



Paediatric Infant Perinatal Emergency Retrieval (PIPER) – NEONATAL

Newborn Standard and Defined Transfer Process

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1. Retrieval System

The Paediatric Infant Perinatal Emergency Retrieval (PIPER) is an integrated statewide service that coordinates emergency referral and retrieval of pregnant women, newborns, infants and children. PIPER works collaboratively with health services as part of the critical care service system to ensure timely access for its patients to the most appropriate level of care. PIPER is responsible for negotiating bed/cot access to health services for emergency perinatal, newborn and paediatric transfers. PIPER, in consultation with the RCH executive¹, leads a statewide escalation process when service system occupancy reaches critical capacity levels. PIPER and level 6 services have joint and equal responsibility to ensure timely access to level 6 services, thereby minimizing the risks associated with delayed transfer. The retrieval process commences when the decision to transfer is made and bed finding occurs in parallel with this process.

2. Defined transfer

2.1 What is a defined transfer?

Defined Transfer refers to a process where a receiving unit is allocated, according to an agreed matrix, by a state-wide retrieval service such as Adult Retrieval Victoria or PIPER for a patient undergoing an emergency transfer. It is a system level process that occurs after escalated efforts to identify a service to accept the patient have been unsuccessful. In Victoria there are agreed defined transfer processes for emergency in utero transfers and emergency paediatric transfers. A similar process is lacking for emergency newborn referrals. This gap exposes a risk for delay in access to the required level of care.

2.2 Rationale and background

An emergency newborn transfer occurs when newborn access to level 6 services is essential and it is deemed safe by the PIPER consultant(s) to initiate and achieve transfer. For the purposes of this document “Emergency” includes both Time Critical and Urgent transfers.

A defined transfer process for newborns (Defined Transfer Newborn [DTN]) recognises that the stabilisation and immediate transfer to a level 6 neonatal intensive care (NICU) is the standard of care for newborns with high illness acuity. To safeguard patient care, PIPER is authorised to nominate a level 6 service to receive an emergency newborn transfer using the DTN matrix. This defined transfer reflects the appropriate system response to the needs of critically ill patients².

Level 6 neonatal services should establish systems, tools and processes to support a consistent approach to implementing Defined Transfer (Newborn) once activation occurs. This includes establishing internal escalation processes, documented lines of accountability and clear business continuity strategies, particularly in relation to staffing arrangements during the activation period. These processes should not rely on strategies such as short notice transfer out of patients to other health services or deferring acceptance for several hours to create capacity.

¹ PIPER operates under the governance of the Royal Children’s Hospital.

² Adult Retrieval Victoria published the *Time critical defined transfer guideline* in 2011. In 2013, two separate specific defined transfer guidelines were published for time critical cardiac and neurosurgical patients. These guidelines are now well established and accepted by the Victorian public critical care sector (for more information <https://www.ambulance.vic.gov.au/about-us/our-services/adult-retrieval-victoria/#resources>).

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3. Defined Transfer (Newborn) Activation Procedure

3.1 Assessment

The Defined Transfer (Newborn) process may be activated after PIPER's standard bed sourcing process for an emergency transfer has not succeeded in identifying a suitable L6 bed. In this context the Level 6 services are requested to ensure that their internal escalation pathways have been followed before advising PIPER that they cannot accept the referral.

The standard bed sourcing process is led by a PIPER Neonatal Consultant and involves extensive consultation with Level 6 staff. It takes account of:

- Capability and capacity of the referring health service
- Clinical needs of the newborn for specialised level (6A or 6B) services, particularly where there are clinical characteristics which may restrict the choice of receiving service (e.g. need for surgery, extreme prematurity, suspected or known cardiac, metabolic or other complex medical conditions)
- Degree of urgency
- Known or anticipated critical care system demands
- Usual referral patterns including geographical proximity
- Needs and consideration of the patient's family.

3.2 Activation

Defined Transfer (Newborn) activation proceeds if the escalated standard bed sourcing process has not succeeded in identifying a suitable L6 bed. A Defined Transfer (Newborn) will be authorised by the Director PIPER (or delegate) as follows:

- 1) The Director of PIPER (or delegate) allocates the receiving health service as per the applicable Defined Transfer Matrix as detailed in Appendices 2&3.
- 2) The Director of PIPER (or delegate) notifies the receiving level 6 service bed manager or delegate (in accordance with internal health service policy) that a defined transfer to their service will occur. The receiving service bed manager will then communicate and operationalise the local health service response and actions.
- 3) The PIPER Director or delegate will notify the Assistant Director Perinatal Services & Clinical Councils, Health Service Programs, Department of Health, of the defined transfer.

4. Defined Transfer (Newborn) review and monitoring

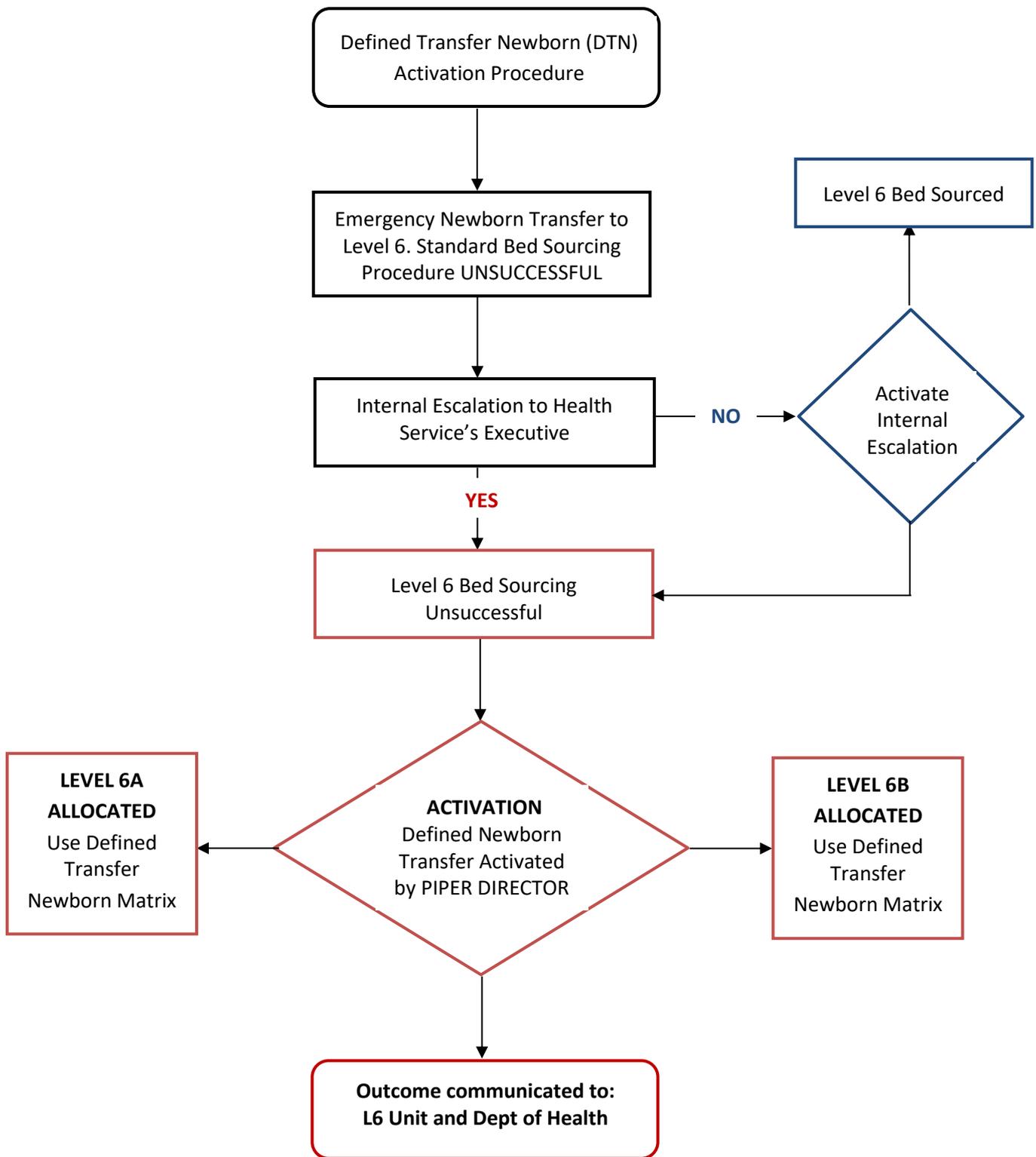
All defined transfer decisions will be retrospectively reviewed by PIPER to ensure the agreed process and assessment has occurred.

PIPER will provide a quarterly report of all Defined Transfer (Newborn) occurring in the period (including referring hospital, receiving hospital and trend analysis) to the Department of Health.

A summary report of all transfers will be provided to the CEO of the level 6 services quarterly by PIPER.

Level 6 services can request a post hoc review of the decision to activate a defined transfer by contacting the Director of PIPER.

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5. Appendices

5.1 Appendix 1: Defined Transfer (Newborn) Level 6 Hospital

Newborns are allocated to level 6 services according to the referring hospital as detailed in the following tables.

JOAN KIRNER	
Metro	*Joan Kirner *Werribee Mercy
Regional/Rural	*Djerriwarrh: Bacchus Marsh
*If <26 weeks then catchment is MHW	
MHW	
Metro	Angliss Box Hill Mercy Hospital for Women
Regional/Rural	Castlemaine Health Cohuna District Hospital Echuca Regional Health Maryborough District Health Service Swan Hill District Hospital Benalla & District Memorial Hospital Goulburn Valley Health: Shepparton Albury Wodonga Health Northeast Health Wangaratta Mansfield District Hospital The Kilmore & District Hospital
MONASH	
Metro	Cabrini Malvern Casey Hospital Dandenong Hospital Frankston Hospital Jessie McPherson Private Hospital Mitcham Private Monash Medical Centre Clayton Peninsula Private Hospital Sandringham Hospital St John of God Hospital Berwick The Bays Hospital Waverly Private
Regional/Rural	Bairnsdale Regional Health Service Bass Coast Health: Wonthaggi Central Gippsland Health Service: Sale Gippsland Southern Health Service: Leongatha Latrobe Regional Hospital: Traralgon South Gippsland Hospital: Foster

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	West Gippsland Healthcare Group: Warragul
RCH*	
Metro	NorthPark Private Hospital St Vincent's Private Hospital The Northern Hospital
Regional/Rural	Ballarat Health Service Bendigo Mildura Base Hospital SJOG Ballarat SJOG Bendigo Wimmera Health Care Group
*Where Defined Transfer (Newborn) has been activated and RCH identified as the designated health service, in the absence of a specific RCH indication, infants born < 27 weeks should be directed to the Royal Women's Hospital.	
RWH	
Metro	Epworth Freemasons Frances Perry Private Hospital Royal Women's Hospital
Regional/Rural	Colac Area Health East Grampians Health Service Epworth Geelong Geelong Hospital Portland District Health St John of God Hospital Geelong SW Healthcare Camperdown SW Healthcare Warrnambool Western District Health Service

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5.2 Appendix 2: Defined Transfer (Newborn) Level 6b Hospital

Newborns requiring management at a level 6b service will be allocated to Monash Children's Hospital or the Royal Children's Hospital on the following geographic basis.

Monash: Surgical/Complex Medical Catchment Matrix	
Metro	Angliss Hospital Box Hill Hospital Cabrini Malvern Casey Hospital Dandenong Hospital Frankston Hospital Jessie McPherson Private Hospital Mitcham Private Hospital Monash Medical Centre Clayton Peninsula Private Hospital Sandringham Hospital St John of God Berwick The Bays Hospital Waverley Private Hospital
Regional/Rural	Bairnsdale Regional Health Service Bass Coast Health: Wonthaggi Central Gippsland Health Service: Sale Gippsland Southern Health Service: Leongatha Latrobe Regional Hospital South Gippsland Hospital: Foster West Gippsland Healthcare: Warragul
RCH: Surgical/Complex Medical Catchment Matrix	
Metro	Epworth Freemasons Frances Perry Private Hospital Mercy Hospital for Women Mercy Werribee Public Hospital NorthPark Private Hospital Royal Women's Hospital St Vincent's Private Hospital Sunshine Hospital The Northern Hospital
Regional/Rural	Albury Wodonga Health Ballarat Health Service Benalla District Health Bendigo Health Castlemaine Health Cohuna District Hospital Colac Area Health Djerriwarrh Health Services East Grampians Health Service Ararat Echuca Regional Health

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	<p>Epworth Geelong Geelong Hospital Goulburn Valley Health: Shepparton Mansfield District Hospital Maryborough District Health Service Mildura Base Hospital Northeast Health Wangaratta Portland District Health South West Healthcare Camperdown South West Healthcare Warrnambool St John of God Ballarat St John of God Health Care Bendigo St John of God Hospital Geelong Swan Hill District Hospital The Kilmore and District Hospital Western District Health Service Wimmera Healthcare Group</p>
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5.3 Appendix 3: Defined Transfer (Newborn) Geographic Distribution by Referring Hospital

Referring Hospital	Catchment Hospital	Region
Albury Wodonga Health	MHW	Hume
Angliss	MHW	Metro
Bairnsdale Regional Health Service	Monash	Gippsland
Ballarat Health Service	RCH	Grampians
Bass Coast Health: Wonthaggi	Monash	Gippsland
Benalla & District Memorial Hospital	MHW	Hume
Bendigo	RCH	Loddon Mallee
Box Hill	MHW	Metro
Cabrini Malvern	Monash	Metro
Casey Hospital	Monash	Metro
Castlemaine Health	MHW	Loddon Mallee
Central Gippsland Health Service: Sale	Monash	Gippsland
Cohuna District Hospital	MHW	Loddon Mallee
Colac Area Health	RWH	Barwon South West
Dandenong Hospital	Monash	Metro
*Djerriwarrh: Bacchus Marsh	Joan Kirner	Grampians
East Grampians Health Service	RWH	Grampians
Echuca Regional Health	MHW	Loddon Mallee
Epworth Freemasons	RWH	Metro
Epworth Geelong	RWH	Barwon South West
Frances Perry Private Hospital	RWH	Metro
Frankston Hospital	Monash	Metro
Geelong Hospital	RWH	Barwon South West
Gippsland Southern Health Service: Leongatha	Monash	Gippsland
Goulburn Valley Health: Shepparton	MHW	Hume
Jessie McPherson Private Hospital	Monash	Metro
Joan Kirner	Joan Kirner	Metro
Latrobe Regional Hospital: Traralgon	Monash	Gippsland
Mansfield District Hospital	MHW	Hume
Maryborough District Health Service	MHW	Loddon Mallee
Mercy Hospital for Women	MHW	Metro
Mildura Base Hospital	RCH	Loddon Mallee
Mitcham Private	Monash	Metro
Monash Medical Centre Clayton	Monash	Metro
Northeast Health Wangaratta	MHW	Hume
NorthPark Private Hospital	RCH	Metro
Peninsula Private Hospital	Monash	Metro
Portland District Health	RWH	Barwon South West
Royal Women's Hospital	RWH	Metro
Sandringham Hospital	Monash	Metro
South Gippsland Hospital: Foster	Monash	Gippsland
SJOG Hospital Ballarat	RCH	Grampians

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Referring Hospital	Catchment Hospital	Region
SJOG Hospital Bendigo	RCH	Loddon Mallee
SJOG Hospital Berwick	Monash	Metro
SJOG Hospital Geelong	RWH	Barwon South West
St Vincent's Private Hospital	RCH	Metro
SW Healthcare Camperdown	RWH	Barwon South West
SW Healthcare Warrnambool	RWH	Barwon South West
Swan Hill District Hospital	MHW	Loddon Mallee
The Bays Hospital	Monash	Metro
The Kilmore & District Hospital	MHW	Hume
The Northern Hospital	RCH	Metro
Waverly Private	Monash	Metro
Werribee Mercy*	Joan Kirner	Metro
West Gippsland Healthcare Group: Warragul	Monash	Gippsland
Western District Health Service	RWH	Barwon South West
Wimmera Health Care Group	RCH	Grampians

6. End of Document