

DO I KNOW THE PATH AHEAD (LOOKING AT THE THOUGHTS OF A PRETERM INFANT AFTER DISCHARGE)

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Aim: This Audit was done to assess existing local and national practice in the follow-up of newborns at risk (less than 32weeks gestation and or under 1500grams birth weight).

Data collection: 202 questionnaires were sent to neonatal units across the United Kingdom and the response was collected.

Results: 108 units responded, of which 88 (81%) were district general and 20 (19%) were tertiary hospitals. 70 (65%) units had a local guideline for follow up, where as 38(35%) didn't. 59 (50%) hospitals reviewed them at six weeks for the first follow up and second between 3-6 months in 43 (40%) hospitals. Subsequent follow up was at 6 months in 32 (29%) and 12 months in 38 (35%) hospitals. Most units 76 (70%) discharged around two years of age. Consultants conducted these clinics 107 (99%) and 76 (70%) had follow up with other teams like physiotherapy 46 (42.5%) and occupational therapy 55 (50.9%).

An assessment tool was used in 82 (75.9%) hospitals which included Bayley 22 (20%) and Griffiths 26 (24%). These assessments were performed by consultants/ trainees in 68 (63%), the community support team in 21 (19%) hospitals. The timing varied between 1 and 2 years of age with the majority being at 2 years, 26 (24%).

Conclusion: Individual units have own practices utilising their resources . Evidence that if these children are identified and supported early, the impact on the long term development of these infants will be minimised. We therefore recommend a national guideline.