

# Integrated NEWS2 and SBAR Clinical Escalation Framework for Nurses and ACPs

This resource equips clinicians with a combined NEWS2 (National Early Warning Score 2) assessment and SBAR (Situation, Background, Assessment, Recommendation) communication approach to improve recognition and escalation of the acutely unwell patient.

## NEWS2 Quick Reference Table

Parameter	3 Points	2 Points	1 Point	0 Points	1 Point	2 Points	3 Points
Resp Rate	≤8		9-11	12-20		21-24	≥25
O <sub>2</sub> Saturation (%) Scale 1	≤91	92-93	94-95	≥96			
O <sub>2</sub> Saturation (%) Scale 2	≤83	84-85	86-87	88-92 >93 on air	93-94 on oxygen	95-96 on oxygen	≥97 on oxygen
Air or Oxygen?		Oxygen		Air			
Systolic BP (mmHg)	≤90	91-100	101-110	111-219			≥220
Pulse (bpm)	≤40		41-50	51-90	91-110	111-130	≥131
Temperature (°C)	≤35.0		35.1-36.0	36.1-38.0	38.1-39.0	≥39.1	
Consciousness				Alert		CVPU	

### Risk Categories & Escalation

Score	Risk	Recommended Action
0–4	Low	Ward-based care; routine monitoring
Single 3 in any parameter	Medium	Inform senior nurse; increased monitoring
5–6	Medium	Urgent review by clinician; increased frequency of obs
≥7	High	Emergency response; immediate senior/critical care review

### SBAR Quick Reference

S	B	A	R
Situation – State who you are, your role, and why you are calling	Background – Relevant patient history and clinical context	Assessment – Current observations, NEWS2 score, your impression	Recommendation – What action you require

### Clinical Scenarios 1

You are a newly qualified nurse working on an orthopaedic ward.

It's Day 2 following Mr Lee's left hip replacement. While doing your routine observations, you notice his respiratory rate is elevated and his oxygen saturation is low, despite being on supplemental oxygen. His skin is flushed, and he seems mildly confused compared to earlier in the day.

Observations: RR 28, SpO<sub>2</sub> 90% on 2 L/min O<sub>2</sub>, BP 92/58, HR 124, Temp 38.9°C, GCS 15.

Step 1 – NEWS2: 13 → High Risk – Immediate medical review required.

Step 2 – SBAR Example:

S: "This is Jade, staff nurse on Orthopaedics. I'm calling about Mr Lee in Bed 12, who is acutely unwell."

B: "Day 2 post left hip arthroplasty. History of COPD and hypertension. Previously stable."

A: "NEWS2 score is 13. RR 28, SpO<sub>2</sub> 90% on 2 L O<sub>2</sub>, BP 92/58, HR 124, Temp 38.9°C. Mildly confused."

R: "I need you to review immediately for suspected sepsis and consider escalation to critical care."

## **Clinical Scenario 2**

You are an ACP in the cardiology ward. Mrs Khan, a 65-year-old patient admitted yesterday with NSTEMI, is awaiting angiography. While reviewing her pre-procedure observations, you notice she is pale, clammy, and her blood pressure has dropped significantly.

Observations: RR 24, SpO<sub>2</sub> 94% on room air, BP 88/54, HR 132, Temp 37.4°C, GCS 15.

Step 1 – NEWS2: 9 → High Risk – Urgent review required.

Step 2 – SBAR Example:

S: "This is Sam, ACP on Cardiology. I'm calling about Mrs Khan in Bed 4, who is showing signs of acute deterioration."

B: "Admitted yesterday with NSTEMI. History of hypertension and CKD stage 3."

A: "NEWS2 score 9. RR 24, BP 88/54, HR 132, SpO<sub>2</sub> 94% RA. Pale and clammy."

R: "Urgent registrar review to consider immediate cath lab transfer."

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### Practice Activity 1 – Student Nurse

You are a second-year student nurse on placement in a respiratory ward.

Mr Roberts, 58, was admitted with community-acquired pneumonia. He is on IV antibiotics. During your afternoon observations, you notice he is breathing faster than earlier and looks flushed.

Observations: RR 21, SpO<sub>2</sub> 92% on 1 L/min O<sub>2</sub>, BP 104/68, HR 118, Temp 39.1°C, GCS 15.

#### Your Tasks:

- Calculate NEWS2 score.
- Determine the escalation category.
- Prepare an SBAR to hand over to the nurse in charge.

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### Practice Activity 2 – Advanced Nurse Practitioner

You are an ANP in the acute medical unit.

Ms Hughes, 72, with a history of congestive heart failure, was admitted overnight with worsening breathlessness. This morning, she appears drowsy, her oxygen saturations are low despite supplemental oxygen, and her respiratory rate is increased.

Observations: RR 26, SpO<sub>2</sub> 88% on 4 L/min O<sub>2</sub>, BP 96/60, HR 138, Temp 37.8°C, GCS 14.

#### Your Tasks:

- Calculate NEWS2 score.
- Determine if critical care review is indicated.
- Prepare an SBAR for the on-call cardiology registrar.

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