

Annual Report 2025/26



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Foreword

Welcome to the 2025/26 Annual Report from the Fertility Scotland National Network, the national strategic network for fertility services in NHS Scotland. It provides a summary of the work of Fertility Scotland during the year from 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026.

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 NHS Scotland. The network was established in 2021, and over the past five years has made significant progress in engaging with a wide range of stakeholders and delivering work programmes to improve NHS fertility services in Scotland.

Achieving the progress outlined in the Annual Report would not have been possible without the energy, time, advice and expertise invested by Network stakeholders. We would like to take this opportunity to thank Network 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.

Joanne Leitch (Scientific Lead)

In Memoriam: Professor Abha Maheshwari



Professor Abha Maheshwari retired from her role as Lead Clinician for the Fertility Scotland National Network at the end of March 2026. It was with great sadness that the Network learned of her death in August 2026.

The Network team would like to acknowledge and pay tribute to Professor Maheshwari's outstanding contribution during her five years as Lead Clinician. The significant achievements of the Network over this period, and the strong reputation it has established with clinicians, stakeholders and the Scottish Government, are a testament to her vision, leadership and dedication.

Professor Maheshwari brought together colleagues from across Scotland, fostering a culture of collaboration and partnership that has been instrumental in the development of a strong and effective national network focused on improving fertility services and patient care. Her leadership was particularly valuable during the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, helping to guide the Network through a period of significant change and uncertainty.

Her commitment, expertise and tireless efforts have made a lasting impact on the Network and the wider fertility community. The foundations she helped establish will continue to support and inspire the Network's work for years to come, and her contribution will be remembered with gratitude and respect.



Fertility Scotland Activity 2025/26

5 strategic
priority areas of
work

Governance and
Communications

Education

National Guidance

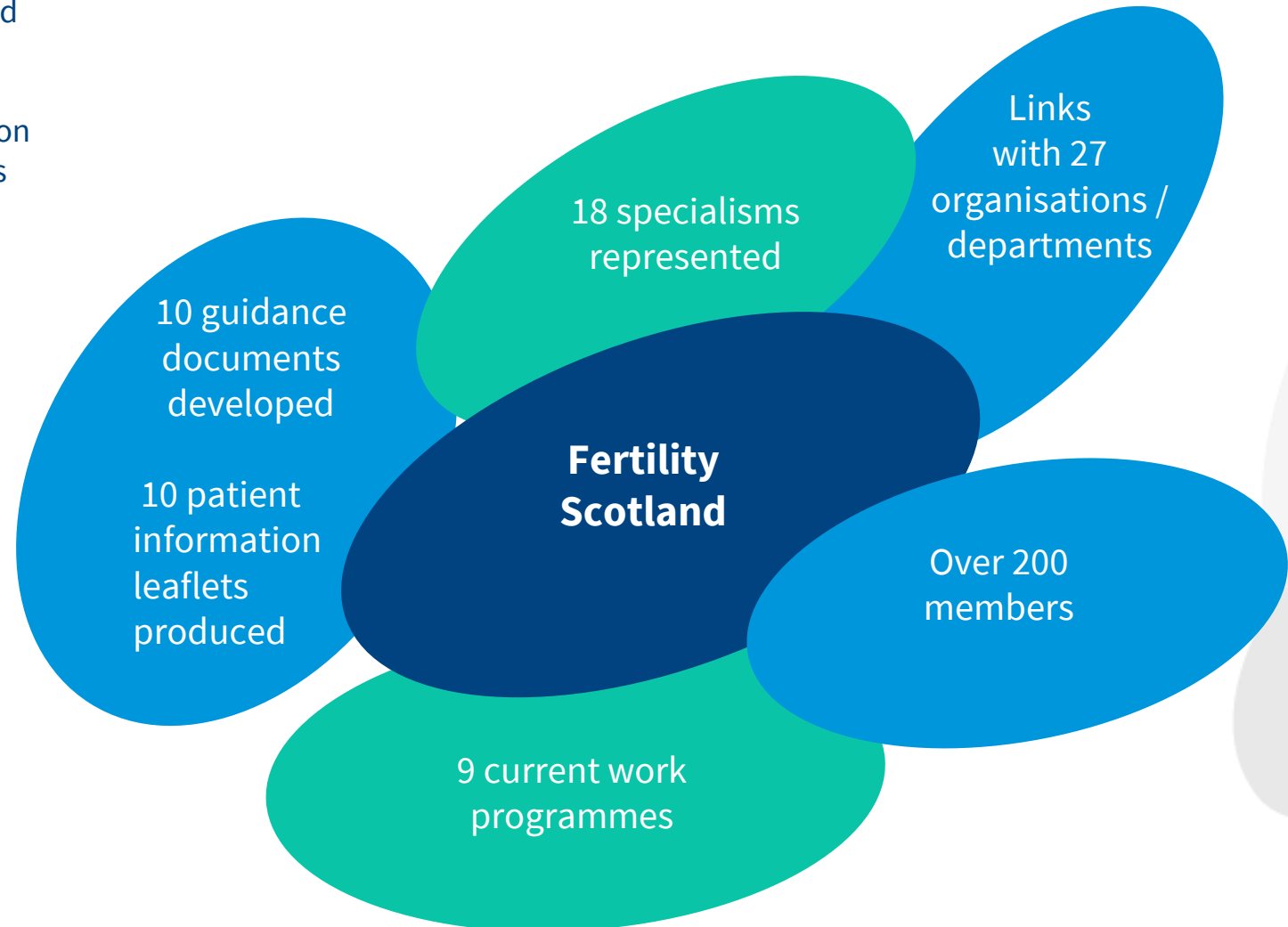
Service
Development

Data

Stakeholder Engagement

Throughout 2025/26 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 diagram to the right summarises key information about the engagement the network has had with its stakeholders.



Work Plan Progress in 2025/26

Completed

- ✓ Seminar series (Seminars implemented)
- ✓ Data Group (three rounds of data gathering)
- ✓ Document Control (guidance published)
- ✓ Audit (audit proformas published)
- ✓ Consent (all consent forms on Fertility Consent reviewed)

5 of 9

On track for completion on time

- ✓ Overseas patients (Guidance under review)
- ✓ Fertility Preservation Storage (Guidance under review)

2 of 9

Delayed but still expected to be completed

- ✓ Surrogacy (Guidance under review)
- ✓ Access Criteria (Guidance under review)

2 of 9

Unlikely to be completed

0 of 9

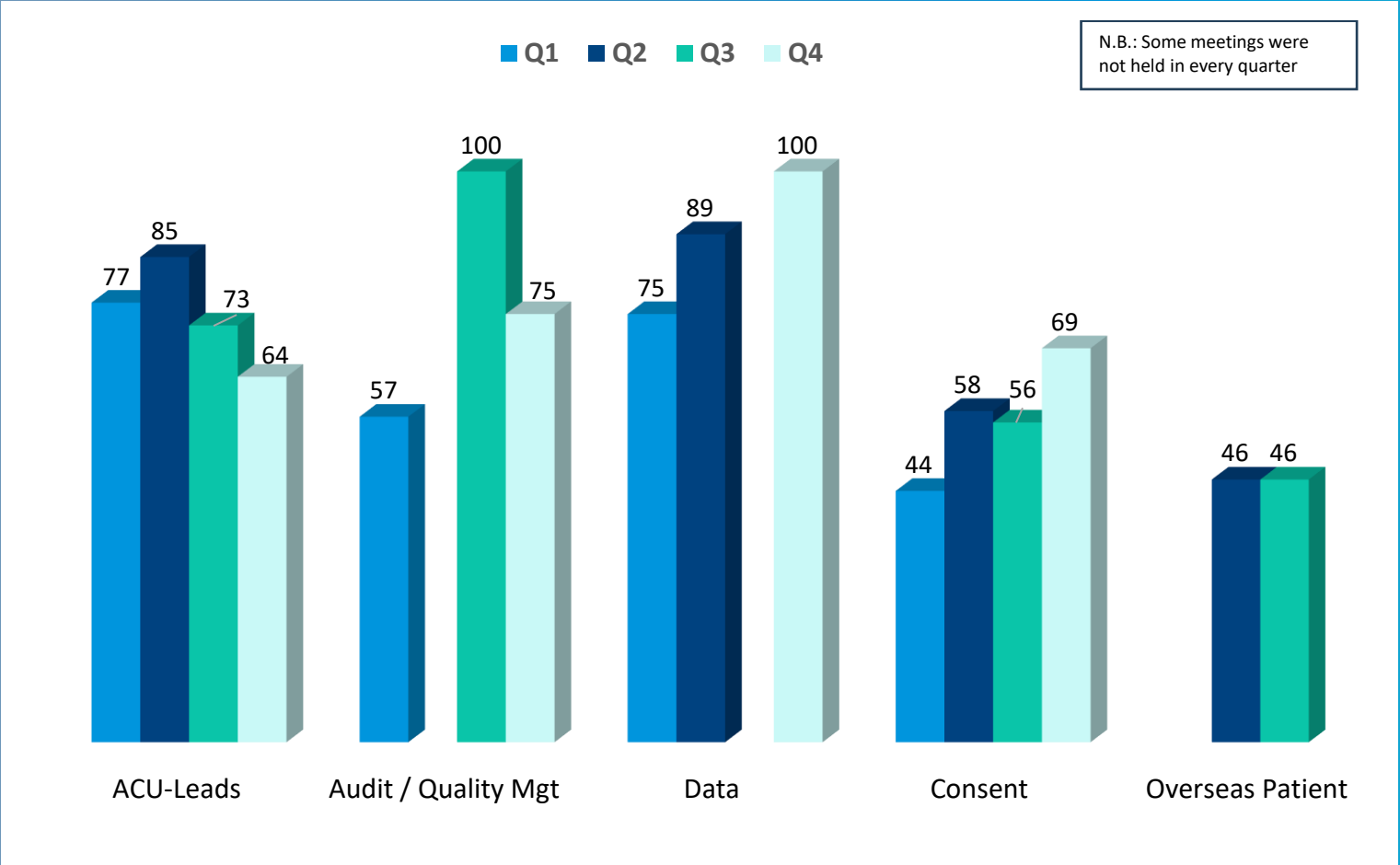
The majority of the Network's key work streams were either completed in 2025/26 or are on track for future completion as planned.

Network performance against a number of agreed Key Performance Indicators is summarised on the next two pages.

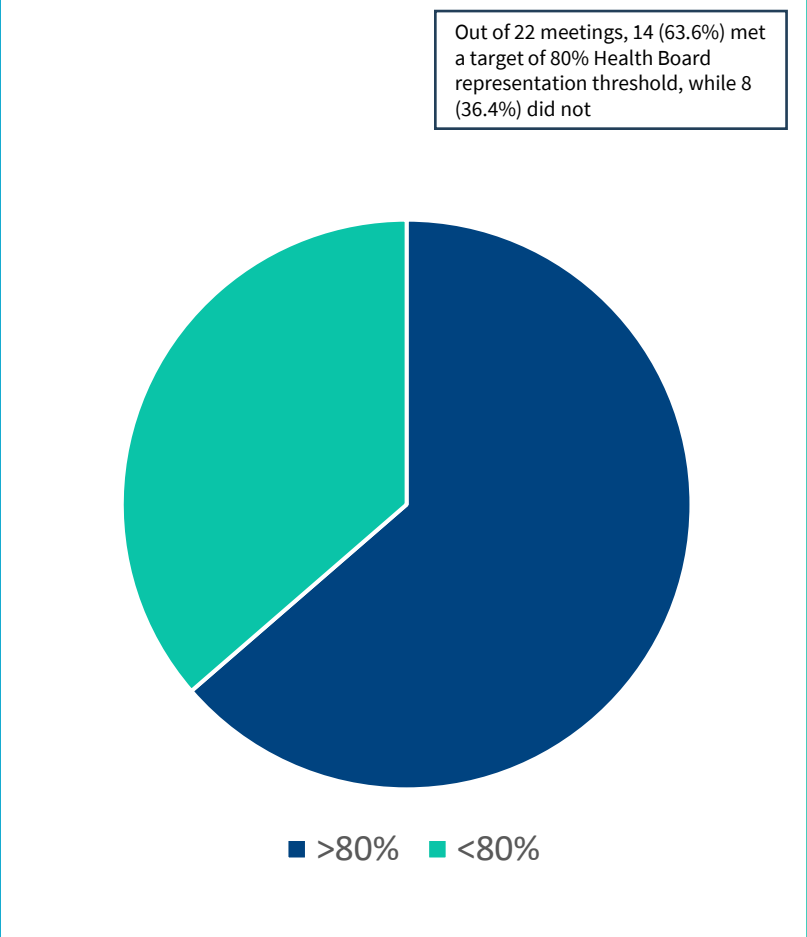
A more detailed overview of progress in each work stream is provided on the following pages.

Key Performance Indicators

KPI-1: Members meeting attendance (%)

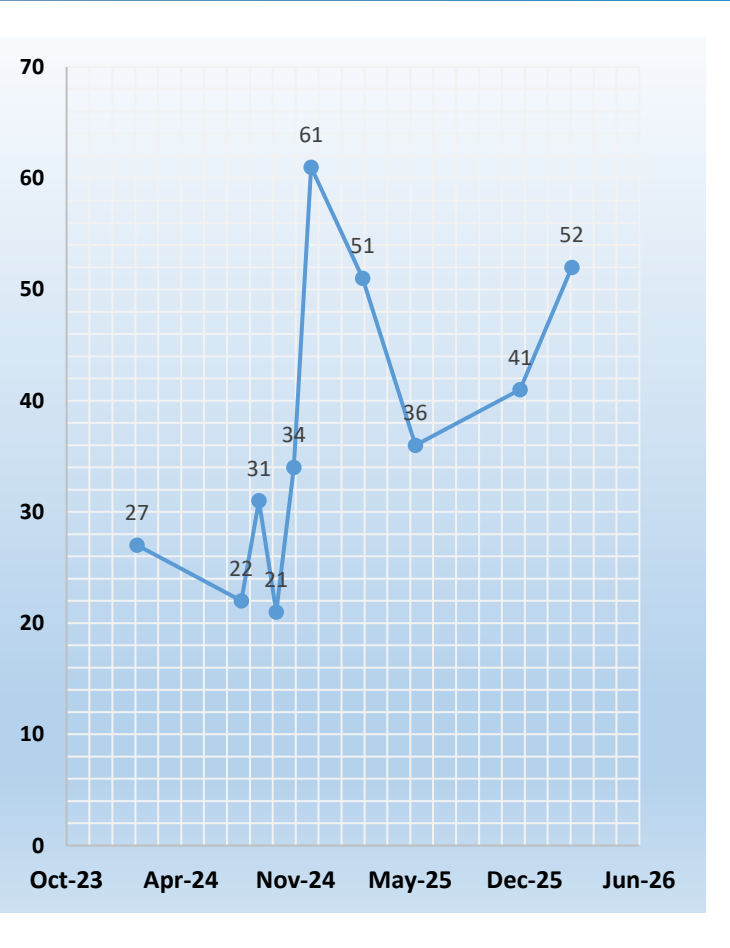


KPI-2: Health Board representation

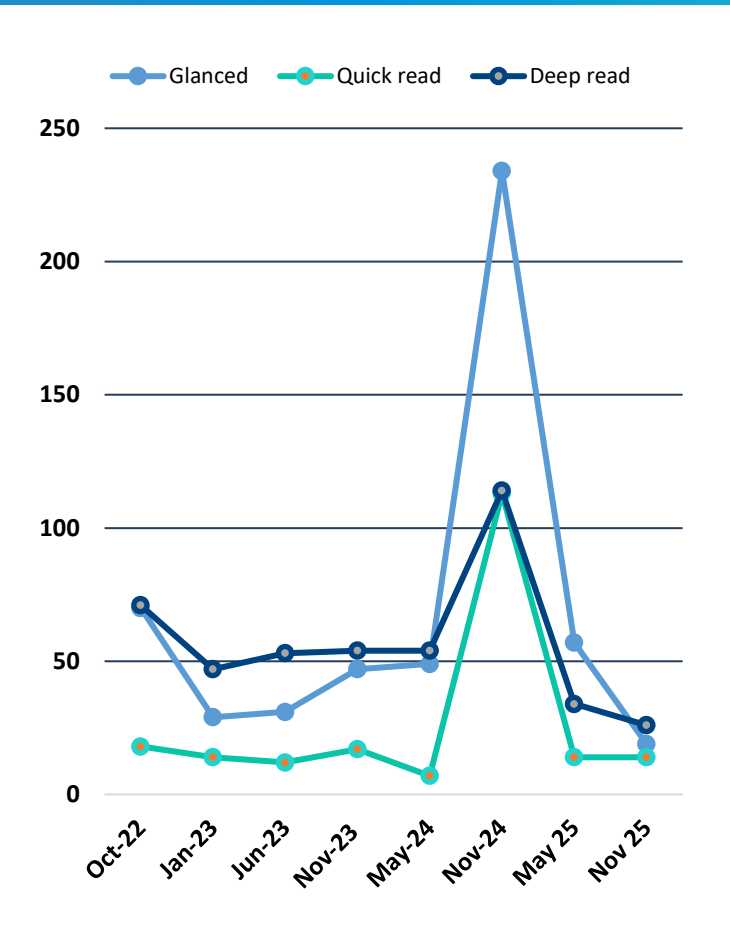


Key Performance Indicators

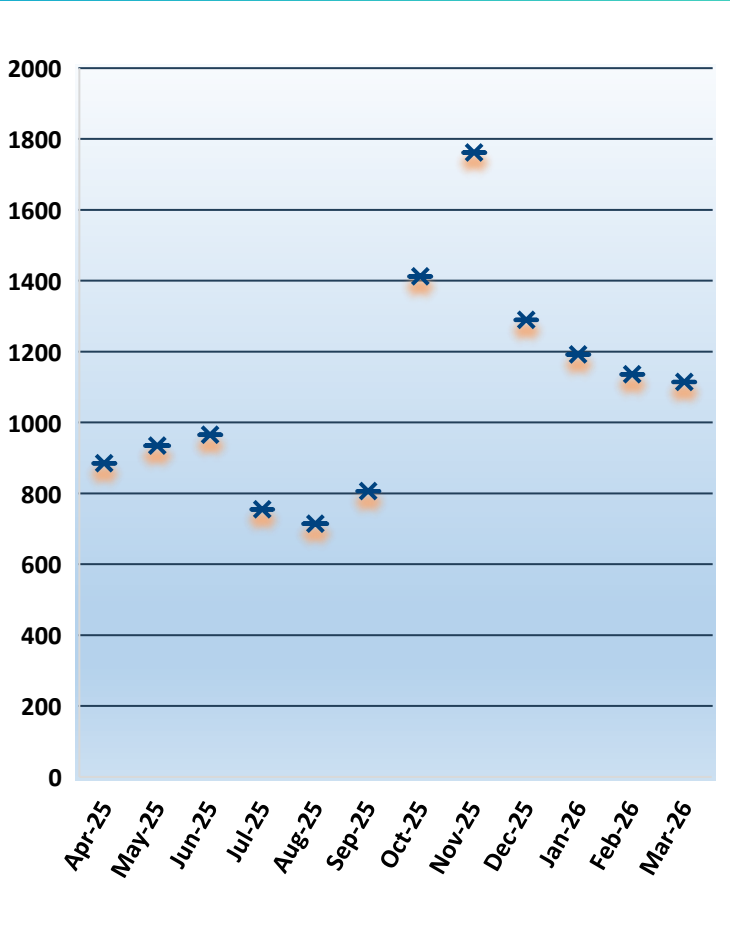
KPI-3: FSN Seminar Attendance



KPI-4: FSN Newsletter Readership



KPI-5: FSN Website Users



Progress in 2025/26: Governance

Key Messages

1. Document control is being actively managed.
2. Consent workgroup is now operating as business-as-usual.
3. A new Quality Management Group was established.

Deliverable

Document Control

- Implement a process to record and review national documents.
- Review documents that are still active and delete obsolete documents.

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/Next Steps



Progress: Protocol for management of documents completed.

Next Steps: Incorporate NSD processes into the document management protocol.

Progress: All 21 consent forms have been reviewed, validation documents circulated. Training videos have been produced. Second round of data review is ongoing.

Next Steps: Continue reviews of documents and implement a more stakeholder-friendly way of managing document versions.

Benefits



- i. Standardises process for document control.
- ii. Ensure documents reviewed annually in line with regulation.
- iii. Facilitate use of the documents.

- i. Avoid duplication of reviewing consent forms and producing a protocol and validation proforma for all clinics.
- ii. Avoid duplication of producing a training package.

Progress in 2025/26: Governance (Contd.)

Deliverable	Progress/Next Steps 	Benefits 
Quality Management Group Co-ordinate the management of documents, including audit documents, shared learning between clinics.	Progress: Terms of Reference approved by the Core Steering Group and Oversight Board. Two meetings have taken place. Next Steps: Incorporate ISO15189 into the remit of the group.	i. Foundation for sharing documents and information as part of a “One Scotland” approach. ii. Reduced duplication. iii. Share learning.



Progress in 2025/26: Education

Key Messages

1. Three national seminars were delivered in 2025/26. The seminar series is planned to continue in 2026/27 on a quarterly basis following a review of stakeholder needs.

Deliverable	Progress/Next Steps 	Benefits 
Seminar Series (Professionals) • Provide a quarterly seminar series to professionals that are associated with NHS Fertility Services.	Progress: The seminar format and schedule has been reviewed and updated according to user preference. Next steps: Continue delivering quarterly seminars	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.

Progress in 2025/26: National Guidance

Key Messages

1. Access Criteria: Completion of this work is expected by quarter 2 of 2026/27.
2. Surrogacy: Completion of this work is expected by quarter 3 of 2026/27.
3. Fertility preservation storage (guideline for management of fertility preservation storage): Completion of this work is expected by quarter 2 of 2026/27.
4. Overseas visitors and treatment: Completion of this work is expected by quarter 2 of 2026/27.

Deliverable

*Access Criteria

- Develop guidance clarifying access to NHS fertility treatment across Scotland.

Progress/Next Steps



Progress: Draft document created and awaiting final approval.

Next Steps: Undergoing final review by Scottish Government.

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.

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: 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.

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

Progress in 2025/26: National Guidance (Contd.)

Deliverable

Progress/Next Steps



Benefits



Overseas Visitors and Treatment

- Guidance document for clinics treating patients on overseas visitor passports.

Progress: Draft document has been prepared and reviewed by key stakeholders.

Next Steps: Undergoing final review – expected approval in early 2026/27.

- i. Standardisation of treatment of overseas fertility patient.

*Fertility Preservation - Storage

- Support Scottish Government with delivering a protocol for patients storing gametes and embryos for fertility preservation purposes.

Progress: A draft protocol is currently being drafted.

Next Steps: Undergoing final review – expected approval in early 2026/27.

- i. Provide uniform guidance that is compliant with the Health and Social Care Act 2022 and the Scottish Government fertility preservation guidance.

Progress in 2025/26: Service Development

Key Messages

1. A case for National Planning support to conduct a national population planning exercise was submitted to Scottish Government for prioritisation in 2026/27.

Deliverable

Proposal to National Planning

- Proposal submitted to the National Planning and Delivery Board to undertake a population-based planning approach to fertility service in Scotland.

Progress/Next Steps



Progress: Proposal has been completed and has been approved by NSD for submission.

Next Steps: Awaiting prioritisation for National Planning support.

Benefits



- i. Decrease variation in service delivery and outcomes across Scotland.
- ii. Improve equity of access to fertility services.
- iii. Improve planning to meet increased demand with changing patient demographics.
- iv. Improve financial and work force sustainability.

Progress in 2025/26: Data

Key Messages

1. The Data Group have established regular data collection, which has informed development of national guidance.
2. The Audit Group has concluded its work to develop standardised audit pro formas.

Deliverable

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/Next Steps



Progress: Seven rounds of data capture have been completed with three substantial changes to national processes. Stakeholder feedback on types of data collated has been performed.

Next Steps: Review data collection and Terms of References for the group.

Benefits



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

Audit Group

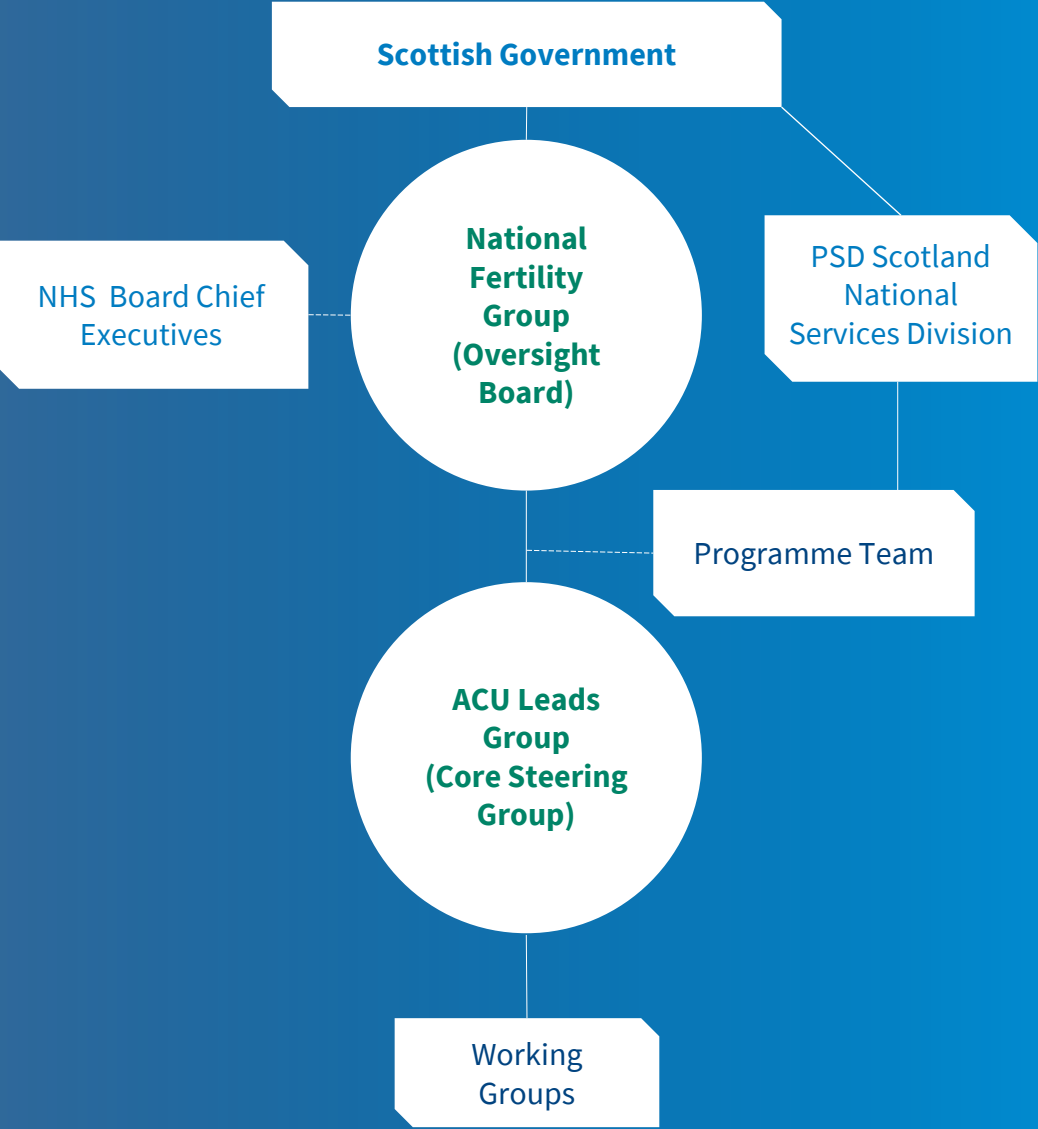
- Produce audit proformas across all tertiary fertility care centres to comply with regulatory requirements as detailed in the HFEA code of practise.

Progress: Twenty-one audit forms have been created. This group has now been decommissioned and transferred to the Quality Management group.

Next Steps: Continue to review audit documents. Incorporate ISO15189 into the workstream.

- 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.
- iv. Minimise duplication of creating audit forms.

Fertility Scotland Governance



Network Oversight Board

The Fertility Scotland Oversight Board function sits with the Scottish Government’s National Fertility Group. 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 NHS Scotland, 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 network’s 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 NHS Scotland. The Core Steering Group is co-located with the Scottish Government’s *Assisted Conception Unit Leads Group*.

Network Programme Support

The National Services Directorate (NSD) of Public Services Delivery Scotland is commissioned by Scottish Government to host the network and provide programme management support and coordination, as well as clinical and scientific leadership, to the Network.

Funding

Public Services Delivery Scotland is funded by Scottish Government to host and support the Scottish Perinatal Network. The funding supports Network staffing, programme management and coordination activities required to deliver the Network's agreed priorities and work programme.

The Network operated within its budget for the financial year 2025/26.

Contact

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

This document has been prepared by the National Services Directorate (NSD) of Public Services Delivery (PSD) Scotland on behalf of the Fertility Scotland National Network. Accountable to Scottish Government, PSD Scotland works at the heart of the health service providing national strategic services to the rest of NHS Scotland and other public sector organisations to help them deliver their services more efficiently and effectively. Fertility Scotland is a collaboration of stakeholders involved in care of fertility, who are supported by a Programme Team to drive improvement across the care pathway.

This resource may be made available, in full or summary form, in alternative formats and community languages. Please contact us on **0131 275 6000** or email **altformats@nhs.scot** to discuss how we can best meet your requirements.

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