

ReSPECT (Recommended Summary Plan for Emergency Care and Treatment); Progress and recommendations for UK-wide implementation

ReSPECT supports healthcare professionals, individuals, and those close to them to have person-centred conversations about what care and treatment would be recommended for a person in the event of a future emergency where they are unable to make or express choices. It helps reach a shared understanding of what matters most to the person, their goals of care, and which treatments or interventions should be recommended in an emergency. The agreed outcomes of this conversation are recorded on a ReSPECT plan, which is given to the person so it can be available to help guide the decision-making of healthcare professionals who are responding in an emergency about what treatment and interventions, including CPR, are recommended and appropriate to help achieve that person's overall goals for care.

The ReSPECT process is unique in being the only Emergency Care and Treatment Plan (ECTP) developed for use with all patients, across all care settings and regions of the United Kingdom. It has already been widely adopted by a large number of health and social care communities across England and Scotland, and Resuscitation Council UK continues to advocate for ReSPECT to become a nationwide standard, promoting consistency and parity in emergency care and treatment planning across the four nations.

Background – Why is ReSPECT important?

Conversations between individuals and healthcare professionals about future health and care emergencies are essential for understanding what would matter most to the person in those situations, and what care and treatment might help achieve appropriate overall goals of care if they are unable to make or express choices. Access to a robust and recognisable communication process—one that supports a shared understanding being reached during the initial conversation and enables agreed outcomes to be shared during a health crisis—is key to ensuring these conversations can help guide clinical decision-making and care provision when it matters most. That is why Resuscitation Council UK (RCUK) is leading the UK-wide adoption of the Recommended Summary Plan for Emergency Care and Treatment (ReSPECT) process.

The plan is intended to be used across all geographical boundaries and be recognised in every health and care setting. It is a clinical document intended to help clinicians make individualised clinical decisions in an emergency. The ReSPECT plan belongs to the person and should be readily available in an emergency.

Celebrating success

Since its launch in 2016, the ReSPECT process has been adopted as the primary emergency care and treatment planning approach across much of England and Scotland.

RCUK welcomes this widespread adoption as recognition of ReSPECT's role in supporting good practice in emergency care and treatment planning. RCUK continues to provide support to organisations in the process of adopting ReSPECT and to those already using it.

In recent years, ReSPECT's contribution to good practice has been highlighted in reports by the [Care Quality Commission \(CQC\)](#) and the [Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman \(PHSO\)](#).

Insights from these reports, along with other published research, have helped ReSPECT to evolve and

continues to support best practice for individuals and the clinicians who care for them in planning for emergency situations.

ReSPECT adoption across the UK

—✓ England - Key recommendations:

The ReSPECT process has been adopted as the primary emergency care and treatment planning process across the majority of England and large parts of Scotland.

Given its widespread use and acknowledgement as a means of supporting good practice in emergency care and treatment planning, RCUK recommends that the ReSPECT process becomes the single Emergency Care and Treatment Plan (ECTP) for all ages in England.

Since its launch, RCUK has worked with adopters using digital healthcare records to ensure ReSPECT is an example of how digitised, standardised care planning can support patient centred decision-making during emergencies.

The fragmented nature of the digitisation of care records in England, means that digital accessibility of ReSPECT plans is inconsistent for healthcare providers and patients alike. RCUK therefore recommends that the NHS in England includes ReSPECT in a patient-accessible digital health care plan, to ensure that what is documented is readily accessible to all looking after the patient, and the patient themselves.

—✓ Scotland - Key recommendations:

The ReSPECT process is embedded in 8 of the 14 Health Boards in Scotland as the Emergency Care and Treatment Plan for NHS Scotland, helping to promote person-centred conversations around future care and treatment planning.

Scotland's Chief Medical Officer has previously recognised that the ReSPECT process has helped progress care planning and plans were set to embed ReSPECT alongside other care planning tools to help ensure people receive care that aligns with what is important to them.

ReSPECT was the first clinical process to be realised on The National Digital Platform (NDP) in Scotland, allowing completed ReSPECT plans to be readily accessible by healthcare providers and individuals alike.

RCUK recommends that ReSPECT is adopted across the whole country as part of the future care planning initiative, which would allow the whole nation to benefit from the existing digital infrastructure and good practice ReSPECT already supports for many in the nation.

—✓ Wales - Key recommendations:

NHS Wales stays involved in discussions about the ReSPECT process and shares its advance & future care planning resources and experiences.

Wales does not currently use ReSPECT. An "All Wales" DNACPR policy for adults has been in place since 2015 and is revised every two years. There is a national oversight group with patient representation, Welsh ambulance representatives, and Health Inspectorate Wales members, who ensure that policy content is adhered to by health boards.

In light of [recent reports](#) highlighting the challenges associated with DNACPR processes, RCUK welcomes the opportunity to engage in discussions with NHS Wales to explore how insight from the ReSPECT process and the evidence which underpins its development could contribute to a revised national approach to emergency care planning in Wales.

—✓ Northern Ireland – Key recommendations:

Adoption of ReSPECT had previously identified as a priority across Northern Ireland as part of the national Advance Care Planning policy.

RCUK continues to recommend adoption of ReSPECT as a nationally standardised, evidence based and patient centred process to aid emergency care and treatment planning and welcomes ongoing discussions with political and healthcare leaders of how it can support this

Notes

1. "Review of Do Not Attempt Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation decisions during the COVID-19 pandemic", Interim November 2020 Report. Care Quality Commission.
2. "Access to critical patient information at the bedside", HSIB, February 2023
3. Chief Medical Officer - Annual Report: 2022. Realistic Medicine: A Fair and Sustainable Future
4. Taubert M, Bounds L: 'Advance & Future Care Planning: Strategic Approaches in Wales' BMJ Supportive & Palliative, 01 February 2022. doi:10.1136/bmjspcare-2021-003498