

7 Minute Briefing: Babies Born During Lockdown



7

Resources

- Children's Commissioner Briefing (May 2020)
- West Midlands Regional Procedures – Injuries in Babies and Children under age 2
- NSPCC – Bruises on children
- ICON website

6

Bruising and non-accidental injury

- Bruising in children who are not independently mobile is a concern and should be referred to Children's Social Care.
- Practitioners must discuss the bruise with the parent/carer and enquire its explanation. They must honestly advise and explain a referral is being made and confirm this within 48 hours using the Multi-Agency Referral Form

5

Risk to babies and parents:

- COVID-19 has disrupted the whole support network available for babies and parents.
- After care may be virtual rather than in person so it is harder for professionals to see body language, home environment, interaction between parent and baby.
- Due to this, it is easier for parents to pretend all is well, so professionals need to be curious and ask questions.
- Injuries that would normally be noticed by professionals in person, or mental health issues of the parents, are more likely to go unnoticed. This could have significant impact on the babies' development if not addressed.

4

Potential impact for parents of babies born during COVID-19

- Undiagnosed post-natal depression
- Parental development of obsessive behaviours
- Prolonged self-isolation
- Increase in Fabricated or Induced Illness
- Development of Agoraphobia
- Increase in Domestic Abuse
- Unaddressed health needs for self and baby
- Low-income families, Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities and young parents have been hit hard and are less likely to receive the support they needed – widening existing inequalities (Best Beginnings Report, Aug 2020) need to know this information, such as GPs and also feeding back outcomes to the agency that has undertaken the caused enquiry.

1

Introduction

During May 2020, the Children's Commissioner published a briefing that identified increased pressure on families during the coronavirus pandemic. This is combined with reduction in support available to a family and increases the risk of harm to babies during this time.

COVID-19 has brought new stresses and complications to families, which professionals should be aware of.

2

National Data

- 76,000 babies born in the first 6 weeks of lockdown (Children's Commissioner).
- 16 Domestic Homicides in the first 2 weeks of lockdown.
- Rise in baby deaths from shaken babies and unsafe sleeping.

In the region, ICON is being funded by NHSE as support for parents who have babies during lockdown.

3

COVID-19 Stresses

- Pre and post-natal worry over lack of medical supplies/baby items.
- Family support limitations.
- Unexpected financial pressures and job insecurity.
- Future uncertainty – change in plans.
- Reductions in contact with health visitors.