

Dear Colleagues

AMENDED NATIONAL ADVICE IN RELATION TO FEEDING A BABY IN A BABY SLING/BABY CARRIER

1. Following on from the recent tragic incident in England where a baby sadly died after being fed in a baby carrier, we wanted to write to you to advise on the action taken in Scotland as a result of this. The Coroner in the case raised [concerns](#) over the lack of advice for parents using baby slings/carriers and infant feeding.

Background

2. As a result, we have now amended our guidance around the use of the baby sling in the baby box [here](#) and removed content on [Parent Club](#) which suggested that baby slings/carriers were suitable for 'hands-free feeding'. Any reference to this is also being removed from our national information products for parents e.g. Ready Steady Baby! and Off to a Good Start.

In addition, as a precautionary approach, Scottish Government no longer advocates for any type of feeding in a baby sling/carrier, including the baby box sling. We would recommend that any practitioners who are looking to provide advice to parents to consider their local sling libraries for further information, as one potential source of advice, noting that some of them charge fees for their services. Additionally, we would like to emphasise that sling libraries are unregulated bodies and therefore there is currently no way to objectively assess the quality of the information they may provide.

In the process of updating this information for parents and practitioners, it has become clear that there are no clinical quality standards in relation to advice giving for practitioners for these products. We understand that there is some work

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Addressees

For action
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Partnership Leads
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being undertaken by interested parties and advocacy groups who already provide some information and guidance to parents to try to get some standards put in place. There is also other work being carried out by academics to explore the use of baby slings/carriers to help improve messaging and information for parents on the benefits and risks of these products.

Manufacturers provide advice on safety alongside their products. These follow voluntary industry standards '[TICKS](#)' which is also set out in full on the Parent Club website.

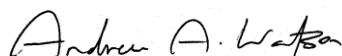
Parents, of course, remain free to choose how they use these products for their baby. Safety messages and advice on risk factors, and cumulative risk, are now included on Parent Club.

There is some additional advice [here](#) where parents and practitioners can view videos and read further guidance on the use of slings/baby carriers and safer practices, according to the author of that website. This website was highlighted to us particularly because of the author's existing role in the NHS (as a GP) and their strong interest in this topic over many years as a credible source of information, particularly in relation to risk factors.

Action

5. In light of this important change to messages in relation to feeding and baby wearing, please can you ensure your local resources, training and advice is consistent with the updated position

Yours sincerely



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Director for children and Families