



## Joint Child Death Overview Panel for the boroughs of Hounslow, Kingston and Richmond Newsletter – May 2015

### Welcome

In this second newsletter from the Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP) we feature information about both our work, and those of other CDOPs and related initiatives to share and promote learning arising from the review of deaths of children. This will assist you in your work promoting the safety and wellbeing of children, alongside their parents and carers. This edition focuses on Sudden Infant Death Syndrome. **There is a helpful advice sheet for parents and professionals on safe sleeping overleaf**, which can be printed and displayed for reference.

### Local learning in focus: Sudden Infant Death Syndrome

Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) is the sudden and unexplained death of a baby that remains unexplained after a detailed post mortem. In the UK, approximately 270 babies and toddlers die from SIDS each year. Since April 2008 across Hounslow, Kingston and Richmond, 20 babies have died from SIDS or a similar cause. Whilst the cause of SIDS is not fully understood, evidence has shown that there are reducible risk factors which can decrease the chance of SIDS.

Of the child death reviews completed by the panel over the last seven years, deaths from Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) have been deemed the leading cause of potentially preventable death across the three boroughs, due to the presence of associated reducible risk factors for SIDS such as co-sleeping, unsafe sleeping location, overheating, parental smoking and parental drug and alcohol use.

The panel initiated the distribution of awareness raising materials to families on safe sleeping in 2010 and is currently engaged in an audit of the wider provision of safe sleeping advice locally and its impact. We are also undertaking a thematic review of all deaths from this cause since the review process began, to enhance our understanding of local trends in terms of risk factors and how professionals might best support families in reducing these. Both the audit and thematic review findings will be reported to each LSCB for consideration as to further work in this important area.

To coincide with Child Safety Week, the CDOP has arranged for the Lullaby Trust to hold a stand in the antenatal department of the local hospitals from which parents and staff will be able to obtain advice on safe sleeping and SIDS prevention. This event will be at **West Middlesex Hospital on Monday 1<sup>st</sup> June** 11 a.m. till 1 p.m. and then at **Kingston Hospital on Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> June** 11 a.m. till 1 p.m. Please pass on details to any colleagues and families to whom this may be of interest.

### National learning in focus: Sudden Unexpected Death in Infancy – A Collaborative Thematic Review

The Welsh Child Death Review Programme and All Wales Perinatal Survey undertook a joint thematic review of unexplained sudden infant deaths in Wales during 2010-2012. Their report was published in January 2015 and can be accessed via the link below. It contains a number of interesting recommendations including advocating professional familiarity with and use of, relevant evidence to support the promotion of safe sleeping messages to parents.

<http://www.wales.nhs.uk/sitesplus/documents/888/Sudden%20Unexpected%20Deaths%20in%20Infancy%20-%20English.pdf>

### How do I get further information about the child death review process?

Please contact the CDOP Coordinator, Sarah Bennett, on 020 8831 6257, for further information about the panel and its work. Professionals are welcome to attend panel meetings as observers so please get in touch if this would be of interest to you.

To read more about the child death review process please refer to Chapter 5 of the government guidance Working Together to Safeguard Children March 2015 via the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children>

## Safe Sleeping

Parents, carers and professionals can reduce the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome by following the advice below to create a safe sleeping environment for babies and toddlers.



- The safest place for babies to sleep is on their back, in a cot, in their parents' room for the first six months (but not in the same bed).
- It is unsafe for adults, children or pets to share a sleeping area with your baby.
- Adults sharing a bed with a baby can accidentally roll too close or onto a baby whilst asleep. There is a higher risk of this occurring if you have taken medication, alcohol or are excessively tired. Co-sleeping is also linked to an increased risk of SIDS if a baby was born prematurely or was of low birth-weight (under 2.5kgs).
- Adult beds, sofas and armchairs are not safe for sleeping babies. Never sleep on a sofa or armchair with your baby.
- Soft bedding such as pillows, quilts and duvets increase your baby's risk of SUDI and suffocation.
- Soft toys and other objects such as cot bumpers should also not be placed in cots – a clear cot is a safe cot. Use a firm, waterproof, well fitting mattress in good condition. Make sure any covers are tucked in, reaching no higher than the baby's chest so that they do not slip over the baby's head.
- Keep baby's head uncovered and place your baby on their back in the 'feet to foot' position. A baby sleeping on their front or side greatly increases the chance of SIDS.
- Overheating can increase the risk of death while your baby is sleeping. Babies can overheat due to too much bedding or if the room is too hot. Use lightweight blankets. If you fold a blanket in half, it counts as two blankets.
- Babies do not need hot rooms and it is rare for their room to need to be heated all night. The room temperatures should be between 16c and 20c.
- Don't worry if your baby's hands feel cold. This is normal. Check their tummy and if it feels hot remove some of the bedding.



- Do not smoke in pregnancy or in the same room as your baby. Smoking by either parent during pregnancy greatly increases the risk of sudden infant death. Newborn babies are at increased risk of SIDS if they are exposed to cigarette smoke. Do not let anyone smoke in the same space as your baby. For help and advice to stop smoking, try the NHS Smoking Helpline on 0800 0224 332 or visit the website <http://smokefree.nhs.uk/>
- Breast feed your baby if you can. Breastfeeding has been associated with a lower SIDS rate. Help and support with breastfeeding can be accessed by visiting the following website:  
<http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/pregnancy-and-baby/pages/breastfeeding-help-support.aspx#close>

## The Lullaby Trust

The Lullaby Trust are a charity that provides specialist support for bereaved families, promotes expert advice on safer baby sleep and raises awareness on sudden infant death. For further information or advice please visit their website:

<http://www.lullabytrust.org.uk/>

Or call their help and advice line on 0808 802 6869.