

TU (LEH) to MTC Hyperacute (Delayed Primary) Transfer Policy 02-17

Operating principle

Even in a well-functioning trauma system there will be occasions when patients who warrant Major Trauma Centre care are initially cared for in trauma units or local emergency hospitals. For a patient who requires MTC level of care for immediate intervention (including, but not restricted to, surgery, interventional radiology, critical care management) there should be no delays to transfer.

Patients eligible to undergo hyperacute (delayed primary) transfer are those needing immediate life / limb saving intervention at a Major Trauma Centre where it cannot be delivered in a trauma unit (TU) / local emergency hospital (LEH)

Patients in TU / LEH meeting hyperacute (delayed primary) transfer criteria may have arrived at hospital in this condition or deteriorate soon after arrival (i.e. they are still within the Emergency Department investigative / resuscitative phase of treatment).

A principle of **“send and call / package and call”** will be used. The Trauma Team Leader (TTL) in the TU / LEH can identify those patients meeting the criteria for hyperacute (delayed primary) transfer and initiate the process. The Regional Trauma Desk (RTD: **01384 215696**) will be the hub for communication for almost all areas within the network; the TU / LEH TTL will call RTD who will then contact the MTC TTL as a conference call. For those areas that do not use the Regional Trauma Desk (appendix 1) the TU / LEH TTL will call the MTC trauma team leader directly. It is expected that patients will be transferred from ED to ED.

Some patients presenting to TU / LEH will have unsurvivable injuries and so transfer will be futile. However, this may not always be clear at initial presentation and the Trauma Network recognises that some patients transferred will die shortly after arrival at the MTC but this situation should be rare and avoided if possible. For this reason it is acceptable to initiate a consultant-to-consultant discussion to consider correct treatment options and for this group of patients accepting a short delay in transfer may be acceptable (see below).

This group may include a variety of traumatic injuries but the majority of patients in this group will have serious brain injury. Patients >75 years of age with large intracranial haematoma demonstrated on CT scanning should be discussed with MTC prior to transfer.

For patients within BBCHW Trauma Network requiring hyperacute (delayed primary) transfer the NORSe (appendix 2) system for neurocritical care referrals to University Hospital Birmingham (UHB) should not be used as it adds delays to patient care.

Information regarding injury and ongoing management will be added to NORSe at a later time by UHB neurosciences as appropriate.

When not to enact this policy

- For logistical reasons e.g. lack of critical care beds in the referring hospital
- For patients initially assessed and treated at a TU / LEH but require ongoing care at a MTC or specialist unit within the urgent (48 hour) transfer pathway

Responsibilities

1. TU / LEH Trauma Team Leader:
 - a. Make decision to enact hyperacute (delayed primary) transfer
 - b. Contact MTC TTL via Regional Trauma Desk* to inform of ongoing transfer to allow reception preparations at MTC
 - c. When immediate transfer to MTC may not be in patients' best interests, contact MTC TTL via Regional Trauma* Desk for consultant-to-consultant discussion
 - d. Ensure that patients are safe to transfer. It is not possible to ensure all patients are stable for transfer as the intervention to achieve stability may be the reason for the transfer
 - e. Confirm emergency ambulance request with RTD** and anticipated timing of transfer
 - f. As a basic principle the TTL should be satisfied that:
 - i. Airway safe for the duration of transfer or secured
 - ii. Appropriate cervical spine protection maintained
 - iii. Life threatening chest injuries excluded or treated
 - iv. Appropriate haemorrhage control achieved
 - v. Escort is provided for transfer competent to manage ongoing patient needs prior to arrival at MTC; adhere to Transfer Guidelines
 - vi. All relevant imaging and reporting is transferred electronically to the receiving MTC

* for those areas that do not use the Regional Trauma Desk (appendix 1) these responsibilities will change to contacting the major trauma centre trauma team leader directly

** for those areas that do not use the Regional Trauma Desk (appendix 1) make emergency ambulance request to ambulance emergency operations centre / EMRTS and confirm anticipated timing of transfer; for North Wales this would be classified as an immediate transfer as per Designed for Life; Welsh Guidelines for the transfer of the critically ill adult. In Wales, during the hours of 08:00-20:00, the EMRTS Air Support Desk can be contacted on 03001232301 to facilitate such transfers by land and air.

2. MTC Trauma Team Leader:
 - a. Accept details of enacted hyperacute transfers from TU / LEH TTL
 - b. Ensure that trauma team is alerted to anticipated arrival of patient
 - c. Ensure that patient is received in appropriate clinical area (e.g. ED resuscitation room) by trauma team and any other staff needed for immediate management
 - d. Be available for advisory discussions with TU / LEH TTL
 - e. If needing specialist opinion prior to accepting transfer (e.g. in cases where transfer may be futile) seek that opinion and commit to providing a conclusion to the TU / LEH within 30 minutes. If an opinion cannot be provided within 30 minutes from the end of the initial call from TU / LEH TTL then automatic acceptance of the transfer is assumed
 - f. Review images on the Imaging Exchange Portal prior to patient arrival if possible
 - g. Notify relevant tertiary services as necessary
3. RTD critical care paramedic:
 - a. Coordinate communication between MTC and TU / LEH
 - i. Receive call from TU / LEH and record details on WMAS call log
 - ii. Set up conference call with MTC TTL and monitor call
 - iii. Advise both parties of hyperacute (delayed primary) transfer process as appropriate
 - b. Liaise with Emergency Operations Centre staff to ensure emergency ambulance dispatched to TU / LEH within WMAS operational area
 - c. Advise TU in EMAS operational area to request "immediate transfer" ambulance from EMAS
 - d. Coordinate Enhanced Care Team (e.g. MERIT/ TAAS.). Involvement in hyperacute (delayed primary) transfer if available and able to attend TU / LEH within reasonable time

Pre Transfer Actions

Trauma units / local emergency hospitals should enact hyperacute (delayed primary) transfer when a patient meets criteria for needing immediate MTC level of care

Imaging within the TU/LEH

Image appropriately prior to transfer: as minimum a chest and pelvis x-ray should be performed to assess for life threatening chest injuries and unstable pelvic fractures.

If transfer is definite based on existing clinical information do not delay it by performing further imaging within TU / LEH

If additional imaging is required to aid decision making, a Major Trauma CT scan should be performed without delay, using the same CT imaging protocol as the local MTC. A full radiologist report must be obtained and sent with the patient or direct to the MTC.

Pre transfer actions at TU (appendix 3)

1. Undertake full primary survey
2. Secure airway if necessary
3. Decompress pneumothoraces or haemothoraces: ideally use transport type drains not under water seal bottles
4. Control haemorrhage
 - a. Stop external bleeding
 - b. Use haemostatic agents (e.g. CELOX®) if necessary
 - c. Activate massive transfusion protocol if required; avoid administering crystalloids
 - d. Give initial dose tranexamic acid (if not already administered by ambulance crew)
 - e. Apply pelvic binder if required
 - f. If exsanguinating internal haemorrhage perform damage control surgery
5. Splint femoral fractures with traction splint
6. Immobilise other fractures with splints or plaster as clinically indicated
7. Only send blood products with patient if they are to be transfused en route; do not routinely send blood products
8. Do not delay transfer to insert invasive monitoring; use non-invasive methods

Escort

The TU TTL will determine the appropriate escort. For example:

- Ventilated patients: anaesthesia or critical care doctor (adhere to regional Transfer guidelines)
- Non-intubated patients: escort capable of dealing with anticipated potential complications en route
- When available a prehospital Enhanced Care Team (MERIT / Air Ambulance) may be used however these services are limited and timely availability cannot be guaranteed

The ambulance service will not routinely return escorts to the TU / LEH

Ambulance Transport

The statutory ambulance service Trusts covering the region will be the provider for most hyperacute (delayed primary) transfers.

An air ambulance provider (see appendices) may provide support ± transport as part of their Enhanced Care Team provision. Use of Enhanced Care Teams and Air Ambulances should be discussed with the RTD.

Appendix 1

Network organisation

The Midlands Trauma Network has three networks within it:

- Birmingham Black Country Hereford & Worcester
- Central England
- North West Midlands & North Wales

Most of these use the Regional Trauma Desk although some hospitals in the NWM&NWTN, including Leighton hospital and the North Wales hospitals do not link with the RTD and instead contact the MTC TTL directly. Also, arrangement of emergency transport by land or air ambulance is coordinated with the local provider.

The Welsh hospitals this refers to are:

- Glan Clwyd Hospital
- Ysbyty Gwynedd Hospital
- Wrexham Maelor Hospital

The MTC involved are:

- Royal Stoke University Hospital
- Alder Hey Hospital

Appendix 2

NORSe

NORSe (Neurosurgical On-call Referral System) is a web application that allows NHS acute trusts to make requests for advice to the Neurosurgery clinicians at UHB NHS Foundation Trust. UHB Neurosurgery clinicians receive an email notification to their on-call blackberry, and will respond to the requestor via the NORSe web application.

When UHB Neurosurgery respond to a referral request, the system will send an email to the email address entered when the referral was originally submitted. The email alerts continue to be sent every time either party posts a message.

NORSe allows the referrer and UHB Neurosurgery to have a text dialogue about the patient. There may be a few messages posted between each party before UHB Neurosurgery provide a management plan.

All messages and management plans entered on NORSe are recorded along with the date, time and name of the user posting the message.

Appendix 3

Adult Hyper-acute Transfer Check list (example)

Action undertaken or considered	Completed by	Comments
Call RTD (01384 215696) and speak to MTC trauma team leader		
Name of MTC TTL		
Upload images to IEP/ PACS		
Airway safe or secured		
Chest decompressed		
Pelvis splinted		
Femurs splinted		
External bleeding stopped		
Tranexamic acid given		
Cervical spine immobilised		
Patient on scoop stretcher		
Escort personnel briefed		
Transfer bag checked		
Transfer drugs ready		
CCN transfer form available		
Copy of trauma chart and ambulance (e) PRF ready		
Appropriate imaging performed and reviewed		

Appendix 4

Checklist for transfer of children with neurosurgical emergency (example)

Checklist: ✓ Use this checklist to assist in ensuring adequate therapy and monitoring are in place prior to and during transfer	Identify and consult: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify acute neurosurgical emergency: (eg. Mode of injury or history, focal neurological deficits, reduced GCS, dilated/unequal pupils, bradycardia & hypertension)• Urgent conference call with KIDS consultant and Neurosurgeon <i>if time-critical, likely to require primary transfer by referring team</i>• If immediately life-threatening, may require primary transfer to neurosurgery theatre (theatre 1 at BCH) or local neurosurgical intervention – discuss with neurosurgeon and KIDS consultant	
Airway and Breathing: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Oral ETT, firmly taped, T2 on CXR• Cervical spine immobilisation if trauma• PaCO₂ 4.5-5.3 kPa• Orogastric tube on free drainage	Circulation: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2 peripheral iv lines• Request crossmatch (Aim Hb>10gms)• Aim for normovolemia• Avoid hypotension• 0.9% Saline maintenance (+dextrose if hypoglycaemia)• Volume expansion 0.9% Saline 10ml/kg boluses• Consider noradrenaline infusion to maintain BP (see KIDS drug calculator)• CVL and arterial line if sufficient time	Disability and other management: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 15 mins Neuro Obs• CT scan (<i>discuss with Neurosurgeon/KIDS</i>)• Normothermia (36-37° C)• Phenytoin 18 mg/kg over 20 mins if seizures• Maintain plasma Na >140mmol• Hyperosmolar therapy (<i>discuss with Neurosurgeon/KIDS see KIDS drug calculator</i>)• Secondary survey if trauma
Preparing for transfer: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Adequate sedation and analgesia with morphine/midazolam infusion – see KIDS drug calculator for dosing• Muscle relaxant infusion – see KIDS drug calculator for dosing• Urinary catheterisation – especially if mannitol used• Strategy for managing raised ICP: (<i>discuss with Neurosurgeon/KIDS regarding sedation, pCO₂, ABP target for cerebral perfusion, hyperosmolar therapy</i>)• Secure child to trolley (<i>not on spinal board</i>)• Connect long extension to allow additional drug and fluid administration en route• Sufficient portable oxygen for whole journey x2• Sufficient battery life on monitor and infusion pumps• Use ambulance oxygen gas and electricity supply where possible• Transfer documentation, radiology, blood results• Regular observations (at least once every 15mins) – including pupillary reactions, heart rate, blood pressure ETCO₂, SpO₂• Seat belts at all times• Travel safe – Lights/Sirens only when necessary to manage traffic congestion or unstable patient or time critical		References: <p>APLS 4th edition 2004 Joint statement from the Society of British Neurological Surgeons (SBNS) and the Royal College of Anaesthetists (RCOA) Regarding the Provision of Emergency Paediatric Neurosurgical Services (document)</p>

Appendix 5

Prehospital provider services

In Wales, the Emergency Medical Retrieval & Transfer Service can be contacted for any time critical transfer via the Air Support Desk on 03001232301 (08:00-20:00)

Outside of these hours, Welsh Ambulance Service NHS Trust should be contacted via your regional control room

More information about EMRTS Cymru can be obtained via the following methods:

www.emrts.wales.nhs.uk

email emrts@wales.nhs.uk

03003000057