

# Title: Safeguarding Unborn Babies



## Background

Pregnancy is an exciting time in a parents life however, it can also be a time of great stress and anxiety which can impact on the safeguarding of unborn babies. Pregnancy is a critical window of opportunity where parents are most receptive to offers of advice and support (1001 Critical Days, 2015)

## Unborn Baby Protocol

The Unborn Baby Protocol provides all professionals with advice and guidance regarding the safeguarding risks to unborn babies in conjunction with the Right Help at the Right Time document. The protocol also assists professionals in their decision making around referrals children's social care.

## Involvement of Fathers

An unborn babies father must be given the same level of consideration as the mother. Recent Serious Case Reviews in Swindon have highlighted a lack of information that is known about fathers. Involving fathers early on in pregnancy supports lifelong wellbeing and outcomes for the child, regardless of residency. Every effort should be made to include information on the unborn father or partner if not the biological father to the unborn baby.

## Information Sharing

Research and audits consistently show the importance of early information sharing to ensure effective integrated working and is a crucial element of early intervention and safeguarding. Practitioners should be proactive in sharing information as early as possible to help identify, assess and respond to risk or concerns about the safety and welfare of unborn babies. GDPR does **not** prevent or limit the sharing of information for the purpose of keeping children safe. The SSP have developed a practice briefing on information sharing which you can access [here](#)

# Minute Briefing

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## Vulnerabilities of Unborn Babies

Vulnerabilities that can increase the risk to unborn babies include unwanted/concealed pregnancy, domestic abuse, substance misuse and Mental Health Illness. However, this is not an exhaustive list and consideration must be given to each individual baby and in consideration with the guidance in the Unborn Baby Policy. **Remember**, 'multiple matters' – Increased vulnerabilities increases the risk.

## Antenatal Assessment

Antenatal assessment is a valuable opportunity to develop a multi-agency approach to supporting families where there are vulnerabilities or risk of potential harm to the unborn baby. The antenatal period provides a key opportunity to implement interventions, explore parents ability to protect their unborn baby and ensure there are clear plans in place for discharge from maternity care following babies birth.

## Timeliness of Intervention

Early assessment, intervention and support in the antenatal period can help to minimise any potential harm and give maximum time for interventions to take place. All professionals working with the family are responsible for ensuring the timeliness of intervention. If a mother books late into her pregnancy this should be considered when planning interventions and when Children's Social Care are undertaking a Pre Birth Assessment