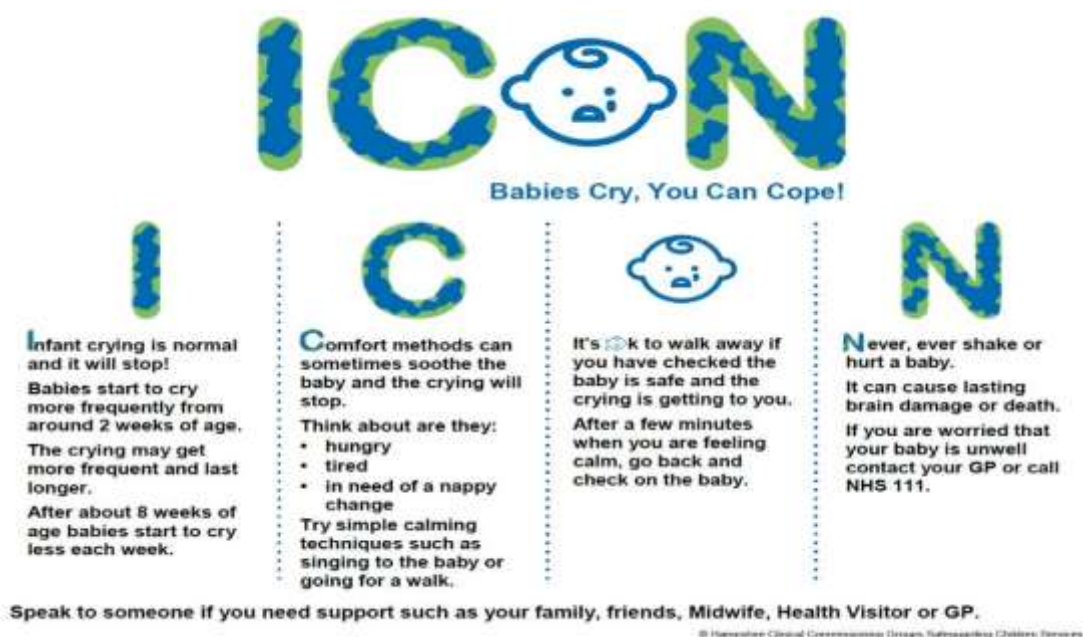
- 3 are infants of six months of age or younger; with the remainder being 2 years of age or younger.
- 4 of the children are female and 1 male.
- Historic domestic abuse was a factor in 2 of the cases.
- Previous safeguarding concerns in 2 cases (either sibling/ parent in childhood).
- Alcohol/ substance use was a factor in 1 case.

ICON

ICON is a national programme underpinned by the following principles:

- Some care givers lose control when a baby's crying becomes too much with some going on to shake a baby with devastating consequences
- The most effective evidence-based programmes provided a simple message that support parents/ care givers to cope with infant crying.
- A co-ordinated parent education programme targeting parents of all new-born infants can reduce the incidence of Abusive Head Trauma in children less than 36 months by between 47 and 75%

The Programme uses the acronym 'I-C-O-N', with each letter representing a key message as detailed below:



The aim is to help people who care for babies cope with crying, provide advice on comforting a crying baby, set out the devastating impact of shaking a baby (which includes brain damage and death) and signpost to sources of support using a variety of resources including discussion, video, written resources and Social Media.

Information and resources for parents and carers:

[ICON infant crying and how to cope leaflet](#)

[Dad Matters: information and resources for dads](#)

[ICON Information for Parents on Comforting Methods](#)

[NHS website - Soothing a crying baby](#)

[Cry-Sis: a charity offering help and support to parents with babies who cry excessively or have sleeping problems](#)

[Little Lullaby provides advice and guidance for young parents around caring for babies and education around safer sleeping](#)

Information and resources for professionals:

[7 minute briefing: ICON](#)

[7 minute briefing: abusive head trauma prevention](#)

[RBSCP infant crying and how to cope leaflet](#)

RBSCP multi-agency coping with infant crying guidance is in the process of being developed and will be available late 2021.