



# LEARNING BRIEF: BABY J

Learning identified at a health learning event in July 2025

**KEY LEARNING:** When there is a SCH in a baby over two weeks old this should be assessed in line with the non mobile baby policy

## WHAT HAPPENED

Baby J was born in April 2025 to professional parents, with no prior social care or police involvement. At 8 weeks, Baby J was found to have a subconjunctival haemorrhage (SCH) - a SCH is a bleed behind the conjunctiva and can show in the baby's eyes. Upon further investigation, multiple healing fractures consistent with non-accidental injury.

## WHAT WENT WELL

- **Continuity of Care:** Consistent midwifery and health visiting support, with extended postnatal care
- **ICON Messaging:** Messages about coping with infant crying (ICON) were delivered at multiple touchpoints, including antenatal classes and postnatal visits
- **Information Sharing:** Timely and effective communication between midwifery and health visiting teams.
- **Appropriate Escalation:** Recognition of SCH as a sentinel injury by the GP and consultant led to safeguarding investigations and multi-agency collaboration.
- **NHS 111:** safety netting advice and opportunistic signposting to ICON

## WHAT COULD BE BETTER

- **Domestic Abuse:** Baby J's mother was asked about domestic abuse it is not clear if Baby J's father was. Professional curiosity and sensitive inclusivity of mothers, fathers and carers is needed
- **Parental Anxiety Support:** maternal anxiety was identified and supported but there is a gap in services locally & nationally when there are low level concerns.
- **NHS 111 Service:** There is no routine checking if babies are taken to ED when advised to do so.
- **Hospital Discharge:** Discharge summaries often place responsibility on parents to seek further care. Clearer communication is needed to ensure parents understand and act on follow-up advice

## RECOMENDATIONS

- **Increase Awareness:** Cascade guidance that SCH in non-mobile babies over 2 weeks of age should trigger safeguarding reviews.
- **Policy Review:** Update multiagency policies to reference SCH.
- **ICON Messaging:** Ensure early and opportunistic delivery to both parents.
- **Discharge Communication:** Improve clarity of follow-up actions at discharge.
- **111/OOH Follow-up:** Review and improve follow-up protocols for babies advised to attend ED.
- **Domestic Abuse Enquiries:** Develop sensitive approaches to include both parents and carers.
- **Support for Parental Anxiety:** Review and enhance signposting for parents with anxiety below specialist thresholds

## KEY THEMES

- **SCH in Babies:** SCH is a sentinel injury in non-mobile babies and should prompt thorough medical and safeguarding investigations.  
[NB: Sentinel= medically mild, superficial injuries]
- **Policy Alignment:** Multiagency policies on injuries in non-mobile babies should reference SCH and be regularly updated.
- **ICON Messaging:** Early and opportunistic delivery of ICON messages to both parents is crucial, especially antenatally and at hospital discharge

**Further information about SCH is available here**