

## 4.8 Safe Sleeping for Infants Guidance – Appendix 2

### Risk Assessment Framework for Sudden Infant Death



## Risk Assessment Framework for Sudden Infant Death

Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) is described as the sudden death of an infant that is unexpected by medical history, and remains unexplained after a detailed investigation. An infant is at higher risk of SIDS during sleep, which is why it is sometimes (confusingly) referred to as a cot death. The cause of SIDS is unknown, but some characteristics associated with the syndrome have been identified.

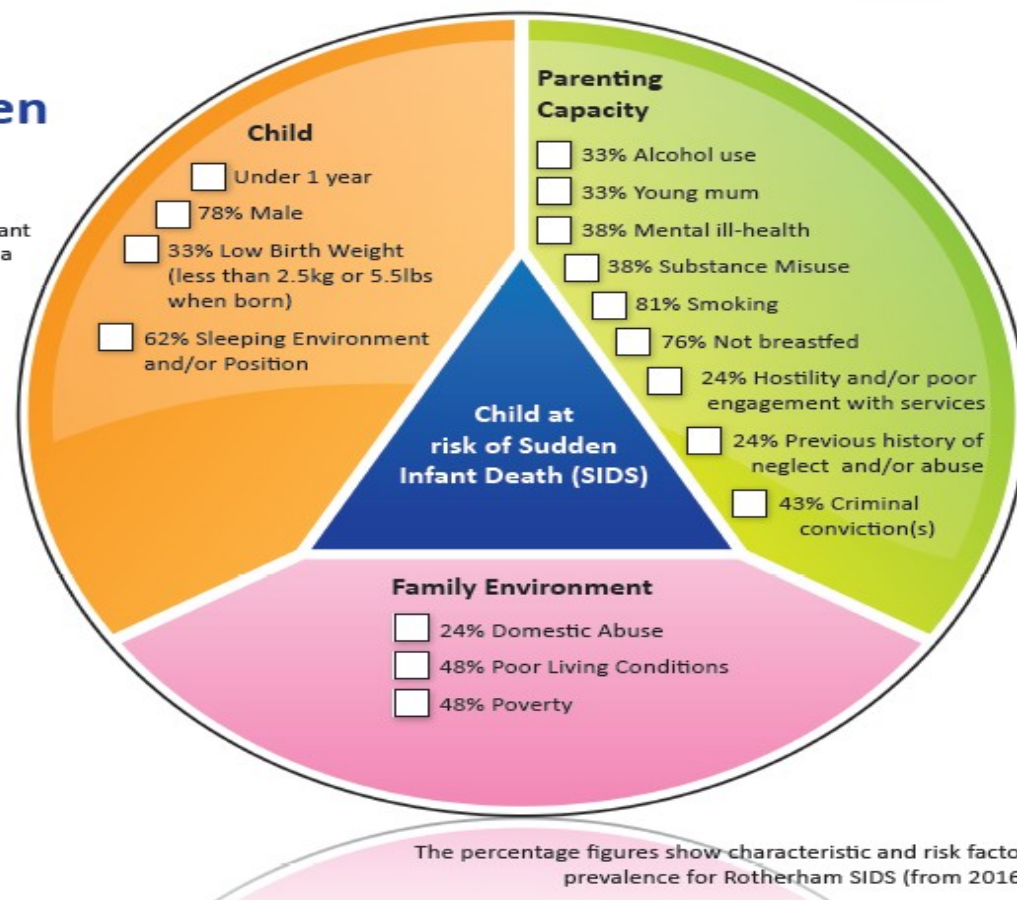
A Review of child deaths in Rotherham (2008-2015) has revealed that a high number of deaths among infants aged under 1 year from SIDS compared to national figures. We have reviewed these deaths and have identified the key characteristics/risk factors that are present. Many of these characteristics/risk factors are supported by national and international evidence relating to SIDS.

This tool allows professionals and workers to further identify and support families who may be vulnerable to SIDS. This tool should be used by all professionals and workers who come into contact with families with infants under 1 year to assess the infant's sleeping environment and reinforce safe sleeping messages.

#### Characteristics and risk factors present in Rotherham SIDS since 2008

- Smoking
- Male Infant
- Domestic Abuse
- Mental ill-health
- Criminal convictions (either parent)
- Alcohol use
- Sleeping environment (this includes co-sleeping (in bed) and overlay, babies being placed on their front (supine) to sleep, and head covering from bedding/duvet)
- Low birth weight
- Poor living conditions (this includes condemned boiler, disrepair of windows, no heating and condemned housing)
- Poverty (this includes unemployment or very low income)
- History of neglect (this includes siblings)
- Young mum (age range 16-21 years)
- Substance misuse
- Poor engagement with services
- Not breastfed.

Produced by Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council Public Health and Child Death Overview Panel.  
Authors: Anna Clack & Stacey Attenborough last updated 2016



#### Co- Characteristics and risk factors

55% of the deaths in Rotherham since 2008 had 8 or more of the characteristics and risk factors present (two having 13 or more risk factors) and 75% had 6 or more characteristics and risk factors present.