Welcome to the 1st edition of the Wales Neonatal Network Update. This update is aimed at everyone who has an interest in or who works in neonatal services. This 1st edition provides some background on the Neonatal Network, who are we, what we do and what have we been doing to support the development of neonatal services in Wales.

In England, neonatal networks have been around for a number of years. The Wales Neonatal Network was set up in Autumn 2010 to support Health Boards in improving the quality of neonatal services.

Who are we

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clinical Lead</td>
<td>Dr Mark Drayton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Network Manager</td>
<td>Karen Stapleton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nurse Lead</td>
<td>Wendy Davies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHANTS Service Manager</td>
<td>Claire Richards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Support Officer</td>
<td>Jacqueline Davies</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What do we do

- Ensure a high quality service is provided based on the latest evidence and best practice.
- Support and monitor the implementation of the All Wales Neonatal Standards.
- Develop and implement consistent pathways for neonatal care across Wales.
- Ensure the input of parents and families is valued and considered in all aspects of the Network’s work.
- Ensure Welsh Mothers and babies receive appropriate care provided by skilled, trained staff.

A Network website will be launched soon which will provide a range of information for both health care professionals and parents and families on neonatal services and the activity of the Network.

This first update covers a lot of background on the Network and what we have been doing. Future updates will be shorter we promise!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONTENTS</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2 Neonatal capacity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Quality and Safety</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Workforce, Education &amp; Training</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Neonatal Transport</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
NEONATAL CAPACITY

This section highlights what we have been doing to make sure families and their babies have access to neonatal cots when they need them.

The right number of cots

Ensuring there are sufficient neonatal cots to meet the population need and appropriate staff numbers is a key priority for the Neonatal Network. Following establishment of the Wales Neonatal Network the team were tasked to perform an initial review of neonatal capacity (cot numbers, as well as the numbers of nurses and doctors) across Wales. This was undertaken and presented to the Steering Group in February 2011. Since then the Network presents an update on neonatal capacity every six months and tracks progress made by Health Boards to maintain and increase the cots available and to improve nurse numbers, in line with staffing requirements outlined in the All Wales Standards.

The latest update on neonatal capacity was presented to the Neonatal Steering Group in February 2013. Copies of previous Capacity Reviews can be obtained from Jacqueline Davies, see Contact details section.

The best use of the cots

The Cot Locator, a template for collecting cot status across Wales, has been in place since January 2011, developed by the Network team. It is completed, on a daily basis, by the neonatal transport teams who use it to locate available cots and help get babies to the right place for care. At a glance, it gives a picture of the available neonatal capacity across the North and South of the Network and supports individual Units in facilitating acute transfers as well supporting the return of babies back to their home unit. The cot locator is emailed daily to all neonatal and maternity units.

Review of Low Dependency Provision and Best Practice Recommendations 2012

In May 2011 a group, led by Dr James Moorcraft, Consultant Neonatologist, Abertawe Bro Morgannwg Health Board (ABMU), was set up, made up of Nurses, midwives and doctors, to look at how Low Dependency (special care) services were being provided across units and to understand the issues affecting high occupancy in special care.

It had been identified by the Network that some units had particularly high occupancy levels in special care and were regularly using their high dependency cots to care for low dependency babies – which is not necessarily the best use of these cots.

The aim of the review was to understand the clinical (weight gain expectation, management of infants with diabetic mother and neonatal abstinence syndrome) and service organisation issues (admission criteria, discharge practices, transitional care, outreach etc) affecting the use of special care cots and to make recommendations to Health Boards on ways to achieve more effective and appropriate use of low dependency resources.

The Review was circulated to Health Boards who have since undertaken a self assessment of Unit practice against the organisational and clinical issues. The results were reported to the October Neonatal Steering Group and showed...
that much work has already been undertaken by Units and there is evidence of a lot of good practice.

**Pressures on neonatal services in 2012**

Units across South Wales have experienced unprecedented levels of demand for critical care and this has been ongoing for many months during 2012. The pressures are across all units, and particularly acute in the south central community. The Network has been looking at some of the reasons why units have been particularly busy in the last year and this is presented in the Network’s Capacity Review 2013.

Compared to 2011, an increased number of babies have been cared for in English units during the first half of 2012, due to a lack of cots in Wales, and many babies have been transferred in–utero to England.

The Network has a key role in letting Health Boards and WHSSC know about the cot pressures and advises them on how improvements can be made.

We have established good relationships with the South West and Pensinular Network in England which cover an area from Gloucester to Portsmouth, and meet regularly to discuss common issues.

**QUALITY AND SAFETY**

**Measuring how we are doing**

Having data and information to be able to analyse what we are doing, and how we are doing compared to others is essential and the Network is leading and supporting work in a number of areas.

**All Wales Neonatal Standards**

The All Wales Neonatal Standards were issued in October 2008 by Welsh Government. The standards provide a basis for the planning and delivery of effective neonatal services across Wales.

Health Boards are responsible for delivering care in line with the Standards. Progress against the Standards is monitored by the neonatal network and reported to the Neonatal Steering Group every six months.

The Standards outline the following requirements:

- Staffing for the different types of Neonatal Unit as well as facilities and support services
- Expectations for patient centred care
- Arrangements for transfer
- Clinical Government arrangements
- Education and Training

Considerable progress has been made since December 2010 to improve compliance with the Standards across Wales. Further work is required by all Health Boards to improve nurse staffing numbers and the availability of the appropriate number of cots for the local population needs.

The Network team have been overseeing a process to update the All Wales Neonatal Standards (2008) to reflect the most up to date advice and recommendations from BAPM. These will finalised and published early/mid 2013.
Badgernet clinical system

Since January 2011 all Neonatal units in Wales have been using BadgerNet as the primary tool for admission and discharge of babies. Babies who move between units can now be easily tracked and their clinical details are available to the unit they are transferred to. This supports prompt clinical decision making and improved quality of care for babies and their families. Dr Roshan Adappa, Consultant Neonatologist, Cardiff & Vale Health Board has supported the network in the implementation of the system across Wales.

Over the last 18 months work has been ongoing to oversee the quality of data entered onto the system to ensure it is accurate and timely. This is a key priority for the Network as data from the system will be used to support clinical audit across the Network as well as supporting the ongoing review of neonatal activity and the planning of future services.

The Network’s Research and Audit Sub Group, chaired by Dr Arun Ramachandran, has overseen quality control audits of badgernet data which have been completed by the majority of Units. 15 daily data entry items and 26 key items in discharge summaries have been audited.

All Wales Neonatal Nursing Acuity Tool

The standards for neonatal nurse staffing are defined by the British Association of Perinatal Medicine (BAPM) and it is essential that units comply with the nurse staffing ratios that are outlined for the different levels of care. A key role of the Network has been to oversee the adoption of an All Wales Neonatal Nursing acuity tool that measures, on a daily basis, the staff available on a unit and patient acuity. The tool has been developed by Wendy Davies, previously Senior Nurse, ABMU, and is currently being adopted by all Units across Wales. Work is ongoing to capture acuity three times daily and to link the tool to a Unit’s escalation policy.

Bliss Baby Charter Audit Tool

The Bliss Baby Charter (BBC) Audit tool was launched early 2012 and has been developed to help units assess their current provision and identify specific action to develop practice and theory in patient centred care.

The tool is made up of ten categories of family-centred care:

| Active care by parents and staff | Parent and family support |
| Communication | Developmental care |
| Empowered decision making | Facilities |
| Guidelines and policies | Staff skills and training |
| Information provision | Service improvement and parent involvement |

The majority of Welsh Units have confirmed their commitment to undertake the audit and the Wales Neonatal Steering Group is encouraging all units to implement this tool. Further information on the tool can be found by accessing the following link: [http://www.bliss.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/Baby-Charter-Audit-tool_lores.pdf](http://www.bliss.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/Baby-Charter-Audit-tool_lores.pdf)
Nursing & Therapies

A key priority for the Network was setting up a Nursing and Therapy Sub Group to oversee neonatal workforce development and education and training. Opportunities for nurse rotation and clinical updating and sharing experience between different units are priorities for Health Boards to take forward.

In October 2011 the Network led a review of the neonatal nursing workforce which was presented to Health Boards. It covered:
- the numbers of nurses on establishments across Wales and the number of nurses ‘in post’
- an analysis of the shortfall in establishments to meet the All Wales Neonatal Standards requirements for nursing

At the time, there was a shortfall of 60.08 wte nurses across Wales, to meet the All Wales Standards. This shortfall has been reduced to 40.027 wte as at November 2012 which is a positive improvement in nurses on the ground.

Advanced Neonatal Nurse Practitioners (ANNPs) and Enhanced Neonatal Nurse Practitioners (ENNPs) Provision

A report prepared by Dr Jenny Calvert, Consultant Neonatologist, Cardiff & Vale Health Board and Dr Arun Ramachandran, on the provision and use of ANNPs and ENNPs was presented to the July 2012 Steering Group. It looked at the roles undertaken and the training and career progression requirements as well as the challenges of developing these roles within Health Boards.

Reconfiguration of Paediatric Training in Wales and the Implications for Neonatology

During 2012 the Wales Deanery has been consulting on proposals for paediatric training in Wales and the distribution of neonatal posts across training units. The Network Steering Group has been considering the implications for Neonatology of reduced posts and has been advising Health Boards on their workforce plans.

Paediatric Therapy Service Provision

In July 2011 a Review of Paediatric Therapy Service Provision to NNU in Wales was undertaken by Mrs Diane Rogers, Head of Children’s Physiotherapy, Cardiff & Vale Health Board. The review outlined the current therapy provision and what staff would be needed across Wales.

Neonatal Transport

The neonatal transport service is a dedicated service designed to move babies safely from one hospital to another for specialised or ongoing care. Its aim is to make sure the transfer is as safe and efficient as possible.

The neonatal transport service for South Wales (CHANTS) commenced on 3rd January 2011, and is provided by three clinical teams from University Hospital of Wales, Royal Gwent and Singleton Hospitals who operate the service on a weekly rotation basis.
Dr Jean Matthes, Consultant Neonatologist, ABMU, leads the Service and Sister Claire Richards, Royal Gwent Health Board, oversees the day to day operation of the service.

In 2012, CHANTS performed 531 transfers, of these 155 were acute (mainly ventilated or requiring emergency transfer and 376 were elective (mainly planned, non urgent transfers). This is an increase of 7.3% since 2011.

North Wales has a separate transport team that undertake transfers between units within Wales and to neonatal units in England. In 2012 N Wales performed 124 transfers, 45 acute and 79 elective.

The teams provide a 7 day week, 12 hour day and are able to respond very quickly, and provide an emergency service to babies.

Contact us:
Wales Neonatal Network, WHSSC, Caerphilly Business Park, Van Road, Caerphilly, CF83 3ED
Tel: 01443 443443  ext. 8151
E-mail Jacqueline.davies1@wales.nhs.uk