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## Background

Each year 200 babies will die unexpectedly before their first birthday.

Many of these deaths are attributed to sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS), when there is no apparent cause of death.

Reports from Child Death Overview Panels (CDOP) indicate that most SIDS cases involve known risk factors, and many of these deaths could be prevented if parents were informed about safer sleeping practices.

The Blackburn with Darwen, Blackpool & Lancashire [Safer Sleep Guidance](#) was updated in May 2024 and now aligns with the national guidelines provided by [The Lullaby Trust](#) and [NICE](#).

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## Why it matters

In 2023/24, the [pan-Lancashire CDOP](#) reviewed five cases where unsafe sleeping was a factor; four of these cases had risk factors such as smoking, high room temperature, or alcohol use.

The Lullaby Trust highlights that many parents will co-sleep with their baby, either intentionally or accidentally.

Certain circumstances can make co-sleeping very dangerous, it is important to provide all caregivers with information on how to mitigate these risks.

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## Information

The safest place for a baby to sleep is in their own clear, flat, separate sleep space, such as a cot or Moses basket. Babies should always sleep in the same room as the person caring for them for the first six months, day, and night.

Caregivers should be advised to:

Protect their baby from smoke during pregnancy and after birth.

Give their baby a **clear, flat, separate sleep space**, in the same room, **day and night**.

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To always put their baby to sleep **on their back** with their feet to the foot of the cot or Moses basket.

To keep baby's head and face uncovered. The room they sleep in should be between 16-20°C.

Strongly advise parents **NEVER** to share a bed with their baby if their baby was low birth weight or if either parent has:

- Consumed alcohol.

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## Questions to consider

- What opportunities do I have to discuss safer sleep?
- Do I routinely ask about alcohol, smoking, drugs, and medication?
- Do I routinely complete the [sleep assessment tool](#)?

Ensure staff know how to escalate and report concerns.

Promote Safer Sleep Week (held in March each year).

Ensure frontline staff understand their role in contributing to Safer Sleep.

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## What to do

Discuss safer sleep practices and complete a [sleep assessment](#) to help caregivers make informed decisions.

Remind caregivers of the risks and create an action plan to mitigate them.

If caregivers choose to bed-share, discuss ways to minimise the risks.

Ensure that grandparents and others who might care for the baby are aware of the safer sleep advice.

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- Smokes.
- Taken medicine that causes drowsiness.
- Used recreational drugs.

**Falling asleep with baby on a sofa or chair can increase the risk of death by 50%.**

Babies can face additional risks where there are factors present including domestic abuse, substance misuse, poor housing, and neglect.

Out-of-routine events, such as holidays, party seasons, or overnight stays with relatives, will affect sleeping routines.

