

Background

- The Safeguarding Children Partnerships in East Sussex, Brighton & Hove, and West Sussex launched the ICON campaign in 2020.
- ICON aims to support all parents and carers with interventions for comforting and coping with a crying baby. The call for resources comes following infant deaths, and safeguarding practice reviews, where a baby has died or been seriously injured as a result of abusive head trauma.

Why it matters

- Abusive Head Trauma (AHT) – also known as ‘shaken baby syndrome’ – causes catastrophic brain injuries, which can lead to death, or significant long term health and learning disabilities. AHT is the most common cause of death or long term disability in babies. 24 out of 100,000 hospital admissions for babies are due to AHT.
- In East Sussex, a recent safeguarding practice review involved abusive head trauma.

Information

- The programme – [ICON: Babies Cry, You Can Cope](#) – provides key messages and resources to let parents and all carers know that babies cry to communicate and that there are ways of coping with this crying.
- Resources include leaflets and video clips which can be shared with parents and all carers at any contact with midwives, health visitors, GPs, social workers, and other professionals who come into contact with families.

- The ICON message can be remembered simply:

I – Infant crying is normal

C – Comforting methods can help

O – it’s OK to walk away

N – Never, ever shake a baby.

- The ICON approach recommends all parents and all carers try and soothe their baby through comforting methods. ICON guidance suggests ways of calming the child before putting them down in a safe environment for a few minutes if the parent is struggling and only as a last resort.
- The programme advises, and provides professionals with a toolkit, including a 'crying plan' which they can complete with parents so they can plan in advance who to turn to for support if the crying becomes too much.
- ICON always recommends contacting a health professional such as a health visitor, midwife or GP for support with their baby and always recommends that the leaflet is given with a conversation to accompany it. Offer ICON as an alternative to a situation where frustration (often linked to tiredness) can lead to abusive head trauma

QR code
to ICON
resources



Questions to consider

- Are you aware of the key messages, and when and how to share?
- Have you checked the ICON message has been received and understood by all your team members?
- Do you discuss normal infant crying and management strategies with parents?
 - How will you share the ICON message?

What to do

- Familiarise yourself with ICON and local pages for resources and information and attend training when available.
- Take the opportunity to raise awareness of ICON among colleagues.
- Talk through the key points in the ICON leaflet with parents (not just the mother) and encourage them to share the information with any family and friends who may care for their child.
- Don't assume that someone has already had this conversation with the parent. The more times the message is reinforced, the more likely a parent will remember it.

