



REDUCING SUDDEN INFANT DEATHS IN THE EAST OF ENGLAND

FEBRUARY 2020



KEY STATISTICS

On average 4 babies die, suddenly and unexpectedly, every week in the UK and no cause will be found. This is known as sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS).

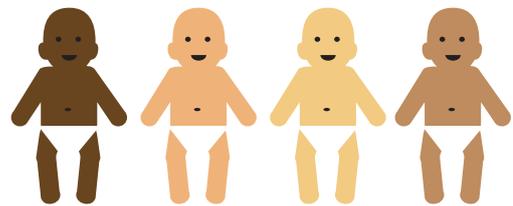
The latest results from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) showed in 2017 SIDS rates in England and Wales went down to the lowest on record. SIDS rates in the East of England have also decreased from 0.29 in 2016 to 0.16 in 2017. Rates of SIDS deaths in the East of England are now the lowest in the country alongside London and below the average rate in England of 0.27.

This is great progress but more can be done to build on this achievement and bring down the number of babies dying in your region still further. It is crucial that you ensure all parents have access to information on how to reduce the risk of SIDS. If all parents followed safer sleep advice, many more babies' lives could be saved.

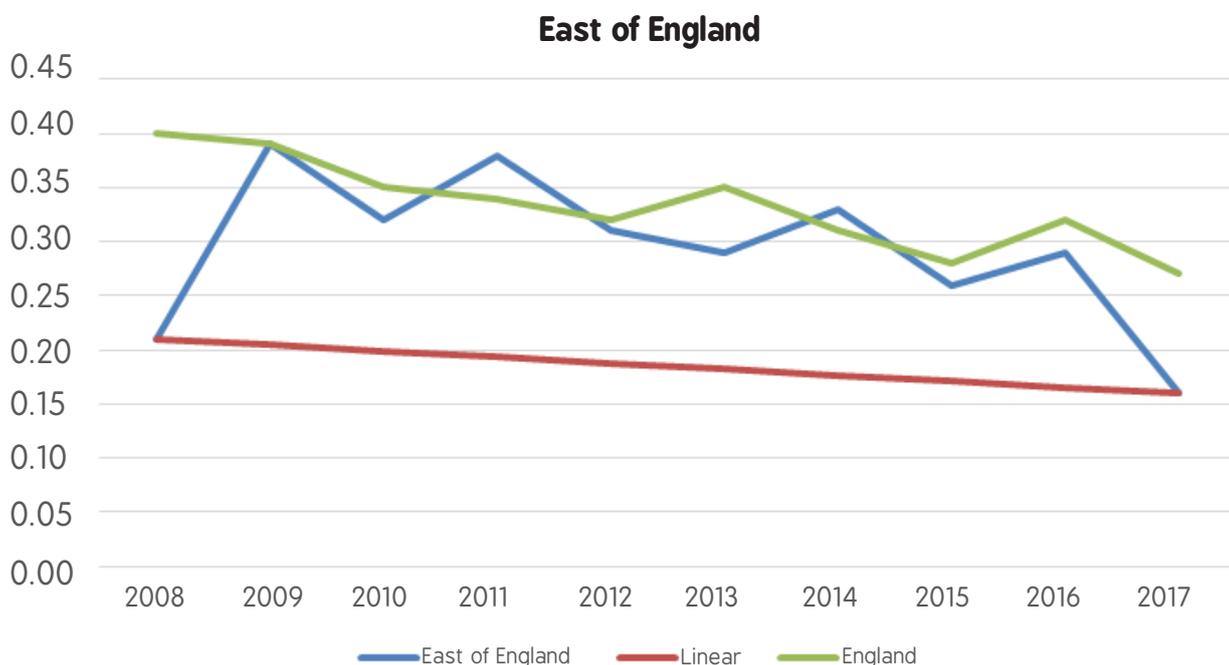
The Lullaby Trust has been working hard to bring down SIDS rates. With your help we can continue to reduce infant mortality in the East of England and move closer to achieving our vision of stopping all unexpected infant deaths.

212

SIDS claimed the lives of 212 babies in the East of England between 2008 and 2017



Sleeping on a sofa with a baby can increase the chance of SIDS by up to 50 times





JORDAN'S STORY

Young mum Jordan shares the story of her daughter Ruby-Leigh

I was 17 when I fell pregnant with Ruby-Leigh. My relationship with her dad was unstable and I was still in foster care at the time. I'd been in care from the age of seven. I hadn't had the best start to life; I never really knew my mum so having my own little family meant everything to me.

The pregnancy was difficult and there were a few scares along the way, but on 16th October 2014 I gave birth to my precious little girl.

She was tiny - 3lbs 14oz – but she was perfect. I remember sitting by the side of the incubator all night, watching her sucking her little thumb. I couldn't believe she was here and that she was okay.

Then my world came crashing down a month later when I woke up to find my girl not breathing. I phoned an ambulance and was told how to perform CPR on my tiny baby. Within minutes I was in the back of an ambulance on the way to hospital.

Alarms were going off in A&E. Ruby was rushed to be resuscitated. It felt like 1,000 doctors were handling her at once. I wanted to follow them, but was asked to wait outside. When I saw the doctors leaving the room I just knew. Ruby had died.

I was all on my own at the hospital. I was heartbroken and just wanted her back. I asked to hold my baby and we were put into a room together. She had wires through her nose and a cannula in her hand. I had pictures taken of me holding Ruby for the very last time and the hospital took her hand and foot prints. Ten hours later they told me I had to take Ruby to the chapel of rest, but I wasn't ready. I couldn't leave her on her own, I just couldn't.

Ruby's post-mortem stated she was a perfectly healthy and well-nourished child. The cause of death was SIDS. I wish SIDS was spoken about more openly so people are aware of the importance of safer sleeping for babies.



HOW YOU CAN HELP

1 SUPPORT SAFER SLEEP WEEK 2020

Our annual Safer Sleep Week campaign takes place from 9th-15th March 2020 and aims to reach as many families as possible with our life saving safer sleep advice. The campaign will once again be supported by Public Health England. The focus for 2020 is on surviving sleep deprivation as we know parental tiredness is the biggest barrier to them consistently following safer sleep advice. Sadly we know only too well the difference one night can make. Running a Safer Sleep Week campaign in your area is an effective way to raise awareness of SIDS and equip parents with information on how they can reduce the risk. We have a range of resources to help you with your campaign including a digital information pack which is free to download and contains Safer Sleep Week posters, cards and publications, which are available to order from our shop. For more information about Safer Sleep Week contact communications@lullabytrust.org.uk

2 ENSURE ALL PROFESSIONALS KNOW THE ADVICE

Any professional coming into contact with families with young babies can make a difference. Health professionals are key, but others including housing, social care and emergency services have made a difference in some areas. The Lullaby Trust offers training and advice to staff who work with families with babies and young children. You could run a SIDS training day for early year's professionals -we can provide an expert speaker and training resources. Visit our website to find out more about our training: lullabytrust.org.uk/training. The Lullaby Trust is here to support you. We have a range of print and online information on all aspects of safer sleep and practices that can reduce the risk of SIDS; ranging from Easy Read cards (produced in 22 languages) to more in-depth information.

3 SUPPORT VULNERABLE FAMILIES IN YOUR AREA

We know how hard it is for bereaved families to have another baby, particularly if their baby died suddenly and unexpectedly. It is common for parents to worry that the same thing will happen again. Working with the NHS, we run a national health visitor led service for bereaved parents. Our Care of Next Infant (CONI) programme supports families before and after the birth of a new baby. We need your support for this vital service to be commissioned and offer this vital lifeline to the most vulnerable families. For more information on how to do this visit lullabytrust.org.uk/professionals/care-of-next-infant

For more information about SIDS, our resources and any other area of our work visit: www.lullabytrust.org.uk

“We take part in Safe Sleep Week each year and have mandatory safer sleep discussions at antenatal, new birth and 8-week contacts with parents,”

Kathryn, Health Visitor

“We have safer sleep displays in all Children’s Centres” *Angela, CSSA*

“A Standard Operating Protocol for promoting safe sleeping for infants has been developed by the maternity services. A cot card has also been developed to inform parents on safer sleep,” *Sinead, Breastfeeding Coordinator*