

# South West Neonatal Network Policy

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## *Regional Operational Escalation Policy*

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## 1. Background

Operational Delivery Networks(ODN) have a responsibility in ensuring the effective operation of neonatal services across their network area and in coordinating patient pathways between providers to ensure continued and consistent access to specialist services. Given the strategic oversight that ODN's have over their network region, in collaboration with individual Provider Trusts ODN's will take a primary role in directing capacity across the region, at time of closure and ensure that the quality of services across the region is maintained. ODNs have both an advisory and supportive role in the relationship between Specialist Commissioning and Provider Trusts and in order to fulfil their objectives in relation to the coordination of neonatal services across the network need to ensure that there are continued and continuous channels of communication across all health partners

## 2. Scope

This guidelines applies to neonatal units that fall within the South West Neonatal Network

## 3. Aim

The purpose of this policy is to provide a clear and agreed process for the management of neonatal pathways in the event of a full or partial reduction to the usual operational running of a neonatal service including a partial reduction in cots, exceeding a 48 hour period, within the SW Neonatal Network. The strategic aims are to:

- Prevent avoidable mortality and morbidity due to neonates not accessing appropriate level of care.
- Maximise capacity within the Network through a co-ordinated escalation and de-escalation approach across geographical footprints.
- Avoid triage by resource until all potential escalation options have been exhausted.
- Ensure appropriate dissemination of information.
- Prevent further escalation and resumption of normal operational patient pathways as swiftly as possible.
- Ensure that disruption as far as possible is minimised for parents and families of babies who require transfer or relocation.

## 4. Process Principles

This policy outlines the roles and responsibilities across Neonatal Services within the South West Neonatal ODN in managing episodes which necessitate or anticipate the need for a full or partial reduction in usual operational capacity due to an inability for a service to accept admissions as outlined in the categories below.

- A neonatal service being at full commissioned capacity and unable to accept any further internal or external referrals for neonatal care for an period extending >48 hours
- Reduction in operational service for >48 hours following local damage as a result of an extraordinary event e.g fire, flood etc

- Reduction in operational service for >48 hours on instruction from local or regional Infection Prevention and Control Team
- Reduction in operational service for >48 hours during refurbishment
- Reduction in operational service for >48 hours due to imbalance between patient acuity and local staffing levels.
- Other (For example: National Pandemic/Equipment failure)

**4.1** The neonatal clinical, nursing and management leads of the affected unit will manage their service in line with their trust specific escalation plans and business continuity plans during times of increasing pressure on neonatal capacity, no matter what its cause.

**4.2** All neonatal services within the South West Neonatal Network will contribute to the success of a fully functional Neonatal Network.

**4.3** All Neonatal Service leads will escalate any identified issues or risks that may impact on the ability for the neonatal service to run at full operational capacity to divisional managers in a timely manner. Local escalation plans should be explored and enacted prior to formally reducing the operational capacity of the service.

**4.4** It is the responsibility of divisional general managers of the affected unit to inform the following personnel within 24 hours of decision to reduce the operational capacity of the neonatal service:

- Neonatal Network Team – Completing an Escalation Form (Appendix One) and returning to [swneonatalnetwork@uhbw.nhs.uk](mailto:swneonatalnetwork@uhbw.nhs.uk)
- Network Transport Teams – NEST and PNTS respectively
- Specialised Commissioners (if out of hours send high priority email)
- Public Health – if Appropriate. Please refer to your local trust infection control policy for further guidance

**4.5** Neonatal units will fully participate in any Network conference calls as required, ensuring that the appropriate personnel participate in the communication. Outcomes of the conference call will:

- Proposed provider solution and timescale
- Impact on neonatal network, establish emergency strategy for patient pathways
- Communication strategy
- Date of follow up conference call

**4.6** During a period of reduced operational capacity, Trust General Managers will provide twice weekly email updates, to the SW Neonatal ODN Leadership Team until full operational service is resumed using the Escalation Update (Appendix One) as a template. **If long term reduction in service is anticipated and Local Commissioning teams are fully aware/briefed reporting frequency will be agreed on a case by case basis . Please ensure timely communication with the Network Team surrounding any further changes to reductions in operational service or reopenings.**

**4.7** The Network Team will co-ordinate communications to ensure accurate and timely dissemination of information to appropriate personnel.

## 5. Roles, Responsibilities and Communication

### 5.1 Local Unit

- As well as following internal Trust management of incident processes, the General Manager will complete and escalate a Network Notification Form (Appendix One) to the SW Neonatal ODN Management Team as soon as an incident meets reduction of service criteria outlined within this policy.
- An action plan will be agreed and documented following communication with the Affected Trusts senior Neonatal Leadership team and General Managers - this should be shared with the Neonatal ODN Leadership Team.
- Any neonate born in the affected unit, which meets that individual unit's local temporary threshold for transfer or uplift in care, should follow the escalation guidance in line with the SW Neonatal ODN Care Pathway
- Where a Consultant Paediatrician / Neonatologist assesses that clinically it would not be 'best practice' to transfer the named neonate, a mutual agreement needs to be made following Consultant to Consultant discussion, these patients should be exception reported as per the SWODN Exception Reporting Document (See Appendix Four)
- Where mutual agreement indicates that it is considered safe to continue the care of the neonate in the referring unit and not to transfer, the Consultant Paediatrician / Neonatologist must complete an exception report.
- A copy of this form must be filed in the infant's notes and emailed to the Network Team.

### 5.2 Neonatal Network Team

- Updates will be communicated by the Network Management Team to all Clinical Leads, Nurse Leads and Management Leads within the SW Neonatal Units as regularly as required
- All communication and decision making papers will be filed by Network Leadership Team and made available for audit by the specialist commissioners if required

### 5.3 The SW Neonatal ODN Executive Board

- The SW Neonatal ODN Executive Board hold responsibility for reviewing all identified network incidents, lessons learnt and shared learning, reporting a summary to the SW ODN Programme Board on request.
- Following Discussion, identified ongoing incidents will be escalated to the Issue Log held by the SW Neonatal ODN Team for discussion with the SW NHSEI Specialised Commissioning Senior Leadership Team in line with the SW NHSEI ODN's Risk and Issue SOP
- Any lessons learnt and shared learning will be circulated to each unit within the SW ODN as appropriate.

## 5.4 Specialised Commissioners

Commissioners will be notified of all unit closures beyond 48 hours by individual units as outlined in this policy or, with permission, by the Neonatal ODN on behalf of the affected trust. The Neonatal ODN will update them on an ongoing basis. Significant unit closures that have a major effect on capacity, quality or wider service provision will be discussed directly with the senior leadership team at SW NHSEI Specialised Commissioning.

## 6.0 Additional Reporting

The South West Neonatal ODN reserves the right to implement further reporting systems to ensure full oversight and assurance during times of extreme pressure and/or acuity within Neonatal services.

## Appendix One

### SW Neonatal Network Notification Form – Reduction in Operational Capacity/Ability to accept admissions

Available online –

<https://www.swneonatalnetwork.co.uk/unit-reporting> [Version Date: 10.08.21]

## Appendix Two

### South West Neonatal Network Units

#### Neonatal Units

Plymouth Hospitals NHS Trust **Derriford Hospital**  
Derriford Hospital, Plymouth, PL6 8DH – *PNTS*

North Bristol NHS Trust **Southmead Hospital**  
Southmead Way Avon, Bristol BS10 5NB -*NEST*

University Hospitals Bristol NHS Foundation Trust **St Michaels Hospital**  
Southwell Street, Bristol, BS2 8EG – *NEST* (Surgical and Cardiac Centre)

#### Local Neonatal Units

Royal United Hospital Bath NHS Trust **Royal United Hospital**  
Combe Park, Bath, BA1 3NG - *NEST*

Royal Devon and Exeter NHS Foundation Trust **Royal Devon and Exeter Hospital**  
Hospital Barrack Road, Exeter, EX2 5DW - *PNTS*

Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust **Gloucester Royal Hospital**  
Great Western Road, Gloucester GL1 3NN - *NEST*

Royal Cornwall Hospitals NHS Trust **Royal Cornwall Hospital Treliske**  
Truro, Cornwall, TR1 3LJ - *PNTS*

Great Western Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust **Great Western Hospital**  
Marlborough Road, Swindon, SN3 6BB - *NEST*

Taunton and Somerset NHS Foundation Trust **Musgrove Park Hospital**  
Parkfield Drive, Taunton, TA1 5DA - *NEST*

### Special Care Units

Torbay and South Devon NHS Foundation Trust **Torbay Hospital**  
Lowes Bridge, Torquay, TQ2 7AA - *PNTS*

Yeovil District Hospital NHS Foundation Trust **Yeovil District Hospital**  
Higher Kingston, Yeovil, Somerset, BA21 4AT - *NEST*

Northern Devon Healthcare Trust **North Devon District Hospital**  
Raleigh Park, Barnstaple, Devon, EX31 4JB - *PNTS*

## Appendix Three

### South West Neonatal Network Care Pathway

Available online –

<http://www.swneonatalnetwork.co.uk/media/105792/swnn-policy-care-pathway.pdf>

## Appendix Four

### South West Neonatal Network Exception Reporting Policy

Available online –

<http://www.swneonatalnetwork.co.uk/media/104380/swnexceptionpolicy2017.pdf>

## Appendix Five

### South West Neonatal Network Contact Information

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