

# NISTAR Team unavailable SOP

**SETTING** Service-wide

**FOR STAFF** All staff

**PATIENTS** All patients

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## Introduction

NISTAR currently operate with four clinical teams and access to three NISTAR ambulances. However, there are ongoing significant gaps in the clinical rota meaning that the NISTAR Team are not always available. The following arrangements set out the actions that should be taken to provide contingency cover should this situation arise.

### **NISTAR Team Core Hours:**

Neonatal NISTAR – 8am to 8pm – 7 days

Paediatric NISTAR - 24hours per day – 7 days

Adult NISTAR - 24hours per day – 7 days

Nurse led NISTAR - 8am to 8pm – 7 days

## Objective

To provide the region with guidance should NISTAR clinical team be unavailable.

## Scope

The SOP applies to those affected by NISTAR clinical teams being unavailable.

## Procedure

NISTAR currently operate with four clinical teams and three NISTAR ambulances. At times there are gaps in the provision of the service across all four teams. When such an occasion occurs, the following should be considered:

- Referrals should continue to come in through the SPOC number – between the hours of 8am to 8pm a call handler will be available and out of hours the phone will be carried by a member of staff in the clinical area. They will offer guidance on the below steps.
- Discussion between referring and receiving units regarding optimisation of care with the aim of holding the patient until NISTAR team is available to complete the transfer.
- The referring unit complete the transfer themselves with advice from the receiving unit. The referring unit should contact NIAS to request an ambulance. The NISTAR ambulance may be used to expedite the process.
- Consideration should be given to using an alternative NISTAR team to assist with transfer if within their parameters e.g. a larger child by the Adult NISTAR team.

- If an Independent Sector provider is available to provide cover for Paediatric NISTAR or Neonatal NISTAR, a referral can be made to them directly or through the NISTAR call handler.
- All occasions when NISTAR are unavailable to undertake a transfer should be recorded either via the QR code or with the NISTAR call handler.



Clinical teams should consider the following points when deciding on which of the above options is the most appropriate method of transport:

- Is medical air required? (The babybus has medical air, however frontline ambulances do not)
- What is the patient condition? (Does the patient require an emergency transfer or can the transfer be delayed without compromising patient care?)
- What equipment is required?
- Where is the patient being transferred from / to? Is this a relatively short journey or is it likely to be protracted?

Each Trust has a responsibility to maintain Critical Care Transfer equipment locally and to ensure that staff are regularly trained in its use.

NISTAR offer training opportunities locally and regionally.

Information on the availability of the NISTAR team is shared with the commissioners, CANNI, NNNI, Child Partnership (for onwards distribution across the Trust points of contact), BHSCT senior management team and recorded on the Child Health Partnership SharePoint monthly.

Weekly updates are sent out to update on weekend cover every Thursday.

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**Regulation / Guidelines / references** – N/A

**Related documents – Appendix 1** – Considerations for using the “Babybus”

**Abbreviations** – NISTAR – Northern Ireland Specialist Transport and Retrieval




SPOC – Single Point of Contact



### Revision History:

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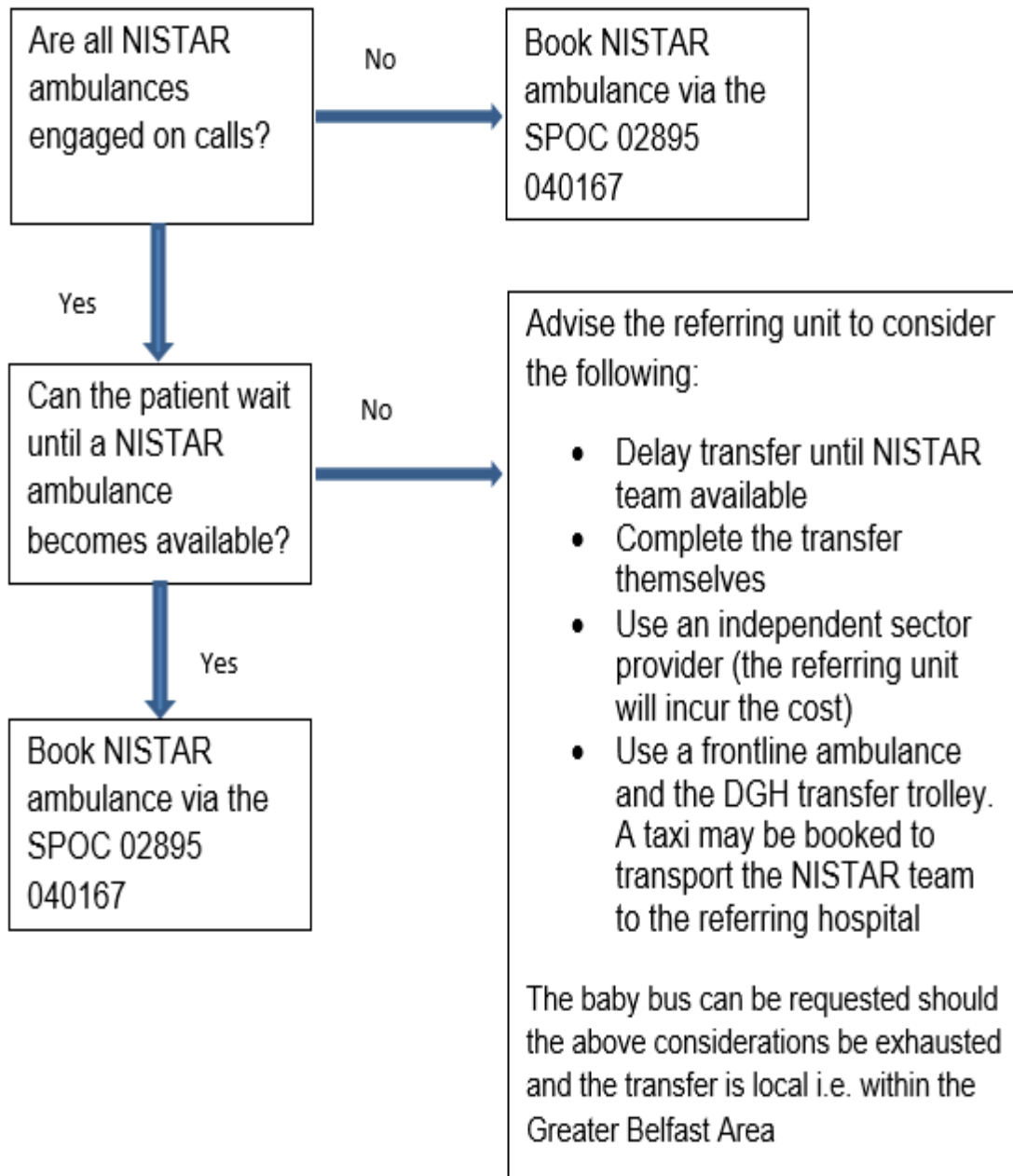
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## **Appendix 1. Considerations for using the “Baby Bus”**

NISTAR work in partnership with the Northern Ireland Ambulance Service (NIAS). NIAS provide three ambulances staffed by Ambulance Care Attendants (ACAs) 0800-2000 and two ambulances 2000-0800. On occasion, when all the NISTAR ambulances are in use but there are still calls pending, the team can use the “baby bus”. Before requesting the baby bus, the following should be considered:



### Guiding notes

NISTAR do not commission the baby bus and using this vehicle is on a good will basis.

The baby bus team have their own workload and as such should only be requested for local calls i.e. calls within the Greater Belfast area. The Greater Belfast area includes hospitals within the Belfast Trust catchment area and both Antrim and the Ulster Hospitals.



The workload of the baby bus will always take priority and as such the baby bus may not always be available for NISTAR to use.

The Ambulance Care Attendants (ACAs) crewing the baby bus may not always be familiar with the NISTAR equipment.

The baby bus is equipped with medical air.

The baby bus crew are controlled by the Non-Emergency Ambulance Control room (NEAC). To request the baby bus, the SPOC should ring 02871 347134.

When using the baby bus, all equipment should be secured appropriately using the straps and / or webbing system.