



Partner Bulletin for practitioners and professionals

Summer Safety: Safer Sleep Away from Home

Every sleep counts – even on holiday

As families across Nottingham and Nottinghamshire prepare for summer holidays, days out and visits to friends and relatives, it's important that safer sleep messages continue to be shared consistently.

We know that greater awareness of safer sleep leads to a reduction in Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). Sadly, across Nottingham City and Nottinghamshire, around 5 to 6 babies die each year in an unsafe sleep environment. By working together, we can ensure that all families receive life-saving safer sleep advice wherever they are.

This summer, we are highlighting the importance of maintaining a safer sleep environment when families are away from home. Holidays, visits to relatives and changes in routine can all affect where and how babies sleep, making it even more important to plan ahead and follow safer sleep guidance for every sleep, both day and night.

Summer Safety Spotlight: Safer Sleep on Holiday, Including Caravan and Holiday Park Breaks

Whether families are staying in a hotel, caravan, holiday lodge, holiday park or with relatives, babies should always have a safe place to sleep. The safest place for a baby is in their own separate sleep space, such as a cot, travel cot or Moses basket, with a firm, flat mattress.

Many families enjoy caravan and holiday park breaks during the summer, but these can involve unfamiliar sleeping arrangements and changes to routine. Locally, there have been incidents linked to unsafe sleep environments whilst families have been away from home, highlighting the importance of planning ahead and following safer sleep guidance wherever babies sleep.

When supporting families, encourage them to:

- ✓ Plan ahead and ensure a safe sleep space is available before travelling
- ✓ Use a cot, travel cot or Moses basket with a firm, flat mattress wherever possible
- ✓ Check that any cot or travel cot provided by accommodation is in good condition, has a firm mattress and complies with current safety standards
- ✓ Ensure the sleep space is free from pillows, duvets, cot bumpers and soft toys
- ✓ Remember that caravans and holiday accommodation can become very warm during hot weather. Babies should be kept at a comfortable temperature and not allowed to overheat. The ideal room temperature for a sleeping baby is between 16 to 20°C
- ✓ Continue to follow safer sleep guidance even when routines change

Key Safer Sleep Messages for Families

Always

- ✓ Place babies on their back for every sleep
- ✓ Use a firm, flat mattress
- ✓ Keep the cot clear of pillows, duvets, cot bumpers and soft toys
- ✓ Keep babies smoke-free before and after birth
- ✓ Share a room with your baby for at least the first six months
- ✓ Keep your baby's head uncovered whilst sleeping

Avoid

- ✗ Sleeping with a baby on a sofa or armchair
- ✗ Allowing babies to sleep in bouncers, swings, pods or nests
- ✗ Using car seats as a regular sleep space outside of travel
- ✗ Overheating babies through excessive clothing, bedding or high room temperatures

Car Seats and Travel: Car seats are designed to keep babies safe whilst travelling and should not be used as a baby's main sleep space. If a baby falls asleep during a journey, they should be moved to a firm, flat sleep surface as soon as practical when they arrive at their destination.

Co-Sleeping: The safest place for a baby to sleep is in their own separate sleep space. If parents choose to co-sleep, it is important that they understand how to reduce risks and when bed-sharing is particularly dangerous.

Never Co-Sleep If:

- ✗ Anyone in the bed smokes
- ✗ Anyone has consumed alcohol
- ✗ Anyone has taken drugs or medication that causes drowsiness
- ✗ The baby was born prematurely (before 37 weeks)
- ✗ The baby weighed less than 2.5kg at birth

What Can I Do as a Practitioner?

As trusted professionals and practitioners, we all have a role to play in reinforcing safer sleep messages and supporting informed conversations with families.

- ✓ Ensure you are familiar with current safer sleep advice and reinforce it whenever possible
- ✓ Make sure fathers, partners, grandparents and anyone caring for the baby understand safer sleep guidance
- ✓ Use the Safer Sleep Risk Assessment Tool and supporting guidance to identify and support families with additional vulnerabilities

- ✓ Encourage open, honest and non-judgemental discussions about sleep arrangements, including co-sleeping
- ✓ Consider safer sleep discussions when supporting families who are planning holidays or overnight stays
- ✓ Review training needs for yourself and your team

Resources for Parents and Carers

- **Safer Sleep Guide for Parents and Carers**
[Safer-sleep-guide-for-parents.pdf](#)
- **Safer Sleep Overview** <https://www.lullabytrust.org.uk/baby-safety/safer-sleep-information/safer-sleep-overview/>
- **Safer Sleep on Holiday** <https://www.lullabytrust.org.uk/baby-safety/travel-and-weather/safer-sleep-on-holiday/>

Resources for Professionals

- Professional Resources: [Professionals-guide.pdf](#)
- Lullaby Trust Training: <https://www.lullabytrust.org.uk/professionals/training/>

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.

You will find links to useful resources and information included as well as a 'safer sleep plan of care' to be discussed with parents and a checklist for parents who may find themselves co-sleeping, whether they plan to or not. A key emphasis within the tool is the importance of open conversations with parents and families, creating an environment where they can discuss their individual circumstances and any worries/queries without fear of judgement..

You will find links to the tools on the safeguarding children partnership websites.

Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership: [For professionals and volunteers](#)

Nottingham City Safeguarding Children Partnership: [Safer Sleep - Nottingham City Council](#)

Safer Sleep Steering Group

The Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Safer Sleep Steering Group is a multi-agency city and county-wide group that works collaboratively to ensure all partners supporting families understand and implement safer sleeping advice. Could your organisation or service be represented on the group?

For further information please contact Kate Whittaker kate.whittaker@nottsc.gov.uk

Key Message

Every sleep matters. Whether families are at home, staying with relatives, travelling abroad, camping or enjoying a caravan holiday, following safer sleep guidance for every sleep can help save lives