

Great Ormond Street
Hospital for Children
NHS Foundation Trust



Policy for Unsafe Chemotherapy Workload

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Distribution List	
1.	Joint Cancer Centre Operational Policy – Appendix

Great Ormond Street Hospital

Policy on Unsafe Chemotherapy Workload

Introduction

This policy outlines the process for deciding when chemotherapy workload has reached an unsafe level at Great Ormond Street Hospital.

The policy details who is able to make the decision that an unsafe level has been reached and the process to be followed if an unsafe level is reached.

The term “chemotherapy workload” refers to the administration of systemic, intravenous, intramuscular, oral, and subcutaneous or intrathecal chemotherapy in an inpatient, outpatient or daycare setting.

Process

The decision that chemotherapy workload has reached an unsafe level can be made by;

- A nurse in charge of a ward area in conjunction with a senior member of the paediatric nursing team
- The consultant on-call for the PTC
- The Head of the Chemotherapy Service
- The lead pharmacist for Children’s Cancer Services

The variables that influence whether or not it is safe to administer chemotherapy may include;

- Staffing levels – nursing
- Staffing levels – medical
- Staffing levels – pharmacy
- Availability of bed (inpatient or Safari Day Care)
- Availability of central cytotoxic reconstitution services
- Dependency of patient/s
- Major incident

It should be noted that this may not be an exhaustive list.

If a senior member of staff considers that one of these variables is such that the chemotherapy workload has reached an unsafe level, they must take the following action;

- Assess whether local action can be taken to resolve the situation and make it safe (for example, postponing patient admissions, redistributing staff), and take any action accordingly.

- If further action is required the staff member should escalate the situation to the following people, or an appropriate representative for further discussion and for the development of an appropriate and safe action plan, which may include enlisting resources from elsewhere or sending patients elsewhere for treatment.
 - Consultant on call
 - Nurse in charge of ward
 - Modern Matron
 - Service Manager
 - Lead Pharmacist

- It is the responsibility of the member of staff who initiated the action to complete an incident form relating to the period of unsafe chemotherapy workload which should be investigated according to the Trust's governance policy.

- Any patient cancellations or deferrals should be recorded in the patient's medical record.

This policy is subject to review in line with National Peer Review Guidance.

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