

# GP briefing note on improving clinical communication using SBAR

## Introduction

The purpose of this briefing is to ensure that all GPs understand the required standards of communication when discussing patients, providing advice to clinical teams or handing-over patients, either to another care setting or another clinician.

Hand-over communication relates to the process of passing patient-specific information from one caregiver to another, from one team of caregivers to the next, or from caregivers to the patient and family for the purpose of ensuring patient care continuity and safety.

## What is SBAR?

SBAR is an easy-to-remember mechanism used widely in medical environments which can be used to frame conversations requiring a clinician's immediate attention and action.

### SBAR stands for:

**S** – Situation: What is happening at the present time?

**B** – Background: What are the circumstances leading up to this situation?

**A** – Assessment: What is the problem?

**R** – Recommendation: What should we do to correct the problem?

## Why use SBAR?

- SBAR helps to prevent breakdowns in communication by creating a shared mental model around all patient handovers and situations requiring escalation, or critical exchange of information
- As a memory prompt, it is easy to remember and encourages prior preparation for communication
- Used during handover SBAR can reduce the time spent on handover activity and so release time for clinical care.

The tool consists of standardised prompt questions within four sections, to ensure that staff are sharing concise and focused information. Using SBAR helps to ensure effective escalation and increased patient safety.

We expect all clinicians to use SBAR during handover. As GPs we also expect you to request the clinical teams use SBAR, as standard, when request advice about a patient.

I hope you find this briefing note useful. I would welcome feedback.

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