



Aneurin Bevan University Health Board

Prevention of Infant Abduction

Maternity Units

N.B. Staff should be discouraged from printing this document. This is to avoid the risk of out of date printed versions of the document. The Intranet should be referred to for the current version of the document.

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1 Executive Summary

Aneurin Bevan University Health Board is committed to meeting its statutory and legal responsibilities to provide a safe and secure working environment (GHNT, 2008, WAG 2005). This policy outlines the responsibility that employees have in the promotion of a secure environment for themselves and others.

Infant safety and the prevention of abduction is a priority within the Family and Therapies Division. All employees of Aneurin Bevan University Health Board, in partnership with women and their families, will comply with all organisational and local safety and security measures in existence. This will involve education of staff, mothers and visitors, the distribution of visiting guidance and adherence to individual unit precautions and security systems, i.e. identification bands, electronic tagging and 'access control key card' systems.

1.1 Scope of policy

Aneurin Bevan University Health Board has birth sites in four local hospitals; these include – the Royal Gwent Hospital, Nevill Hall Hospital and The Birth Centre at Ysbyty Ystrad Fawr and the Birth Room at Ysbyty Aneurin Bevan. Although local arrangements in terms of security systems may be tailored to each site, the principles and policy on the prevention of infant abduction will be utilised by all.

1.2 Essential Implementation Criteria

The following policy will allow employees of Aneurin Bevan University Health Board and its service users to:

- Understand their responsibilities in the maintenance of infant security
- Understand the action that will take place in the event of an infant abduction

2 Aims

- To prevent the abduction of infants from the hospital environment during the immediate postnatal period
- To keep mothers and infants together, ensuring early infant attachment and wellbeing

3 Responsibilities

- Service users must respect and adhere to visiting hours and their allied restrictions outlined in the guidance
- All staff must uphold the principles of good practice outlined in the guidance and act swiftly in the event of a suspected infant abduction.
- In addition, Senior/Lead Midwives must ensure that the effectiveness of the guidance is monitored through its inclusion in mandatory training and the facilitation of practice drills annually

4. Principles of Good Practice in Ensuring Safety of Infants

Mother and Infant

- 4.1 Infants will be correctly identified using ID bands immediately after birth. Infants admitted with mothers in the postnatal period must be fitted with ID bands as soon as possible.
- 4.2 Electronic tagging will take place as per local procedures.
- 4.3 Mothers are reminded to be vigilant at all times, to ask to see staff ID badges and to accompany their infants for tests and procedures when appropriate

Area

- 4.4 An annual risk assessment will be undertaken on ward entrances and exits and after any changes to access
- 4.5 Rooming in will be practised.
- 4.6 Maternity beds will not be used for non- pregnant women thereby reducing the risk of strangers within the ward environment.

Staff

- 4.7 Maternity staff will be educated about the risk of infant abduction. Training will be carried out locally in the form of practice drills, undertaken to ensure staff are familiar with the relevant action to be taken in the event of infant abduction.
- 4.8 Awareness of this policy will be part of the mandatory training for midwives and support staff.
- 4.9 All staff entering the maternity units must wear identity badges with photograph and name clearly displayed.

Visitors

- 4.10 All staff will identify visitors encountered on the ward and promptly inform security if their behaviour appears suspicious or threatening.
- 4.11 Staff, women and their families will be encouraged to challenge any individual who attempts to remove an infant regardless of the reasons given.
- 4.12 During visiting times there will be increased vigilance by staff, especially where there are known child protection issues. There is increased opportunity at this time for infants to be removed from the ward in bags containing women's belongings.

Current Infant Security Systems in Use for Hospital Births

- 4.13 Plastic bracelets with identical numbers and details on mother and infant bands supplemented with electronic tags.

The infant will have two identification bands placed one on each ankle and the mother one band placed on her wrist.

The midwife will check the bands with the mother or her birth partner following birth, prior to placing them on the infant. Details recorded on the band will include: mother's full name, hospital unit number, infant's sex, date and time of birth. The identification bands will be checked daily whilst in hospital.

- 4.14A midwife will remove the electronic tag when the baby is transferred home from the ward by cutting through the plastic.

The system will be function checked and the system check documented on a daily basis by the ward staff.

The alarms will trigger an alert if they pass near to the entrance/exit of ward areas unless the alarm is bypassed, e.g. on transfer from one ward to another.

Swipe Card Access to Ward Areas

- 4.15 All relevant staff will have swipe card access to maternity ward areas in line with organisational policy for swipe card access to areas within the Family and Therapies division. When staff leave the organisation for employment elsewhere, the ID swipe card must be returned to their manager who will without delay (whether they have the ID card or not) notify the ID issuing

centre to have the card deactivated, this can be done in advance of the leaving date.

NB In the event of a staff member losing his/her ID swipe card, they must ensure the old card is deactivated and a new card obtained.

CCTV

4.16 Sited at entrance to some ward areas and maternity buildings. Regular review of the system should be undertaken to ensure it is recording accurately.

5. Action in the Event of an Infant Abduction

(See appendix one and two)

5.1 On suspecting abduction of an infant, the midwife will confirm the abduction and then inform the person in charge of the ward.

5.2 The alarm will be raised and the switchboard informed to contact relevant services:

- Security
- Porters
- Police

5.3 Secure entrances and exits to ward area.

5.4 The midwife in charge of the unit will be immediately informed, who in turn will mobilise staff and co-ordinate proceedings.

Midwife in charge will contact

- Head of Midwifery
- Senior Manager
- Governance Midwife
- Clinical Director
- Consultant on-call
- General Manager
- Supervisor for Midwives
- Facilities Manager
- Press and Communications manager for Aneurin Bevan Health Board

5.5 Midwifery staff will be delegated to:

- Move the mother of the abducted infant to a private area for comfort and support and to remain with her throughout
 - Check the electronic tags and bands of all remaining infants
 - Inform other mothers regarding the situation in order that a state of alert can be maintained
 - Reassure the mothers on the ward and provide support
 - Arrange for family members to be informed and request their attendance at the unit to support the mother
- 5.6 Delegated persons will pursue the abductor if event witnessed and description of person obtained.
- 5.7 A delegated staff member will search immediate areas, i.e. wards, toilets, corridors, offices.
- 5.8 Ensure staff do not handle or remove any of the infant's clothing, blankets, equipment & cot.
- 5.9 Staff will be expected to co-operate with the police by giving an accurate history of events in the ward prior to or during the abduction.
- 5.10 Media enquiries will be managed via the Press and Communications Manager in conjunction with the senior management team and the police department.
- 5.11 When the situation returns to normal, all relevant departments and security will be informed to stand down.
- A Datix will be completed in conjunction with Aneurin Bevan University Health Board risk management policy.
- 5.12 A multidisciplinary case review will take place within 24 hours of the event occurring and findings reported accordingly.
- 5.13 Security will be checked and reviewed at the first available opportunity.

Opportunity will be provided for staff and women to reflect on the situation, and professional support and advice offered by the unit manager.

5.14 The policy will be audited following each reported incident to ensure the policy has been implemented appropriately and is effective.

6. Training

- Maternity staff will be educated about the risk of infant abduction. Training will be carried out locally in the form of practice drills, undertaken to ensure staff are familiar with the relevant action to be taken in the event of abduction.
- Awareness of this policy will be part of mandatory training for midwives and support staff.

7. References

- Gwent Healthcare NHS Trust (2008) Security Policy
- Welsh Assembly Government (2005) Healthcare Standards. Making the Connections. Designed for Life. Cardiff: WAG

Appendix One

Quick Guide – Action in the Event of Infant Abduction

PROCEDURE	RATIONALE
1. Suspect an abduction 2. Confirm abduction and raise the alarm 3. Contact switch board to notify: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Security • Porters • Police 4. Inform midwife in charge 5. Secure entrance and exits to ward area	Prevent delay Mobilise staff and co-ordinate proceedings to ensure all staff and visitors remain in area
6. Midwife in charge to inform: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Switchboard • Senior Midwifery Manager • Head of Midwifery • Clinical Director • General Manager • Consultant on call • Governance Midwife • Supervisor for Midwives • Facilities Manager • Press & Communications Manager 	
7. Midwife in charge to delegate tasks e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moving mother of abducted infant to a private area and stay with her • Pursue abductor if identified • Check remaining ward areas • Comfort and support other women • Check other infants ID bands 	Provide support and comfort Halt the abduction Ensure infant not held elsewhere To reassure women during a stressful time Check identity, ensure mother and infant bands match
8. Staff will not remove the empty cot or touch any of the clothing	Needed as evidence by the police
9. Co-operate with the police	Aid the investigation
10. Direct Media attention to Press & Communications Manager on ext 45945	To channel media attention via the correct sources in conjunction with the police
11. Inform all when situation returns to normal	Facilitate return to normal duties
12. Complete online Datix form	Compliance with Health Board policy

Appendix Two

In the Event of an Infant Abduction – Information Cascade

