

Having a Drink? Who's in Charge?

Keeping children safe when adults are drinking
alcohol

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2011 – 2021

In the beginning...the concept

BCHC safeguarding children's team increasingly concerned about consequences for children of parents who engage in excessive alcohol consumption.

Two BSCB SCRs involve deaths of young babies from parental overlaying on sofas.

“WHO'S IN CHARGE?”

***The voice of the child** to parents /carers who are both consuming alcohol to the same level*

***A conversation for the parents/carers** – before they start drinking- someone drinks less*



Best Care
Healthy Communities

Evidence at the Outset-

The Context

- **2.6m children in UK live with a parent whose drinking puts them at risk.**
(Alcohol Concern/Children's Society)
- **8 out of 10 sudden infant deaths in Birmingham involved co-sleeping.**
(Birmingham CDOP)
- **Nearly half all SCRs into Birmingham child deaths identified alcohol as risk factor.**
(23 per cent nationally)
- **Alcohol a factor in up to 60% of children subject to Child Protection Plan.**
(Alcohol Concern)



The Vision

“Who’s in Charge?”

- An Integrated Public Health and Safeguarding message
- A call to Action – behavioural change in the home
- Putting child CSPR /SUDIC evidence & learning into practice
- A memorable phrase

Background

- Our vision: To reduce avoidable deaths and injuries in young children related to parental alcohol use.
- Our product: A direct to public campaign of five short films for social media, COVID compliant messaging.
- Our team's skills –Safeguarding, clinical, communications, social media film production

Call to action - Partnerships

- 2009: DH five-point plan for an alcohol-free childhood, stressing importance of parental influence and role of professionals and support services.
- No funding for children and young people to receive alcohol awareness education.



drinkaware.co.uk
for the facts about alcohol



Qualitative analysis of serious case reviews into unexpected infant deaths

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ABSTRACT

Objective To develop a detailed understanding of the circumstances of sudden unexpected death in infancy (SUDI) cases subject to serious case review (SCR).

Design This was a thematic analysis of SCRs relating to cases of SUDI in England. SCRs were obtained for SUDI cases dying between 1 April 2011 and 31 March 2014. These were cases (aged 0–2 years) that presented as a SUDI and for which no clear medical or forensic cause of death was found.

Results SCRs were held for 30 SUDI cases, published reports were available for 27/30. The median (range) age at death was 2 (0–19) months. Background risk factors in families included: alcohol or drug dependency in 18/27, parental mental health problems in 14/27, domestic abuse in 9/27 and parental criminal records in 13/27. Nineteen infants had received support from social care, 10/19 were subject to child protection plans. Neglect was a feature in 15/27 cases. Parents did not engage with professionals in 18/27 cases, involving social care in 14/18, health care in 13/18 and drug and substance misuse services in 5/18. Eighteen of 27 deaths occurred in highly hazardous sleep environments, 16/18 involved cosleeping and 13/16 cosleeping deaths occurred with parents who were intoxicated with alcohol or impaired by drugs.

Conclusion Most SUDI cases occurred in hazardous sleep environments and are potentially preventable. They occurred in families well known to services with concerns about neglect, substance misuse and poor engagement

What is already known on this topic?

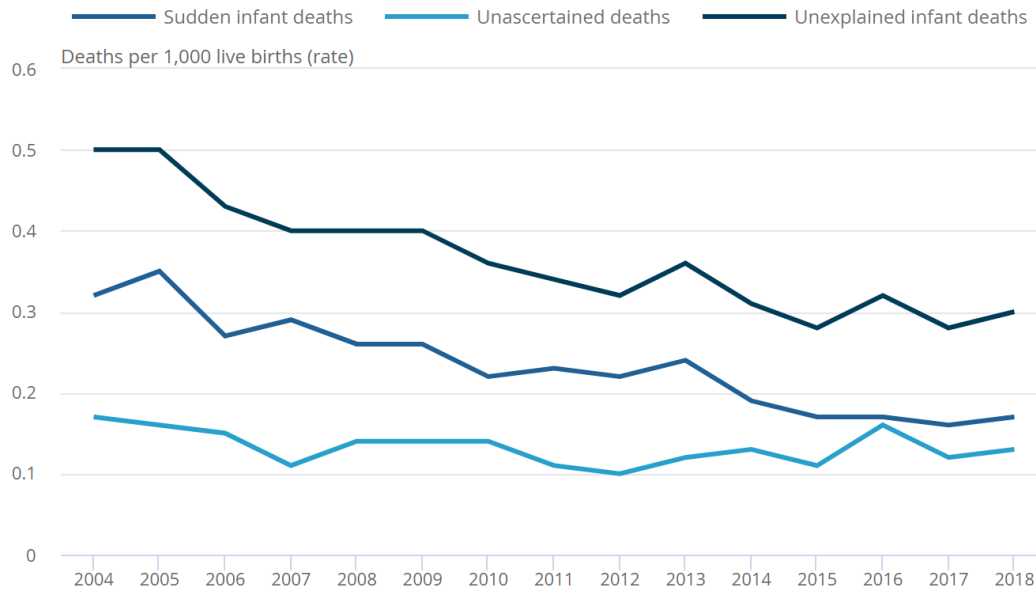
- ▶ Sudden unexpected death in infancy (SUDI) occurs more commonly in socially deprived families.
- ▶ Child protection concerns are a well-known but relatively rare occurrence in SUDI investigations.
- ▶ The risk of SUDI is greatly increased when an infant shares a sleep surface with an adult who has consumed alcohol or drugs.

What this study adds?

- ▶ Sudden unexpected death in infancy (SUDI) cases subject to serious case review (SCR) occur in families with domestic violence, mental health problems, and substance misuse, with established patterns of non-engagement with professionals.
- ▶ Most SUDI cases subject to SCR occurred in highly hazardous sleep environments involving intoxicated parents sharing sleep surfaces with young infants.
- ▶ SUDI cases subject to SCR often happened following a sudden change in family circumstances.

Figure 1: The unexplained infant mortality rate has flattened in recent years

Unexplained infant mortality rate, England and Wales, 2004 to 2018



Source: Office for National Statistics - Deaths in England and Wales

**Out of routine:
A review of sudden
unexpected death
in infancy (SUDI)
in families where
the children are
considered at risk of
significant harm**

Final report

July 2020

Alcohol related child deaths are hidden - possible factor in 20% of unexplained infant deaths

Ambition: to create a clear message on risks of alcohol when caring for young children

Bedsharing more safely

Whether you choose to bed-share or it is unplanned, there are some key risks you should avoid.

It is dangerous to share a bed with your baby if:

- you or anyone in the bed has recently drunk any alcohol
- you or anyone in the bed smokes
- you or anyone in the bed has taken any drugs that make you feel sleepy
- your baby was born prematurely (before 37 weeks of pregnancy) or weighed under 2.5kg or 5½ lbs when they were born.

Things to remember if bedsharing

In these scenarios, it is always best to put baby in their own safe sleep space, such as a cot or Moses basket. Keeping the cot or Moses basket next to the bed might make it easier to do this.

Reason: studies have found that bedsharing with your baby after drinking alcohol or using drugs has a very high risk of SIDS. Sleeping close to a smoker also greatly increases the chance of SIDS. Premature and very small babies have a greater chance of SIDS when they share a bed with an adult.



Trialing early ideas...community safety partnership alcohol forums-



Birmingham Community Healthcare **NHS**
1888 700 000

I just Blanked out.

After a drink you might not care where you rest your head, but where a child sleeps can be the difference between life and death

photo

For more information
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Birmingham Community Healthcare **NHS**
1888 700 000

I just passed out - my child passed away.

After a drink you might not know what you're resting on...

123R

For more information
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Birmingham Community Healthcare **NHS**
1888 700 000

Drink too much is left

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When kids are n who's in charge?

If you've had too much to drink



You would never neglect your children
their safety at risk if drinking at home
Every year, adult drinking at home is le
themselves and their brothers or siste
Staying in to drink? Stay in control

When drink lea tired... who's in

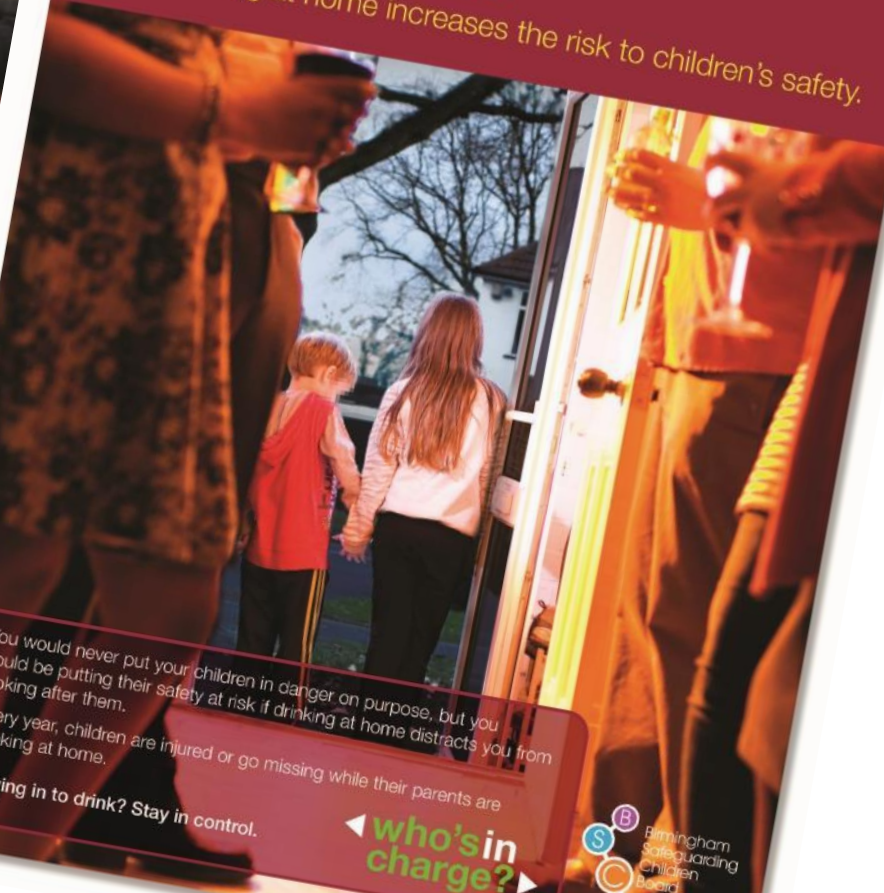
Drinking and sleeping with you



Birmingham Community Healthcare NHS Trust **NHS**

If you're having a get-together, think before you drink... who's in charge?

Adult drinking at home increases the risk to children's safety.



You would never put your children in danger on purpose, but you
could be putting their safety at risk if drinking at home distracts you from
looking after them.
Every year, children are injured or go missing while their parents are
drinking at home.

Staying in to drink? Stay in control.

◀ who's in charge? ▶



The value of “Who’s in Charge?”

- A generic message not targeted at age, gender or social class – asks everyone the question
- To achieve a behaviour change by triggering active dialogue between parents in the home
- Learning into practice - tools for discussion - awareness raising of hidden risk
- A memorable phrase and a hard hitting message
- **The voice of the child – “Who’s in Charge of me?”**



Qualitative outcomes

Feedback (Sept 21 data)

"I never thought of it like that before – nobody tells you that stuff"

- A Teenage Parent

"You have to tell people about this!"

- A Bereaved Parent
- ROSPA Ambassador

"Never thought about that like that. I tell them to have a good night out, you know have a good drink, and sit for them, but when they come back I go home. If they bring the kids round to us to stay we might have a bottle of wine once they're in bed"

- The Grandparents

"Just shows how much we are drinking without realising – its cheaper to drink at home and you think you're safe as you don't have to drive"

- The Expectant Parents

1,001,813 have watched the videos

" I put them to bed on a Friday and it's my night off – I buy a bottle of wine for myself - I didn't think till I saw you do that...makes me think what I am doing now"

- A Single Parent

...I was immediately hooked. This is just what we need for our military community and the posters themselves paint such a powerful story. Well done!"

- Major (Ret'd) Dr Sally Sole /
Clinical Director Bergen-Hohne Region
The Professional

583,221 people have seen the social media post

Spread – Local, Regional & National

- Collaborative working and investment
- Regional impact
- National endorsement





WiC – National Safeguarding Award:



- Alcohol related child deaths and injuries are preventable but hidden
 - increasing public awareness empowers parents to make safer choices.
- Our use of social media gave wide reach
 - Targeting high risk behaviours during COVID
- Winning gave us an opportunity to spread the message and share our resources – national and international interest



Thank you

- <https://www.bhamcommunity.nhs.uk/about-us/news/latest-news/whos-in-charge-video-campaign/resources/>
- #WhosinChargeBrum
- #AlcoholAwarenessWeek

