

CHILD DEATH ALERT FOR SOTW

ISSUE

A small number of deaths in young babies have occurred in the South of Tyne and Wear area in the past few months where babies have been left in car seats to sleep for long periods. There have also been a number of similar cases around the country.

RESEARCH

Research has been carried out in New Zealand in relation to babies experiencing breathing problems after being left sleeping in a car seat & concluded that the position the babies were sleeping in - with their head falling forward may have restricted their breathing.

The other significant factor was that the mothers of half the babies were smokers.

Research in America has also found that new-born and particularly premature babies can develop breathing problems from sitting for too long in car seats

The Foundation for the Study of Infant Deaths advises parents that the safest way for a baby to sleep is flat on their back and in their own cot or crib, preferably in the same room as a parent or other responsible carer.

However if a young baby is being transported in a car, he or she should be carried in a properly designed and fitted car seat, carried backwards and be observable by a competent adult.

ACTION TO BE TAKEN

- **Every** opportunity should be taken by **ALL** health staff to reinforce with parents and carers of young babies to continue to use correctly fitted car seats for car journeys.
- To restrict for young babies the number and length of car journeys in particular.
- To not leave babies sleeping in their car seats once a journey is over, but rather place to sleep in their cot.

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