

Neonatal Transfers – Who does what?

The following guideline has been developed to assist the users and providers of the Greater Manchester Neonatal Transport Service (GMNeTS) in deciding which transport team is responsible for conducting the transfer.

Alongside the introduction of a dedicated transport service for Greater Manchester, neighbouring networks in Lancashire & South Cumbria and Mersey & Cheshire have introduced network based transport services. Lancashire and South Cumbria offer a Monday to Friday daytime consultant led service working from Preston and Blackburn (STARS). Despite this, support from GMNeTS will still be required for some daytime intensive care transfers from the Lancashire and South Cumbria network where the infant is being transferred into a tertiary or level 3 unit in Greater Manchester.

From June 2007, GMNeTS has formalised the out of hours cover for Lancashire and South Cumbria and receives payment for this service on a cost per case basis. If a baby is deemed to be too sick or preterm to remain in the referring unit overnight or at weekends, then GMNeTS will undertake the transfer to Blackburn or Preston where appropriate, or otherwise into the Greater Manchester Network. At present only a small number of infants are being transferred within the Lancashire MCN in this manner and the North West Ambulance Service have agreed to support this providing activity does not increase significantly. For further operational details please see appendix 1.

On a small number of occasions infants are either referred into or out of the Greater Manchester network to or from another network. The normal practice here will be for the unit which receives the infant to be primarily responsible for performing the transfer. In recent months there have been increasing requests from Yorkshire and North Trent to conduct acute transfers into Manchester. GMNeTS will agree to undertake these transfers where possible on an individual basis and also receives payment from the relevant PCT on a cost per case basis.

There is also some interaction with tertiary paediatric services for instance where babies with cardiac or surgical conditions require transfer to PICU or HDU. The exact configuration of these services and co-location with tertiary neonatal units varies between networks. GMNeTS has recently changed the policy relating to the transfer of infants between a Neonatal Unit and PICU at Royal Manchester Children's Hospital. GMNeTS will now undertake these neonatal transfers to PICU routinely, however will not undertake the transfers of patients readmitted to hospital via a paediatric ward or A&E, irrespective of the age or weight of the patient. These paediatric referrals should continue to be undertaken by PICU.

The situations set out below are proposed guidelines for who will undertake a transfer with the team identified in the top bullet point having the primary responsibility for conducting the transfer. In most situations this will be the team which does perform the transfer however if the clinical situation or circumstances demand otherwise then other teams may be approached in descending order of priority. Thus flexible interpretation of these rules and due regard for the safety of the patient should always be at the forefront of decision making. If there are difficulties in deciding who should undertake the transfer, the Clinical Lead for GMNeTS should be consulted during normal working hours or otherwise the on call Neonatal Consultant at St Mary's Hospital.

**Dr Ian Dady, Clinical Lead, GMNeTS
October 2007**

Referrals from a Neonatal Unit in the GM network

All transfers to Neonatal Medical or Surgical Units in Greater Manchester:

- **GMNeTS**
- Other receiving team where appropriate (Hope / NNSU)
- Referring Hospital

All transfers to PICU or Paediatric HDU in Greater Manchester:

- **GMNeTS**
- PICU retrieval team
- Referring Hospital

Transfers to a paediatric unit (not PICU or HDU) in Greater Manchester including Outpatients

- **GMNeTS**
- Referring Hospital

Transfers to another network for Neonatal Medical care:

- **Receiving Tertiary Neonatal team or Network based transport service**
- GMNeTS
- Referring unit

Transfer to another network for Neonatal Surgical / PICU / Cardiac intensive care:

- **Receiving Tertiary Neonatal / PICU or network based Transport service**
- GMNeTS
- Referring Hospital

Notes

1. Transfers from paediatric units in Greater Manchester will normally be undertaken by the referring paediatric staff or receiving PICU transport team.
2. Alder Hey Childrens Hospital does not have a neonatal transport team. Ventilated surgical infants are transferred to Liverpool Womens Hospital who should undertake the transfer. Babies transferring to PICU should be transferred by the PICU team. Stable babies being transferred to a paediatric ward who do not need PICU or HDU will not normally be transferred by the PICU retrieval team.

Referrals from a Neonatal Unit in the Lancashire and South Cumbria Network

Transfer for Neonatal Care within Lancashire and South Cumbria:

Monday to Friday 0900 – 1700:

- **STARS**
- GMNeTS
- Referring Hospital / Other receiving team where appropriate

Monday to Thursday 1700 – 0900 or Friday 1700 until Monday 0900

- **GMNeTS**
- Referring Hospital / Other receiving team where appropriate

Intensive Care Transfers to tertiary or level 3 Neonatal Medical or Surgical Unit in Greater Manchester:

- **GMNeTS**
- STARS (weekdays if GMNeTS not available)
- Referring Hospital / Other receiving team where appropriate (Hope / NNSU)

Intensive Care transfers to a tertiary or level 3 Neonatal Unit in another network:

- **STARS** (weekdays only)
- Receiving Tertiary Neonatal team or Network based transport service

All transfers to PICU or Paediatric HDU in Greater Manchester:

- **PICU retrieval team**
- STARS (weekdays only)
- GMNeTS / Referring Hospital

Transfers to a paediatric unit (not PICU or HDU) in Greater Manchester including Outpatients

- **STARS (weekdays only)**
- Referring Hospital
- GMNeTS

Transfer to another network for Neonatal Surgical / PICU / Cardiac intensive care:

- **Receiving Tertiary Neonatal / PICU or network based Transport service**
- STARS (weekdays only)
- Referring Hospital

Notes

1. **The Lancashire and South Cumbria Neonatal Transport Service will initially operate between 09.00 and 19.00 Monday to Friday, taking referrals until around 1700. Outside of these hours GMNeTS will provide support where possible.**
2. **GMNeTS will undertake out of hours neonatal intensive care transfers from referring units within Lancashire to either Preston or Blackburn if this is clinically appropriate. If a cot is not available in either unit, or if it is clinically not appropriate, then the infant may be transferred by GMNeTS into Greater Manchester. If a cot is not available in Greater Manchester then the transfer should be undertaken by the receiving unit or network service. For further information please see the detailed guidance in appendix 1.**
3. **If the infant requires transfer for tertiary neonatal care in Greater Manchester, the transfer will normally undertaken by GMNeTS rather than STARS.**
4. **In view of the likely duration of transfer and staff shifts, referrals to GMNeTS between 0400 and 0600 will not routinely accepted unless the infant is very sick or extremely preterm. Referrals after 0600 on a weekday will be routinely deferred to the STARS team. Once a referral has been accepted by GMNeTS, they will be responsible for providing pre-transport stabilization advice.**
5. **Back transfers and non-acute cases will normally remain the responsibility of the STARS team to be undertaken during weekdays.**
6. **Transfers from paediatric units in Lancashire and South Cumbria will normally be undertaken by the referring paediatric staff or receiving PICU transport team. GMNeTS will not be responsible for undertaking transfers from Accident and Emergency or a Paediatric ward, irrespective of the weight or corrected gestation.**
7. **Alder Hey Childrens Hospital does not have a neonatal transport team. Ventilated surgical infants are transferred to Liverpool Womens Hospital who should undertake the transfer. Babies transferring to PICU should be transferred by the PICU team. Stable babies being transferred to a paediatric ward who do not need PICU or HDU will not normally be transferred by the PICU retrieval team.**

Referrals from a Neonatal Unit in another Network

Transfer for Neonatal Care within referring units own network

- **Receiving level 3 or tertiary neonatal team / Network based transport service**
- Other receiving team where appropriate
- Referring unit

Intensive Care Transfers to tertiary or level 3 Neonatal Medical or Surgical Unit in Greater Manchester:

- **GMNeTS**
- Other receiving team where appropriate (Hope / NNSU)
- Referring Hospital / other network based transport service

Intensive Care transfers to a tertiary or level 3 Neonatal Unit in another network:

- **Receiving level 3 or tertiary neonatal team /**
- Referring unit

Transfers to PICU or Paediatric HDU in Greater Manchester:

- **GM PICU retrieval team**
- Referring Hospital / Network based transport service
- GMNeTS

Transfers to a paediatric unit (not PICU or HDU) in Greater Manchester including Outpatients

- **Referring Hospital / Network based transport service**

Transfer to another network for Neonatal Surgical / PICU / Cardiac intensive care:

- **Receiving Tertiary Neonatal / PICU or network based Transport service**
- Referring Hospital

Notes

- 1 Transfers from paediatric units elsewhere will normally be undertaken by the referring paediatric staff or receiving PICU transport team.
- 2 Alder Hey Childrens Hospital does not have a neonatal transport team. Ventilated surgical infants are transferred to Liverpool Womens Hospital who should undertake the transfer. Babies transferring to PICU should be transferred by the PICU team. Stable babies being transferred to a paediatric ward who do not need PICU or HDU will not normally be transferred by the PICU retrieval team.

Out of hours referrals from Lancashire and South Cumbria

Background

The Lancashire and South Cumbria MCN Transport Service (STARS) has been operational since September 2006 and will normally accept referrals between 0900 and 1700, Monday to Friday. Currently babies who require an urgent transfer for intensive care outside of the STARS working hours are retrieved by either the Greater Manchester Neonatal Transport Service (GMNeTS) or by the staff from another network's tertiary receiving unit e.g. Liverpool Women's Hospital.

It is proposed that infants who require transfer for intensive care (but not tertiary care) outside of the STARS working hours, will instead be taken by GMNeTS to a level 3 unit within Lancashire and South Cumbria at either Blackburn or Preston. This agreement is contingent on continuing funding by Lancashire and South Cumbria for transfers undertaken by GMNeTS on their behalf. North West Ambulance Service has agreed to support these transfers providing they do not exceed anticipated levels of activity.

Details

Normally Preston will accept referrals from Lancaster, Barrow and Blackpool. Blackburn will normally accept referrals from Burnley. If either Preston or Blackburn is full, then the other unit will be approached to accept the referral. If neither Blackburn nor Preston can accept the referral, the infant will be transferred into the GM network providing there is capacity at an appropriate level 3 unit. GMNeTS will not undertake transfers to other units within the Lancashire and South Cumbria network, or to any other networks.

In certain circumstances, the referring clinician may wish to exercise discretion about whether an infant requires an immediate referral, or whether it can appropriately be deferred to the next weekday morning to be undertaken by the STARS team. Referrals after 5pm on Fridays should normally be made immediately. The referring clinician may also wish to request a tertiary bed in Manchester – in case of doubt for either question, please contact GMNeTS who will seek advice from the on call Consultant Neonatologist at St. Mary's Hospital.

In view of the likely duration of transfer and staff shifts, referrals between 04:00 and 06:00 will not normally be accepted, unless the infant is sick. Referrals after 06:00 will routinely be deferred for the STARS team or otherwise the GMNeTS day staff if it is a weekend or bank holiday.

Once a referral has been accepted by GMNeTS, they will be responsible for providing pre-transport stabilisation advice, until the patient is handed over to the staff at the receiving unit. GMNeTS will continue to undertake all transfers during weekdays into a tertiary neonatal unit in Greater Manchester.

Exclusions

- Infants who are not inpatients on a neonatal unit
- Infants who have been discharged home and readmitted to a neonatal unit requiring transfer to PICU
- Infants who have been re-admitted to Accident and Emergency or a paediatric ward
- Infants who require transfer to a unit outside either Lancashire and South Cumbria or Greater Manchester networks