

## Co – Sleeping Between with Mother and Infant

Issue Date	Review Date	Version
May 2019	May 2024	1

### Purpose

The purpose of this Standard Operating Procedure is to provide all clinical staff working within Maternity Services with the guidance on co-sleeping between mother and infant to optimise patient safety.

### Who should read this document?

All maternity staff within University Hospitals Plymouth.

### Key Messages

We do not advise co-sleeping and advise that the safest place for the infant to sleep is in a cot by the side of your bed.

### Core accountabilities

Owner	Maternity Guideline Committee
Review	Maternity Clinical Effectiveness Committee
Ratification	Director of Midwifery
Dissemination (Raising Awareness)	Maternity Staff
Compliance	Director of Midwifery

### Links to other policies and procedures

### Version History

1	June 2019	Approved by the Maternity Clinical Effectiveness Committee
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*The Trust is committed to creating a fully inclusive and accessible service. Making equality and diversity an integral part of the business will enable us to enhance the services we deliver and better meet the needs of patients and staff. We will treat people with dignity and respect, promote equality and diversity and eliminate all forms of discrimination, regardless of (but not limited to) age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage/civil partnership and pregnancy/maternity.*

**An electronic version of this document is available on Trust Documents.  
Larger text, Braille and Audio versions can be made available upon request.**

Standard Operating Procedures are designed to promote consistency in delivery, to the required quality standards, across the Trust. They should be regarded as a key element of the training provision for staff to help them to deliver their roles and responsibilities.

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## Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)

### Co-sleeping between mother and infant.

#### 1 Introduction

There is an association between co-sleeping and sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS). Although SIDS is now very rare over 200 babies die each year in the UK. Around half of SIDS babies die while co-sleeping.

#### 2 Definitions

For the purpose of this policy the term co-sleeping will be used when a mother and her infant sleep together on any surface (such as a bed, chair or sofa) whether intended or not. It is recognised that whilst in hospital mothers may take their baby into bed with them to support breast feeding, to provide comfort, or just to be close to their baby.

#### 3 Recommendations

The number of babies who die of SIDS could be reduced dramatically if families follow 3 key pieces of advice: put babies on their back for every sleep, on a clear flat sleep space, and keep them smoke free day and night.

In view of this University Hospitals Plymouth do not promote co-sleeping and advise that the safest place for the baby to sleep is in a cot by the side of the mother's bed.

If the mother feels sleepy she should place the baby in the cot, or call for help so that a member of staff can assist. If a mother and baby are found to be co-sleeping, the mother should be woken and the baby placed in the cot.

#### 4 Document Ratification Process

The design and process of review and revision of this procedural document will comply with The Development and Management of Formal Documents.

The review period for this document is set as default of five years from the date it was last ratified, or earlier if developments within or external to the Trust indicate the need for a significant revision to the procedures described.

This document will be reviewed by the Guideline Committee and ratified through the Clinical Effectiveness Committee.

Any amendments or revisions to this document will include a consultation with the Guideline Committee.

## **5 Dissemination and Implementation**

Following approval and ratification, this procedural document will be published in the Trust's formal documents library and all staff will be notified via the Maternity newsletter.

Document control arrangements will be in accordance with The Development and Management of Formal Documents.

The document author(s) will be responsible for agreeing the training requirements associated with the newly ratified document with the Director of Midwifery and for working with the Trust's training function, if required, to arrange for the required training to be delivered.

## **6 Reference Material**

1. Blair, PS and Ball, HL (2004), "The prevalence and characteristics associated with parent-infant bed-sharing in England." Archives of Disease in Childhood, 89(12):1106-10.
2. Office for National Statistics, "Birth Summary Tables, England and Wales:2016."
3. Office for National Statistics, "Unexplained Deaths in Infancy, England and Wales:2016."
4. National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (February 2015). Postnatal care up to 8 weeks after delivery (NICE Guideline 37).
5. If parents require further information please refer to the link below;

<https://www.lullabytrust.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Safer-Sleep-for-babies-a-guide-for-parents.pdf>