Referral Process for Neonatal Transfers (01.01.2026)

HSC NISTAR — Northern Ireland Specialist Transport & Retrieval

---

Neonatal Team (0800-2000) - refer to SPOC with inpatient consult order following confirmation of cot in receiving unit

↓

Who is available?

├── **No neonatal nurse & no neonatal consultant**

If **team out on a call** neonatal transport nurse & co-ordinator to review referral and plan transfer later in the day.
If **team not available** co-ordinator to review referral against specification with Paediatric Nurse Led team if available (repatriation/step down care only)
If **referral is accepted** by Paediatric Nurse Led team;
Nurse Led team to contact referring unit
If **referral not accepted** by Paediatric Nurse Led team or team not available, NISTAR to document on Encompass the referral outcome.
Co-ordinator to contact referring unit and advise:
Await availability of Neonatal NISTAR team OR local team transfer
Stabilisation/transfer advice available from receiving neonatal unit consultant – to be documented on Encompass
Referring unit to record and escalate referral not accepted e.g. DATIX/intertrust

└── **Neonatal transport consultant only**

Referral to be sent to neonatal transport consultant for initial assessment, triage and plan. All options to be explored and clearly documented on Encompass with referral outcome. Options include:

- NISTAR trained nurse in NICU can be released to facilitate transport with consultant **OR**
- If this option isn't available consider if patient meets specification for referral to Paediatric Nurse Led team (repatriation/step down care only) **OR**
- Await availability of Neonatal NISTAR team **OR**
- Local team transfer
  - *Stabilisation/transfer advice available from Neonatal transport consultant – to be documented on Encompass*
  - *Referring unit to record and escalate referral not accepted*

No Neonatal Service available 08.00pm to 08.00am (excluding cardiac and PICU transfers)
Document referral on NISTAR inpatient consult order
Record and escalate referral appropriately through local arrangements e.g. DATIX/intertrust
Risk assessment of the two options – await availability of NISTAR neonatal team OR organise a local team transfer – *stabilisation/transfer advice available from NICU receiving unit on-call consultant**
If local team transfer contact NIAS on 02890404080 option 1 (999 for time critical), check availability of NISTAR vehicle (subject to ambulance availability, team commitments and journey time) OR book frontline NIAS vehicle (remember medical air is not available)
(*Regional NICU on-call consultant advice available on 028 9615 0570/0571/0572)