

# Briefing on “The Myth of Invisible Men” Safeguarding children under 1 from non-accidental injury caused by male carers

## 01 Background

The national **Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel** commissioned this review in response to concerns about serious incidents in which men are the perpetrators of terrible injuries and abuse to babies.

The review focusses on the circumstances of babies under 1 year old who have been harmed or killed by their fathers or other men in a caring role.

***“Despite evidence suggesting some men are very dangerous, service design and practice tends to render fathers invisible and generally ‘out of sight’”***

## 03 Key areas to consider

- Do you have useful resources that can be shared with new parents on how to cope?
- Do you always explore with mothers who the father is and their views of the father’s involvement in the baby’s life?
- How can you engage with fathers in a similar way to mothers? Approaches to engagement, to interviewing and to listening should be the same for both women and men. Explore their histories, where they draw their support from, and how they see their futures.
- How can you explain the extreme vulnerability of babies with both parents (regardless of whether they live together or are in a relationship), and with new partners?
- Consider ways to maximise fathers’ participation and involvement. For example, explicitly include men in your invitations to meet with you, or offer appointments either early in the day or as late as possible so that working fathers are able to attend.

**35%** of all serious incident notifications to the national panel involved serious harm to babies. In the majority of cases, men were the perpetrators.

## 02 What the review found

- The role that the men play in the child’s life and their own experiences were frequently overlooked by services.
- Anger and a low tolerance of frustration threshold were identified as key characteristics of the men.
- Injuries inflicted were abnormal and abusive responses to triggers that are normal and everyday behaviour of babies, eg crying, vomiting, poor sleeping.
- Nearly 40% of cases in the fieldwork cohort involved very young parents.
- The men had not commonly had a lot of contact with criminal justice agencies and therefore had not been flagged as presenting a significant risk to others.

## 04 Resources

ICON “Babies cry, you can cope”  
<https://iconcope.org/>

[Herefordshire Children’s Centres](#)

[Talk Community Directory – Children and Families pages](#)

Read the full report: [Safeguarding children under 1 year old from non-accidental injury - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)