

Safer sleep for babies over the festive period.

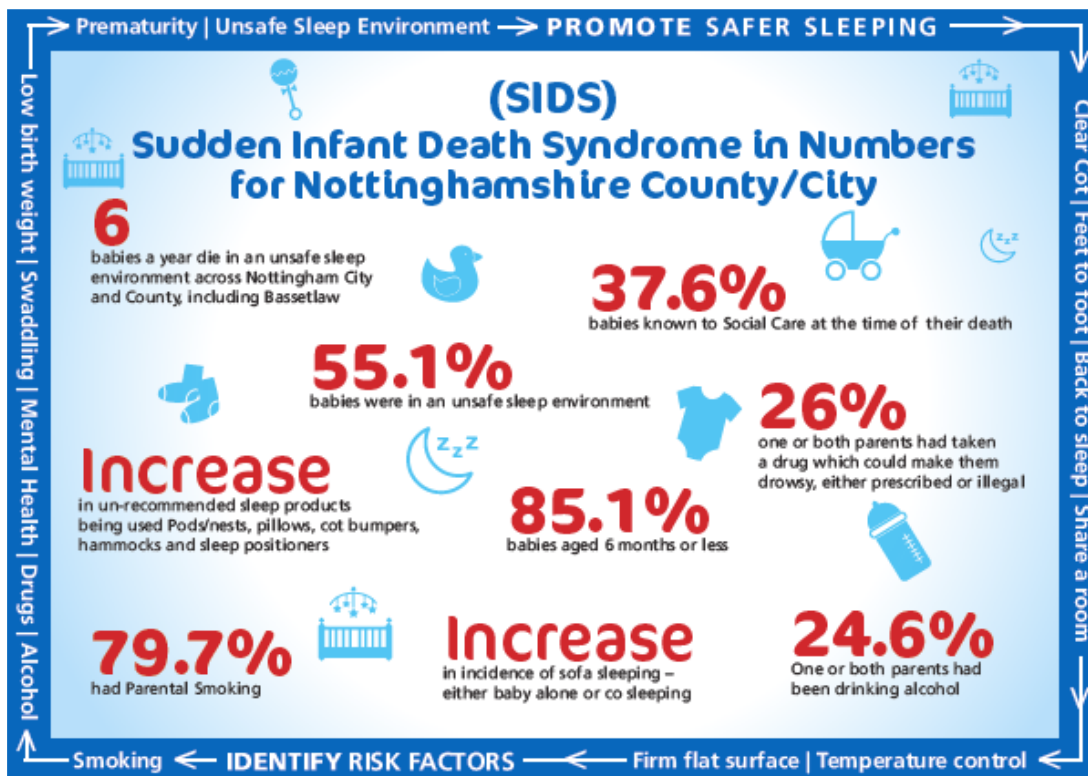
As the festive season approaches, the Nottingham City and Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnerships are reminding professionals and parents about the importance of safe sleep for babies.

Sadly, around 196 babies and young children in the UK still die every year of Sudden Unexpected Death in Infancy/Childhood (SIDS/SUDC). Since parents and carers have been following the risk reduction advice first promoted in the early 1990s the number of infants dying has fallen significantly.

The picture in Nottinghamshire.

In Nottinghamshire (city and county) there are on average 6 deaths each year of babies (up to 15 months old) that are likely to be due to an unsafe sleep environment. The 'at a glance' pictorial below provides a summary of themes.

By following evidence-based safer sleep advice the risk of these tragic events can be reduced.



Key messages for parents and carers over the winter/festive period.

Over the festive period, families with babies may be out of their usual routine due to traveling to stay with others/having visitors. Other people may be helping out and putting babies to bed. Families may be hosting or attending parties and festive celebrations. Additionally due to the winter weather, parents and carers may be concerned about ensuring their baby is warm enough whilst sleeping.

It's really important that parents and carers continue to follow safer sleep advice over this time to lower the risk of SIDS. Advice needs to be followed at all times, whether babies are sleeping at home or away, at their normal bedtime and during daytime naps.

From December 12th-24th [The Lullaby Trust](#) is running a '12 Days of Safer Sleep' campaign with an advent style theme. Social media posts will be shared based around advice that is suitable for this time of year, including the risks of alcohol and co-sleeping, travelling with babies and managing temperature.

Follow the Lullaby Trust on Twitter, Facebook or Instagram to view and share campaign messages. [@LullabyTrust](#)

Key messages for parents and carers are:

- Always put your baby on their back for every sleep, day and night, as the chance of SIDS is particularly high for babies who are sometimes placed on their front or side.
- The safest place for your baby to sleep is a separate cot or Moses basket in the same room as you for the first 6 months, even during the day. Make sure the cot or Moses basket is clear (not cluttered with toys, cot bumpers, pillows etc) and that the baby is sleeping on a firm, flat mattress protected with a waterproof cover.
- It is really important that you do not accidentally fall asleep with your baby on a sofa or armchair. Sleeping on a sofa with a baby can increase the risk of SIDS by 50 times. If you think you might fall asleep on a sofa or armchair, put the baby down in a safe place to sleep. Be particularly aware of this after drinking alcohol or taking drugs including prescribed medication that may make you feel sleepy.
- If your baby is unwell with a cold or fever don't be tempted to wrap them up more than usual. Babies need fewer layers to lower their body temperature.
- There are many sleeping products on the market. The Lullaby Trust has put together a [product guide](#) to help people choose the products babies need to reduce the chance of SIDS. The guide also includes what types of products to avoid.

Some parents choose to share a bed (also known as co-sleeping) with their babies. If you are bed sharing, make your bed a safer place for your baby by:

- Keeping pillows, sheets and blankets away from your baby or any other items that could obstruct your baby's breathing or cause them to overheat. A high proportion of infants who die because of SIDS are found with their head covered by loose bedding.
- Avoiding letting pets or other children in the bed.

It is important for parents and carers to know that there are some circumstances in which co-sleeping with your baby can be very dangerous. You should never sleep together with your baby if:

- Either you or your partner smokes (even if you do not smoke in the bedroom)
- Either you or your partner has drunk alcohol or taken drugs (including medications that may make you drowsy)
- Your baby was born premature (before 37 weeks) or at a low birth weight (2.5kg or 5.5 lbs or less)



What can I do as a practitioner to support safer sleep advice?

- ✓ Follow the Lullaby Trust campaign from December 12th-24th 2021 and share social media messages with parents, carers and families.
- ✓ Ensure you are familiar with safer sleep advice and reinforce it with parents, carers and families whenever you have the opportunity, making sure that they understand it. Make sure Dads and partners understand the advice as well as Mums.
- ✓ Share the 'Your Baby's Sleep' survey with parents and carers and encourage them to complete it.

Your baby's sleep survey link <https://consult.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/children-and-families-services/fd95b984>

- ✓ Make use of the Safer Sleep Risk Assessment Tool and guidance to help you identify and support vulnerable families where there is a greater risk of SIDS.

The tool and guidance are available on the Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership website [here](#) and the Nottingham City Safeguarding Children Partnership website [here](#)

- ✓ Consider training needs for you and your team. Training can be accessed through the [Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership](#) and [Nottingham City Safeguarding Children Partnership](#). Training is also provided by the Lullaby Trust.

- ✓ Find out more about the Safer Sleep Steering Group. This is a multi-agency county wide group. The group meets quarterly and works collaboratively to ensure that partners who support families in Nottinghamshire and Nottingham City understand and are supported to implement safe sleeping advice. Does your service/organisation need to be represented on the group?

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