

1

Background

The Rochdale Safeguarding Children Partnership are pleased to announce the launch of the ICON programme, which is a multi-agency response to abusive head trauma (AHT) in babies.

Following a number of serious case reviews in Rochdale and Oldham a co-ordinated national programme has been developed in collaboration with partner agencies across the country, aimed at educating parents and everyone who cares for a baby on how to cope with a crying baby, and how to handle a baby safely.



Infant crying and how to cope: ICON programme



2

What is ICON?

ICON stands for:

- I** Infant crying is normal
- C** Comfort methods can sometimes soothe the baby
- O** It's okay to walk away if you have checked the baby is safe and the crying is getting to you
- N** Never ever shake or hurt a baby

7

Questions to consider

Do we discuss normal infant crying and management strategies with parents? Have we dealt with any concerns? Have we checked the ICON message has been received and understood? Do we need to reiterate? Are parents aware of local support services, who to contact for support? Has the ICON conversation been had with others around the baby e.g. grandparents, babysitters and others? How will we as professionals share this message?

For support and info visit: rochdalesafeguarding.com (local)
iconcope.org (national)

3

Why it matters

AHT ('Shaken Baby Syndrome') often causes irreversible damage and at least 1 of every 4 babies who are violently shaken dies from this form of child maltreatment.

The programme is aimed at preventing deaths and catastrophic injuries where possible.

6

Keep messages: help for parent / carer

Don't get angry with baby or yourself. Put baby in a safe place and walk away so you can calm yourself down by doing something that takes your mind off the crying. Try:

- *Listening to music, doing some exercises or doing something that calms you down
- *Call a friend or relative; they may be able to help you calm down or watch the baby for you.

After a few minutes when you are calm, go back and check on baby

5

Key messages: help for baby

Comfort methods can sometimes soothe the baby. Babies can cry for reasons such as if they are hungry, tired, wet/dirty or if they are unwell. Calming techniques can help:

- *Talk calmly, hum or sing to the baby
- *Let them hear a repeating or soothing sound
- *Hold them close – skin to skin If you think there is something wrong with the baby or the crying won't stop, speak to your GP, Midwife, Health Visitor or call NHS

4

Triggers

Crying is considered the main trigger for shaking a baby. Peak of crying is 6 – 8 weeks of age. The parents or the mother's partner are responsible for AHT in 75% of babies. A majority of perpetrators are male (70%).

The most at risk groups are:

- Male baby
- Below 6 months
- Low birth weight
- Regular contact with health professionals