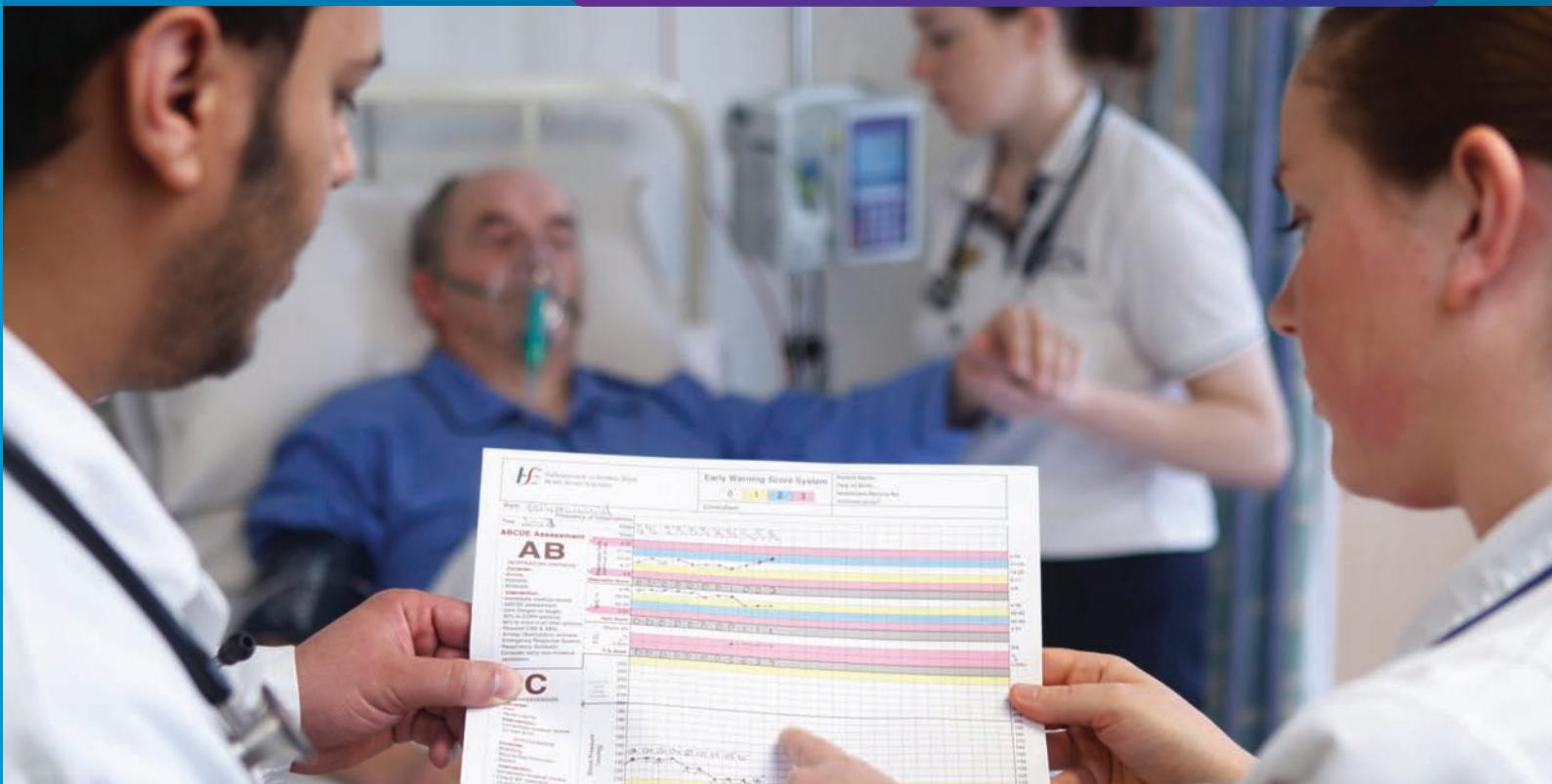




ACUTE MEDICINE

National Early Warning Score (NEWS)

The National Early Warning Score is a track and trigger scoring system used by healthcare staff when recording patient's vital signs. Each vital sign is allocated a score based on measured physiological parameters, these scores are added together to give a total early warning score. The NEWS provides a basis for a national standardised approach to the first assessment of the patient and thereafter the continuous tracking of their clinical condition throughout their episode of care. The triggers for escalating care are easy to follow and are dictated by a locally agreed escalation protocol. The training of healthcare staff is standardised throughout the system.



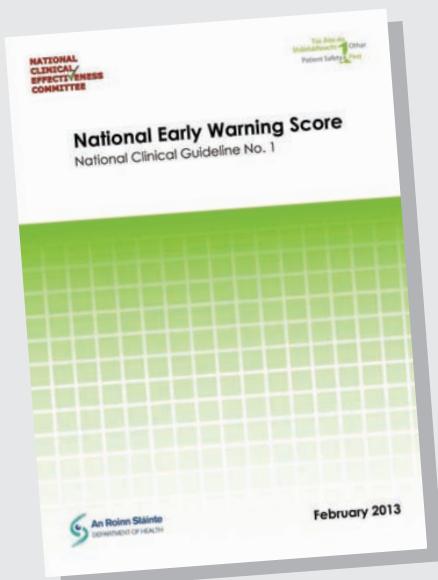
THERAPY PROFESSIONS COMMITTEE
• Chiropractors & Paediatricians
• Dietitians/Clinical Nutritionists
• Occupational Therapists
• Orthoptists
• Physiotherapists
• Speech & Language Therapists



The National Early Warning Score Project is a work stream of the National Acute Medicine Programme

www.hse.ie/go/nationalearlywarningscore/

National Early Warning Score Overview



The Minister for Health, Dr. James Reilly launched the 1st National Clinical Guideline, the National Early Warning Score (NEWS) for Ireland, in February, 2013.

The National Clinical Effectiveness Committee (NCEC) recommended the guideline for endorsement by the Minister. The NCEC is a national committee, whose aim is to provide a framework for endorsement of national clinical guidelines and audit to optimise patient care within the Irish Health System, both public and private.

This Guideline clearly sets out how to recognise and respond to patients whose condition is deteriorating. It was designed for adults in acute hospitals and is based on international evidence.

The Guideline is a multi-disciplinary initiative, developed through the collaborative work of frontline clinical staff, patient groups and key patient safety experts.

National Clinical Guidelines will help to further improve the quality, safety and cost effectiveness of healthcare in Ireland.

Ireland is the first known country to agree a National Early Warning Score. It was agreed in April 2011 and updated in January 2012 to reflect the most up-to-date international evidence.

Background

The Royal College of Physicians in Ireland in conjunction with the Health Service Executive were instrumental in setting up a number of clinical programmes under the Clinical Strategy and Programmes Directorate, Health Service Executive (SHE), in 2010. The National Acute Medicine Programme was one such programme.

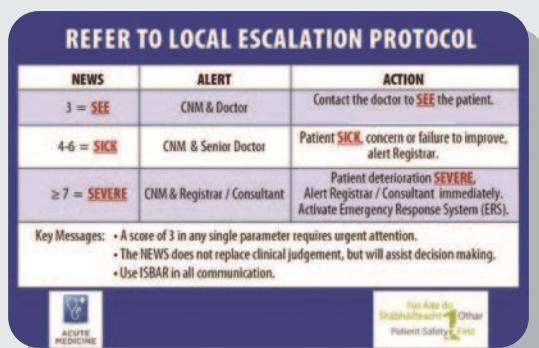
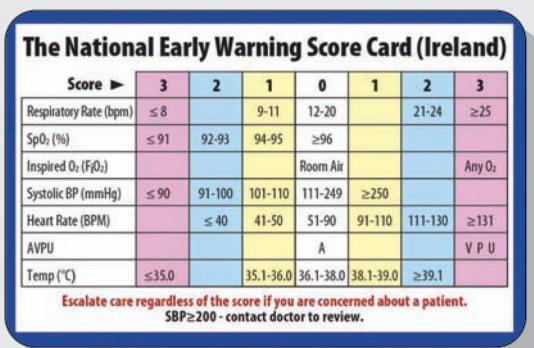
As patient safety and quality are central to the delivery of health care, the National Acute Medicine Programme identified the agreement of a NEWS and associated education programme as a priority, and one of its main work streams. A multi-disciplinary National Governance/Clinical Guideline Development Group and a National Advisory Group were set up. In order to promote engagement from clinical

areas, representation was sought from Directors of Nursing and Clinical Directors in each acute hospital in Ireland, when setting up the National Advisory Group.

The overall aim of the NEWS Project was to develop one integrated solution for a NEWS, an associated education programme and a National Clinical Guideline. The NEWS applies to adult patients in acute hospitals and does not apply to children or patients in obstetric care, as early detection of clinical deterioration in these two groups of patients are identified by different physiological parameters and signs to those of adult patients in acute health care settings.

The National Early Warning Score Card (Ireland)

The NEWS card contains the NEWS scoring matrix. On the back of the card trigger scores for action are indicated. The easy to remember catchphrase, 3 = see, 6 = sick, 7 = severe can be used. Screening for Sepsis is recommended at a score of 3. The NEWS does not replace clinical judgement but supports the decision making process. It must be noted that in a small percentage of cases the score does not act as a trigger for deterioration in a patient's condition.



The COMPASS Education Programme



compass

The nationally agreed education programme in support of the NEWS is called COMPASS. This is an interdisciplinary education programme designed to enhance health care professionals' understanding of clinically deteriorating patients, and the significance of altered clinical observations. It also seeks to improve communication between health care professionals.

The COMPASS programme has three mandatory phases including:

- working through an interactive CD and Training Manual which is a pre-learning requirement
- completing a paper quiz
- attending a face-to-face session

The programme includes:

- The National Early Warning Score (NEWS)
- The National Patient Observation Chart for clinical practice areas (can be modified locally)
- An escalation protocol for deteriorating patients (can be modified locally)
- The ISBAR Communication Tool

Each programme is evaluated on completion.

The National Patient Observation Chart

The IS BAR Communication Tool

The use of a structured communication tool improves the quality and structure of information exchanged between healthcare professionals and reduces patient harm.

ISBAR Communication Tool	
I Identify	Identify: You, Doctor, Patient
S Situation	Situation: Why are you calling?
B Background	Background: What is relevant background?
A Assessment	Assessment: What do you think is the problem?
R Recommendation	Recommendation: What do you want them to do?

Acknowledgements

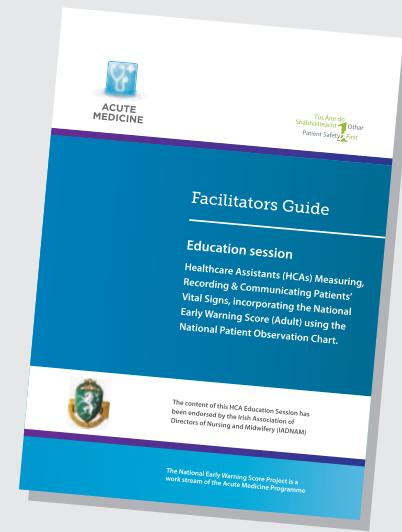
The COMPASS programme was modified to suit the Irish health care system with the kind permission of the Health Directorate, ACT Government, Australia. It was developed in conjunction with the National Early Warning Score which incorporates the Vital PAC™ Early Warning Score (ViEWS) vital sign parameters, with the kind permission of Professor Gary Smith (UK). The National Patient Observation Chart for clinical practice areas was designed using an amended version of the CYMRU chart with the kind permission of Professor Chris Subbe (Wales) on behalf of the developers. Great credit is due to staff in the clinical area, supported by management for embracing this patient safety initiative.

Patient Information



A poster and leaflet were developed with input from patient groups, providing an explanation of the National Early Score and how it works for patients.

Healthcare Assistant Education



A 'Healthcare Assistant (HCA) Education Session' was developed as a national project to provide guidance for HCAs on the National Patient Observation Chart. The project received the endorsement of the Irish Association of Directors of Nursing and Midwifery (IADNAM).

Improvements in Patient Care

The implementation of the National Early Warning Score (NEWS) and National Patient Observation Chart (NPOC) in acute hospitals in Ireland provides standardisation and minimisation of variables in practice which international evidence suggests are among the most important elements of patient safety. Even though the NEWS and NPOC are relatively new innovations in Ireland, healthcare professionals are already providing examples of improved outcomes for patients in relation to the early detection of deterioration in their condition.

Awards

Taoiseach's Public Service Excellence Award (2012)

Healthcare Innovation Award (Biomnis) – Patient Safety Category (2012)

Irish Medical Times Healthcare Award – Excellence in Healthcare Management (2012)

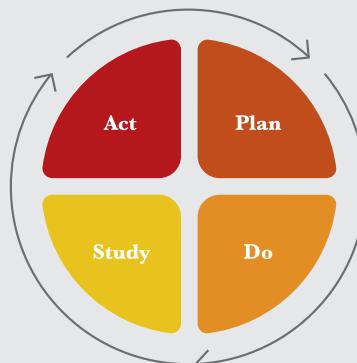
Society of Acute Medicine (UK) commendation for the National Patient Observation Chart Development Poster (2012)

The EU Commission selected the National Early Warning Score Project along with the National Acute Medicine Programme as an innovative project in 2012. It was selected from a large number of entries across the European Union. As a result it was placed on the EU website and can be accessed through the following short link: <http://bit.ly/Z9LC90>

The Future

We will:

- Continue to provide support for the implementation of the NEWS and COMPASS Programme
- Liaise with key stakeholders including patient groups and other clinical programmes on all aspects related to the NEWS
- Support ongoing audit
- Provide recommendations for improvement and standardisation of communication
- Maintain the NEWS website
- Strengthen the need for Emergency Response Systems (ERS)
- Conduct NEWS/COMPASS programme evaluation as part of a continuous quality improvement approach.



Quality Improvement Cycle