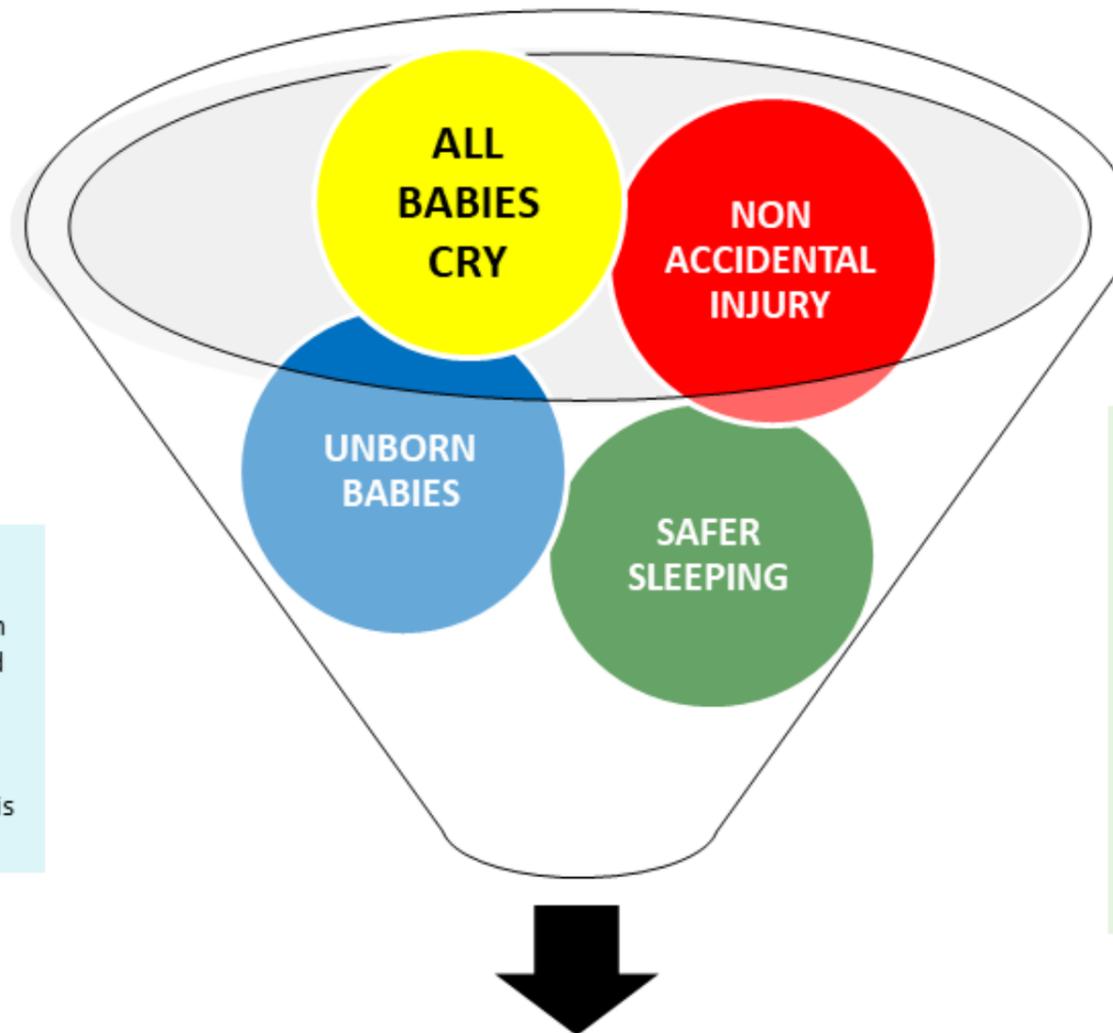




## AIMING TO GIVE ALL BABIES THE BEST START IN LIFE

**We will underpin our strategy with clear communications under the banner of 'All Babies Cry'.** We will ensure that all parents are supported to develop their parenting skills to manage crying babies and have access to resources to help them manage anxiety and sleep deprivation. The 'All Babies Cry' communications campaign will support all aspects of the strategy, recognising that looking after a newborn can be stressful and more so in the context of Covid-19 and limited family support networks.

**We will develop practice to better safeguard unborn children and address risks posed by concealed or denied pregnancy.** The definition of neglect incorporates risks posed in utero and we will have transparent and challenging conversations with parents and each other to address reasons why a pregnancy may be concealed/denied, including the impact that this could have on unborn children.



**Preventing Non Accidental Injuries:** We will work with professionals from all disciplines to implement the learning from Norfolk's thematic Serious Case Review on NAI, Case AF. Building on a trauma informed approach, we will support staff to have safe and challenging conversations with families and each other to ensure practice is baby focused and risk sensible. There will be specific focus on: respectful scepticism ("thinking the unthinkable"); professional challenge and deference; and giving voice to the baby's lived experience of care.

**Safer Sleeping:** We will provide the training, tools and resources to families and staff from across the partnership to ensure that safer sleeping messages are delivered to and understood by families with newborn babies. We will communicate effectively with parents of newborn babies to ensure that they understand the risks posed by inappropriate sleeping arrangements and can provide a safe place for their babies to sleep. Partners from all agencies will reinforce the messages and contribute to robust risk assessments to address any underlying issues, including overcrowding, substance and alcohol misuse and parental mental health.

**LEADERSHIP & GOVERNANCE**  
Providing co-ordinated & strategic response through:

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT & TRAINING DEVELOPMENT OF RESOURCES POLICY REVIEW	COMMUNICATION CAMPAIGN & AWARENESS RAISING DATA & PERFORMANCE INTELLIGENCE TRAUMA INFORMED PRACTICE
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## **Protecting Babies at Risk of Harm Strategy**

The onset of the Covid-19 pandemic has highlighted risks posed to babies nationally, with a significant rise in reports of children who suffered non-accidental injuries (NAIs). As of 6 November 2020, more than 300 "serious incident notifications" of injury and death involving children were reported by local authorities between April and October, of which almost 40% involved children under the age of one. Ofsted's chief inspector reported that more than half of those babies – 64 in total – suffered non-accidental injuries, eight of whom sadly died.

Norfolk has considered several Rapid Reviews on babies since March 2020. This is in the context of published Serious Case Reviews on pre-verbal/non-mobile babies in the last two years, namely: the thematic Serious Case Review on NAIs, Case AF, published January 2020; and two cases of babies who died as a result of overlay, Case AB, published June 2019. A national Child Safeguarding Practice Review on Sudden Unexpected Death in Infancy (SUDI) in families where the children are considered at risk of significant harm was published in July 2020.

The challenges we face protecting unborn children and very young babies have been exacerbated due to lockdown. As a result, the Norfolk Safeguarding Children has adopted Protecting Babies as one of its priorities alongside Neglect and Child Exploitation. (See Appendix 1, overview of NSCP priorities). There are some clear crossovers with neglect as an issue and, to a lesser degree, adolescents if young parents are struggling with the responsibility of looking after their babies.

The Protecting Babies from Harm strategy has been written in response to local and national reviews in order to implement the learning in Norfolk. Recommendations from local and national Serious Case Reviews/Safeguarding Practice Reviews (SCRs/SPRs) have been incorporated. (See Appendix 2)

The strategy covers three main areas: non-accidental injuries to babies; assessing risk to unborn babies, including concealed or denied pregnancy; and safer sleeping. The overarching message is recognising that All Babies Cry.

The strategy is underpinned by a discrete steering group, chaired by Health, and reports directly to the NSCP Partnership Group.

## **Principles:**

The NSCP adheres to the following principles in the development and implementation of this strategy:

- We will maintain a clear focus on the unborn child/baby and focus on their lived experience of care and acting as their advocates
- We will have whole system leadership in awareness raising and tackling the risks posed to babies with all partner agencies taking responsibility for professional standards within their organisations.
- We will have clear lines of accountability, roles and responsibility in cases of unborn children/babies
- We will have a shared, multi-agency approach to identification of risks posed to babies and agreed interventions and pathways
- We will demonstrate commitment to equalities and diversity acknowledging that some unborn children/babies are at more risk due to their diverse needs
- We will be culturally competent in this area of work, recognising that parenting is learned and has cultural influences
- We will be competent and confident in recognising and managing the complexity and emotional impact of safeguarding babies, with a focus on 'thinking the unthinkable'