

Title	Exception Reporting Process		
Reference	GL-ODN-01		
Author	NWNODN Lead Nurses		
Target Audience	NWNODN Neonatal Units		
Ratified by	SMT		
Date ratified	12/12/18, 07/12/22, 07/12/25		
Date for review	19/12/28		
Version	FINAL		
Document history			
Date	Version	Co-Ordinator	Notes
22/4/21	V25	CN	Amendment made to Whiston gestation for transferring out from >28 to >27 wks to bring in-line with practice
31/12/21	V26	CN	Extended end date by 6 months, as directed by LWL. Pending Service Spec review & NCCR
01/12/22	V27	HM, CN, KH	Reviewed and updated
07/12/22	Final	KH	Reviewed and agreed at SMT – for circulation through NSGs
17/12/25	Final	HM, CN, ID, KH	Reviewed and updated – transport exceptions and to 2024 service specification

Contents

Introduction	3
Purpose	3
Exception Criteria According to Neonatal Unit Designation:.....	3
SPECIAL CARE UNIT (SCU)	3
LOCAL NEONATAL UNITS (LNU)	3
NEONATAL INTENSIVE CARE UNITS (NICU).....	4
Exception Reporting: Neonatal Transport Service Connect North West (CNW)	4
Exception Reporting: Standards Relating to All Units.....	5
Responsibilities	5
NWNODN Sharing of Exception Reporting Learning	5
REFERENCES	6
Appendix 1: NWNODN Unit Designation and Exception Criteria with Deviations	7
Cheshire and Merseyside.....	7
Greater Manchester.....	7
Lancashire and South Cumbria	7
Countess Of Chester Redesignation Plan.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Appendix 2: Process for Place of Birth Exceptions	9
Appendix 3 – NWNODN exception reporting process.....	10

North West Neonatal Operational Delivery Exception Reporting Guideline

Introduction

This guideline draws on the Neonatal Critical Care Service Specification (2024/15 EO8/S/a), BAPM Categories of Care (2011), National Neonatal Critical Care HRG's (2024), Neonatal Intensive Care Transport Specification (2024 /15 EO8/s/b) and Transport minimum data set (NTG/BAPM 2012). The NWNODN will utilise the exception process set out in this guideline to monitor adherence to agreed network pathways and admission criteria.

Purpose

To set out standards around the NWNODN exception guideline reporting process and the criteria used for exception reporting across different unit designations within North West neonatal services.

Exception Criteria According to Neonatal Unit Designation:

Exception criteria across the NWNODN is in line with the Neonatal Service Specification (2024 EO8/S/a).

[Appendix 1](#) sets out unit designation for all neonatal services within the NWNODN and any deviations to the routine exception reporting for North West Neonatal units.

SPECIAL CARE UNIT (SCU)

1. Care provided to babies <32 weeks gestation
2. Care provided to babies with a birth weight < 1000g
3. Intensive care (as per BAPM 2011) categories of care, except for initial stabilisation period (<6hours) prior to transfer
4. High dependency Care, except for initial stabilisation period (<6hours) prior to transfer including:

- Non- Invasive ventilation
- Peripheral long line
- Umbilical Line
- Seizures/continuous Cerebral Function Monitoring
- TPN only
- Receiving Blood Products
- Tracheostomy
- Trans-anastomotic tube
- Naso-Pharyngeal Airway
- Ventricular tap
- Insulin only

In addition, all LNU criteria listed below will be exception-reported for Special Care Units. This includes any interventions or care activities that may require more than four hours to complete, e.g. Blood products

LOCAL NEONATAL UNITS (LNU)

1. Care provided to infants below accepted gestation limits for LNU:
2. Singleton babies < 27+0 weeks
3. Multiple birth <28+0 weeks
4. Babies born weighing <800g
5. Support for more than one organ e.g. ventilation and inotropes

6. High frequency oscillatory ventilation (HFOV)
7. Therapeutic hypothermia
8. Prolonged intensive care (ventilatory support) >48 hours
9. Deviation from Cardiac Antenatal Pathway, for example prostaglandin infusion.
10. Deviation from NWNODN Ante-natal Surgical Referral Pathway e.g. presence of a Replogle tube
11. Administration of Adrenaline via an infusion.
12. Presence of an umbilical arterial line >48 hrs
13. Presence of a peripheral arterial line >48 hrs
14. Insulin infusion >48 hrs
15. Presence of a chest drain
16. Exchange partial/dilution/transfusion
17. Presence of epidural catheter
18. Presence of silo for Gastroschisis
19. Presence of external ventricular drain
20. Dialysis (any type)

Care that is only available in a NICU or during transport (such as nitric oxide) will be flagged but not reported as an exception if it is clear that the infant was transferred in a timely manner.

Additional information regarding action required for local neonatal units when caring for babies in these criteria is set out in the Advice Guideline:

<https://www.neonatalnetwork.co.uk/nwnodn/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/GL-ODN-14-Advice-Guideline.pdf>

NEONATAL INTENSIVE CARE UNITS (NICU)

1. Potential deviation from Cardiac Network Antenatal Pathway, e.g. prostaglandin infusion outside of cardiac centre.
2. Potential deviation from NWNODN Ante-natal Surgical Referral Pathway e.g. presence of Replogle tube or Silo outside of a surgical centre.
3. Therapeutic Hypothermia outside NWNODN guideline criteria i.e., <35/40

Exception Reporting: Neonatal Transport Service Connect North West (CNW)

1. All out of network transfers of mother or baby.
2. Occurrences of non-compliance with the NTG standard 60-minute immediate dispatch time.
3. Cases where standard response times exceeded 6 hours from the referring call.

Transport exceptions will be identified using data collated by Connect North West whenever there are issues this will be flagged through the MPI process.

- a. Exception reports relating to transport should be brought to NWNODN for discussion with the SMT and to locality NSGs.
- b. Transport exceptions will be collated by the NWNODN data dashboard for monitoring.

Connect NW will collect and share exceptions to these criteria and report against national Transport Group standards through the Neonatal Steering Groups (NSG).

Exception Reporting: Standards Relating to All Units

1. All babies >44 weeks gestational age will be monitored, with exceptions reported if gestational age exceeds >46 weeks.
 - a. If a baby's surgical care is already recorded on Badgernet, they will be removed from the weekly exception report, and the NNU will not receive a form to complete.
 - b. If a baby is marked as surgical subspeciality on the report, minimal information is required, care can continue until 60 weeks corrected gestation.
 - c. All babies that remain in the NNU at 60 weeks corrected gestational age will be flagged and an exception form issued.

Delays in repatriation will be audited through the repatriation guideline process for monitoring purposes

Responsibilities

1. Each neonatal unit has an agreed set of clinical indicators. Where the likelihood of the case falling outside the criteria for local care the NWNODN expect the following:
 - Advice discussion with local NICU within 24-36hours of baby receiving Intensive Care with timely consideration to transfer to a tertiary unit within 48hours.
 - Documentation of NICU decision making and agreed management plan recorded in the babies notes.
 - Babies at the threshold of the criteria may remain within the referring unit, subject to prior discussion and agreed management plan with a consultant from the advisory NICU.
2. Exception reports will be generated on a weekly basis and monitored by the data lead nurse.
3. The governance lead will be responsible for reviewing exception reports assessing clinical governance risks and working with providers to address any issues identified.

NWNODN Sharing of Exception Reporting Learning

The NWNODN are responsible for identifying learning through the exception reporting process and sharing this learning appropriately.

1. A summary of exception reporting data and learning identified will be shared in the NWNODN quarterly governance reports
2. A summary of the exception reports and learning will be shared at each locality Neonatal Steering Group meeting with locality specific learning as well a regional learning identified.
3. Exception reports for infants born <27/40 (singleton), <28/40 (multiple) births and babies with a birth weight <800grams will be shared with the maternity services to understand maternity factors around birth outside a NICU. A summary of learning from these cases will be shared back through maternity governance systems on a locality basis.
 - a. The process for exceptions around place of birth is set out in [APPENDIX 2](#)
4. The process for exception reporting through the NWNODN and the sharing of learning is set out in [APPENDIX 3](#)

REFERENCES

1. Toolkit for High Quality Neonatal Services (2009) Department of Health
2. NICE Quality Standards for Neonatal Care (2010) National Institute of Clinical Excellence
Page 3
3. BAPM Categories of Care (2011), BAPM
4. National Neonatal HRG descriptors (2024)
5. Neonatal Critical Care Service Specifications EO8/S/a
6. Neonatal Critical Care Retrieval (Transport) EO8/S/b
7. Operational Delivery Network. Memorandum of Understanding (Partnership Agreement)
January 2014 NHS England

Appendix 1: NWNODN Unit Designation and Exception Criteria with Deviations

Cheshire and Merseyside

Neonatal Unit	Designation	Exception Criteria	Deviation
Liverpool Women's	Surgical NICU	All units	Nil
Arrowe Park	NICU	NICU exceptions	Nil
Countess of Chester	LNU – Accredited to active cooling prior to transfer	LNU exceptions	Temporary admission criteria restriction: infants >32 weeks
Leighton	LNU	LNU exceptions	Nil
Macclesfield	SCU	SCU exceptions	Nil
Ormskirk	LNU Accredited to active cooling prior to transfer	LNU Exceptions	Nil
Warrington	LNU - Accredited to active cooling prior to transfer	LNU exceptions	Nil
Whiston	LNU - Accredited to active cooling prior to transfer	LNU exceptions	Nil

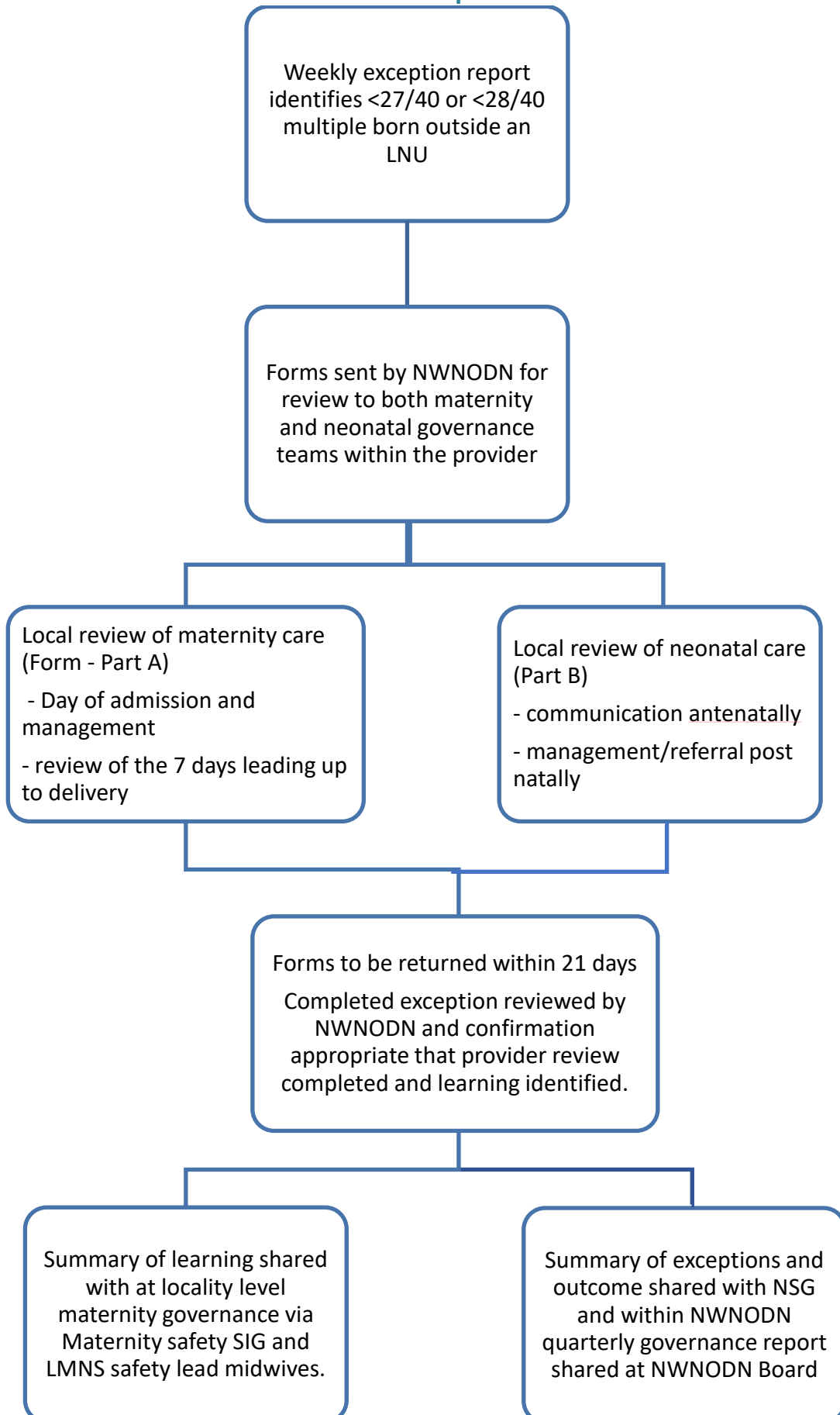
Greater Manchester

Neonatal Unit	Designation	Exception Criteria	Deviation
Manchester Foundation Trust – St Mary's ORC	Surgical NICU	All units	Nil
Bolton	NICU	NICU exceptions	Nil
Oldham	NICU	NICU exceptions	Nil
Manchester Foundation Trust – North Manchester	LNU	LNU exceptions	Admission criteria from 29/40
Manchester Foundation Trust – Wythenshawe	LNU - Accredited to active cooling prior to transfer	LNU exceptions	Nil
Stepping Hill	LNU	LNU Exceptions	Nil
Tameside	LNU	LNU exceptions	Nil
Wigan	LNU - Accredited to active cooling prior to transfer	LNU exceptions	Nil

Lancashire and South Cumbria

Neonatal Unit	Designation	Exception Criteria	Deviation
Preston	NICU	NICU exceptions	Nil
Burnley	NICU	NICU exceptions	Nil
Blackpool	LNU	LNU Exceptions	Nil
Lancaster	LNU	LNU exceptions	Nil
Furness	SCU	SCU exceptions	Nil

Appendix 2: Process for Place of Birth Exceptions



Appendix 3 – NWNODN exception reporting process

