



ARTP

Association for
Respiratory Technology
& Physiology

Standard Operating Procedure:	Professional Standards
Target Audience:	All registered and unregistered Respiratory Physiologists/Clinical Scientists working within a Respiratory/Sleep Laboratory
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IQIPS Domain(s):	<p>Patient and client experience domain (PE1, PE3 and PE4)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure that service delivery is patient focussed and respectful of the individual patient and their specific requirements achieved with due regard for differences in culture, religion, age and other factors.• Use of best practice in line with current guidelines.• Ensure consent is obtained.• Service must manage complaints and feedback. <p>Facilities, Resources and Workforce domain (FR6)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Effective use of resources.• Services are safe. This is achieved through competent staff.• Engage in CPD, assessment of competence, mandatory training and a local induction. <p>The service must recruit and train staff to assure competence.</p>

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Standard Operating Procedure

1. Introduction

Committing to a high professional standard is fundamental to working within the NHS. Upholding the professional standards outlined in this document should be seen as a way of reinforcing professionalism at work.

This Standard Operating Protocol (SOP) was written by the ARTP Standards Committee with oversight by the ARTP Executive Board. It has been designed so that it can be used locally as an SOP to reinforce the professional standards of behaviour required within individual services and the staff employed to provide them, as well as support the evidence required for external accreditation such as IQIPS and the CQC.

The SOP sets out the professional standards that both registered (and unregistered) Respiratory Physiologists and Clinical Scientists must maintain, whether when providing patient care or bringing their professional knowledge to other roles such as leadership, education or research. They are the required standards recommended by the ARTP and the professional standards that our patients rightly deserve and should come to expect.

The professional standards in this document complement information and guidance other organisations and registration bodies provide.

It is very important to stress that registered Respiratory Physiologists and Clinical Scientists must also adhere to the professional codes as set out by the Registration Council for Clinical Physiologists (RCCP) and the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC).

The Association of Respiratory Technologists and Physiologists (ARTP) also has a professional standards document for its members that can be used in conjunction with this SOP.

- The ARTP code of conduct (1999).

Which can be found here:

<https://www.artp.org.uk/Resources/2befc3d2-76d6-4889-8bf1-29fc7f5ee964>

2. Scope and aims

This document describes how to maintain a high professional standard when working within a Respiratory and/or Sleep Physiology Department. It is aimed at all staff working within the physiology service, including locums and students on work placement. The document can be used either as a standalone guide and/or in conjunction with local induction procedures to highlight the level of professionalism required of team members with varying levels of experience (students, trainees, etc.).

Staff maintaining the standards set out within this document will, in turn, act as a role model for all team members.

3. Professional Standards: Codes of Behaviour and Core Values.

This SOP sets standards of conduct and behavior, providing clear, consistent, and positive messages to patients, service users, and colleagues about what can be expected of those providing Respiratory and/or Sleep physiology services. Respiratory/Sleep Physiologists and Clinical Scientists will have differing levels of experience, knowledge, and skills, but all will have clear proficiency standards. Staff can work under supervision or at different levels of autonomy and responsibility. Therefore, All staff should use professional judgment and be individually accountable for their work. Respiratory Physiologists and Clinical Scientists uphold these professional standards within their own limits of competency. The commitment to work within one's limits of competency is a key underpinning principle of professional standards. Attempting to work outside of known limits of competence can significantly impact patient safety and, therefore, should be strictly discouraged.

The professional standards outlined below should be used by everyone who cares about excellent high-quality Respiratory and Sleep physiology service provision. Patients can use the standards to provide feedback on their care; staff can use them to promote safe and effective working. Employers should support their staff in upholding these standards to provide the quality and safety expected by service users and external organisations such as the CQC and IQIPS. Educators and training officers can use these professional standards to help students and trainees understand what it means to be a Respiratory/Sleep Physiologist or Clinical Scientist and how keeping to these standards helps achieve and maintain their professional registration and, importantly, the service's reputation.

The standards below are a series of statements that signify excellent practice by Respiratory and Sleep Physiologists/Clinical Scientists. It puts the interests of patients and service users first, is safe and effective, and promotes trust and standards of care through professionalism.

The way we act and behave has a direct influence on those around us, including our peers and, more importantly, the patients we care for. The codes of behaviour and values described below should be ingrained in all Respiratory and Sleep Physiology staff.

3.1. Promote Professionalism at all times

Uphold the reputation of the profession, NHS trust, and department/service at all times. Always display a personal commitment to these professional standards. Act as a model of integrity and leadership for others to aspire to, which in turn leads to trust and confidence from patients, the public, and other healthcare professionals.

- Ensure your professional conduct justifies the public trust and confidence in you, your service, and the profession.
- Be honest and trustworthy.
- Be calm, friendly, and approachable.
- Act with integrity at all times, and treat people fairly without discrimination, bullying, or harassment.
- Have an awareness of how your behaviour can affect and influence the behaviour of others.
- Do not take advantage of a person's vulnerability or cause them upset or distress.
- Have clear professional boundaries with patients, the general public, carers, and your work colleagues,
- Do not express your personal beliefs (including political, religious, or moral beliefs) in an inappropriate way.
- Never use inappropriate language, tell inappropriate jokes, or use racist, sexist, or discriminatory comments/language.
- Always disclose any known conflicts of interest and not be directly involved in caring for friends or relatives wherever possible.
- Refuse all but the most trivial gifts, favours, or hospitality, as accepting them could be interpreted as an attempt to gain preferential treatment. Never accept any personal monetary gifts or loans from anyone in your care.
- Ensure any publications, research papers, and audits you produce are accurate, responsible, ethical, and do not mislead.
- Never use your professional status to promote causes that are not health—or work-related. If you are involved with promotional activities, ensure they are accurate and do not mislead.
- Understand the need to work accurately and precisely (quality assurance programs in place).
- Present yourself in a professional manner that is in line with trust/local uniform policy.
- Ensure name and/or ID badges are worn at all times and visible to the patient.

- Maintain a high standard of personal hygiene.
- Manage your own health and well-being, make changes to your practice, or cease practising if your mental or physical health could possibly impact your judgement or performance or put patients or work colleagues at risk.
- Be reliable and punctual; attend for work adhering to staff rotas.
- Always be honest about your qualifications, experiences, and skills.
- Use the resources available effectively, efficiently, and timely, having proper regard for the best interests of the public and patients.
- Comply with your trusts and NHS professional policies, standards, protocols, and guidelines.

3.2. Make the Patient the Centre of Everything you do

Put the interests of patients using or needing your services first. Make their safety and care your main priority, ensure dignity and that their needs are considered, recognised, assessed and responded to. Treat patients respectfully, uphold their human rights and challenge all discriminatory attitudes or behaviours.

- Treat people with kindness and compassion.
- Deliver the fundamentals of care effectively.
- Ensure that any treatment, care, or general assistance for which you are responsible is delivered without unnecessary delay.
- Provide guidance and explain the nature, purpose, and techniques to patients and carers to maintain a patient-centred relationship.
- Be empathetic, see the world as the patient does, and share and understand the patient's feelings, needs, and concerns.
- Recognise patient anxiety and distress and respond compassionately with empathy.
- Be patient, and respect different ethnic, religious, and cultural backgrounds.
- Respect the patient's gender; this may differ from sex at birth.
- Show respect and compassion regardless of age, circumstance, or other factors.
- Engage with and talk to patients. Aim to anticipate the patient's needs.
- Children and those with reduced mental capacity have clinical needs and priorities that may differ from those of adults; these needs must be adequately met.
- Respect dignity: make the patient feel valued.

3.3. Communicate Effectively

Communicate effectively, keeping clear and accurate records and sharing skills, knowledge, and experience where appropriate. Reflect and act on any feedback received to improve services.

- Be considerate and caring; communicate in a caring, polite, and appropriate manner.
- Take reasonable steps to meet patients' language and communication needs, assisting wherever possible to those who need help communicating (such as an interpreter).
- Use a range of verbal and nonverbal communication methods when communicating information, advice, instruction, and professional opinion to patients, carers, work colleagues, and others.
- Be aware of the consequences of nonverbal communication and how age, culture, gender, socioeconomic status, and religious beliefs can affect it.
- Share your knowledge, skills, and experiences with others, including other organisations and colleagues.
- Work co-operatively within teams and respect your colleagues' skills, expertise, and contributions.
- Contribute to team meetings/discussions.
- No decision should be made without involving those it may affect.
- Listen! This is as important as what we say and do.
- Check the patient's understanding from time to time to ensure understanding is maintained and any mistakes or misunderstandings are kept to a minimum.
- Use terminology that people in your care, colleagues, and the general public understand.
- Consider any cultural sensitivities to better understand and respond to a patient's personal and health requirements.

3.4. Practice Within Own Limits of Competency

Assess the need and deliver services or advise on treatment without delay, using the best available evidence.

- Recognise and work within your limits of competence.
- Demonstrate and understand limits of competency, consult, and take advice when appropriate.
- You should ask for help from a suitably trained and experienced staff member to carry out any action that you deem outside of your limits of competency.
- Make sure all information and advice is evidence-based, including information about using healthcare products, devices, or services.
- Understand the need to conform to standard operating protocols and procedures.
- Be registered on the appropriate voluntary or statutory professional register (if applicable).
- All trainees must be adequately supervised and demonstrate that the trainee's responsibility for any clinical activity (under direct or indirect supervision) remains with the training supervisor.

- Ensure that you have the appropriate level of indemnity insurance relevant to your scope of practice. (For example, when undertaking private patient testing or when working as an independent practitioner in sleep medicine, i.e., physiology-led sleep services.)
- Support students' and colleagues' learning; help them develop in competence and confidence.

3.5. Safety First

To ensure patient safety, you must work within your limits of competence, exercise your duty of candour, and raise concerns immediately whenever you identify a risk to patient or staff safety. Then, take any necessary action to deal with any concerns where appropriate.

- Accurately identify, observe, and assess signs of normal or worsening physical or mental health in the person in your care.
- Give medication in line with local protocols, within limits of practice (i.e. PGD/PSD).
- Make a timely referral to another practitioner or service when any other action, care, or treatment is required.
- Take account of your safety and the patient's safety in your care.
- Be aware of health and safety legislation, all relevant local health and safety policies, and risk and COSHH assessments in place in the workplace.
- Promote and adhere to infection prevention rules.
- Be aware of immunisation requirements, flu vaccination (its impact on patient safety), and the role of occupational health teams.
- Always offer help if an emergency arises in your service or anywhere else.
- Only act within your limits of competence during an emergency.
- Protect anyone you have managerial responsibility for from harm, bullying, discrimination, or victimisation.
- Take measures to reduce any risks as much as possible.
- Notify your manager if you are charged with or found guilty of a criminal offence.

3.6. Delegate Appropriately

Delegate only to staff with the knowledge, skills, and experience to carry it out safely and effectively. Provide oversight and support.

- Delegate appropriately. Only delegate tasks, duties, and responsibilities within their scope of competency, ensuring they fully understand the instructions.
- Make sure any delegated tasks are supervised and supported appropriately.
- Confirm that the outcome of any delegated tasks meets the required standard.

3.7. Confidentiality, Information Governance, Use of social media, and Data Sharing

When using information:

- Understand the principles of information governance.
- Respect patient confidentiality.
- Keep records secure.
- Maintain a high standard of record keeping.
- Collect, treat, and store all data relating to research findings appropriately.
- Write legibly. Adhere to the trust policy when writing within case notes and/or e-records.
- Complete records at the time or as soon as possible after an event or an episode of care to ensure accuracy.
- Do not falsify records and take appropriate action if you know someone else has not adhered to this.
- Get properly informed consent and document it before acting.
- Keep to all laws about mental capacity and ensure that the rights and best interests of those lacking capacity are still at the centre of the decision-making process.
- Do not give someone else access to your computer/network login, IT access, or password details assigned for personal and professional use.
- Attribute any records (paper or electronic) to yourself, making sure they are clearly written to ensure transparency.
- Recognise and respond appropriately to situations where sharing information is necessary to safeguard the patient and the general public (e.g., fire safety information and risks when prescribing oxygen therapy).
- Share necessary information with other healthcare professionals, working in partnership, sharing your skills, knowledge, and experience where appropriate, only when in the patient's best interest. Ensuring adherence to information governance and data sharing policies.
- Use all forms of spoken, written, and digital communication (e.g., social media) responsibly respecting the right to privacy of others at all times.
- You must ensure that you adhere to high professional standards of behaviour and communicate responsibly while utilising social media and networking sites.
- Be aware of the potential risks associated with using social media and networking sites; for example, members of the public may be able to search for and identify a work location. Adjust your privacy settings on social networking sites to restrict who can view your profile, preventing patients and members of the public from finding out personal information about you, your family, and your loved ones.

- If you choose to identify that you work for an NHS Trust, healthcare service, or department on a personal social media account, be aware that members of the public may associate your personal thoughts, actions, and behaviours with the NHS trust, profession, or service you work for and indeed the wider NHS. Stating that, for example, "all my thoughts are my own," **will not** safeguard staff against this. Any comments made on social media about colleagues, managers, or patients have the potential to be linked to the workplace.
- Only co-operate with the media when it is appropriate and in accordance with your local NHS trust policy, ensuring patient confidentiality and dignity is always maintained.
- Abide by the rules set out by professional bodies or work-related forums such as the ARTP forums.
- Any message posted on a forum will be the author's sole responsibility.
- Do not post any material that is knowingly false and/or defamatory, inaccurate, abusive, vulgar, hateful, harassing, obscene, profane, sexually-oriented, threatening, invasive of a person's privacy, or violates any law.
- As with all online discussions, humour and light-heartedness should be welcomed. However, this needs to be balanced against a professional outlook and understanding. Do not cause offence, post flippant or provocative messages, or deliberately cause offence or upset.
- Do not forward any post initially intended for the forum in question to a wider audience without the original author's approval or consent when using a work-related forum. This would also include obtaining approval or consent from anyone involved in the conversation thread.
- Respect confidentiality when using forums. Forum conversation should not include content that is libellous, pornographic, sexually or racially offensive, or otherwise illegal.
- Respect should always be shown to other forum users, and do not make any personal or derogatory remarks. Swearing or using coded expletives (i.e., using characters and numbers to replace letters) is not permitted.
- Do not make any remarks regarding manufacturers or their products on a forum.
- You must identify yourself using an email signature (name, position, and institution) so that other forum users can identify the sender of the message. When posting on professional forums, you must also disclose any known conflicts of interest (e.g., financial or affiliations).

3.8. Maintain and Develop your Knowledge and Skills

- Keep your training/CPD up to date, including Good Clinical Practice (GCP) and your trust's mandatory training.
- Maintain the knowledge and skills needed for safe and effective practice.
- Demonstrate expert knowledge and skills. Be keen to learn and develop new skills.

- The physiologist must have the expertise and clinical and technical knowledge to deliver effective care based on research and evidence.
- Be innovative. Embrace new ways of working and strive to improve and develop.
- Ensure you complete any necessary training and achieve the required level of competency before carrying out a new role, diagnostic test, or procedure.
- Respect the skills and expertise of your colleagues, referring to them when appropriate.
- Evaluate the quality of your work and your team with a peer review process or audit.
- Provide accurate, honest, and constructive feedback to colleagues and trainees.
- Gather and reflect on feedback and use it to improve your service/practice.

3.9. Report Concerns About Safety and Be Open when Things Go Wrong

Be open with patients and report concerns. Document incidents and investigate.

- Be open and honest with patients when mistakes are made or harm has been caused, and give helpful and honest responses to anyone who complains—ensure a duty of candour.
- If someone has suffered harm or an incident has occurred that has the potential to cause harm, act immediately to rectify the situation.
- Document any incidents or events formally and escalate it if appropriate.
- Raise your concerns immediately if you are being asked to practice beyond your designated role, responsibilities, experience, and training.
- Do not hinder, obstruct, intimidate, or victimise a colleague, patient, or member of the public who wants to raise a concern.
- Acknowledge and act on any concerns you raise, escalating or investigating as appropriate.
- Co-operate with any investigation into your professional conduct or competence, the conduct or competence of others, or the care, treatment, or other services provided to patients.
- Never allow someone's complaint to affect the care that is provided to them.
- Use all complaints as feedback and an opportunity for reflection and learning to improve services.
- Support patients who want to raise concerns or complain about their care and treatment.

3.10. Promote and Protect the Interests of Service Users, Carers, and Work Colleagues

Treat patients, carers, visitors, and work colleagues with respect. Challenge discrimination.

- Take all reasonable actions to protect patients and staff who are vulnerable or at risk of harm or abuse.
- Act as an advocate for the vulnerable, challenging poor practice and discriminatory attitudes and behaviour relating to their care.
- Knowledge of relevant laws regarding safeguarding, protecting, and caring for vulnerable people.
- Report any concerns, and do not be afraid to confront unprofessional behaviour or poor/unsafe practices.
- Deal with differences in professional opinion with colleagues through discussion and informed debate, respect everybody's views and opinions, behaving professionally at all times.
- Respect a patient's right to privacy.
- Recognise diversity and individual choice and avoid making assumptions.
- Respect a patient or service user's human rights.
- Understand illness, anxiety, and the behaviour of patients undergoing tests and treatments and the behaviour of friends and relatives and respond accordingly.
- Listen and respond to patients' preferences and concerns.
- Work in partnership with people to ensure care is delivered effectively.
- Recognise and respect the contribution that people can make to their health and well-being.
- Encourage and empower patients to be involved in decision-making and making informed choices.
- Respect the level to which patients want information regarding the care they receive and the decisions made about their health and well-being.
- Respect, support, and document a patient's right to accept or reject care and treatment.

4. Useful Supporting Documents

1. Our Culture of Compassionate Care (6Cs) – NHS England (2012)
2. Code of Conduct for NHS Managers – NHS England (2002)
3. NHS Continuing Healthcare Checklist – DoH (2009)
4. NHS Code of Behaviour – NHS professionals (July 2006)
5. RCCP Standards of Conduct, Performance and Ethics.
6. RCCP Standards of proficiency.
7. ARTP Code of Conduct (1999).
8. The Code: Professional Standards of Practice and Behaviour for Nurses, Midwives and Nursing Associates (2018)
9. Academy for Healthcare Science: Improving Quality Protecting Patients. Standards of Proficiency for Healthcare Science Practitioners. May 2016.

The authors would like to stress that this document is intended for guidance purposes only. It has been developed to assist with evidence collection required for external visits or departmental accreditation such as IQIPS. It can also be used by services to support local induction processes and help service leads reinforce the professional standards required in Respiratory and Sleep Physiology and healthcare within the NHS as a whole. The contents of this document/guide can be used as a tool to help develop a local SOP using your own hospital trust format. The authors would also suggest using a signing sheet to identify when and who has read the document so that this can be used as evidence of a staff member's awareness of the document's contents/SOP.

Document Approval Table

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