**Background**

Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) is the sudden, unexpected, unexplained death of an apparently healthy baby. Most deaths happen during the first six months of a baby’s life. Infants born prematurely or with low birthweight are at greater risk (5 times more at risk than those of a normal birthweight).

The exact cause of SIDS is unknown, but there are several things that can be done to reduce the risk.

**SIDS in numbers**

* SIDS claims the lives of approximately 240 babies every year in the UK, this equals 5 per week
* Around 88% of SIDS happen in the first 6 months of life
* Boys are more at risk than girls. In 2017, 55% of deaths were boys
* The rate of SIDS has reduced by 82% since the launch of the ‘Back to Sleep’ message in 1991.
* Sharing a room with your baby can halve the risk of SIDS
* An infant placed on their front is up to 6 times more at risk than one placed on their back
* Sleeping on a sofa with a baby can increase the chance of SIDS by up to 50 times

**How can we improve**

**practice at CHFT?**

* Ask about sleeping arrangements
* Ask about alcohol/ drug use/ prescribed medication
* Explore who will be caring for the baby
* Routinely give information and discuss information about safer sleeping with parents/ carers
* Always document the discussion and advice given

**<https://www.lullabytrust.org.uk/safer-sleep-advice>**

[**https://thedadpad.co.uk**](https://thedadpad.co.uk)

**Protective Factors**

* Place baby on its back to sleep
* Keep baby smoke free during pregnancy and after birth
* Place baby in a separate cot/ moses basket to sleep
* The mattress should be firm, flat and in good condition with a waterproof cover
* Breastfeed baby if possible

**7 Minute Briefing**

**Safe Sleeping**

**Key messages**

* The safest place for a baby to sleep is on its back, in a cot or moses basket in the same room as parents/ carers for the first 6 months, day and night
* Sleeping with a baby on a sofa increases the risk of SIDS
* Bed sharing with an infant should never happen with anyone who is a smoker, has drunk alcohol or taken drugs (legal or illegal)

**Professional role at CHFT**

* Target parents antenatally and postnatally
* Also target other carers (grandparents/ extended family) with safe sleep messages
* Document advice regarding safe sleep messages in the clinical record
* Ensure consistent safe sleep messages are shared wih families and understood. Do not assume someone else will have provided the information. Be mindful of individual learning styles and the need to deliver this information in different ways.
* Use every opportunity to share the safe sleep message

**Risk factors**

* Babies born prematurely (37 weeks or less)
* Babies born at low birth weight (2.5kgs/ 5.5 pounds)
* Sleeping with baby on an armchair/ sofa
* Use of pillows/ duvets, cot bumpers, wedges and loose bedding.
* Soft toys in the moses basket/cot
* Sleeping in a car seat

**Bed sharing increases the chance of SIDS and should not happen when either parent/ carer:**

* Smokes
* Has drunk alcohol
* Has taken drugs or medications that increase drowsiness
* Is extremely tired

Date May 2020



