



# NISTAR

Northern Ireland Specialist Transport & Retrieval



<b>Document Title</b>	Business Continuity Standard Operating Procedure
<b>Version Number</b>	V1
<b>Version Date</b>	01/07/2020
<b>Effective Date</b>	01/07/2020

Author: Signature & date	 01/07/2020	Name Ciaran McKenna	Position: NISTAR Service Manager
Authorised by: Signature & date	 01/07/2020	Name Emma Thompson	Position: NISTAR Lead Nurse
Approval by: Signature & date	 01/07/2020	Name Brian Mullan	Position: NISTAR Clinical Director

No	Operating Procedure	Key Points
1	Introduction	NISTAR incorporates the neonatal, paediatric and adult retrieval services. The team provides advanced resuscitation, stabilisation and inter-hospital transfer of critically ill infants, children and adults 24/7, 365 days of the year. While NISTAR have processes and procedures in place to ensure service delivery the following standard operating procedure details the actions to be taken should these processes or procedures fail.
2	Objective	To ensure that robust contingency arrangements are in place in order to facilitate the safe and timely transfer of patients in the event that the NISTAR team is unavailable or the NISTAR infrastructure fails.
3	Scope	This SOP will predominantly apply to the core team of NISTAR clinicians and support staff however key stakeholders including



		<p>NIAS, the individual Trust Intensive Care Units (ICUs) and the Commissioners will require an awareness of it.</p>
4	Procedure	<p><b>Telephony failure</b>  Referrals to NISTAR are co-ordinated via the Single Point of Contact (SPOC) on 02895040167. In the event of telephony failure or the absence of the call management team, referrals can be made via the following numbers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adult team: 07740907481</li> <li>• Paediatric team: 07845015899</li> <li>• Neonatal team: 07825147266</li> <li>• Nurse led team: 07749401483</li> </ul> <p>The SPOC co-ordinates teleconferences when the NISTAR team and referring/receiving clinicians need to discuss a case. In the event that this facility is not available the referring/receiving clinicians will discuss the case via phone and then update the NISTAR team.</p> <p><b>IT failure</b>  Referrals are sent to the NISTAR teams via email. In the event that the NISTAR IT system fails referrals will either be communicated verbally via phone or scanned and emailed via a Trust scanner.</p> <p><b>NIAS crew unavailable</b>  NISTAR is supported by three ambulance crews during the day and two at night. In the unlikely event that all ambulances are engaged on calls or that all ambulances are unavailable as a result of staff absence, a request for an emergency ambulance can be made to ambulance control on 02890 404023. Please note that emergency ambulances are often engaged on emergency 999 calls and there may be a delayed response.</p> <p><b>NISTAR team unavailable</b>  The NISTAR team may be unavailable for a range of reasons including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff absence</li> <li>• Locum shifts uncovered</li> <li>• Engaged on another call</li> </ul> <p>In the event that the NISTAR team is unavailable referring units should consider the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) If the patient is stable consider delaying transport until the NISTAR team becomes available. This may mean waiting on the next NISTAR team to commence their shift or the current team to complete their call.</li> </ol>



		<p>2) If the patient is unstable the referring unit should consider completing the call themselves. The referring unit should call NIAS on 02890404023 to book an ambulance. The referring unit should request the NISTAR ambulance to attend if it is available as this may expedite the transfer. It is important to note that the NISTAR ambulance if attending will be staffed by one Ambulance Care Attendant only and will not have a clinical team on board.</p> <p>3) Consider using an independent sector provider to complete the transfer.</p> <p><b>Vehicle breakdown during transfer</b> In the unlikely event that a NISTAR ambulance breaks down during transfer or is involved in an accident the following actions should be taken:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Contact NIAS Emergency Ambulance Control either via radio or on 02890404023 to advise of the breakdown/accident and request either an emergency ambulance or NISTAR ambulance to attend depending on which is more readily available.</li> <li>2) Check all equipment to ensure that it is still functioning. Report any issues to NIAS Emergency Ambulance Control and request an ETA of the back-up ambulance.</li> <li>3) Check oxygen / medical air supply and update NIAS Emergency Ambulance Control with the estimated time that this will run out and the urgent need for a back-up ambulance.</li> <li>4) If safe to do so consider returning to referring hospital, proceeding to receiving hospital or diverting to nearest hospital with an Emergency Department and await for ambulance / breakdown recovery to arrive.</li> <li>5) Advise NISTAR management team and complete an incident form (Datix).</li> </ol>
5	Regulation/ Guidelines/references	<p><b>Dissemination</b></p> <p>This SOP will be available on the NISTAR website.</p> <p><b>Resources</b></p> <p>BHSCT Business Continuity Framework 2020.</p> <p><b>Monitoring</b></p> <p>This guideline will be reviewed every two years or sooner should significant changes to practice occur.</p>



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6	Related documents	BHSCT Business Continuity Framework
7	Abbreviations	BHSCT – Belfast Health and Social Care Trust NIAS – Northern Ireland Ambulance Service NISTAR – Northern Ireland Specialist Transport and Retrieval Service SPOC – Single Point of Contact
8	Revision history	This guideline will be reviewed every two years or sooner should significant changes to practice occur.