

Annual Report 2023/24



Contents

1. Executive Summary and Introduction
2. Fertility Scotland Network Governance
3. Stakeholder Feedback/Research
4. Fertility Scotland Network Strategy - Progress in 2023/24
5. Changes to 2023/2024 Work Programme
6. Fertility Scotland Work Priorities 2024/25
7. Finance
8. Network Programme Team



Foreword

Welcome to the 2023/24 Annual Report from the Fertility Scotland Network (FSN), the national strategic network for fertility services in NHS Scotland.

Fertility Scotland works in partnership, across traditional organisational and geographical boundaries, to realise a programme of work that supports the delivery of fertility services in NHSScotland.

The network was established in 2021, and over the past three years has made significant progress in establishing its structures and delivering work programmes to improve NHS fertility services in Scotland. The network looks forward to 2024/25 with ambitious plans.

Abha Maheshwari (Clinical Lead) & Joanne Leitch (Scientific Lead)



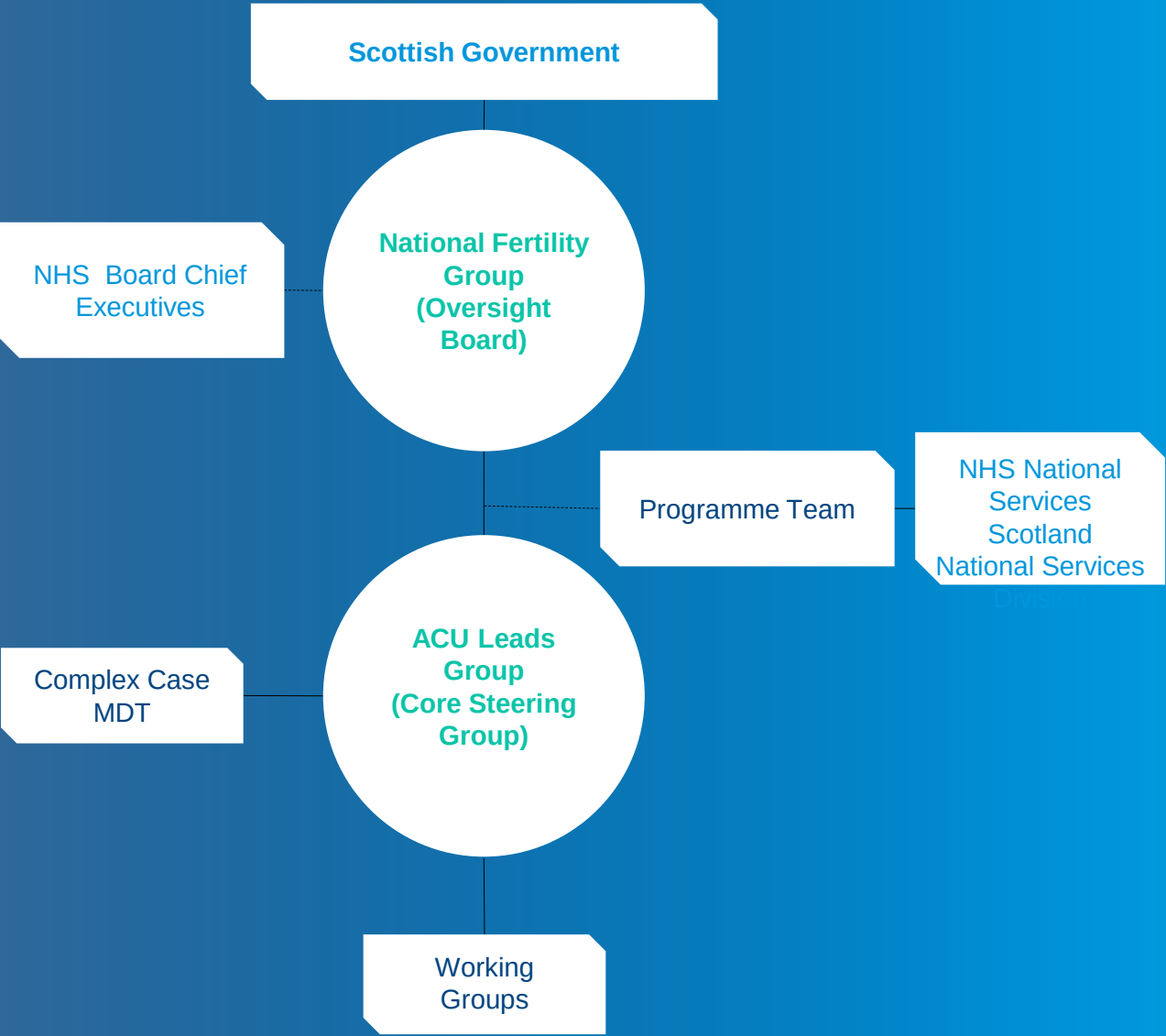
Introduction

This Annual Report aims to provide stakeholders with an update on the work of the Fertility Scotland national strategic network, focusing on key achievements during the financial year from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024.

Achieving the progress outlined in the Annual Report would not have been possible without the energy, time, advice and expertise invested by network stakeholders.

The Network Programme Team would like to take this opportunity to thank members for their commitment and contributions, with special thanks to those who have given their time to chair Network work streams, as well as to Scottish Government for their continued support.

Governance Structure



Network Oversight Board

The Fertility Scotland Oversight Board function sits with the Scottish Government’s *National Fertility Group*, chaired by Mary Morgan (Chief Executive, NHS National Services Scotland).

The aim of the Board is to provide national strategic leadership to the network and advise NHS Boards and other partners in relation to the delivery of fertility services in NHSScotland, using the most up to date evidence base and in line with strategic local, regional and national NHS and Scottish Government priorities.

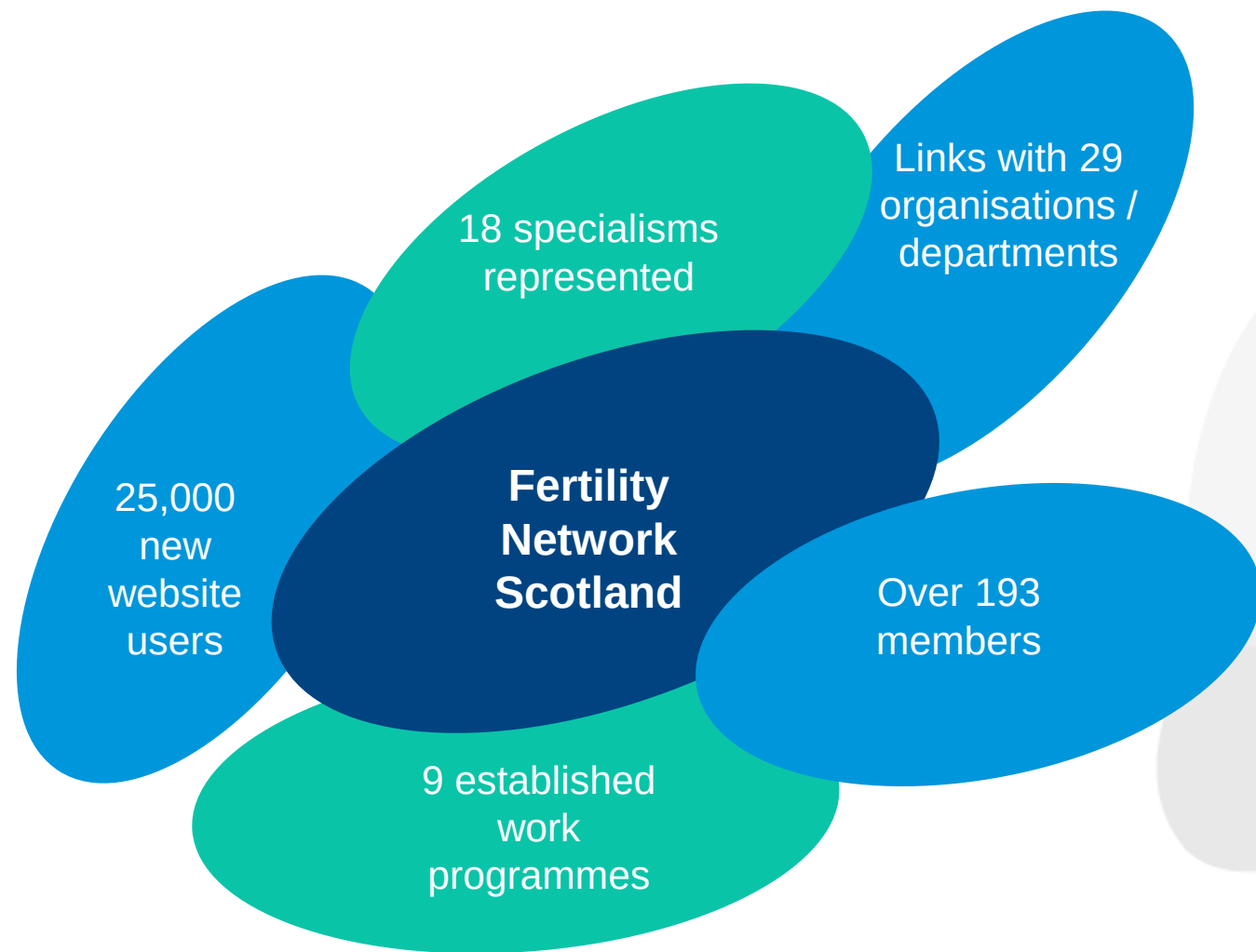
Network Core Steering Group

Reporting to the National Fertility Group, the Fertility Scotland Core Steering Group is responsible for overseeing the networks’ work programme to deliver on its agreed strategic priorities. The group works across geographical and organisational boundaries to support Boards with a ‘Once for Scotland’ approach to the planning, design and delivery of fertility services in NHSScotland. The Core Steering Group is co-located with the Scottish Government’s *Assisted Conception Unit Leads Group*. It is co-chaired by the Scottish Government Policy Lead, Sarah Corcoran, and the Network Lead Clinician, Abha Maheshwari.

Stakeholder Engagement

Throughout 2023/24 the network continued to build its engagement and dialogue with stakeholders to be able to progress its strategic priorities and deliver value and benefit to network stakeholders.

The graph to the right summarises key information about the engagement the network has had with its stakeholders.





Progress in 2023/24

RAGB	Description	Milestones achieved
Blue (B)	The network achieved the objective.	10/14 (71%)
Green (G)	The network is on track to achieve the objective by the agreed end date.	0/14 (0%)
Amber (A)	A risk the network will not achieve the objective by the agreed end date but progress has been made.	4/14 (29%)
Red (R)	The network is unlikely to achieve the objective by the agreed end date / major barriers to progress.	0/14 (0%)

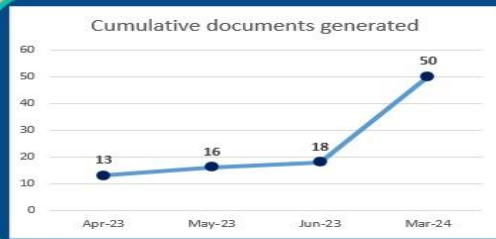
The table summarises the progress the network achieved in 2023/24 in delivering against the agreed work plan for the year.

Overall, more than 70% of work streams were either completed or are on track for completion as planned. There were some delays with the remaining work streams but progress has been made towards completion.

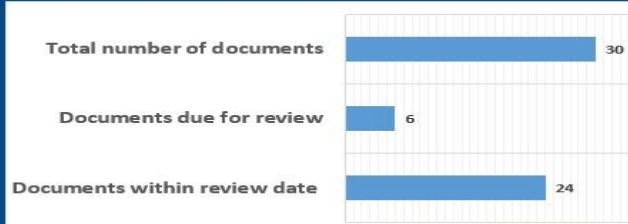
Network performance against a number of agreed Key Performance Indicators is summarised in the dashboard on the next page.

A more detailed overview of progress in each work stream is provided on the following pages.

FSN Document Output



Document Review

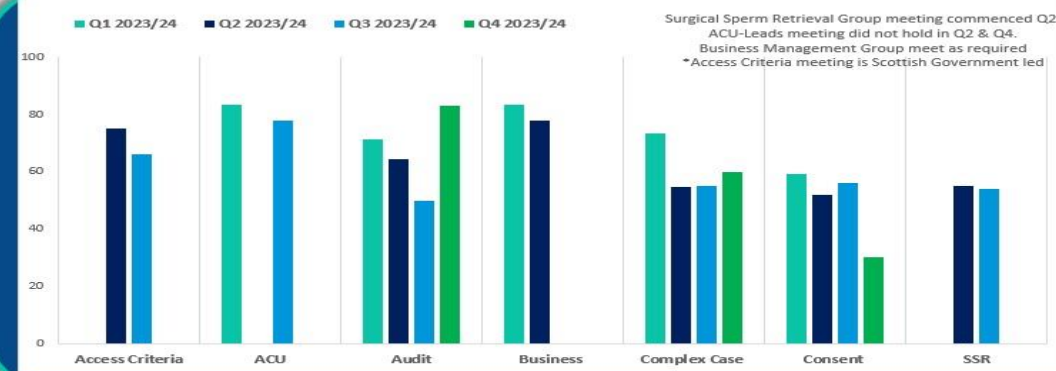


Current Milestone RAGB Status

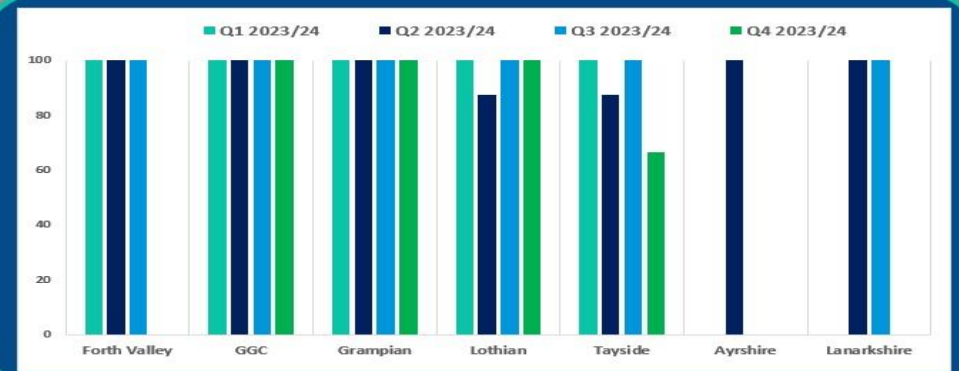
Data as at Mar 2024

RAGB	Description	Milestones achieved
Red (R)	The network is unlikely to achieve the objective by the agreed end date / major barriers to progress.	0
Amber (A)	A risk the network will not achieve the objective by the agreed end date but progress has been made.	4/14
Green (G)	The network is on track to achieve the objective by the agreed end date.	0/14
Blue (B)	The network achieved the objective.	10/14

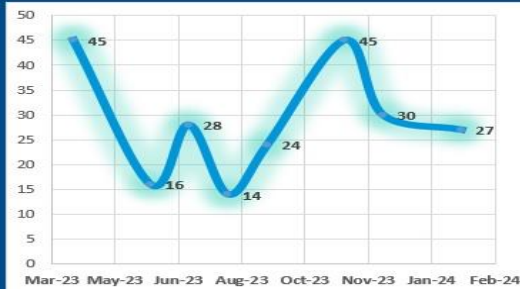
% of members attending FSN meetings



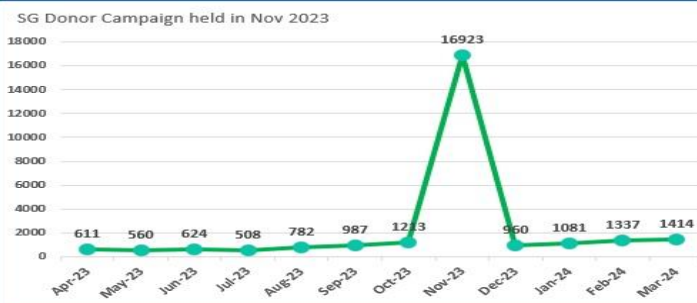
% of Health boards attendance at FSN meetings



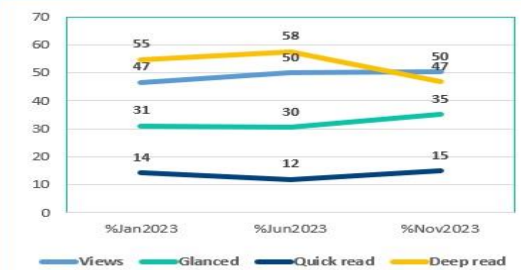
Number of stakeholders attending monthly seminars



Number of monthly fertility Scotland website users



Number of stakeholders who read the Newsletter





Progress in 2023/24: Short Life Working Groups

Deliverable



*Access Criteria

- Document clarifying access to NHS fertility treatment across Scotland.

*Storage

- Provide a protocol for management of gamete and embryo storage.
- Provide patient contracts for gamete and embryo storage.

Ovulation Induction

- Guidance document for ovulation induction
Information sheet for patients requiring ovulation induction.
- Data monitoring sheet for measuring outcomes.

Referral

- Patient pathway from primary to secondary/tertiary treatment.

*Scottish Government led, supported by FSN

Progress/Next Steps



Progress: Draft document created and awaiting final approval.

Next Steps: Undergoing final review by Central Legal Office and Scottish Government.

Progress: The protocol and patient contracts have been completed.

Next Steps: NA

Progress: The protocol and patient information has been approved and circulated.

Next Steps: Collate patient outcome data.

Progress: Pathway has been approved by the ACU Leads.

Next Steps: Undergoing final review for BMI criteria following direction from NFG.

Benefits



- i) Clarify areas of uncertainty raised over the past three years at the complex case multi-disciplinary meeting group.
- ii) Reduce disparity between clinics.

- i) Provide a uniform set of storage guidance that is compliant with the Health and Social Care Act 2022.

- i) Evidence based guidance to optimise successful outcomes.
- ii) High quality uniform information for patients.
- iii) Monitoring outcomes for future evidence-based protocol development

- i) To support standardisation of referrals across NHS Scotland.
- ii) To reduce number of visits to clinics by ensuring appropriate tests are performed or have been requested at the time of referral.

Progress in 2023/24: Short Life Working Groups

Deliverable



Pre-implantation Genetics Testing (PGT)

- With specialist screening service and Genetics Network
 - review the current pathway.
 - present an options appraisal for future delivery of the PGT service.

Surgical Sperm Retrieval (SSR)

- Guidance document for clinics treating patients requiring SSR.
- Information sheet for patients requiring SSR.
- Data monitoring sheet for measuring SSR outcomes.

Surrogacy

- Guidance document for clinics treating surrogacy patients.
- Counselling forms for intended parents and surrogates.
- Information sheet for intended parents and surrogates requiring SSR.

Progress/Next Steps



Progress: Pathway reviewed and the Options Appraisal was presented and approved by NSD SMG and NSSC.

Next Steps: Subsequent meeting highlighted shortfall in funding resource which is currently under review..

Progress: Draft documents completed.

Next Steps: Approval at ACU Leads and NFG

Progress: Counselling forms and draft surrogacy guidance have been circulated to clinics.

Next Steps: Final approval for guidance document. Patient information to be completed following approval of surrogacy guidance.

Benefits



- i) Improve the PGT service by simpler patient pathway.
- ii) Defined pathway for the genetic testing element of the pathway.

- i) Evidence based guidance to optimise chances of successful outcomes.
- ii) High quality uniform information for patients.
- iii) Monitoring outcomes for future evidence-based protocol development.

- i) Support standardisation of surrogacy across Scotland.
- ii) Provide high quality patient information.



Progress in 2023/24: Long-term work programmes

Deliverable



Progress/Next Steps



Benefits



Audit Group

- Produce audit proformas across all tertiary fertility care centres to comply with regulatory requirements as detailed in the HFEA code of practise.

Progress: Twenty one audit forms have been created.

Next Steps: Continue to prioritise areas for audits.

- i) Streamlined process for compiling audit proformas that are HFEA and ISO15189 compliant.
- ii) Improved inspection outcomes and delivery of patient care by sharing audit outcome data.
- iii) Shared learning between centres.

Data Group

- Implement a process to collate and review tertiary outcome data.
- Share data with the group three times a year for shared learning and to improve outcomes.

Progress: Three rounds of data capture have been completed with two additional meetings focussed on outcomes,

Next Steps: Review the data and make recommendations.

- i) Provide support and feedback to clinics to improve patient outcomes.

Consent

- Review consent forms on the Fertility Consent Platform.
- Produce a protocol and validation documents for clinics using the Fertility Consent Platform
- Produce a training package for clinics that use Fertility Consent.

Progress: All twenty-one consent forms have been reviewed and the validation documents circulate. Note: Consent forms need to be reviewed annually.

Next Steps: Protocol and training package to be completed.

- i) Avoid duplication of reviewing consent forms and producing a protocols and validation document.
- ii) Avoid duplication of .producing a training package.

Progress in 2023/24: Long-term work programmes

Deliverable



Complex case

- Provides a forum to discuss challenging cases and support consistent clinical decision making.
- Highlights issues that may feed into policy recommendations.
- Serves as a teaching forum.

Seminar Series (Professionals)

- Provide a monthly seminar series to professionals that are associated with NHS Fertility Services.

Progress/Next Steps



Progress: Since 1 April 2023, 33 cases have been reviewed.

Next Steps: The forum will continue in 2024/25.

Progress: A seminar series has now been established.

Next steps: The seminar series will continue. Following outcome of the Customer Insight Research, timings and the format of the seminars will be reviewed.

Benefits



- i) Review cases using a multi-disciplinary team.
- ii) Provides an opportunity for professional learning.
- iii) Formalised route for informing policy recommendations

- i) Reduce the requirements for each department to arrange their own CPD events.
- ii) Provide a forum to communicate best practice, including protocols generated by the network.



Work Priorities 2024/25

Deliverable

Short-term visitor visas

- Guidance document for management of patients on short-term visa (Indefinite Leave to Remain) .

Management of Network documents

- Produce a protocol for managing guidance documents, protocols, patient information and forms that are shared with Network Stakeholders.

Research

- Establish a foundation for data gathering for research purposes in collaboration with “Research Data Scotland”.

*Donor Central Storage

- Support Scottish Government to ensure all clinics deposit their donor sperm in the central storage facility at SNBTS.
- Complete a protocol to ensure equitable distribution of sperm from SNBTS to the clinics. .

Peer Review

- Complete a peer review process between clinics.

Service Redesign

- Develop options for changes to the delivery model of NHS fertility services.

*Scottish Government led

Benefits



- i) Support consistency of management of patients, with short-term visas taking into account duration of treatment and management of any stored gametes or embryos.

- i) Ensure network documents are circulated to stakeholders in a timely manner.
- ii) Ensure clarity of responsibility of management of the documents.

- i) Improve treatment using data for decision making processes.

- i) Give patients a wider choice of donor sperm.

- i) Shared learning between clinics
- ii) Allow priority areas to be identified within clinics for service improvement and focus for the Network.

- i) Improved patient outcomes and cost effectiveness.



Finance

The Network is funded by an allocation from Scottish Government.

The Network operated within its budget for the financial year 2023/24.

Network Programme Team

The Network Programme Team comprises of:



Abha Maheshwari
Clinical Lead



Joanne Leitch
Scientific Lead



Janis Heaney
Associate Director



Carsten Mandt
Sen Programme Manager



N Prathalingam
Programme Manager



Tolu Oyedepu
Prog Support Officer

If you would like to find out more about the Network, please contact the team on:
NSS.FertilityScotlandNetwork@nhs.scot