

2<sup>nd</sup> September 2024

Dear Hip Screening Lead,

**Changes to the NIPE Pathway for Hip Dysplasia in England and  
ACTIVATE the NIPE OUCH pathway (following GIRFT recommendations)**

We are writing to make you are aware of changes to the Newborn and Infant Physical Examination (NIPE) pathway within NHS England and to advocate the submission of comprehensive data to optimise the performance of the NIPE pathway - through the Overcoming Unplanned Variation in Children's Health (OUCH) evaluation. This applies to all babies born after **1<sup>st</sup> April 2024**.

**NEW CHANGES IMPLEMENTED** – In 2023 the British Society of Children's Orthopaedic Surgery (BSCOS) published the DDH consensus study, which highlighted the key ultrasound measurements that guide treatment amongst children with DDH. NHS England (NHSE) will now collect these measurements on all babies undergoing a hip ultrasound, through the Smart4NIPE database. Smart4NIPE is a mandatory database of screening returns to NHSE, at the moment largely completed by midwives and screening co-ordinators.

The **core ultrasound measurements** newly collected by NIPE are –

- (1) is the hip centred (Yes/No).
- (2) what is the alpha angle (value).
- (3) is the hip dislocatable (Yes/No/Not done).

These form the minimum data needed to classify the ultrasound findings for use in local and national audits of the screening programme.

**IMPLEMENTING GIRFT SUGGESTIONS** - The ***Getting It Right First Time (GIRFT)*** recommendations for Children's Orthopaedic Surgery, included the recommendation to ensure "accurate and complete returns to NIPE on the national Smart4NIPE database to allow national data analysis", along with recommendations to "complete trials of universal screening". In line with these recommendations, a further change to the Smart4NIPE system (the OUCH evaluation), will optimise the data collected in routine care to understand DDH frequency, risk factors, treatment, outcomes and screening failures.

**DETAILS OF THE SMARTIE/OUCH EVALUATION** - The evaluation will collect basic details of treatments at each visit, from the initiation of a harness to the removal of a harness and/or the plan for surgery. The evaluation will also record details of children presenting with a 'late dislocation' (i.e. a dislocation not identified during primary screening). This significant buy-in from children's orthopaedic teams and will enable high-quality audit to monitor the success of the screening programme and treatments. The data will be available for local, regional and national audit. Once successfully underway, this will also enable screening and treatment pathways to be refined, by embedding research into routine care (i.e. changing screening pathways and enabling randomised controlled trials).

## **OUR ASK**

In line with the GIRFT recommendations, we ask that all centres optimise their submissions to the NIPE database. We advocate that you:

- (1) Identify the person currently uploading data to the Smart4NIPE system at your hospital. Work with this person to ensure that the core ultrasound measurements are complete and accurate.
- (2) Activate the OUCH evaluation. This will collect details related to DDH treatment. This needs to be activated on a hospital-by-hospital basis (see below).
- (3) If you are in a hospital trust without any maternity services you may not have routine access to the Smart4NIPE system. Then contact NHSE (using the details below) to encourage them to enable Smart4NIPE to facilitate full national evaluation of the screening programme.

## **ACTIVATING THE OUCH EVALUATION (it's one step after watching the training video!)**

NHSE simply request e-mail confirmation from the lead clinician for the hip treatment pathway in each hospital (typically a children's orthopaedic surgeon or paediatrician). The e-mail must confirm that they have watched the training video and wish to make the data collection tab live.

[Link to training video](#)

Or Scan



THEN click to compose the template e-mail which will be sent to NHS England. The e-mail acknowledges that additional data items are added through a data sharing agreement and acknowledge that you have watched the training material.

[Click here](#)

Or Scan



If you have any questions about the process for participation (or the QR codes do not work), please contact Richard Kirk, evaluation co-ordinator (Liverpool University), at [RKirk@liverpool.ac.uk](mailto:RKirk@liverpool.ac.uk) or Jill Walker, [jillwalker1@nhs.net](mailto:jillwalker1@nhs.net) (NHS England).

Yours sincerely,



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**BSCOS President**



**Deborah Eastwood**  
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