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Background

Following on from the [Out of Routine Report](#) in 2020 which concluded that safer sleep interventions that focus solely on the provision of information, are unlikely to influence the behaviours of parents in this population, this study sought to understand what types of interventions could influence safe sleep practises in high risk groups.

A copy of the full report can be found here:

[sudi_report.pdf \(ucl.ac.uk\)](#)

The study used a mixed methods approach which looked at the data from two recent systematic reviews and conducted interviews with families who had had recent contact with children's social care.

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Why it matters

According to The Lullaby Trust, around 3 babies a week still die from sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS).

11 babies died across Blackburn with Darwen, Blackpool & Lancashire last year, where unsafe sleep may have been a contributory factor to the child's death.

Many of these deaths have modifiable factors and are more common among babies in the most vulnerable and at-risk families and babies who die tend to have one or more risk factors.

3

Information

What the report found:

A range of motivational factors (such as parental sleep deprivation and a desire to bond with the infant) play a key role in influencing the infant sleep environment.

Professionals responsible for conversations about infant sleep safety have concerns about providing tailored support and managing risk in families with a social worker.

4

Trusted sources and sound evidence are the key to the delivery of effective communications about safer sleep.

Social pressure about 'good parenting' may act as barriers to parenting discussing/ planning for 'out of routine' circumstances.

5

Safer sleep messages might be best delivered to families in receipt of social care by a practitioner who can provide continuity of care and has a trusting relationship with them.

Professionals should use open conversations and provide tailored support and move away from a didactic or just giving out information approach.

This will require training and support and a change of organisational culture to allow professionals to manage risk more confidently.

6

What to do

Ensure you have open conversations with families about sleeping arrangements based on minimising and managing risks. Ensure joint exploration of the best ways for parents to keep their infant safe and minimise risks.

Be sensitive to the needs and context of individual families.

Identify motivational factors that are influencing individual parenting behaviours.

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Questions to consider

What do you currently cover in your conversations with families about safer sleep practices?

Do I need to adapt these conversations based on the findings of this report?

Am I confident to have conversations about managing risk with families?

Am I familiar with the pan-Lancashire safer sleep guidance, materials, and assessment tool? If not, they can be found [here](#).

To test our 'sharing learning process' when you receive this 7mb please Ctrl & Click [HERE](#) and complete this very short survey.

