



<b>EOC SOP CHANGE NOTICE</b>			
<i>ISSUE NO</i>	<i>EFFECTIVE DATE</i>	<i>DATE OF ISSUE</i>	<i>REVIEW DATE</i>
CN/9/2026	21 May 2026	21 May 2026	N/A
<b>SONeT/SORT – REQUESTING AN EMERGENCY AMBULANCE VEHICLE FOR TRANSFERRING A NEONATAL OR PAEDIATRIC TEAM FROM UHS OR OUH TO A REFERRING HOSPITAL IN WESSEX AND THAMES VALLEY</b>			
<b>FAO: (skillset)</b>		<b>REASON:</b>	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EOC CDMs  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EOC Shift Officers  EOC Clinicians  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 999 TLs  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Dispatchers / Ass. Dispatchers  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ECTs / Ass. ECTs		Temporary Workaround (e.g. Pathways)  Permanent Change  Pilot  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> For Information Only	

**Background**

Southampton Oxford Neonatal Transport (SONeT) provides a 24/7 specialist neonatal retrieval service across Thames Valley and Wessex, transferring critically unwell babies from district hospitals to NICUs in Oxford, Southampton and Portsmouth. Services operate from hubs in Oxford and Southampton. Each team consists of a registrar, neonatal nurse and driver, with consultant support for complex cases. SORT Oxford performs equivalent paediatric critical care retrieval from their hub in the John Radcliffe hospital.

SORT transfer critically unwell children (0-16years) from district hospitals in the Thames Valley to a tertiary PICU, primarily Oxford but occasionally Southampton or further afield. The primary team consists of a paediatric fellow or ACCP, a paediatric critical care nurse and driver. The retrieval consultant attends for complex cases.

We may receive a request to get the teams to a local hospital in the event of both their primary and resilience vehicle failing, in order to quickly get their specialist expertise to the critically unwell neonate or child. We may also receive requests to transfer consultants/specialists to hospitals where the team are already in attendance but require their expertise for support.

As each team has a resilience vehicle, and in Oxford they can often use the other Oxford team's vehicle (if not in use), therefore, this is expected to be a very rare occurrence.

## **Process**

Before requesting SCAS' assistance, the teams will ensure they have explored their contingency plans in place.

### **Vehicle Failure Contingency plan**

- Deploy resilience vehicle.
- If unavailable, utilise another SOnET/SORT hub vehicle (if free).
- If no resilience vehicle available, request SCAS support for transport of the clinical team to the referring site while equipment follows later.

### **When SCAS Support is appropriate**

- Time-critical retrieval requiring immediate clinical presence.
- Vehicle VOR (primary and resilience unavailable).
- Consultant required urgently to join a team already deployed.

## **Procedure**

If SOnET/SORT contingency plans are fully evaluated and a SCAS resource is deemed as necessary, the following will take place:

- The SOnET/SORT teams will call on the HCP lines:
  - **TV**                   **0300 123 9826**
  - **Hants**               **0300 123 9806**
- The SOnET/SORT teams will identify themselves and state the reason for the request.
- They will state the number of clinicians to be transported.
- They will state the pickup and destination locations.
- They will confirm that equipment will follow separately.
- These requests will be prioritised as a Level 2 (18-minute average response time).

### **SCAS Resource Options**

- Solo Response Vehicle (SRV): Suitable for one clinician due to capacity of the vehicle.
- Emergency Ambulance: Required for more than one clinician; deployed only in rare, time-critical circumstances due to operational impact.

## **Further Information**

In the Thames Valley region, the journeys are from Oxford to Reading, Milton Keynes, Wexham Park and Stoke Mandeville. In Southampton the journeys are from Southampton to Portsmouth, Basingstoke, Dorchester, Bournemouth, Chichester, Salisbury and Winchester.

## **Audit and Review**

Use of this procedure is expected to remain rare and limited to exceptional circumstances.

Reviews of this process will take place at 3 months, 6 months and annually thereafter by the EOC governance team, in collaboration with SONEt/SORT leads.

Each audit will review:

- the circumstances and rationale for the request
- timeliness of response and resource allocation
- operational impact on SCAS services
- any delays, risks, or patient-safety considerations
- compliance with the procedure

To ensure accurate data capture, all calls must be flagged using the **#SONeT-SORT#** preset comment.

### **Communication**

Contact with the teams can be initiated by using the following telephone numbers:

- SORT (Oxford team) – 01865 223 037
- SONEt (Oxford and Southampton teams) – 01865 223 344

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ruth EP" with a stylized flourish underneath.

**Ruth Page**  
**Director of ICC**

**Authors: Christine Belton, CDM**  
**Russel Farrant Assistant Director of ICC – Resource & Deployment**