

Family Safety Advice Guidance

This guidance has been developed to support practitioners to effectively complete the "Your family's safety advice" section of the early help assessment and Social Care single assessment. It identifies key messages for families about safety issues and highlights points which practitioners should consider and where they can obtain additional information. The guidance also provides information about where practitioners can seek additional safety advice as well as support and resources for families they are working with.

1. SAFETY ISSUE: Fire safety. Are there working smoke alarms on each floor of the property? Are the parents / family happy that in the case of a fire they could all escape safely? How? Do they have an escape plan?

Smoke alarms

Key message: The easiest way to protect your family and home from fire is a smoke alarm.

- You are twice as likely to die in a fire if you do not have a smoke alarm that works.
- There should be a smoke alarm on every level of the family home.
- Test batteries in smoke alarms every week.
- If your smoke alarm is not working, immediately replace the battery or smoke alarm.

Fire escape plans

Key Message: Having a fire escape plan could save the lives of your family.

- Plan together as a family; make sure the children know what to do and make sure the children are the first to leave the property.
- Remember children are unlikely to be woken up by a fire alarm.
- Ensure the escape route is practical so it can be carried out.

A [safe and well visit](#) can be requested for advice about fire safety that is specific to the home and the people who live there. It includes a family fire escape plan in the event of a fire, smoke alarm fitting if necessary and provision of additional safety equipment if needed. This service is free, however you will need to go through a number of risk based qualifying criteria questions to access this. Referrals to see if you are eligible for a free home safety check can be made via:

Chesterfield, Bolsover and North East Derbyshire - 01246 223 500
Derby City and South Derbyshire - 01332 291 134
Erewash and Amber Valley - 0115 932 6832
High Peak and Derbyshire Dales - 01298 22620

For further information about fire prevention and safety in the home and what to do in an emergency, see the [Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Service website](#). The Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Service also have a Facebook and Twitter page that parents can link to via social media.

Paraffin based skin products

Key message: Skin products which contain paraffin, such as white soft paraffin, white soft paraffin plus 50% liquid paraffin and emulsifying ointment, present an increased fire risk and lead to an increased risk of clothing, medical dressings or bed clothes to catch fire.

- When using paraffin based skin products don't smoke, use naked flames (or be near people who are smoking or using naked flames); or go near anything that may cause a fire,
- Change clothing and bedding regularly - preferably daily - because paraffin based skin products soak into fabric and can become a fire hazard.
- The risk is greater when they are applied to large areas of the body, or when dressings or clothing become soaked.

For more information see [GOV.UK: Paraffin-based skin emollients on dressings or clothing: fire risk](#).

2. SAFETY ISSUE: Safe sleep arrangements

Key Message: Safe sleep practice reduces the risk of cot death in babies and infants.

- The Department of Health advises against bed sharing and recommends that babies sleep in their own cot in the parents' room for the first 6 months. If parents find this difficult to follow, they should be encouraged to speak with their Midwife or Health Visitor.
- Babies should always be placed to sleep on their backs, on a flat surface and in the feet to the foot of the cot position. The mattress should not be elevated and the use of pillows should be discouraged.
- Never put a baby to sleep or sleep with a baby on a sofa, armchair or settee.
- Babies should be in the same room as the parent(s) during the day and night.
- If a baby is given a dummy at sleep times, it should be used at every sleep time until the age of six months.
- Babies and infants should never be left to sleep for long periods in car seats; once a journey is complete they should be taken out of the car seat.
- Check that the family have had a safe sleep assessment completed by the Midwife or Health Visitor. If an assessment has not taken place and the baby is less than 6 months, refer to the Midwife (if the baby is less than 10 days old) or Health Visitor (if the baby is over 10 days old).
- To avoid overheating babies and young children should have their outdoor clothing and hats removed once they are moved indoors.
- Discuss and check safe sleep arrangements at each visit, ask "where did your child wake up?"
- Remember that children under the age of 6 years should not sleep in cabin or bunk beds or share these with siblings or friends.

See DSCBs' Guidance to support safe sleeping practices in babies and infants, located in the DSCB's Safeguarding Children procedures [Document Library](#) and [CDOP Safe Sleep Alert](#). Please also see Unicef [The Co-Sleeping and SIDS: A Guide for Health Professionals](#) and the [Lullaby Trust website](#).

3. SAFETY ISSUE: Don't shake your baby advice

Key message: It is very dangerous to shake a baby; it can cause serious injury or death.

- Parents or carers may shake a baby in a moment of anger or frustration, especially if the baby cries a lot.
- Always protect a baby's head, even in an emergency, i.e. if the baby appears to have stopped breathing don't shake it. In these situations Doctors advise stimulating the baby and seek medical help as a matter of urgency via 999. Always pick the baby up ensuring the head and neck is well supported.
- Check that families with babies under 6 months have seen the "Shaking your baby is just not the deal" DVD and leaflet; if they haven't refer to Midwifery or Health Visiting services.

See DSCBs Guidance on Prevention of Non Accidental Head Injury located in the DSCB's Safeguarding Children procedures [Document Library](#). To support discussions with parents, practitioners can access the Crying Baby: "[Shaking your baby is just not the deal](#)" film clip. There is also an accompanying leaflet which you can find on the Derby Safeguarding Children Board website, [Pregnant Women and Babies page](#) and on Derbyshire Safeguarding Children Board website, [Policies and Procedures page](#).

4. SAFETY ISSUE: Home safety

Key message: Every year more than two million children under the age of 15 are taken to A & E following an accident in and around the home. More are treated by their GP and by parents and carers. Most of these accidents are preventable through increased awareness, improvements in the home environment and better product safety.

- Is the home and garden environment as safe as it could be? Consider the child's age and development.
- Have the family got any necessary safety equipment i.e. stair gates or fire guards?

- General safety advice:
 - Children should be supervised at all times particularly around ponds, baths and open water.
 - Children should be looked after by a responsible carer and should not be left unsupervised with casual friends or acquaintances.
 - Keep floors free of toys and obstructions that can be tripped over.
 - Always use a securely fitted safety harness in a pram, pushchair or highchair.
 - Never leave babies unattended on raised surfaces.
 - Always keep nappy sacks and other plastic bags or wrapping away from babies and young children.
 - Keep medicines, cleaning products/dishwasher tablets and chemicals in their original containers and out of sight and reach of children, preferably in a locked cupboard.
 - Choose toys appropriate to the age of the child.
 - Ensure any household items, cards and toys with button batteries have a lockable battery compartment. Seek immediate medical attention if there are any concerns about a child swallowing a button battery.
 - Keep matches and lighters out of sight and reach of children.
 - Keep small children out of the kitchen whenever possible.
 - Never leave children unsupervised with a dog.
 - Large items of furniture should be secured to the wall.

The [Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents website](#) has a wide range of child home safety information and advice.

5. SAFETY ISSUE: Safe storage of harmful substances

Key message: If a child swallows Methadone, other medication, drugs or alcohol they could be seriously harmed or die.

- Lock all human or animal medications / drugs / alcohol / e-cigarettes away from children; don't keep Methadone in the fridge.
- Before getting rid of empty Methadone bottles, rinse them with water.
- Teach children not to eat or drink anything that is unfamiliar.
- Do not ever give children another person's medication.
- Needles and injecting equipment must be stored safely.
- Take old and unwanted medicines to a pharmacy.

If any member of the family are known to drug and alcohol services, check they have received safe storage advice and support; this may include the provision of a safe storage box for those prescribed Methadone or any similar medication. If they haven't received support, advice or a safe storage box, liaise with the appropriate substance misuse service. See [Derby Drug and Alcohol Services website](#) and the [Derbyshire Recovery Partnership website](#).

There are three useful Keep Safe leaflets about alcohol, Methadone/medication/drugs/ alcohol and injecting equipment. These are located DSCB's Safeguarding Children procedures [Document Library](#).

Version Control

Policy to be read in conjunction with the Derby and Derbyshire Safeguarding Children Procedures					
Version	Author/s	Updated by	Signed off by	Date	Review Date
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