**Safer Sleep**

**Risk Assessment Tool for Practitioners**



June 2022

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| **Local Picture and Key Messages** |

Unsafe sleep practices have been an identified factor in seven infant deaths in Rochdale since 2017 (three Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews, one Health Lessons Learned Review, three Rapid Reviews); these deaths are potentially preventable.

In five cases there was clear evidence of safer sleep messages being delivered verbally and in writing to the parent by Midwifery and Health Visiting Services but the advice was not adhered to at the time of the infant’s death.

Alcohol / substance intake was a factor for the person providing care to the child in four of the deaths.

In two cases, health professionals observed unsafe sleep arrangements.

There was no evidence of safer sleep messages being given to new fathers or family members who were supporting the family. Safer sleep advice is routinely given out to all mothers during pregnancy and in the first few weeks of a baby’s life.

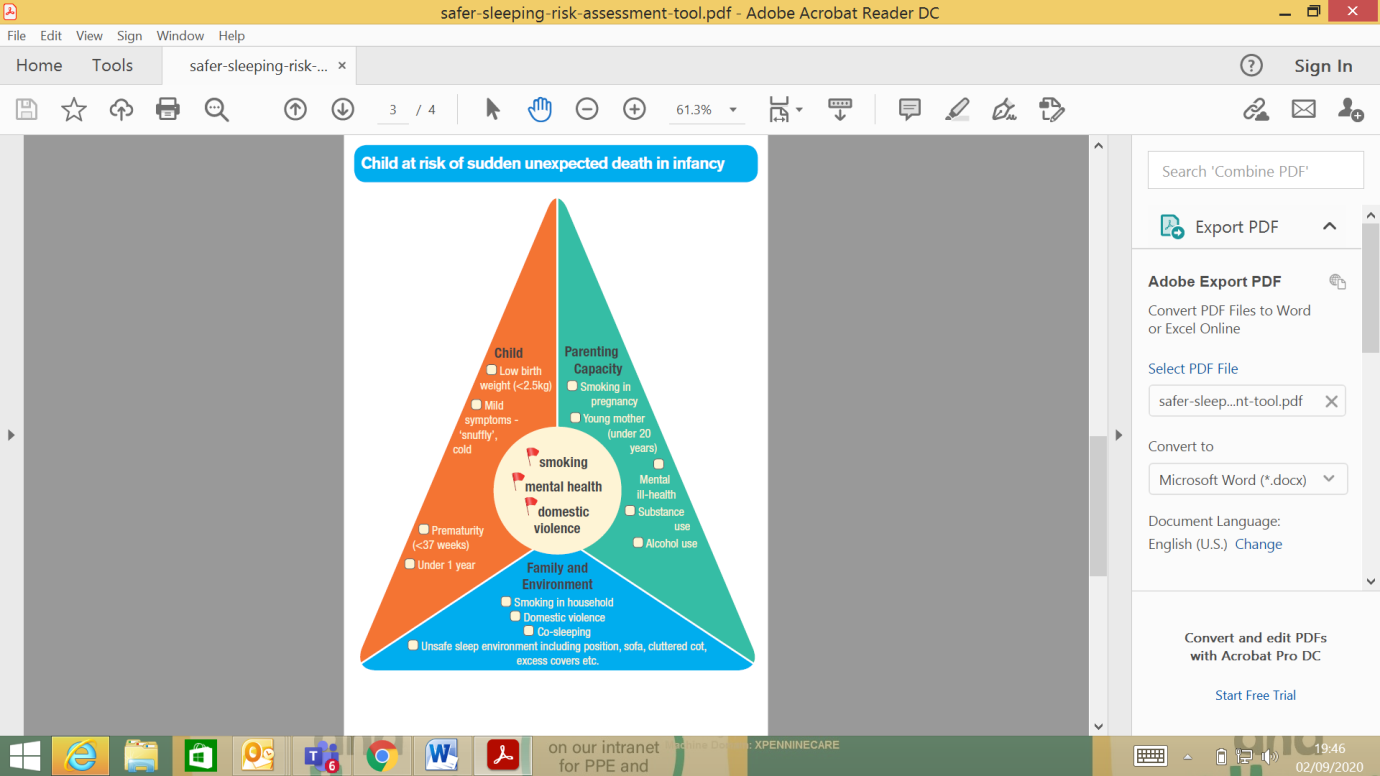
To help prevent further deaths we need everyone working with families in Rochdale to help ensure safer sleep advice is followed.

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| Our key messages to parents and carers are in line with Lullaby Trust advice and are listed below:   * **Every sleep needs to be a safer sleep**. Have an infant sleep plan and routine, particularly if there is a change in sleep environment. e.g. staying with friends/relatives overnight * Always place your baby to sleep on their **back, on a firm, flat, waterproof mattress.** * Always sleep your baby in a moses basket, crib or cot for every sleep episode, day or night, in the same room as parent / carer for the first six months. * Never leave your baby to sleep on a sofa chair or bed. * Do not cover your baby’s head, face or use lose bedding. * Smoking in pregnancy or during the first 12 months after your baby is born increases the risk of sudden infant death. * Avoid letting baby get too hot. The ideal room temperature is between 16 and 20 degrees centigrade. * Babies who are unwell need fewer bed clothes, not more.   It is recognised that some parents choose to share a bed with their baby. If so, parents need to seek advice from a health professional to discuss risks and ensure a safer sleep plan is in place. |

This tool allows practitioners to identify, and therefore support families who are most at risk of unsafe sleeping and sudden unexpected death in infancy.

It is intended for use by all practitioners coming into contact with families and infants up to the age of 12 months to assess the sleeping environment and as a basis for discussion to reinforce safer sleeping messages.

The tool involves mapping known risk factors. It is not about how many boxes are ticked, **all are risk factors in their own right.**

Child at risk of sudden unexpected death in

**If there are any risk factors, follow these steps:**

* Check whether the family are aware of safer sleep advice. Check their level of understanding both of the advice and why it is so important to follow it.
* Are they following Safer Sleep advice? Ask where baby woke up.
* Remember **every sleep needs to be a safer sleep**: both day and night time sleeps, and sleeps at and away from home.
* Ensure that the safer sleep for babies information from the Lullaby Trust is given in the parent’s first language.
* Explore what might be preventing the family from following the advice. This could be a range of things including advice from wider family members. Put a support plan in place and follow up as much as your professional role allows.
* Consider referring onto other services for support including mental health services, domestic abuse services and smoking cessation services. Try to explore why they have not engaged before and follow up on any referrals made.
* Complete the Individual Risk Assessment Form below.
* If you have concerns seek advice from your agency’s safeguarding lead and:
* liaise with **other professionals** working with the family.
* consider whether the family would benefit from an **Early Help Assessment.**
* seek advice via **EHASH (Early Help and Safeguarding Hub) Tel: 0300 303 0440 / complete a Multi-Agency Referral Form (MARF).**

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| **Individual Safer Sleep Risk Assessment** | |
| **Child’s name and date of birth:** |  |
| **Parent(s’)’s name:** |  |
| **Date of assessment:** |  |
| **Name and title of practitioner completing assessment:** |  |
| **Risk factors identified:** |  |
| **Actions taken:** |  |
| **Plan:** |  |
| **Review date:** |  |

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| **Lullaby Trust Resources** |

The Lullaby Trust have lots of safer sleep resources for both parents and practitioners which can be accessed by any practitioner, including those listed below:

Link to current available resources:

[www.lullabytrust.org.uk/publications-2015](http://www.lullabytrust.org.uk/publications-2015)

Safer sleep guidance document for parents:

<https://www.lullabytrust.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Safer-sleep-for-babies-a-guide-for-parents-web.pdf>

Easy read card which has been translated into multiple languages: <http://www.lullabytrust.org.uk/publications-2015>

‘Make a Room’ and ‘Spot the Risks’ game which help parents visualise the best sleeping arrangement:

<https://www.lullabytrust.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/game-make-a-room.pdf>



Sleep product guide:

<https://www.hct.nhs.uk/media/2689/the-lullaby-trust-product-guide.pdf>

**Acknowledgements**

With agreement and thanks, the following resources were localised:

* Manchester Safer Sleep Guidance
* Nottinghamshire LSCP Safer Sleep Risk Assessment Tool