

## **1. Background**

During the period of the Covid 19 lockdown which started in March 2020, in Salford there has been an increase in incidents that have resulted in serious harm to a child aged under 2. National [research](#) carried out by Ofsted has shown that there has been a 20% increase in babies being killed or harmed during March to October in England, as well as a rise in unexpected infant deaths. The SSCP partner agencies carried out a review of local multi-agency practice to identify where practice can be improved in order to protect children from harm in the future.

## **2. Safeguarding Concerns and Incidents**

During the lockdown period there have been more incidents that have prompted professionals to look at safeguarding practice than there have been in the same period in other years. In Salford there have been four incidents involving babies and children under the age of 2 years. These have included features such as:

- non-accidental injury
- co-sleeping
- domestic abuse
- parental mental ill health

## **3. Findings**

Some of the reviews found that the sharing of information between professionals to inform risk assessments may have been impacted by Covid19 restrictions.

The restrictions imposed by the Covid19 lockdown meant that families' usual support networks were not available.

## **4. Findings Cont.**

Covid19 restrictions also meant that face to face in person visits and meetings by professionals were not taking place as regularly as they normally would.

Covid19 restrictions and the lack of usual supports for families meant that this had a significant impact on parental mental health.

## **5. Recommendations**

Local reviews have resulted in a recommendation to update local pathways to support new parents during Covid19, to ensure a consistent approach and enable the right supports to be in place at the right time.

New families can form a support bubble: Covid19 [guidance](#) on family support approaches and bubbles should be promoted.

## **6. National Learning**

Ofsted have stressed that:

*"everyone needs to play their role. That includes professionals across whole communities. Midwives, health visitors, GPs and other health workers who have good relationships with families and can build on that trust. Staff working in schools and nurseries who may have information about a vulnerable infant because an older sibling attends the setting"*

## **7. Implementing Change**

Early Help Service Antenatal and Postnatal Pathway

In response to Covid-19 the Early Help Service and the 0-19 Health Service have devised an antenatal and postnatal pathway.

To make a referral for targeted Early Help support complete an online referral to the [Bridge](#) selecting Antenatal / Postnatal Pathway as the presenting issue. For access to virtual antenatal courses call the Salford Early Help Team on 0161 686 7235. For more [info](#) about the pathway email [kate.berry@salford.gov.uk](mailto:kate.berry@salford.gov.uk)

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**Additional Information**

**Visit:** <https://safeguardingchildren.salford.gov.uk/>

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