

- Debrief again after key points in the process for example the SUDI review meeting.
- Use resources available such as the occupational health department and bereavement counselling services.

Information provided on the [HIS website](#) can guide staff as to the likely progress of the investigation and the appropriate actions for their profession.

## Support for parents

---

The quality of the care and support that bereaved parents receive may depend on the staff caring for them. For staff to provide parents with good individualised care they must feel well supported. This applies to all members of staff who come into contact with parents and other family members who have experienced a SUDI.

You can find a leaflet for parents on the [HIS website](#), which provides information about what happens next after they have experienced the sudden and unexpected death of their child.

SUDI  
SCOTLAND

## Sudden Unexpected Death in Infancy (SUDI)

### Staff Support Leaflet



## Background:

### Sudden Unexpected Death in Infancy

---

When an infant dies unexpectedly, initially the term SUDI is used. The post-mortem examination is carried out and like any other sudden death, the Procurator Fiscal has to be informed and a police investigation started.

In some cases, a cause of death may be found during the post-mortem examination, but in many cases the post-mortem examination will not explain the death. The term SUDI may therefore be given as a classification of death on the death certificate, as the death is unexplained.

Once all ancillary post-mortem investigations are complete, cases may remain unexplained. However, pathology or circumstantial factors, for example social or parenting issues, may be highlighted as being present, although not causing the death. In these instances SUDI may be entered on a death certificate.

Only when all other causes are excluded by a full post-mortem examination, can the diagnosis of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) be used.

### Coping and seeking help

---

Each individual involved in a SUDI event may react differently. It should be recognised that classic grief reactions may affect you in unexpected ways. This is not unusual but it is significant if it affects your health or work adversely.

Look out for being sensitive to triggers that would not normally upset you, such as being hypercritical or defensive of yourself or others, questioning your own and others' values, sleeping poorly or excessively, and eating more or less than usual. Please consider seeking help.

You should avoid discussing the details of the case with non-professionals who do not have a 'duty of confidentiality'. This may be difficult if your friends or family notice that you are upset, but you should be respectful of the infant and the family.

Organisations and managers should ensure that there is provision for staff support, and that the culture of the organisation recognises that it is both responsible and professional for staff to seek support if they need it.

### Support for staff

---

Being affected by a SUDI is not unnatural or unprofessional. It may be of benefit to any staff involved to:

- Have a team debrief soon after the SUDI has occurred, especially if staff responded to an emergency call and were involved in attempted resuscitation.