

Updates from your Surgery in Children Network

Planning for Emergency Procedures

A message from Simon...

The Surgery in Children Network has an extremely broad remit covering all elements of childrens surgery, both elective and emergency pathways. In this newsletter we are focusing on emergency pathways following the release of some important national documents that will hopefully help us shape development of our emergency policies across the region.

Having good local protocols and policies is extremely important across all parts of the health service, however in an emergency situation having clear policies and pathways that are agreed and easily accessible if required is of critical importance, and avoids conflict and confusion in what may already be challenging circumstances.

The network team will be working with clinical colleagues over the next few months to make sure we have good, clear, and robust policies for key emergency procedures, with an aim that where possible these pathways are consistent across the South West. In particular, we will be looking at local and regional pathways for testicular torsions and emergency airway scenarios. If you are interested in supporting this work then please get in touch with the team.

Best Wishes,
Simon Courtman
Clinical Director, SW SIC ODN



Emergency Airways Pathways

Across our region we aim to ensure that all children are offered the same access to safe, quality services. In an emergency, having guidance which provides clear evidence based pathways of care supports the delivery of this aim. The Health Services Safety Investigations Body (HSSIB) recently published an investigation report into a critical incident involving a child requiring emergency airway management - 'Advanced airway management in patients with a known complex disease' is available [here](#).



[here](#).

There are several recommendations from the report which can be implemented across the South West. These include having access to a difficult airway trolley with standardised equipment that staff are trained in using, following the [Difficult Airway Society Pathway](#) and [APAGBI CICV pathways](#), and having an established local pathway for provision of ENT surgeons in an anticipated difficult airway, even in emergency situations. The ENT Working Group are developing Emergency Airway Management Best Practice Recommendations - contact [Gael Rolls](#) to learn more or be involved in this work.

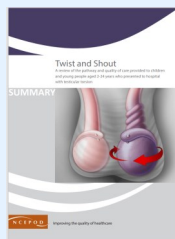
Foreign Body Ingestion

The ingestion of foreign bodies is another emergency that all centres should have an appropriate policy to facilitate swift triage and escalation. Ingestion of button batteries and magnets represents a paediatric emergency - all Trusts should have a pathway to guide local care of children who present with a suspicion of foreign body ingestion. Regional guidance developed by the Peninsula Trauma Network is available [here](#), and local guidance from Bristol Children's Hospital can be accessed [here](#).

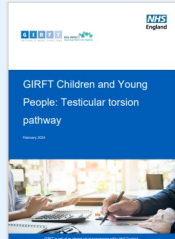


National Focus: Testicular Torsions

There has been significant national focus on the management of suspected testicular torsions recently. Two important national reports were published in February 2024, both considering pathways and practice around the management of suspected testicular torsion.



NCEPOD Review: The review findings were published in early February with key areas of recommendations around increasing public awareness, minimising the need for transfers, urgency of review by senior decision makers, and ensuring adequate access to follow-up. Read the report and associated tools [here](#).



GIRFT CYP Testicular Torsion Pathway: The pathway highlights similar areas of focus to the NCEPOD Review, emphasising a review of children by a surgical decision maker within 60 minutes of arrival at ED, and operating within 1 hour of decision for surgery. It can be accessed [here](#) along with a webinar discussion.

Auditing Readmissions

Over the last 12 months, two of our Working Groups have carried out patient-level audits to understand reasons for children being readmitted as an emergency following their surgical procedures. The ENT group reviewed readmissions following tonsillectomies, and the General Surgery & Urology group have recently completed collating information about patients readmitted following a circumcision.

It is important to understand why children present back at hospital following a routine procedure, and the two audits have raised key opportunities to review post-operative management, pathways, and information provided to patients to hopefully improve readmission rates across the region. Findings from network audits are available on our [NHS Futures Platform](#) for colleagues working in the SW.

Clinical Working Group Updates

Restoration and Service Improvement: Regional and national updates related to children's surgery were shared. Colleagues from Plymouth presented work on paediatric ENT theatre improvements and theatre utilisation, and Simon Courtman shared work on re-prioritisation and planning a 'Super Saturday' list, including consideration shared by Sheffield Childrens Hospital.

T&O Working Group: Rob Whitham and Luke Duggleby shared results from their forearm fracture management survey and discussed next steps for the upcoming patient-level audit. Caroline Edwards shared processes and findings of the Early Management of the Paediatric Forearm Fracture audit in Plymouth, and the delivery of Botulinum Toxin survey was shared for discussion.

ENT Working Group: Julian Gaskin provided a national update on tonsillectomy pathways, presenting the [BAPO Day-case Tonsillectomy Guidance](#). There was discussion around the key elements required in the development of the ODN's emergency airways best practice recommendations, and the group discussed the draft 'management of atypical TB' survey which has now been finalised and circulated to providers for completion.

Optimising MRI Pathways for Children Group: Alex Marsh (Clinical Psychologist in Paediatric Neuropsychology) presented Bristol's work on preparing children for functional MRI scans and the process taken to understand patients' individual needs. The group discussed the paediatric MRI pathway audit and patient-level audits which will be taking place over the coming months.

Pre-Assessment Working Group: The group met in January to look at standardising fasting guidance for children across the South West. Draft guidance was circulated and feedback gathered with comments for change to align with national fasting guidance and current published evidence. The next meeting will focus on e-pre-op with presentations of experience using electronic platforms from Plymouth and Bath.

Clinical Nurse Forum: An update from the national drivers describing local implications for paediatric surgery was presented from the network, along with the data showing the local position, where we can celebrate the excellent achievements being made and where we can share for further improvement across the region. The next meeting will focus on workforce and education - planning continues for the Surgery in Children Nurse Study which is taking place in September.

Further information, papers & recordings of presentations can be found on the [SW SIC ODN NHS Futures Platform](#).

CURFFED Project 2024



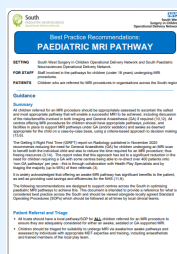
The ODN Team are working with regional Specialty Registrars Rob Whitham and Luke Duggleby to support with the delivery of their CURFFED Project (Children's Urgent Reduction of Forearm Fractures in the Emergency Department)

- a multi-centre audit assessing the initial management of the paediatric forearm and distal radius fractures.

The study includes an audit of BOAST standards and a questionnaire study - it is anticipated that the results will help to improve patient care by informing future research and changing clinical practice. Learn more [here](#) on the SW SIC ODN website.

Paediatric MRI Pathway

The Paediatric MRI Pathway Best Practice Recommendations have now been approved by the Optimising MRI Pathways for Children Working Group - available [here](#). The ODN are now working with regional providers to ensure that the pathway is disseminated appropriately with relevant teams for implementation.



General Surgery & Urology Working Group



In March, the General Surgery & Urology Working Group met in Taunton for the first SW SIC ODN face to face meeting. The afternoon began with short presentations from 5 of our South West providers to share local experiences and cases of interest with the group.

The second part of the meeting included educational sessions on transition to adult services for complex colorectal patients and oesophageal atresia patients. This was followed by a group discussion on how the ODN may be able to support the improvement of patients' experience of transition across the region.

It was fantastic to bring colleagues together and provide an opportunity for networking and sharing learning. We received some great feedback and have established next steps and actions for the group following the



meeting. With thanks to everyone who attended and to Mr Tim Rogers for chairing.

Sharing of Education & Resources

PCCS Nursing Competencies: New nursing competencies have been developed by the Paediatric Critical Care Society that are suitable for all nurses, both newly qualified and experienced, working with children at Level 1 and 2 - available [here](#).

SW Paediatric Mental Health Network Meeting: The Faculty of Nurse Education (FCNE) are hosting a meeting to share learning and education for children's mental health on Thursday 25th April at BAWA Health & Leisure in Bristol. Tickets are £25pp and can be bought by registering [here](#).

Starlight - Play and Palliative Care Webinar: In January, Starlight held a Play and Palliative Care webinar - watch the recording [here](#).

Raising Awareness of Testicular Torsion:

A series of posters aimed at raising awareness among boys and education leaders of the need to act quickly on testicular torsion are now available to schools and [here](#) on the GIRFT website.



Please complete our Feedback Survey

As part of our end of year review and planning for future activities, we want to ask you, our stakeholders, for some feedback. We want to ensure that the Surgery in Children Network adds value to our region and that we are prioritising things that matter to you.

Please complete our brief survey to share your feedback: Please email swsicodn@uhbw.nhs.uk for the survey link.

April - June Meeting Dates 2024

- T&O Working Group - 15th April
- ENT Working Group - 25th April
- Restoration & Service Improvement - 3rd June
- Pre-Assessment Working Group - 12th June
- General Surgery & Urology Working Group - 20th June
- Optimising MRI Pathways for Children - 1st July

[Contact us](#) to learn more or be added to a group.