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**Child** abuse rates 'have not declined';   
**Child maltreatment** has not declined in spite of numerous policy initiatives to tackle the problem, research claims.  
  
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There has been a "significant decrease" in the number of violent infant deaths in England over the past decade, but "sustained" rises in neglect and abuse.

For older children, the number of deaths and injuries has not changed in recent years but neglect has risen sharply.

There has been no fall in the number of children or infants taken into care.

Academics at the UCL Institute of **Child** Health - linked to Great Ormond Street Hospital, which faced criticism for its doctors' failure to save Baby P - say the figures show that government initiatives to safeguard children have not succeeded.

Their study, published in The Lancet on Friday, showed "no consistent decrease" in **maltreatment** across six countries since modern **child** protection systems were developed in the 1970s.

Professor Ruth Gilbert, professor of clinical epidemiology at ICH, said: "Our results suggest the need to focus on preventing factors that contribute to **child maltreatment**, in order to substantially reduce rates of **child maltreatment** in the future.

"For too long, policy has been driven by high profile deaths of individual children. We need to invest in population-based data to inform policy and to monitor trends.

We also need to be able to link health and social care data to understand which professionals are seeing these children."

The death of Victoria Climbié led to the development of a computer database of all 11million children in England, which has now been abandoned, while the murder of the Soham schoolgirls led to plans for a quarter of all adults to be vetted before they could work or volunteer near children.

This scheme has also been scaled back.

The death of Baby P at the hands of relatives is said to have triggered a steep rise in the number of applications by social workers to take children away from their families.