

7. Further reading

[The myth of invisible men: safeguarding children under 1 from non-accidental injury caused by male carers](#)

[NSPCC Summary of "The myth of invisible men"](#)

[NSPCC Unseen men: learning from case reviews](#)

1. Context

Men can play a vital role in their children's development and wellbeing.

However, an analysis of case reviews shows that fathers, male caregivers and male partners sometimes go 'unseen' by services involved with children.

Services and practitioners tended to focus on the mother's role as caregiver, reducing opportunities for men in a child's life to be involved.

2. Who are unseen men?

Two main types of unseen men (sometimes referred to as 'hidden' men) have been identified in case reviews.

1. Men who posed a risk to a child, which resulted in the child suffering serious harm or death.
2. Men who could have protected and nurtured the child in their life but were overlooked by professionals.

6. Key issues for practice

The review identified a four-tiered approach to improving the engagement and assessment of fathers:

1. Understanding men's lives and their histories – how does this impact them now?
2. Engaging and assessing men – developing parenting strategies.
3. Supporting best practice – role of supervision in supporting the worker and ensuring engagement of fathers is evident within work.
4. Service design – set the necessary conditions within which work with fathers is enabled and expected.

5. Information Sharing

Lack of information sharing was identified as a key factor that prevented practitioners from seeing and responding in a timely way to risk to babies. Three key issues were identified:

1. A lack of patient record integration across the health service.
2. GDPR was seen by many to have made information sharing less effective and more complex.
3. Practitioners were unclear about thresholds for sharing information and referring cases.

3. Findings from case reviews

The Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel reviewed cases in England where babies under one year old were harmed or killed by their fathers or other males in a caring role.

This review found that services need to be better attuned to situations where a number of factors may combine together to create a risk to babies.

4. Risk factors

The injuries inflicted on the baby were often triggered by normal infant behaviour, such as crying, in the context of the risk factors identified below:

A background of abusive or neglectful parenting and poor attachment; impulsive behaviour and low frustration threshold; substance use; low self-esteem, easy default to violence and anger; external pressures such as poverty, debts, racism, deprivation, poor relationships with the mothers of the children.

