

# BRIEFING

14 November 2019



## **Innovative new programme to prevent ‘shaken baby syndrome’ launches across the region**

Last week saw the regional launch of an innovative new programme to support parents manage normal infant crying and to prevent abusive head trauma injuries to babies caused by shaking, also referred to as ‘shaken baby syndrome’. ‘ICON – Babies Cry, You can Cope’ (ICON) is an evidenced-based programme designed to help parents and carers understand the normal crying pattern of young infants and to help them develop successful coping mechanisms to deal with this.

The ICON programme delivers four simple messages before the birth and in the first few months of a baby’s life:

- I** – Infant crying is normal;
- C** – Comforting methods can help;
- O** – It’s OK to walk away;
- N** – Never, ever shake a baby.

These ICON messages have been demonstrated to help parents and carers manage the stresses which can be caused by normal infant crying. Midwives, Health Visitors and other professionals across the region have developed ICON expertise to help give parents and carers the tools they need to help keep their babies safe.

The ICON project was developed by Dr Sue Smith (founder and programme advisor) and builds on research completed as part of her PhD studies around abusive head trauma in

infants, and on similar preventive projects studied across North America and Canada. Hampshire Safeguarding Children Partnership host the National ICON Steering Group.

The North Yorkshire and York ICON programme is funded and supported by local partners including NHS commissioners, NHS provider organisations and Public Health commissioners. This system-wide regional approach will ensure consistent and sustained messaging for parents and carers about infant crying.

The Clinical Commissioning Groups' Safeguarding Children Team said "It is absolutely normal for babies to cry, and sometimes this can increase over the first few months before subsiding. We know that some parents and carers can get frustrated by this and we want to provide all the support we can to help them.

"Building on successes elsewhere in England, we are introducing 'ICON' across North Yorkshire and York to provide a consistent and sustained approach to providing parents and carers tools and interventions to prevent behaviours which can result in abusive head trauma and help them keep their babies safe."

This programme is being implemented in partnership by:

1. Airedale Hospital NHS Foundation Trust
2. City of York Healthy Child Service
3. Harrogate and District NHS Foundation Trust
4. NHS Hambleton, Richmondshire and Whitby Clinical Commissioning Group
5. NHS Harrogate and Rural District Clinical Commissioning Group
6. NHS Scarborough and Ryedale Clinical Commissioning Group
7. NHS Vale of York Clinical Commissioning Group
8. North Yorkshire Healthy Child Service
9. South Tees Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
10. York Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

More information and resources to support the ICON project are available on the dedicated ICON website at <http://iconcope.org/>.