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Background

The sudden and unexpected death of a baby is usually referred to by professionals as 'sudden unexpected death in infancy' (SUDI) or 'sudden unexpected death in childhood' (SUDC). Although there are no definitive explanations for some of these deaths, there is reliable evidence that links issues with an infant's sleep environment and an increased risk of SUID.



Diogelu Gwent Gwent Safeguarding

7 Minute Briefing for Safe Sleep: Safe Environment

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Why it matters

This is an opportune time to re-enforce the safe sleep message. Within Gwent area there have been 3 SUIDs in a 4 week period. Although none of the deaths were considered suspicious, 2 had features relating to the safe sleep agenda. Health Professionals within ABUHB particularly Midwives, Health Visitors, Nursery Nurses, GP's, Practice Nurses, NICU staff and Paediatric Nurses are all in a perfect position to give and re-give the same message.

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Further resources for Professionals

Additional resources including videos or more detail for certain issues can be found on the website for the Lullaby Trust.

- [Video resources](#)
- [The Lullaby Trust – Reducing the Risk](#)
- [Safe Sleep presentation](#)

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Aim

To spread the message of safe sleep within the Gwent Safeguarding Board. We want to be sure that all Health Professionals that have contact with parents of babies and infants give clear, current, consistent advice to parents, in relation to safer sleep at every and any opportunity.

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Message for Parents

For infants to sleep alone but in the same bedroom as the parent or carer.

Not to sleep on sofas, chairs etc. with a baby.

Also, not to sleep in car seats for long periods and highlight the risk of long car journeys.

Babies to sleep in a suitable flat crib or cot with an appropriate mattress.

To be placed on back only with feet to the bottom of the cot to prevent head becoming covered by bedding.

Parents and carers not to smoke or allow anyone else to smoke around their baby.

[The Lullaby Trust](#)

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Recommendations for staff

Consistency! All staff must discuss the Lullaby trust leaflet with parents, it is not enough to just hand it out. We also need to re-enforce the safe sleep message at every contact. Offer a safety check when visiting homes for the first time. **Document** advice, actions and planning at every contact. Although not promoted, if parents do consider having baby in bed to feed or sleep, harm reduction advice should be given i.e.

- Includes the removal of pillows & quilts etc.
- Definitely should not be done if there has been alcohol or drug use.

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Research...

The Office of National Statistics reported - In 2019 - there were, 170 SUID; that is approx. 4 per week, with 86% of these in the first 6 months; mothers aged under 20 are five times as likely to experience SUID of their baby. Although there has been a decline in numbers since 2004, these figures are stagnant and haven't changed much in the last 4 years. Safe sleep messages are still required.

