

# National Services Directorate Highlight Report

**2024-25  
Version 2**

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# Foreword

Welcome to the 2024/2025 Highlight Report from National Services Directorate of NHS National Services Scotland.

On behalf of NHSScotland boards and Scottish Government, National Services Directorate (NSD) aims to deliver equitable, high value health services for Scottish residents or patients in Scotland with very specialised health care needs.

Our purpose is to support NHSScotland and be a valued and trusted partner for planning, commissioning, and coordinating high quality, person-centred specialist services, networks, and screening programmes.

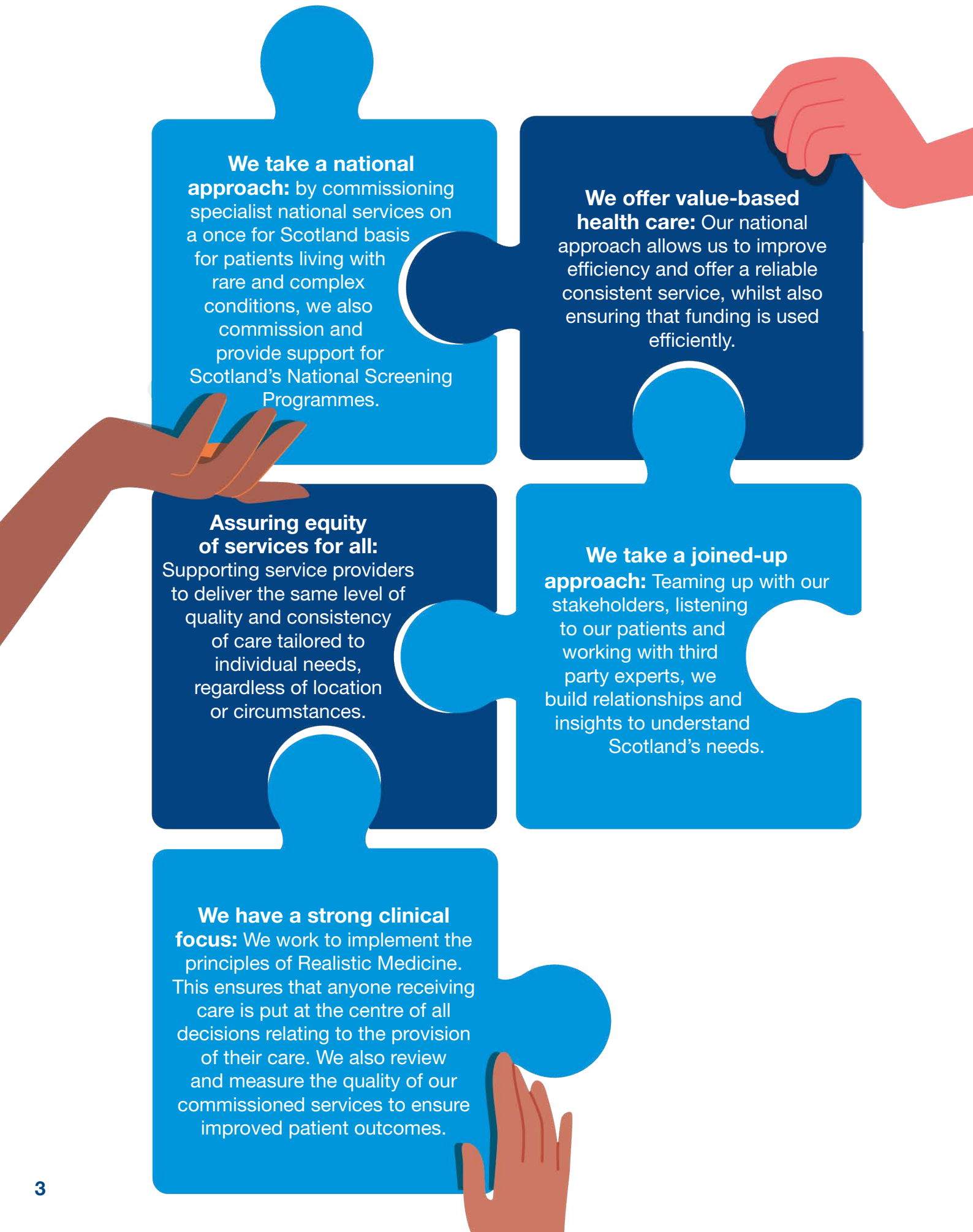
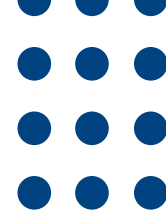
We hope you find our annual Highlight Report informative.



**Susi Buchanan**  
Director of  
National Services  
Directorate  
NHS National  
Services Scotland



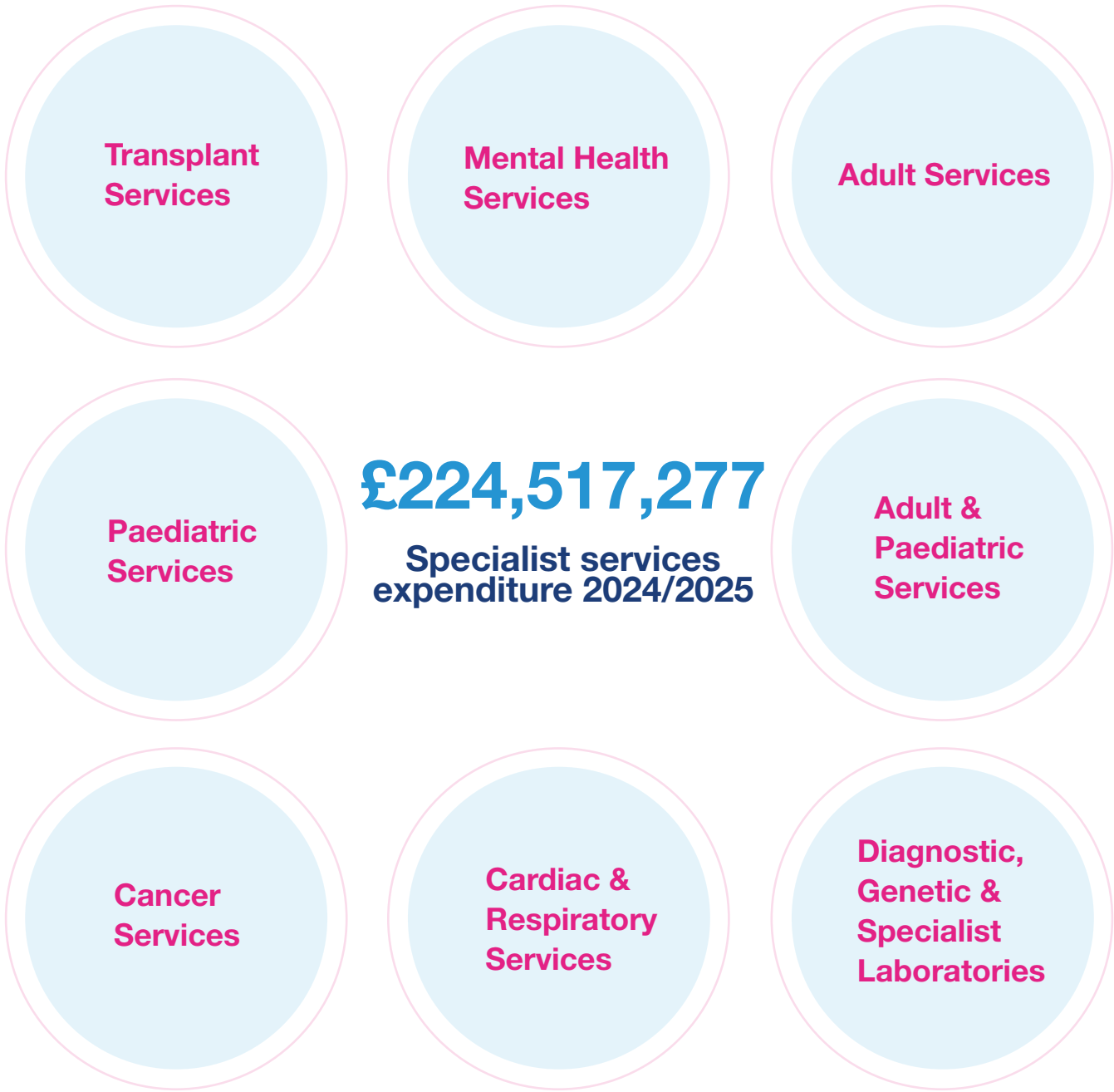
# Our guiding principles



# Specialist services

Specialist services provide care to patients with highly specialist needs, or those with a very rare condition. The specialist teams ensure that eligible patients, regardless of where they live in Scotland, have access to services that provide the highest possible standards of care to achieve the best quality of health outcomes.

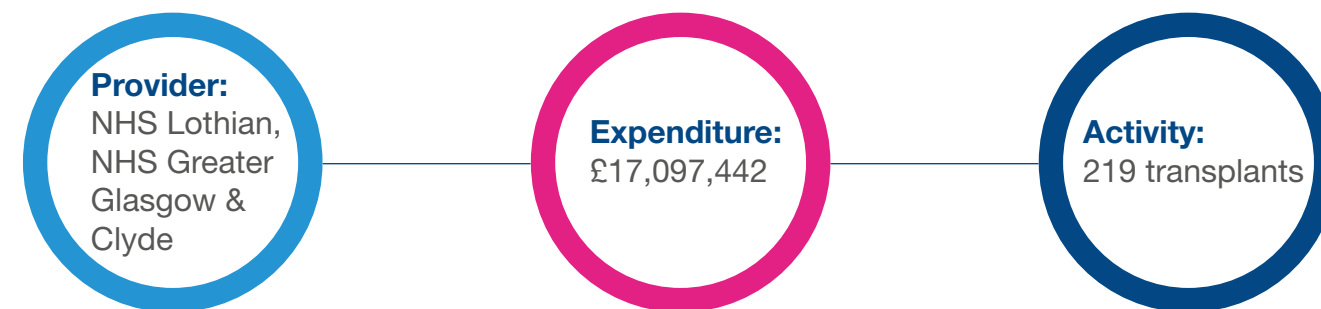
National Services Division commissions 56 specialist services on behalf of NHSScotland boards and Scottish Government. These include:



## Transplant Services



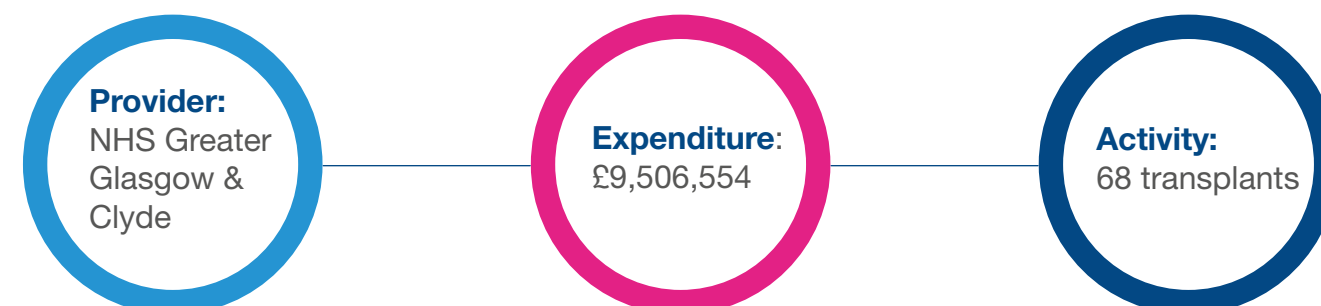
### Adult Renal Transplants



**Website:** <https://www.nss.nhs.scot/specialist-healthcare/specialist-services/solid-organ-transplantation/renal-transplantation-adult/>

The Adult Renal Transplantation Service supports patients over 16 years of age who are living with end-stage kidney failure. The service provides assessment of potential recipients and living donors, transplant operations and inpatient care, with a follow up assessment prior to being discharged to local nephrology care.

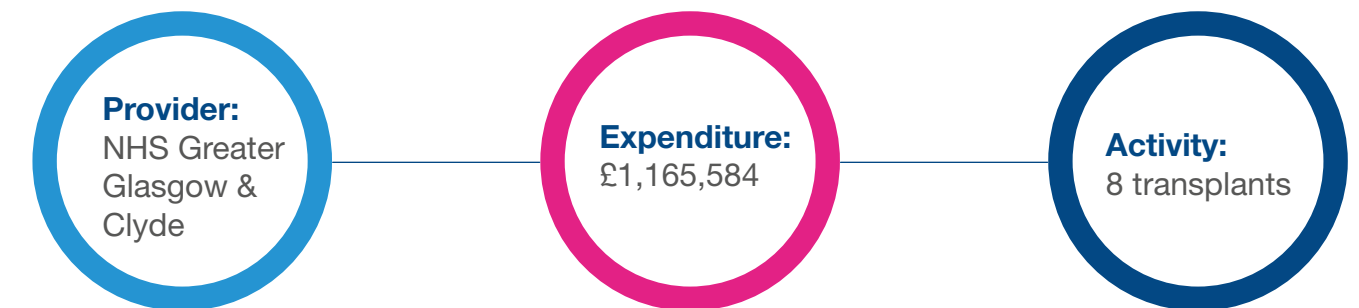
### Adult Stem Cell Transplants



**Website:** <https://www.nss.nhs.scot/specialist-healthcare/specialist-services/stem-cell-transplantation-adult/>

The Adult Stem Cell Transplantation service is for patients over 16 years of age with haematological malignancy or bone marrow failure syndromes, in line with the BSBMTCT list of accepted indications. The decision to transplant is made by local and regional multidisciplinary teams and all associated assessments, follow-up, and admissions up to day 100 after transplant are included as part of the comprehensive service provided.

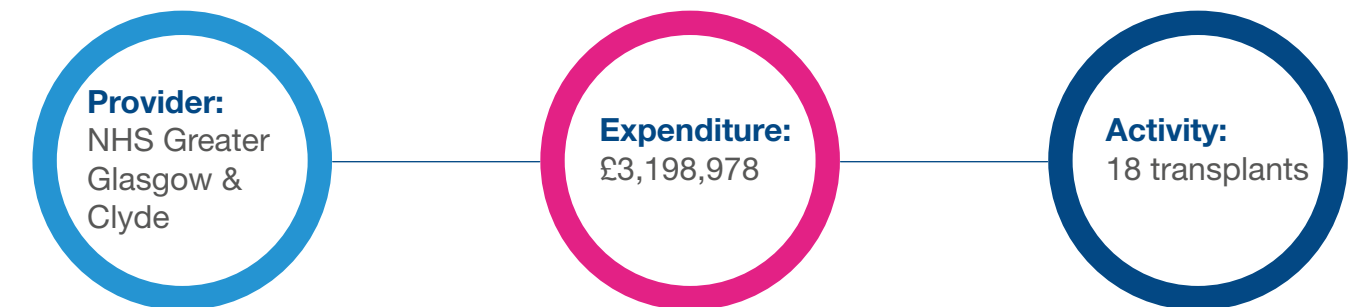
### Paediatric Renal Transplants



**Website:** <https://www.nss.nhs.scot/specialist-healthcare/specialist-services/solid-organ-transplantation/renal-transplantation-paediatric/>

The Paediatric Renal Transplant Service offers a pathway for the provision of kidney transplants to children up to the age of 16 with chronic kidney disease (CKD), including all assessments, transplant operation and inpatient care. The service works in partnership with adult nephrology teams to aid the transition of patients to adult services when required.

### Paediatric Stem Cell Transplants



**Website:** <https://www.nss.nhs.scot/specialist-healthcare/specialist-services/stem-cell-transplantation-paediatric/>

The service provides hematopoietic stem cell transplantation (HSCT) to children up to the age of 16, including all assessments and follow up. Young people known to the service still receive treatment until the age of 18. In an allogeneic transplant, the patient receives stem cells donated by another person. Conditions requiring allogeneic HSCT fall under two main categories: disorders that comprise mostly blood cancers, such as leukaemia, or non-malignant conditions, like haemoglobinopathies, primary immune deficiencies, inherited metabolic disorders and non-malignant bone marrow failure.

### Advanced Heart Failure & Heart Transplant



**Website:** <https://www.nss.nhs.scot/specialist-healthcare/specialist-services/solid-organ-transplantation/advanced-heart-failure-and-heart-transplant/>

The Scottish National Advanced Heart Failure Service (SNAHFS) supports adult patients with severe heart failure who have not responded to treatment by medicines. The service offers mechanical-circulatory support and heart transplantation to eligible patients.



Islet Cell Transplantation



Website: <https://www.nss.nhs.scot/specialist-healthcare/specialist-services/solid-organ-transplantation/islet-cell-transplantation/>

Patients over 16 years old with type one diabetes are considered for islet transplant alone if they have severe hypoglycaemic unawareness but normal or near-normal renal function, simultaneous islet, and kidney transplant if they have renal failure and insulin-dependent diabetes or islet after kidney transplant if they have functioning kidney transplants and diabetes. Patients are offered an assessment, islet transfusion, inpatient care and follow up for life.

Liver Transplantation



Website: <https://www.nss.nhs.scot/specialist-healthcare/specialist-services/solid-organ-transplantation/liver-transplantation/>

Patients over 16 years old are considered for a liver transplant if they have a diagnosis of acute or chronic liver disease and subsequent failure, liver tumours (such as hepatocellular carcinoma, a particular type of cancer) and metabolic liver diseases/ variant syndromes. All patients are offered an assessment, transplant operation, inpatient care and follow up for life.

Simultaneous Kidney Pancreas- Pancreas Transplantation



Website: <https://www.nss.nhs.scot/specialist-healthcare/specialist-services/solid-organ-transplantation/pancreatic-transplantation/>

Patients over 16 years old living with Type One insulin-dependent diabetes and end stage kidney failure are considered for a pancreas transplant if they have severe hypoglycaemic unawareness but normal or near-normal renal function, a simultaneous pancreas and kidney transplant if they have renal failure and insulin-dependent diabetes and pancreas after kidney transplant if they have a functioning kidney transplant and insulin dependent diabetes. All patients are offered an assessment, transplant operation, inpatient care and follow up for life.

Mental Health Services



Advanced Interventions



Website: <https://www.nss.nhs.scot/specialist-healthcare/specialist-services/advanced-interventions/>

The Advanced Interventions Service (AIS) provides assessment and treatment options for people suffering from chronic and severe treatment-refractory depression (TRD). The service’s primary aim is to improve symptoms of OCD or reduce depressive symptoms. Patients are usually referred if they have failed to respond to other types of treatment. Patients with obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD) may also be treated by the service. The service also assesses patient suitability for neurosurgical treatment as they may benefit from ablative neurosurgery.

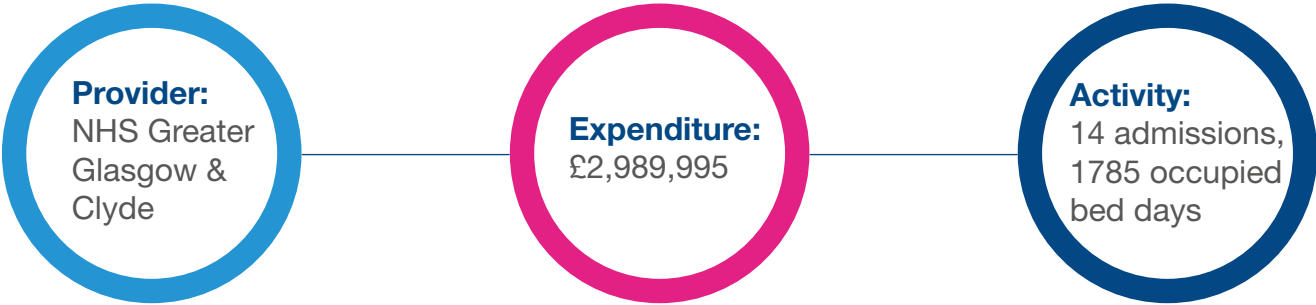
Mental Health Service for Deaf People



Website: <https://www.nss.nhs.scot/specialist-healthcare/specialist-services/mental-health-service-for-deaf-people/>

The service coordinates outreach clinics across the country to support deaf adults with moderate or severe mental health conditions. The service offers consultancy and liaison around the following: advice on local management of deaf people with moderate or severe mental health problems, which present challenges in assessment and/or treatment across Scotland and assessment and/or treatment of patients at request of, or in liaison with, local clinicians on an outreach basis. The service also provides training in deaf awareness and deaf mental health issues for mental health professionals. The service is based at St John’s Hospital, Livingston.

Child Inpatient Psychiatry



**Website:** <https://www.nss.nhs.scot/specialist-healthcare/specialist-services/child-inpatient-psychiatry/>

The Child Inpatient Psychiatry Unit provides psychiatric services for children aged 5 to 11 years. Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) refer patients to the Unit when children fail to respond to care at a local and regional level, and they require specialist treatment. Healthcare professionals assess and treat these complex risks and disorders. They might include psychosis, obsessive compulsive disorders, learning disabilities, eating disorders and autistic-spectrum type disorders. The Unit is inside the Royal Hospital for Children in Glasgow.



Adult & Paediatric Services



Cochlear Implantation: Adult & Paediatric



**Website:** <https://www.nss.nhs.scot/specialist-healthcare/specialist-services/cochlear-implantation-adult-and-paediatrics/>

The Scottish Cochlear Implant Programme (SCIP), based at Crosshouse Hospital, Kilmarnock, is for profoundly deaf adults and children. It provides assessment and specialist implantation surgery for patients with severe to profound deafness who have gained little or no benefit from conventional acoustic hearing aids. Speech and language therapy support and follow up are also part of the service.

Cleft Lip & Palate



**Website:** <https://www.nss.nhs.scot/specialist-healthcare/specialist-services/cleft-lip-and-palate/>

Based in the Royal Hospital for Children and the Queen Elizabeth University Hospital, Glasgow, this service provides cleft lip and palate treatment and care to children and adults. The service includes assessment, specialist surgery, specialist nursing and clinical psychology. Some adults who have already had a cleft lip or palate repair may still have some functional problems or be self-conscious or unhappy about their appearance. GPs may refer such cases back to the service for assessment and consideration for further surgical intervention.

**Ear and Atresia Reconstruction: Adult & Children**



**Website:** <https://www.nss.nhs.scot/specialist-healthcare/specialist-services/ear-and-atresia-reconstruction-adult-and-paediatric/>

The Ear and Atresia Reconstruction Service provides assessment, surgery and review for adults and children who require ear reconstruction or implantable hearing devices. Adults are treated at St John’s Hospital Livingston, with children’s services provided from The Royal Hospital for Sick Children in Edinburgh.

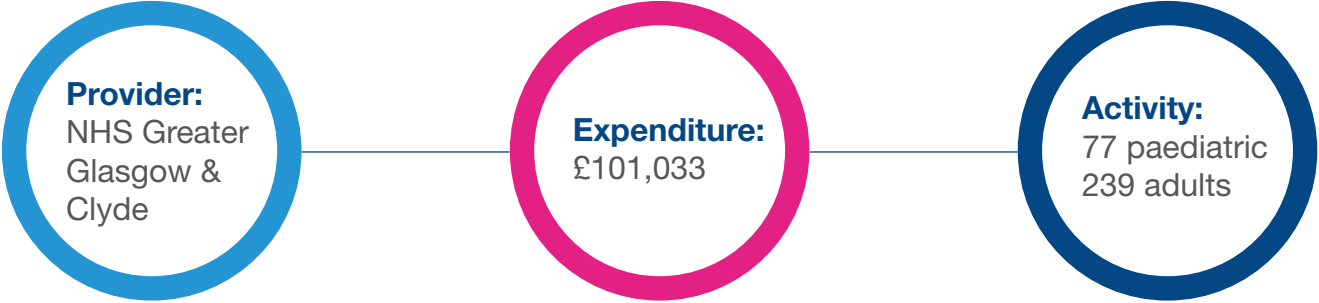
**Burns Hub: Adult and Paediatrics**



**Website:** <https://www.nss.nhs.scot/specialist-healthcare/specialist-services/scottish-national-burns-centre/>

A review of burn services in Scotland recommended a change to the current model of care, including a nationally designated service for large and complex burn injuries. This nationally designated service provides a holistic service ranging from admission and treatment in intensive care services through surgery, physiotherapy, psychological support, and other required patient support for patients who have experienced a large or complex burn injury.

**Epidermolysis Bullosa (Paediatric & Adult)**



**Website:** <https://www.nss.nhs.scot/specialist-healthcare/specialist-services/epidermolysis-bullosa/>

This service offers specialist outreach nursing support and treatment to adults and children living with the rare skin condition epidermolysis bullosa (EB) which causes life-long blistering and ulceration of the skin and mucus membranes. Specialist nurses provide services including wound care management and symptom control to help reduce the debilitating symptoms and complications of this painful condition.

**Adult Services**



**Adult Brachial Plexus Injury**



**Website:** <https://www.nss.nhs.scot/specialist-healthcare/specialist-services/brachial-plexus-injury-adult/>

The Brachial Plexus Service service provides assessment, intervention, occupational therapy, physiotherapy, counselling and outpatient follow-up care for patients through an integrated multidisciplinary service for traumatic brachial plexus injury and tumours involving the brachial plexus including:-

- Diagnosis: clinical examination, MRI, neurophysiology.
- Surgery: early surgical exploration and nerve repair; late secondary reconstruction.
- Rehabilitation: multidisciplinary approach, clinical nurse specialist, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, orthotics. The service is based in the New Victoria Hospital, Glasgow.

**Scottish National Pain Management**



**Website:** <https://www.nss.nhs.scot/specialist-healthcare/specialist-services/scottish-national-pain-management-programme/>

The Scottish National Pain Management Programme offers access to a highly specialist, intensive programme for adults with severe chronic pain. The interdisciplinary team help with developing self-management skills to cope with persistent chronic pain. Both residential and virtual intensive pain management programmes are provided.



Deep Brain Stimulation



**Website:** <https://www.nss.nhs.scot/specialist-healthcare/specialist-services/deep-brain-stimulation/>

Deep brain stimulation (DBS) is a treatment that can ease the symptoms of movement and (psychiatric) disorders, for patients living with conditions such as Parkinson’s and Dystonia. Based at the Institute of Neurological Sciences in the Queen Elizabeth University Hospital, Glasgow, the service provides assessment, surgery, post-operative care, and follow up management. Ongoing care is given by local services.

Hyperbaric Medicine



**Website:** <https://www.nss.nhs.scot/specialist-healthcare/specialist-services/hyperbaric-medicine/>

The hyperbaric medicine unit provides treatment and advice for diving related illness using recompression or decompression therapy. The unit is situated within Aberdeen Royal Infirmary and is supported by one other centre based in Orkney. They provide telephone advice and care 24 hours a day, seven days a week to divers, medical professionals, and the coastguard.

Photobiology



**Website:** <https://www.nss.nhs.scot/specialist-healthcare/specialist-services/photobiology/>

The Photobiology Unit provides a diagnostic and management advice service for patients throughout Scotland who live with UV-associated skin disorders (photosensitivity). Based at Ninewells Hospital, Dundee, specialist dermatologists examine referred patients for the diagnosis of photosensitive dermatological conditions. Clinical management arising from consultation, investigations and advice for ongoing care is also provided. The service additionally includes the investigation of cutaneous porphyrias with a clinical advice service.

Scottish Specialist Prosthetics Service



**Website:** <https://www.nss.nhs.scot/specialist-healthcare/specialist-services/specialist-prosthetics/>

The Specialist Prosthetics Service is responsible for the assessment, prescription and provision of specialist prosthetic limbs. A single multidisciplinary team based on two sites provides this service. The service locations are West of Scotland Mobility and Rehabilitation Centre (WestMARC) at the Queen Elizabeth University Hospital in Glasgow, and the Southeast Mobility and Rehabilitation Technology (SMART) centre at the Astley Ainslie Hospital in Edinburgh.

Spinal Injuries



**Website:** <https://www.nss.nhs.scot/specialist-healthcare/specialist-services/spinal-injuries/>

The Queen Elizabeth National Spinal Injuries Unit (QENSIU) is located at Queen Elizabeth University Hospital. This service manages the acute injury and lifetime care of all patients with a spinal cord injury to maximise function and prevent the complications of paralysis. It includes patients who have a spinal cord injury as a result of physical trauma. People suffering from an acute non-traumatic injury as a result of disease or infection to the spinal cord also receive care.

Stereotactic Radiotherapy



**Website:** <https://www.nss.nhs.scot/specialist-healthcare/specialist-services/stereotactic-radiotherapy/>

Highly focused Stereotactic Radiotherapy is used to treat non-cancerous conditions - arteriovenous malformations (AVM) and vestibular schwannoma (VS). A small number of rarer tumours can also benefit from this treatment. Patients need stereotactic radiotherapy if surgery may have too high a risk of mortality or morbidity. Several beams of radiation precisely target the tumours. In addition to those who are treated, many discuss management options with the expert team.



Supra-renal and thoraco-abdominal aortic aneurysms



**Website:** <https://www.nss.nhs.scot/specialist-healthcare/specialist-services/supra-renal-and-thoraco-abdominal-aortic-aneurysm/>

The service, based at the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh, repairs extensive aneurysms that extend along the thoracic (chest) and abdominal sections of the aorta. Treatment options include either open surgery or endovascular repair by inserting a stent.

Mesh Surgical Service



**Website:** <https://www.nss.nhs.scot/specialist-healthcare/specialist-services/complex-mesh-surgical-service/>

From the late 1990s to 2018 women in Scotland were treated with polypropylene mesh implants for stress urinary incontinence and pelvic organ prolapse. Unfortunately, some women develop complications from vaginal mesh surgery and this service is for those considering specialist surgical mesh removal. The Complex Mesh Surgical Service hosted by NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde (GG&C) is the nationally designated centre in Scotland for women with mesh complications. The GG&C service forms part of the UK network of centres and is recognised for its clinical expertise in this field. The service provides multidisciplinary team (MDT) assessment, surgical intervention, post-operative care, post-surgery follow-up. Local health boards provide ongoing management with support from the specialist surgical centre.

Paediatrics Services



Chest Wall Deformity



**Website:** <https://www.nss.nhs.scot/specialist-healthcare/specialist-services/chest-wall-deformity-paediatric/>

The Chest Wall Deformity (CWD) Service provides interventions for paediatric and adolescent patients with anterior (front) chest wall deformities. Based at the Royal Hospital for Children, Glasgow, the multi-disciplinary team will assess and offer surgical reconstruction or bracing to patients with pectus excavatum and pectus carinatum or variations, and follow up care.

Complex Paediatric Airway Disorder



**Website:** <https://www.nss.nhs.scot/specialist-healthcare/specialist-services/complex-airways-disorder-paediatric/>

This service provides comprehensive support for the management of children (foremost neonates and infants) with conditions causing obstruction of the major airway. Based at the Royal Hospital for Children, Glasgow, the service provides endoscopic and open surgical interventions for children with complex breathing difficulties.

Epilepsy Surgery



**Website:** <https://www.nss.nhs.scot/specialist-healthcare/specialist-services/epilepsy-surgery-paediatric/>

The Scottish Paediatric Epilepsy Surgery Service provides care for children up to the age of 16 with intractable epilepsy. Eligible children and young people will follow the Scottish Paediatric Epilepsy Network’s Continuing Epileptic Seizures Care Pathway, before receiving consideration by the national epilepsy team. Based at the Royal Hospital for Sick Children, Edinburgh, patients who are referred to the service receive care delivered through a network approach.

Extra Corporeal Life Support



**Website:** <https://www.nss.nhs.scot/specialist-healthcare/specialist-services/extra-corporeal-life-support-paediatric/>

The Extra Corporeal Life Support (ECLS) Service is based in the Royal Hospital for Children in Glasgow. ECLS provides temporary life support to children with cardiac or pulmonary failure, while allowing the lungs to rest. Extra-corporeal life support uses extra-corporeal membrane oxygenation (ECMO), a supportive intensive care technique offered to children who develop acute but potentially reversible respiratory or cardiac failure.

Interventional Fetal Therapy



**Website:** <https://www.nss.nhs.scot/specialist-healthcare/specialist-services/interventional-fetal-therapy/>

The Interventional Fetal Therapy Service provides treatment for a range of conditions affecting unborn babies. The service is based in the Ian Donald Fetal Medicine Unit at Queen Elizabeth University Hospital in Glasgow. Using advanced technical skills and specialist equipment, the service provides high quality diagnosis and treatments to optimise the outcome for both child and parent-to-be.

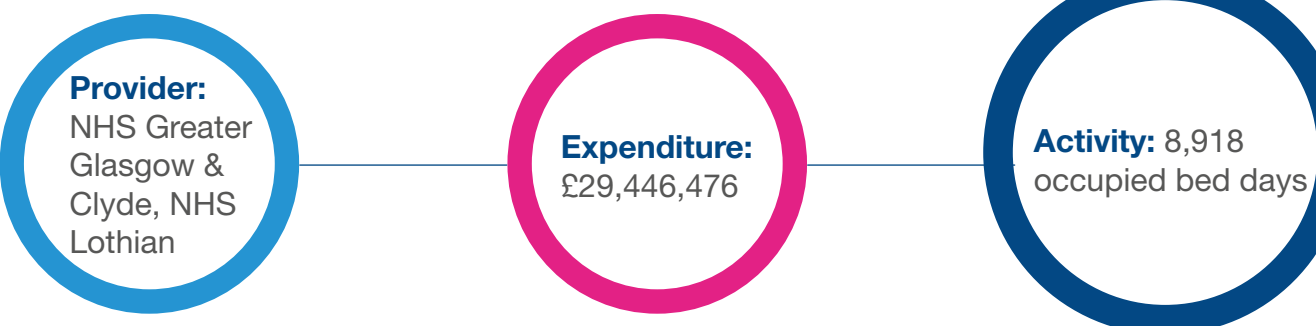
Obstetric Brachial Plexus Injury



**Website:** <https://www.nss.nhs.scot/specialist-healthcare/specialist-services/brachial-plexus-injury-paediatric/>

The Obstetric Brachial Plexus Injury Service (OBPIS) assesses, diagnoses and treats young children with an injury to the brachial plexus region. Complications during childbirth commonly cause these injuries. After assessment in the Royal Hospital for Children in Glasgow, children usually receive rehabilitation treatment. Occasionally they need specialist shoulder surgery. Ongoing care is also provided. An outreach clinic is available in Aberdeen to facilitate access to the service by patients from remote areas.

Paediatric Intensive Care



**Website:** <https://www.nss.nhs.scot/specialist-healthcare/specialist-services/intensive-care-paediatric/>

The Paediatric Intensive Care Units (PICU) supports children and young people with life-threatening conditions. Based within the Royal Hospital for Children, Glasgow and the Royal Hospital for Sick Children, Edinburgh, the two PICUs are commissioned as a single service to provide care to the paediatric population. There are 21 beds in Glasgow and 10 beds in Edinburgh. Both units work closely with ScotSTAR, the specialist transport service that includes paediatrics, as well as supporting other national specialist children’s services.

Scottish National Spine Service (Adults & Paediatrics)



**Website:** <https://www.nss.nhs.scot/specialist-healthcare/specialist-services/scottish-national-spine-service/>

The service provides care for people who have acquired a spinal deformity in childhood or adolescence. Care is provided at both the Royal Infirmary and the Royal Hospital for Sick Children, Edinburgh. Patients referred to the service will undergo an initial assessment and investigation. Following this, a decision will be made about whether a patient is suitable for orthotics (bracing) or surgery. Reducing spinal curvature and enhancing quality of life are the aims of the treatment.

Scottish Paediatric Molecular Radiotherapy (SMaRT)



**Website:** <https://www.nss.nhs.scot/specialist-healthcare/specialist-services/scottish-paediatric-molecular-radiotherapy-service/>

The service offers molecular radiotherapy (MRT) for children and young adults up to age 18 with cancer and is based in the Royal Hospital for Sick Children, Glasgow. The service treats patients who have been diagnosed with either thyroid carcinoma or high risk neuroblastoma which has relapsed or has failed to respond to other appropriate evidence-based treatments for this condition.

Transcranial Doppler & MRI Scanning Services



**Website:** <https://www.nss.nhs.scot/specialist-healthcare/specialist-services/transcranial-doppler-and-mri-scanning/>

The service offers transcranial Doppler (TCD) and MRI scanning for children and young people with haemoglobinopathy (blood disorders) and is based in the Royal Hospital for Sick Children, Glasgow. TCD is a non-invasive ultrasound method used to examine the blood circulation within the brain. TCD is available to all eligible patients between two and 18 years old. MRI scanning is used to assess iron overload and monitor chelation therapy for children with haemoglobinopathies on transfusion treatment.

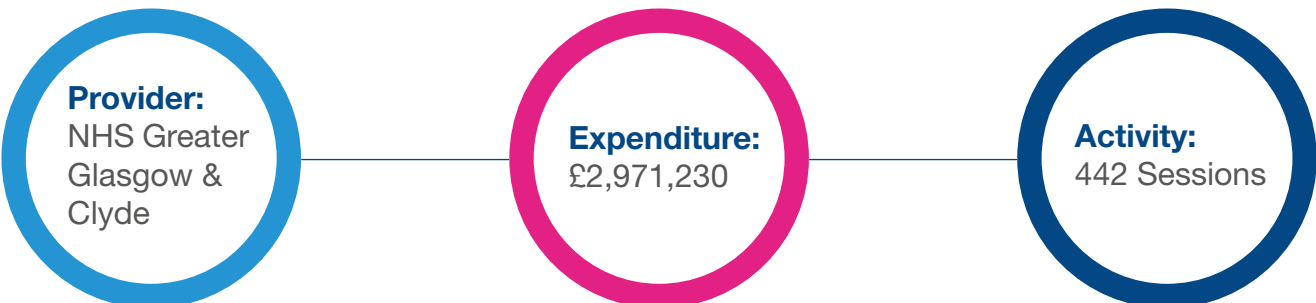
Craniofacial Surgery



**Website:** <https://www.nss.nhs.scot/specialist-healthcare/specialist-services/craniofacial-service-paediatric/>

The Scottish national craniofacial service is for children and young people up to the age of 16. The service is based at the Royal Hospital for Children, Glasgow. The service treats paediatric patients from across Scotland with a craniofacial condition resulting from a congenital disease, tumour or trauma. The service provides: multidisciplinary diagnosis, surgery and ongoing care for all syndromic and non-syndromic craniofacial cases that affect both the floor of the skull and the bones and tissue of the face.

Paediatric Dialysis

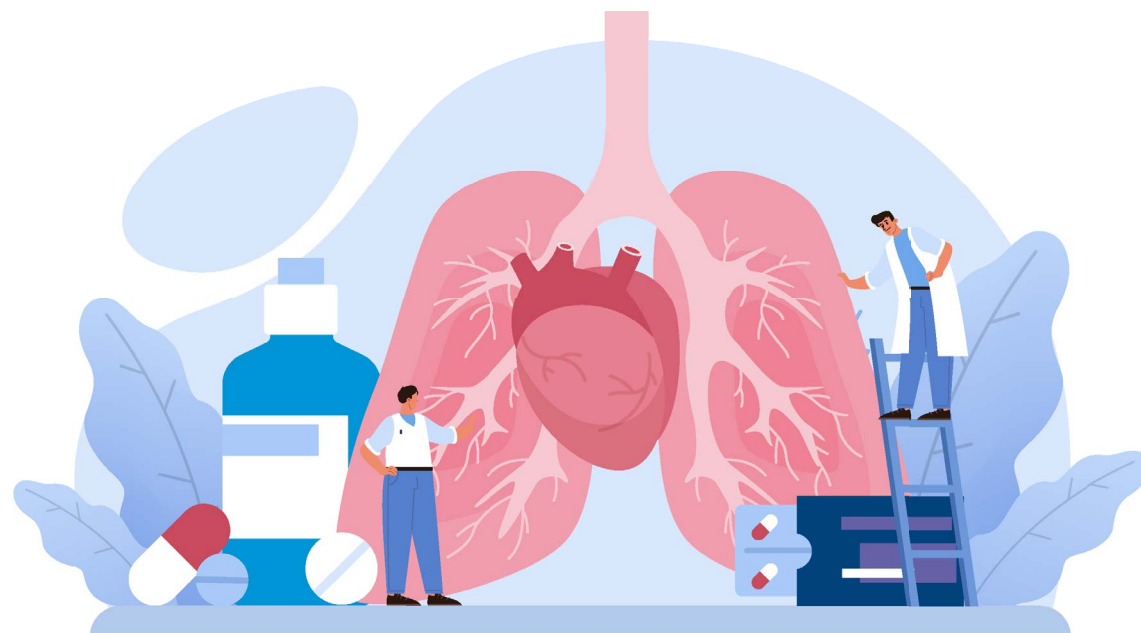


**Website:** <https://www.nss.nhs.scot/specialist-healthcare/specialist-services/dialysis-paediatric/>

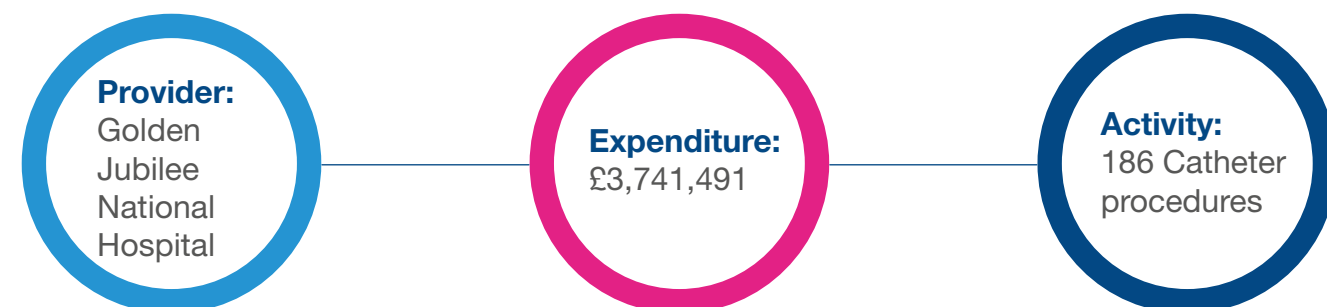
The Paediatric Dialysis Service delivers the renal pathway for haemodialysis and peritoneal dialysis alongside specialist care for children with ultra-rare renal diseases/disorders, integrating with the commissioned paediatric renal transplant programme. The aim of the service is to bring together the transplant programme, the paediatric dialysis service and the care of children with highly complex disorders within one overarching seamless pathway.



## Cardiac & Respiratory Services



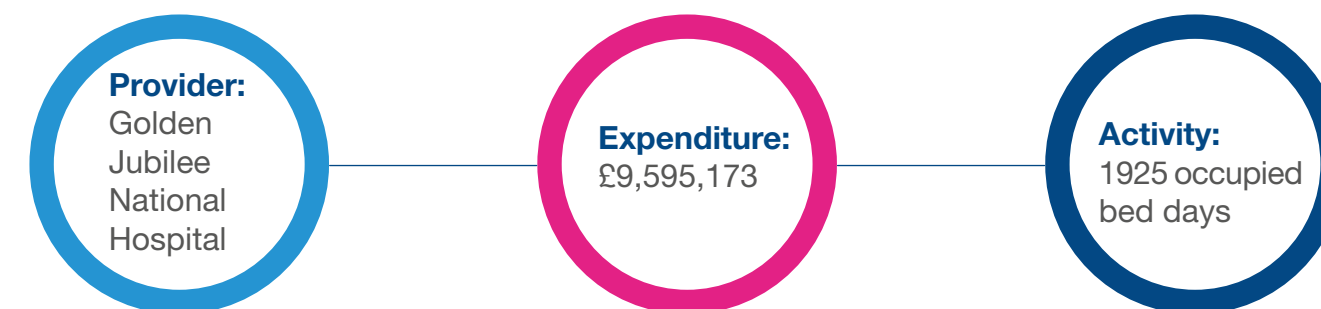
### Adult Congenital Heart Disease



**Website:** <https://www.nss.nhs.scot/specialist-healthcare/specialist-services/congenital-heart-disease-adult/>

The Scottish Adult Congenital Cardiac Service (SACCS) provides care for people aged 16 or over with a diagnosis of congenital complex heart disease. The service is based at the Golden Jubilee National Hospital in Clydebank and aims to assess all adults with congenital heart disease to improve their life expectancy and quality of life, through safe and effective congenital heart surgery and catheter interventions.

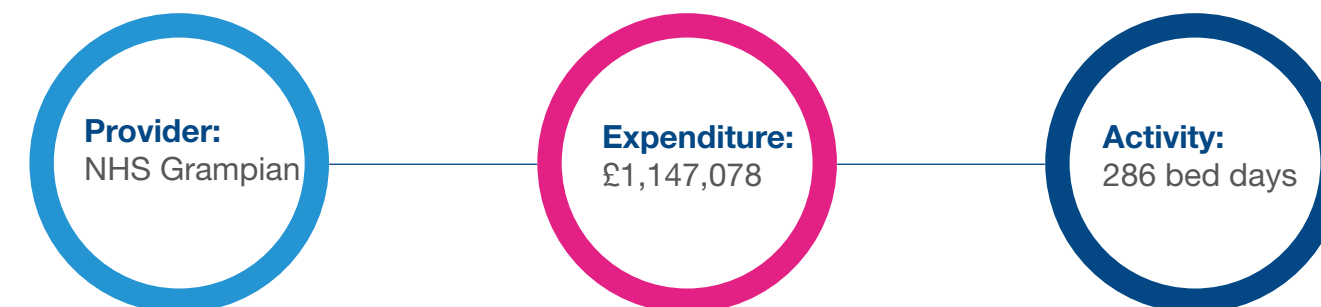
### Pulmonary Vascular Hypertension



**Website:** <https://www.nss.nhs.scot/specialist-healthcare/specialist-services/pulmonary-vascular-hypertension/>

The Pulmonary Vascular Service provides therapeutic benefits to patients with severe pulmonary hypertension. Advice is also given in the treatment of pulmonary hypertension associated with congenital heart disease in children and adults. The service is delivered across two sites: the Golden Jubilee National Hospital, Clydebank and the Queen Elizabeth University Hospital, Glasgow. The service provides inpatient assessment, diagnosis, specialised treatment, and outpatient follow up management including emergency inpatient care provision. Patients may be referred to NHS England for additional procedures.

### Extra Corporeal Membrane Oxygenation (ECMO)

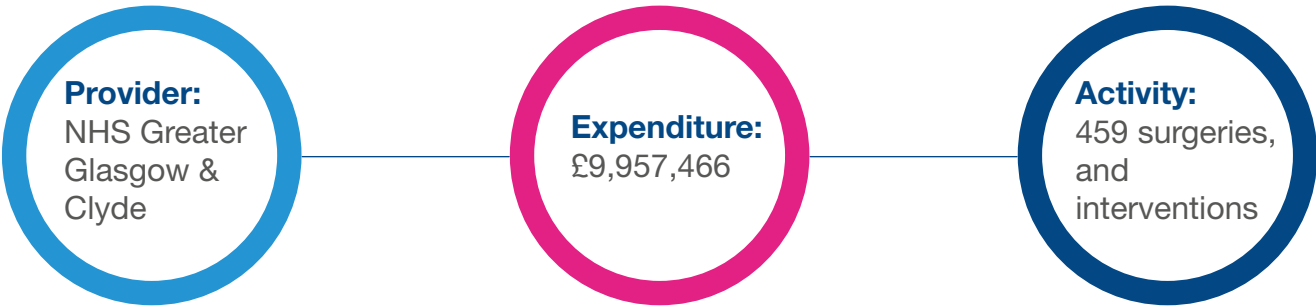


**Website:** <https://www.nss.nhs.scot/specialist-healthcare/specialist-services/extra-corporeal-membrane-oxygenation-ecmo-service-adult/>

The adult Extra Corporeal Membrane Oxygenation (ECMO) Service is based within the Royal Infirmary Hospital in Aberdeen. ECMO provides temporary life support to adults with severe respiratory failure, while allowing the lungs to rest and recover from injury.



Paediatric Cardiac Service



**Website:** <https://www.nss.nhs.scot/specialist-healthcare/specialist-services/congenital-heart-disease-paediatric/>

The paediatric cardiac service (PCS) provides care for neonates and children up to the age of 16 years or transition with paediatric cardiac disease (PCD). This service is based in The Royal Hospital for Children, Glasgow.

Percutaneous Mitral Valve & Related Interventions



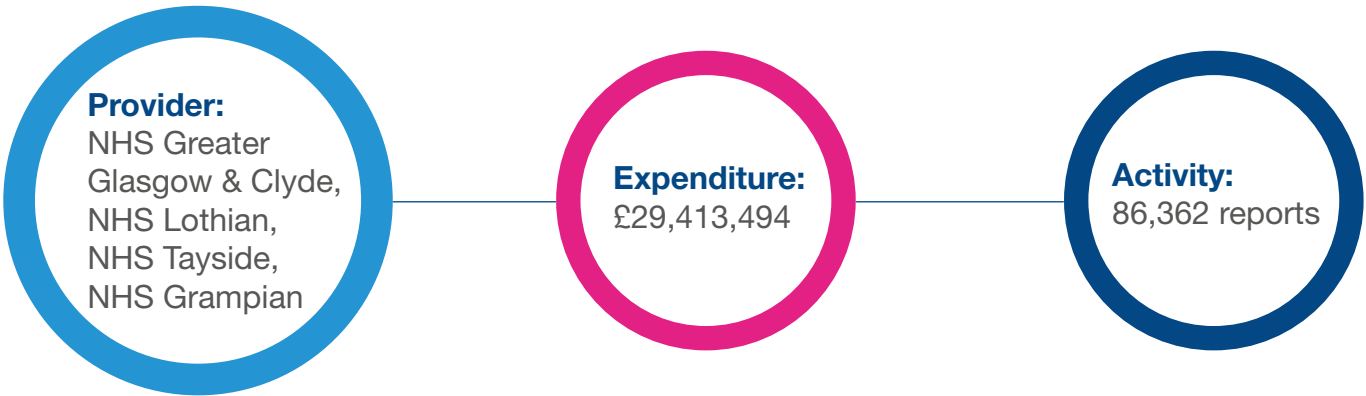
**Website:** <https://www.nss.nhs.scot/specialist-healthcare/specialist-services/percutaneous-mitral-valve-and-related-interventions/>

The Percutaneous Mitral Valve and Related Interventions Service treat patients with valvular heart disease to improve their symptoms and quality of life, if signs of cardiac failure are identified. Based at the Royal Infirmary Hospital of Edinburgh, the Edinburgh Heart Centre offers three procedures: balloon mitral valvuloplasty, paravalvular leak closure and left atrial appendage occlusion, all minimally invasive. Patients considered to be of high operative risk can receive these procedures in preference to open surgical treatment.

Diagnostic, Genetics & Specialist Laboratories



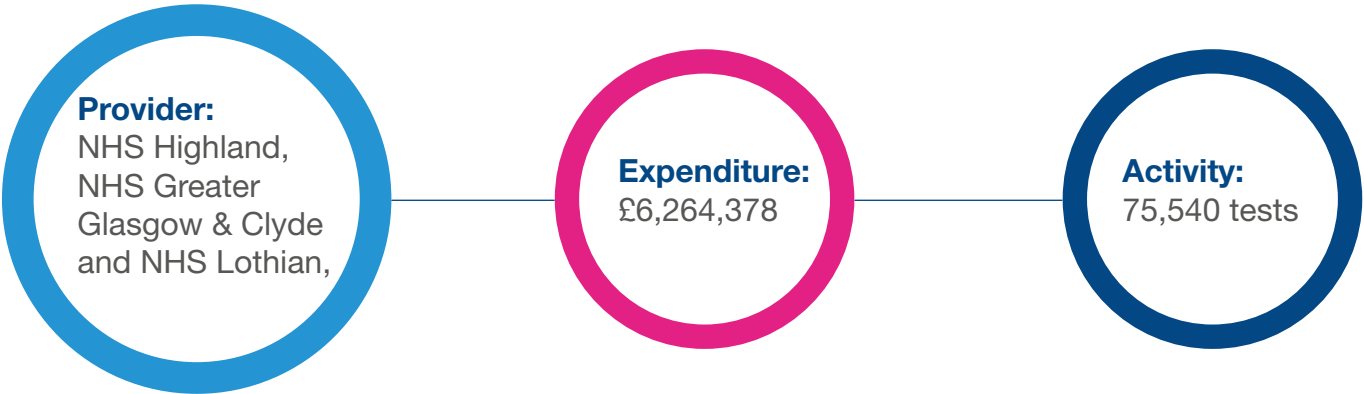
Genetic & Molecular Pathology Laboratories



**Website:** <https://www.nss.nhs.scot/specialist-healthcare/specialist-services/genetic-and-molecular-pathology-laboratories/>

Genetic testing services are delivered through four regional centres. Each aim to provide equitable, high-quality genetic and molecular pathology testing services for Scotland. The number of conditions which we can test for is increasing. The Scottish Genomics Strategic Network continues to develop a Scottish strategy for genomic medicine and agree the translation of that strategy into operational practice ensuring a value-based approach to genetic testing that reflect realistic medicine ambitions.

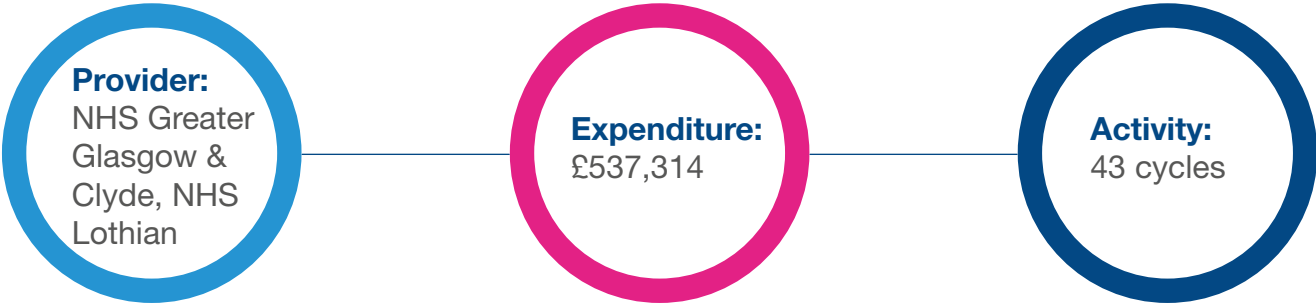
Microbiology Reference and Specialist Laboratories



**Website:** <https://www.nss.nhs.scot/specialist-healthcare/specialist-services/microbiology-reference-and-specialist-laboratories/>

The Scottish Microbiology Reference and Specialist Laboratories provide support to guide public health responses to communicable (infectious) disease. Each laboratory maintains an archive of samples and contributes to research, quality assurance, audit, and teaching, and offer analytical and advisory services to NHSScotland boards and Public Health Scotland, which collects epidemiological data for public health purposes. Commissioning of 14 microbiology reference and specialist laboratories currently takes place in Scotland across three sites.

Pre-Implantation Genetic Diagnosis



**Website:** <https://www.nss.nhs.scot/specialist-healthcare/specialist-services/microbiology-reference-and-specialist-laboratories/>

The Scottish Pre-implantation Genetic Diagnosis (PGD) Service is for couples at risk of passing on an inherited disorder. It can significantly decrease the risk of having a child affected by a genetic condition. The service is available to residents of Scotland who meet the eligibility criteria for referral. PGT is offered when one or both genetic parents have, or are carriers of, a known genetic abnormality. Testing of the couples’ embryos takes place to determine whether an embryo is at risk of a genetic disease, with only low genetic risk embryos transferred back into the uterus.

Therapeutic Drug Monitoring



The laboratory testing service service delivers Infliximab (IFX) and Adalimumab (ADL) levels and their respective total anti-drug antibodies (ADA) for optimising care predominantly in gastroenterology patients with inflammatory bowel disease. These agents have reduced the morbidity from these inflammatory disorders by targeting a key component of the inflammatory process (TNF alpha). Due to variations between individuals handling of the drug and amount of inflammatory load, the aim is to ensure patients have sufficient drug and limit those who have very high drug levels. By optimising drug dosage, it has been shown that there is a better long-term outcome.

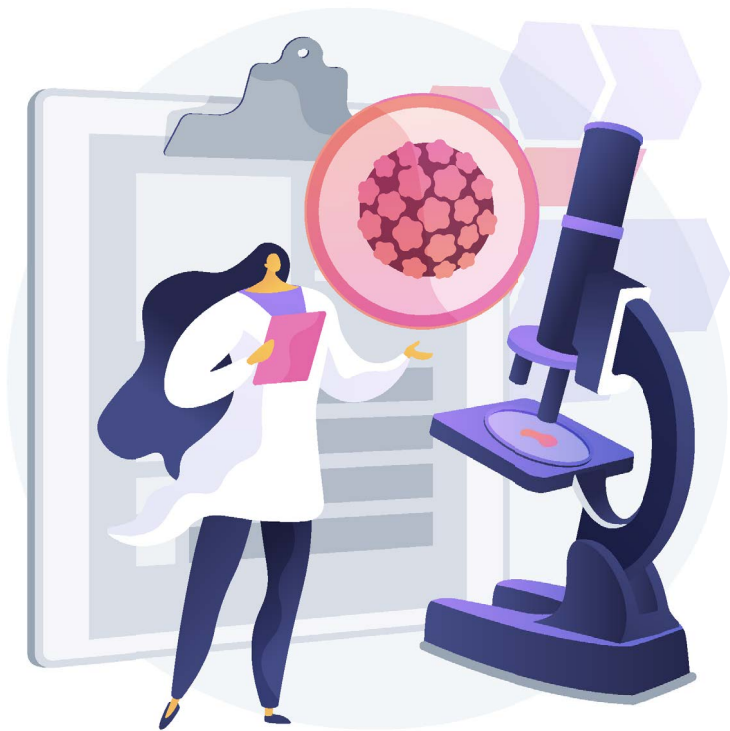
Trace Element & Micronutrient Diagnostic & Research Laboratory



**Website:** <https://www.nss.nhs.scot/specialist-healthcare/specialist-services/trace-element-and-micronutrient-diagnostic-and-research-laboratory/>

This service specialises in the measurement and interpretation of trace elements and vitamins in clinical samples. The Scottish Trace Element and Micronutrient Diagnostic and Research Laboratory (STEMDRL) is provided by the Department of Clinical Biochemistry, Glasgow Royal Infirmary, NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde. The laboratory provides a national analytical and advisory service for a range of nutritional and toxicological problems that involve essential and toxic trace elements and vitamins. STEMDRL also provides a service for the determination of vitamins (A, B1, B2, B6, C, E and K).

Cancer Services

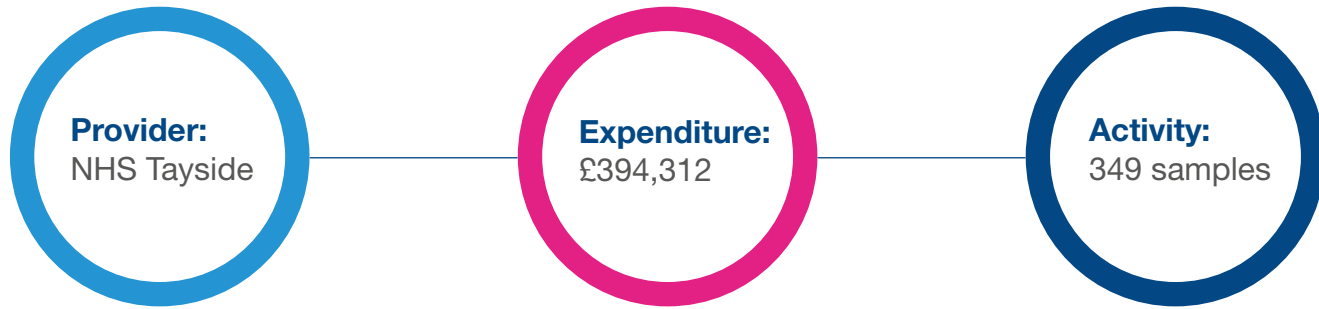


Hilar Cholangiocarcinoma



The Hilar Cholangiocarcinoma (HC) will support discussion and surgical management of resectable HC which is a bile duct cancer arising at or near the biliary confluence. The primary end point of service is to have successfully carried out curative surgery or complex biliary drainage on the patient.

Hydatidiform Mole



**Website:** <https://www.nss.nhs.scot/specialist-healthcare/specialist-services/hydatidiform-mole/>

The hydatidiform mole service provides diagnosis, follow up, and support for women with a molar pregnancy. The service is based in the Department of Blood Sciences at Ninewells Hospital, Dundee. If it's suspected that a woman has a hydatidiform mole, a referral is made to the service to confirm the diagnosis. If the test result is positive, the patient is enrolled in the laboratory follow up programme. This allows for early identification of the signs of persistent trophoblastic disease (PTD) or the development of choriocarcinoma. The Dundee team coordinates this care and provides ongoing follow-up and support.

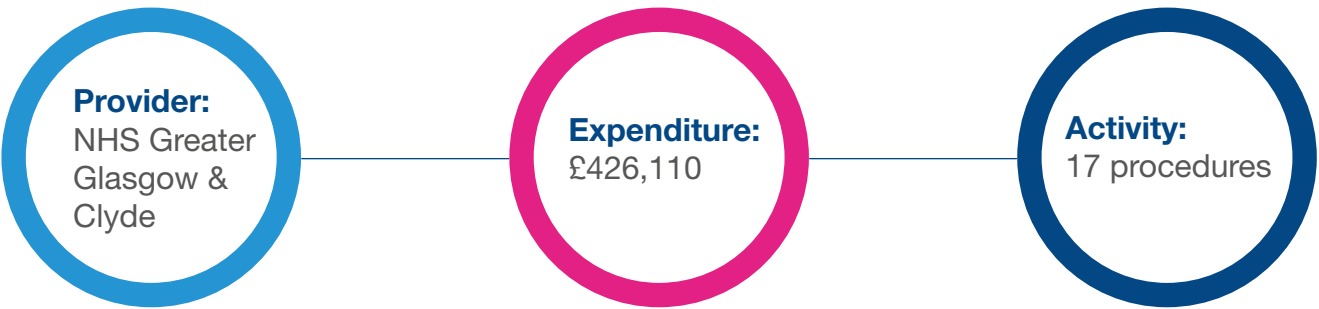
Ophthalmic Oncology



**Website:** <https://www.nss.nhs.scot/specialist-healthcare/specialist-services/ophthalmic-oncology/>

The Scottish Ophthalmic Oncology Service provides a comprehensive service for both intra and extra ocular tumours for the adult population of Scotland. Based at the Department of Ophthalmology, Gartnavel General Hospital, the service provides diagnosis and management of malignant tumours or suspected tumours of the eye and adnexal structures in adults, where specialist knowledge is required. Review and treatment for children and young people is restricted to exceptional circumstances.

Retroperitoneal Lymph Node Dissection



**Website:** <https://www.nss.nhs.scot/specialist-healthcare/specialist-services/retroperitoneal-lymph-node-dissection/>

The Retroperitoneal Lymph Node Dissection service is a highly specialist surgical procedure designed to remove the residual lymph nodes at the back of the abdomen as part of the treatment for individuals with metastatic germ cell cancer. Most patients will be men with testicular cancer. Patients are referred into the supra-regional testicular cancer MDT based at the Beatson West of Scotland Cancer Centre (WOSCC).

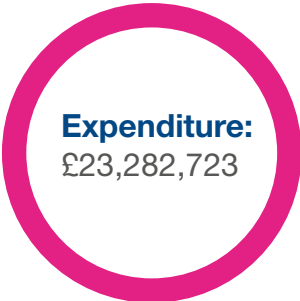
# Financial Risk Share

We manage several national financial risk share schemes on behalf of NHSScotland boards. These allow NHSScotland to pool funding across the country, so that boards can share the financial impact of any unpredictable expenditure, in respect of the treatment, for very rare conditions that may require a high-cost intervention.

Every NHSScotland board contributes to cover the cost of access to an agreed list of specialist treatments. The range covered by these arrangements is reviewed by NHSScotland boards annually. Without these schemes an individual health board could face significant financial risk. The risk share schemes provide assurance to patients with very rare conditions that NHSScotland will cover the costs of their treatment or care.

The following risk share schemes were in operation in 2024/2025:

## Inherited bleeding disorders



**Website:** <https://www.nss.nhs.scot/specialist-healthcare/financial-risk-share/inherited-bleeding-disorders/>

Recombinant Blood Products: This scheme pools funds for blood clotting concentrates and drugs for people with haemophilia and rare bleeding disorders living in Scotland. People who receive products from the scheme will be registered with one of five haemophilia centres. For several years the cost of recombinant product has reduced. This related to the reduction of price of products and introduction of a new drug for patients with inhibitors. Over the past year there has been an emerging increase in usage due to procedures which were delayed during the pandemic and the increased prescription of a new drug.

## Forensic medium-secure care for patients with learning disabilities

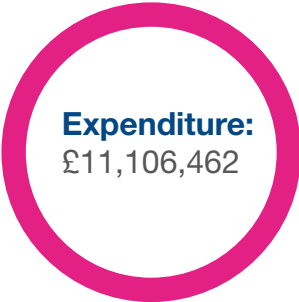


**Website:** <https://www.nss.nhs.scot/specialist-healthcare/financial-risk-share/forensic-medium-secure-care-for-patients-with-learning-disabilities/>

The Forensic Mental Health Services for People with Learning Disabilities supports assessment and treatment of people with a learning disability who pose a danger to others. The service provides assessment, admission, continuing care, specialist treatment and rehabilitation. All this happens under medium security conditions. The facility can accommodate 12 patients with learning disabilities: 8 male and 4 female. The service is at the Rowanbank Clinic, NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde.



## Inherited Metabolic Disorders



**Website:** <https://www.nss.nhs.scot/specialist-healthcare/specialist-services/inherited-metabolic-disorders-adult-and-paediatric/>

NHS boards pool funds to meet the costs for a small number of orphan drugs that are used to treat extremely rare diseases that are chronically debilitating or life-threatening. The majority of drugs the scheme covers are for people with inherited metabolic disorders. Numbers of patients on Orphan Drugs, to treat inherited metabolic disease, has risen significantly over the last 10 years. This is due to improved diagnosis of Fabry's disease and the growth in the cohort of patients with this disease and other rare metabolic disorders.



## Lutathera for Neuroendocrine Tumours



Lutathera therapy treatment for neuroendocrine tumours (NETs) is provided at the Beatson West of Scotland Cancer Centre in Glasgow. The service provides in-patient and follow-up treatment to people with small bowel NETs that are somatostatin receptor (SSR) positive. Lutathera therapy slows down the growth of tumours, or prevents them from growing altogether.



## UK Specialist Services



We meet the costs of specialist patient treatment outside of Scotland, on behalf of NHS boards. Decisions about treatment for any patient referred to a service outside Scotland are made by relevant specialists and the patient's local NHS board. Any request for funding must show that the referral is to access a proven, evidence-based, specialist intervention that's not available elsewhere in NHSScotland.





Ultra-orphan drugs



**Website:** <https://www.nss.nhs.scot/specialist-healthcare/financial-risk-share/ultra-orphan-medicines/>

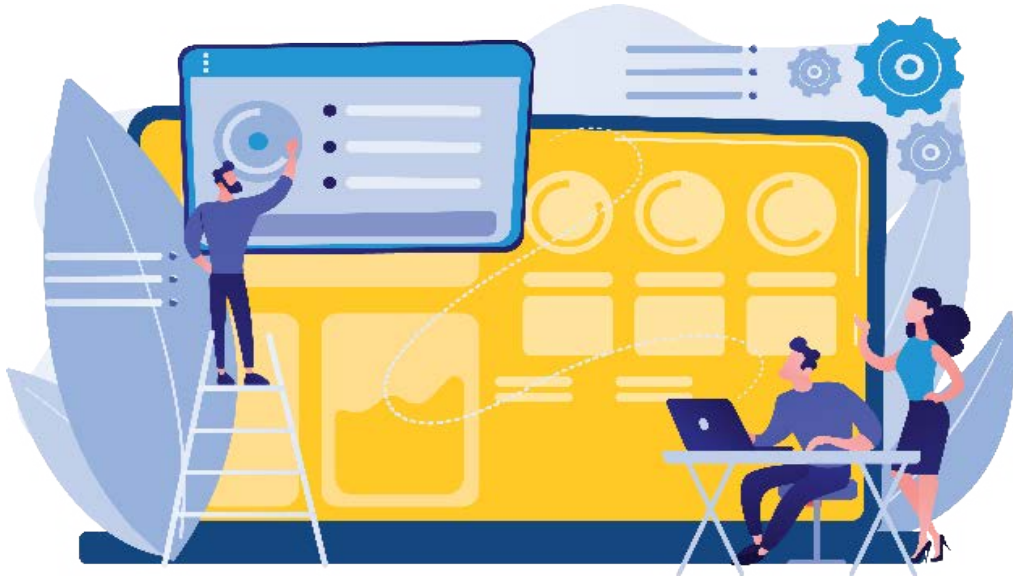
Ultra-Orphan Drug Risk Share provides funding for medicines that have approval via the ultra-orphan medicines pathway and a small number of medicines for extremely rare conditions that have been accepted by SMC outside the new ultra-orphan process. This scheme pools funds from all of Scotland’s health boards.

CAR-T Therapy



**Website:** <https://www.nss.nhs.scot/specialist-healthcare/specialist-services/car-t-therapy-service-adult/>

CAR-T therapy is an advanced therapy medicinal product (ATMP) where a patient’s own immune cells are genetically modified to specifically target tumour cells, thereby developing a potent and highly focused immune response to eradicate malignant cells. The CAR-T clinical service for adults in Scotland is integrated with the NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde Adult Stem Cell Transplantation unit, which also delivers the nationally designated allogeneic stem cell transplantation service for adults. NOTE: This service was de-designated as a national service in 2024



Population Screening

Screening programmes aim to detect early signs of disease or a condition in the population and offer a reliable pathway to referral for diagnostic testing and further treatment. Screening policy is set by the Scottish Government Health and Social Care Directorates on the advice of the UK National Screening Committee (NSC) and other appropriate bodies.

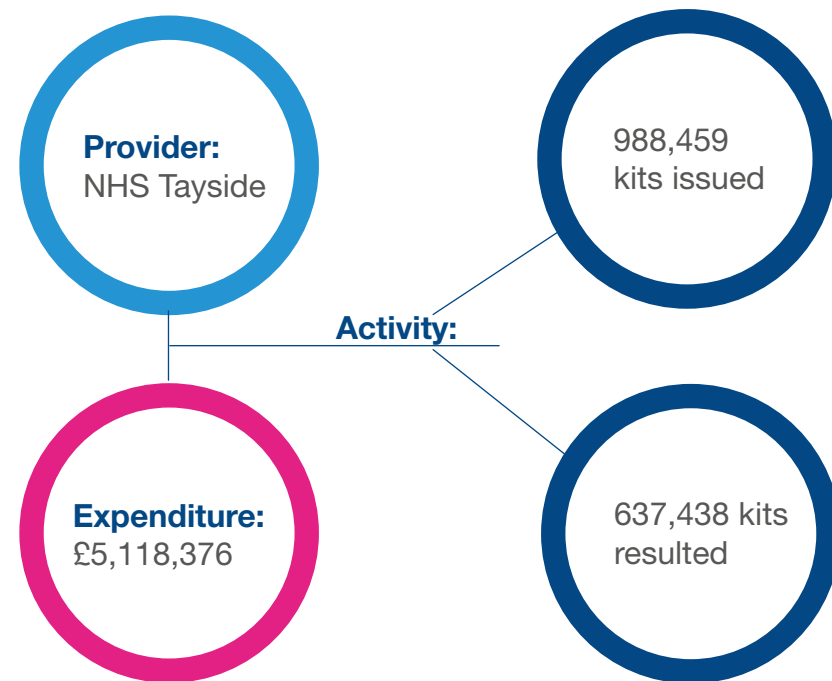
For a screening programme to be considered as a population-based programme, it must be acceptably accurate and designed to test for a disease or condition where earlier detection and intervention would be of benefit to the patient and where the screening test does not cause unacceptable harm.

NSD is responsible for commissioning national elements within five of the national programmes (detailed below).



# Scottish Bowel Screening Programme

## Scottish Bowel Screening Centre



**Website:** <https://www.nss.nhs.scot/screening-oversight-and-assurance-scotland/screening-programmes/bowel-screening/>

\*Please note this is based on management information and not nationally published screening data

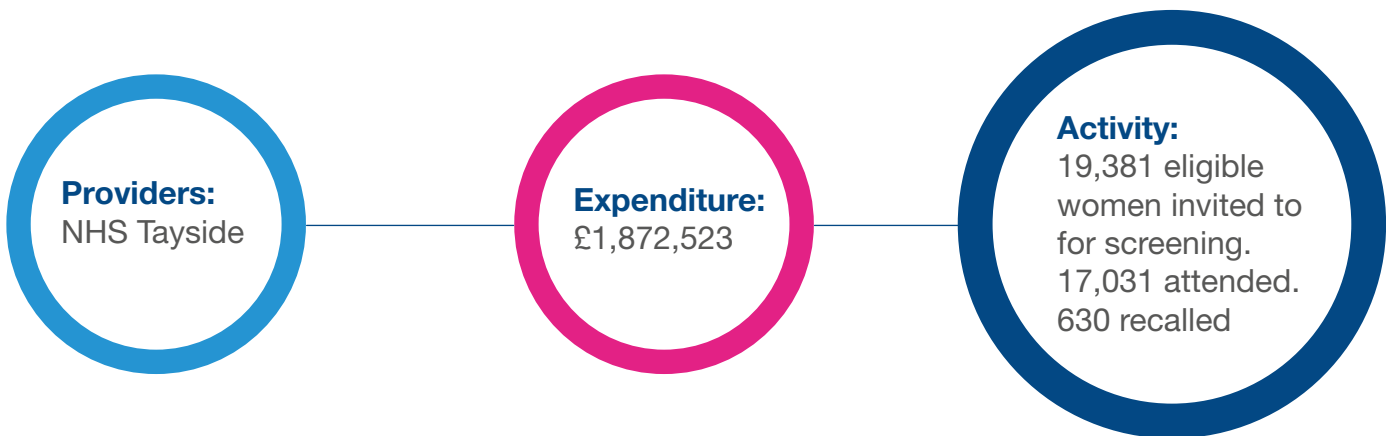
The Scottish Bowel Screening Programme issues bowel screening kits to all eligible men and women aged 50 to 74 years of age across Scotland, and for those over 75 years who self-refer into the programme. Located in Dundee, the Bowel Screening Centre provides a call-recall office, helpline, and laboratory which receives, and analyses all returned kits. If the test indicates the individual requires further investigation, participants are referred via the Bowel Screening IT System (BoSS) to the relevant local colorectal cancer service.

# Scottish Breast Screening Programme

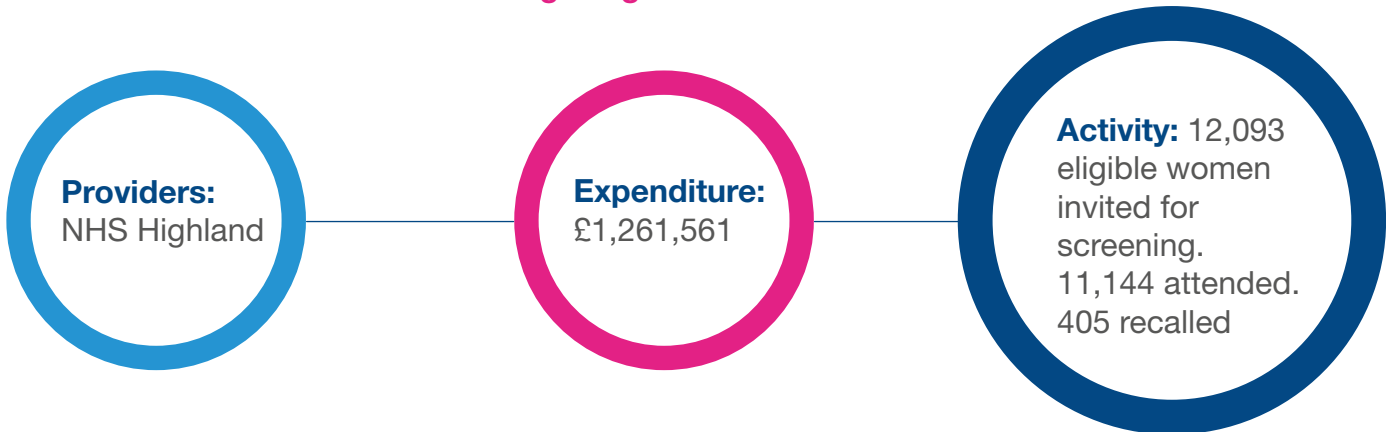
**Website:** <https://www.nss.nhs.scot/screening-oversight-and-assurance-scotland/screening-programmes/breast-screening/>

The Scottish Breast Screening Programme (SBSP) is nationally commissioned through six NHSScotland boards. Invitations are issued to local eligible populations to attend one of the six breast screening centres or a mobile unit, within the local area to ensure equity of access in both urban and rural areas of Scotland. Women between 50 and 70 years of age are invited for screening.

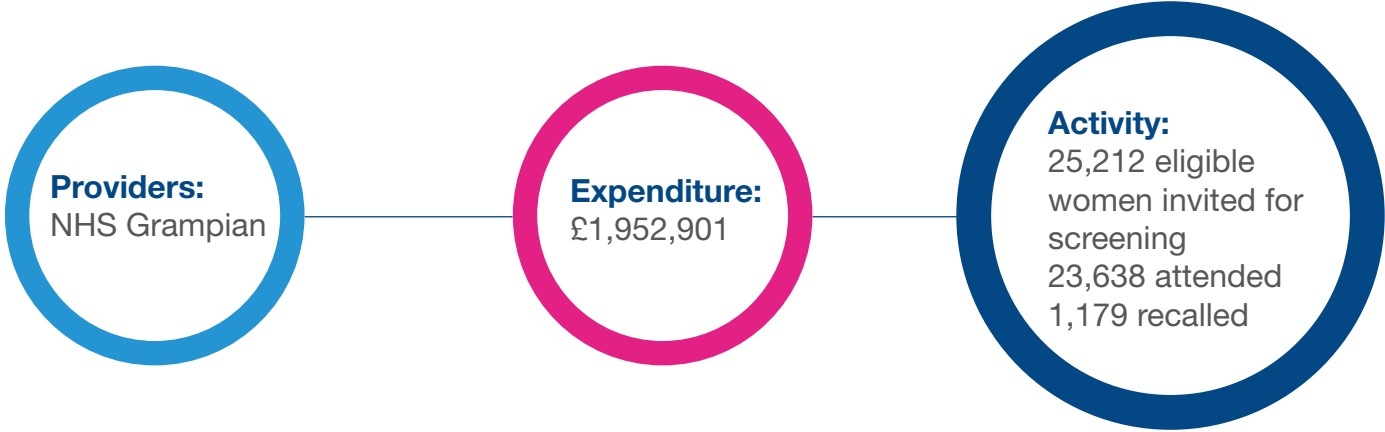
## East of Scotland Breast Screening Programme



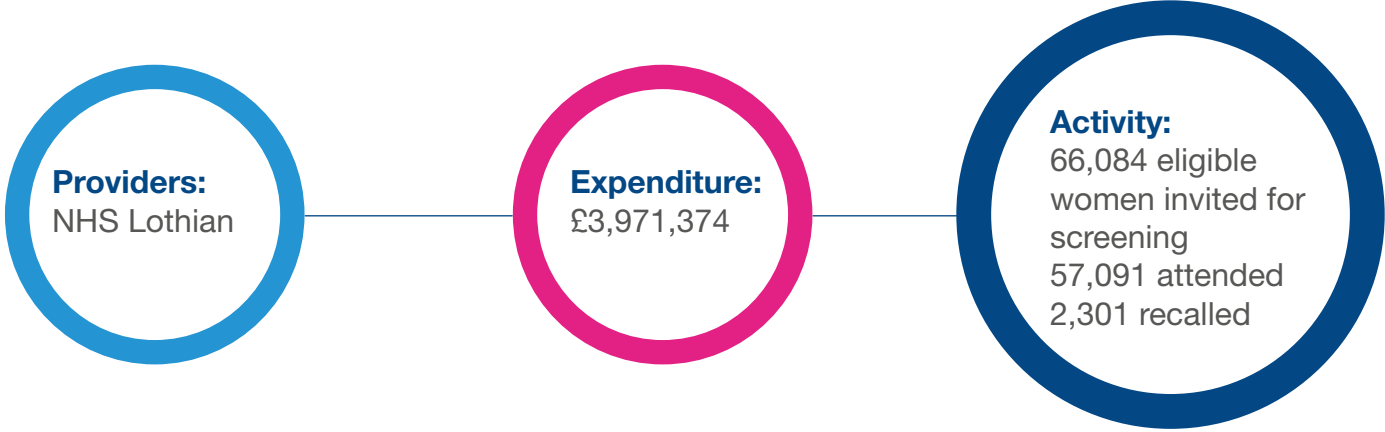
## North of Scotland Breast Screening Programme



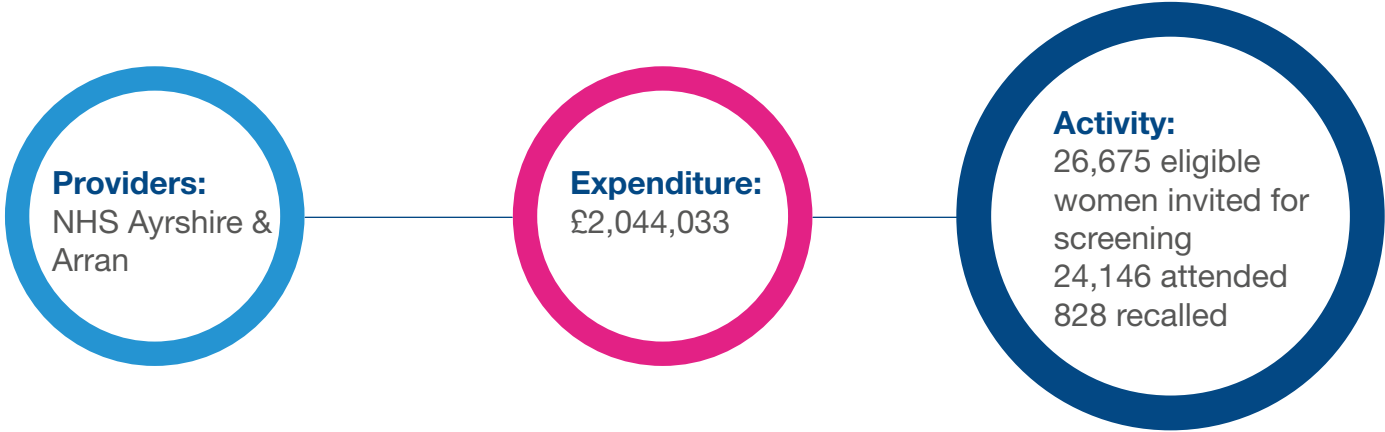
North East of Scotland Breast Screening Programme



South East of Scotland Breast Screening Programme



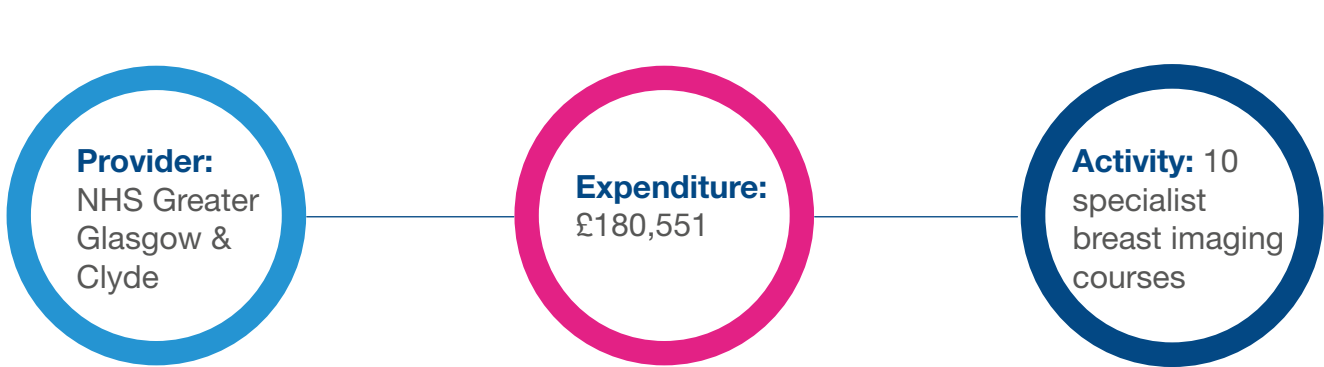
South West of Scotland Breast Screening Programme



West of Scotland Breast Screening Programme



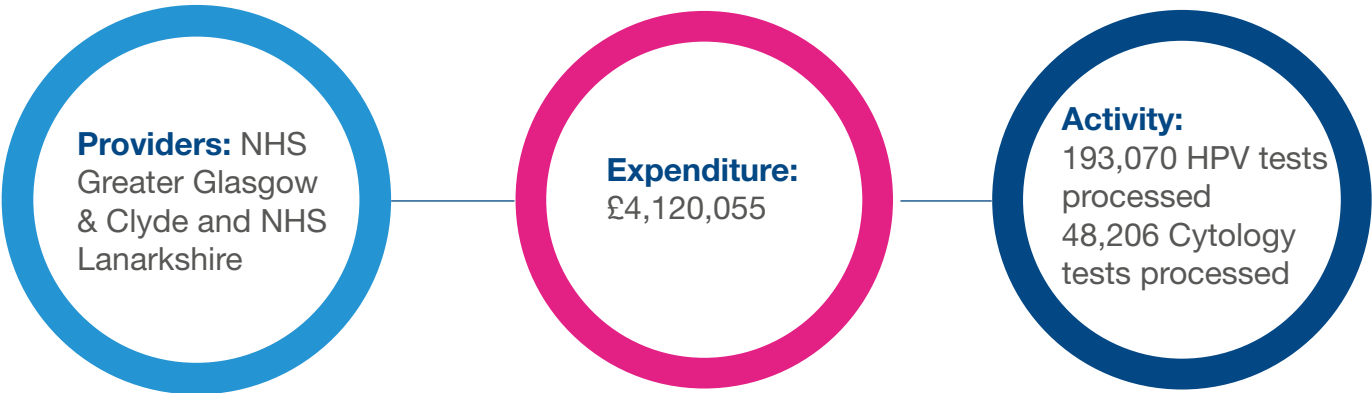
Scottish Academy of Breast Imaging



The Scottish Academy for Breast Imaging (SABI) is situated within the West of Scotland Breast Screening Centre (WoSBSC), training is delivered on two sites; WoSBSC and in South East Scotland Breast Screening Centre in Glasgow. SABI provides training for staff employed in NHS Scotland Breast Screening Programme, for wider Radiology department needs regarding the symptomatic breast service in Scotland and further afield for the private sector. Students attend from throughout the UK and Ireland.

Scottish Cervical Screening Programme

Scottish Cervical Screening Specialist Laboratory Service



**Website:** <https://www.nss.nhs.scot/screening-oversight-and-assurance-scotland/screening-programmes/cervical-screening/>

NSD commissions two laboratories to provide Human Papiloma Virus (HPV) primary screening and further cytology screening for the Scottish Cervical Screening Programme.

Cervical Cytology Training School



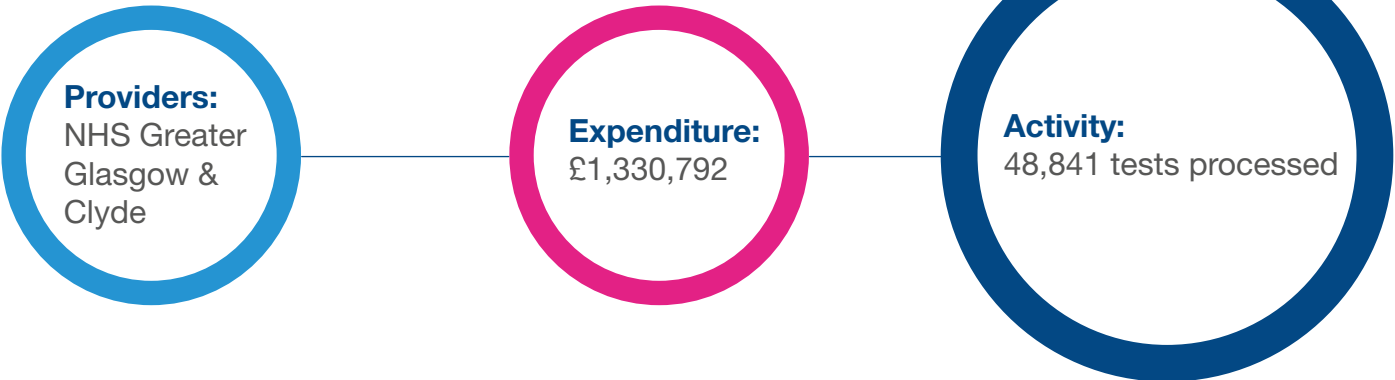
Website: <https://www.nss.nhs.scot/screening-oversight-and-assurance-scotland/screening-programmes/cervical-screening/cervical-cytology-training-school/>

The Scottish Cervical Cytology Training School delivers specialist courses to train and provide continuing professional development for staff who deliver cervical cytology screening as part of the Scottish Cervical Screening Programme.



Newborn Blood Spot Screening Programme

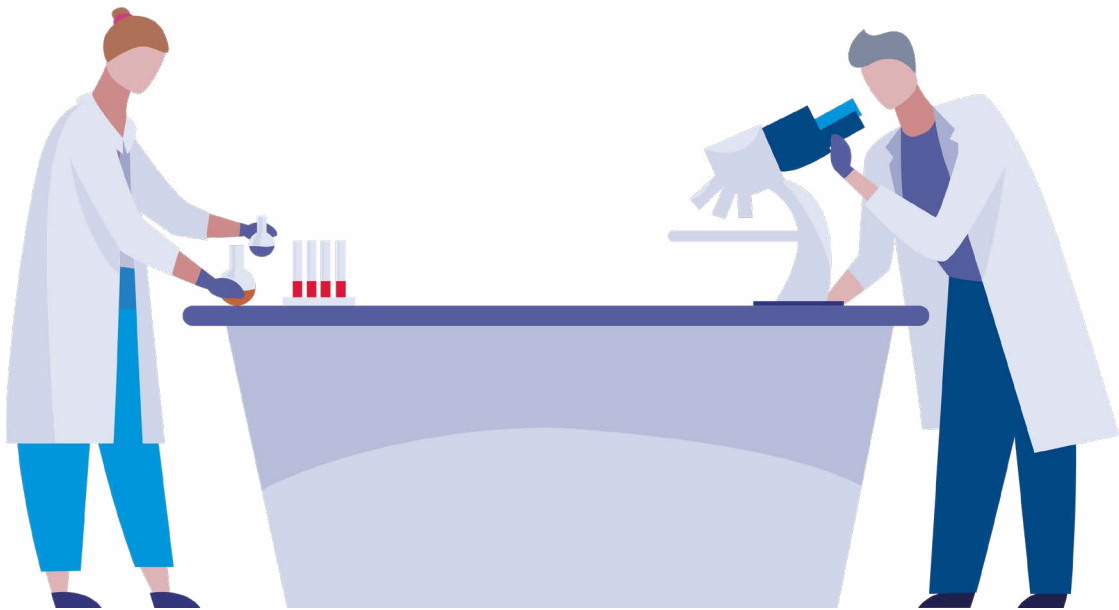
Newborn Bloodspot Screening Laboratory



Website: <https://www.nss.nhs.scot/specialist-healthcare/screening-programmes/newborn-blood-spot-screening/>

Every baby is offered newborn blood spot screening, which is also known as the heel prick test. Ideally this occurs between 96 to 120 hours of life (or four to five completed days). Day of birth is day zero.

Newborn blood spot screening involves local midwives taking a blood sample from the baby’s heel to find out if they have one of nine rare but serious health conditions. The sample is sent to the national laboratory for testing.





# Pregnancy Screening Programmes

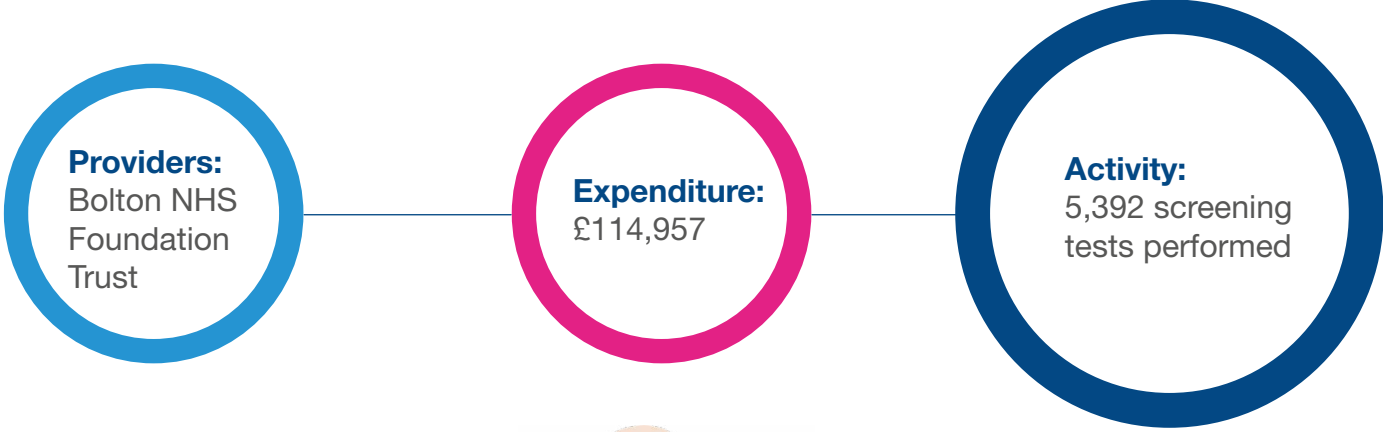
**Website:** <https://www.nss.nhs.scot/specialist-healthcare/screening-programmes/pregnancy-screening/>

NSD commissions two laboratories to provide first and second trimester pregnancy screening for trisomy chromosome conditions; Down’s syndrome, Edwards’ syndrome and Patau’s syndrome. The second trimester test is only offered for Down’s syndrome.

## Trisomy Screening Laboratory (first trimester)



## Trisomy Screening Laboratory (second trimester)



# National Networks

National networks work across professional and organisational boundaries to support Scottish Government policy aims of safe, effective healthcare that’s designed around patients, carers and families. They are funded by NHSScotland boards and managed and governed through NSD.



## Clinical Networks

Scotland has 24 clinical networks for rare conditions and highly complex care needs, which help ensure that patients receive high-quality specialist care. These networks bring together healthcare professionals and other experts to work collaboratively with patients, carers, families, and voluntary organisations. Together, they design and support care pathways that promote equitable access to the highest standards of care, no matter where in Scotland a person lives.

- Care of Burns in Scotland (COBIS)
- Children and Young People’s Allergy Network (CYANS)
- Children with Exceptional Healthcare Needs (CEN)
- Cleftcare Scotland (Cleftcare Scotland)
- Network for Inherited Cardiac Conditions Scotland (NICCS)
- National Gender Identity Clinical Network Scotland (NGICNS)
- Perinatal Mental Health Network (PMHN)
- Phototherapy Network (Photonet)
- Paediatric End of Life Care Network (PELiCaN)
- Scottish Acquired Brain Injury Network (SABIN)
- Scottish Differences in Sex Development (DSD)
- Scottish Muscle Network(SMN)
- Scottish Obstetric Cardiology Network (SOCN)
- Scottish Paediatric and Adult Haemoglobinopathies Network (SPAHL)
- Scottish Inherited Bleeding Disorders Network (SIBDN)
- Scottish Paediatric and Adolescent Rheumatology Network (SPARN)
- Scottish Paediatric and Adolescent Infection and Immunology Network (SPAIIN)
- Scottish Paediatric Endocrine Group (SPEG)
- Scottish Paediatric Epilepsy Network (SPEN)
- Scottish Paediatric Renal and Urology Network (SPRUN)
- Scottish Systemic Vasculitis Network
- Surgical Congenital Anomalies Network Scotland (SCANS)
- Visual Impairment Network for Children and Young People (VINCYP)
- Hearing Impairment Network for Children and Young People (HINCYP)

In 2024/25, clinical networks have supported this through:

- Delivery of education and peer support through conferences, online sessions, TURAS modules and case discussion forums
- Development of guidance, pathways and information resources,
- Data collection and analysis to support identification and measurement of improvement
- Service improvement projects

**Website:** <https://www.nn.nhs.scot/>

Diagnostic Networks

Five diagnostic networks support improvements in how diagnostic services are delivered to ensure the right test at the right time.

- Haematology and Transfusion Scotland Network (HaTS)
- Scottish Clinical Biochemistry Network (SCBN)
- Scottish Microbiology and Virology Network (SMVN)
- Scottish Clinical Imaging Network (SCIN)
- Scottish Pathology Network (SPAN)

Website: <https://www.nn.nhs.scot/>

The [Scottish Strategic Network for Diagnostics](#) leads on the transformation of diagnostic services in Scotland.

Scottish Cancer Network

Website: <https://www.nn.nhs.scot/cancer-networks/>

Aligned to national cancer strategy vision, the Scottish Cancer Network (SCN) supports and facilitates a ‘Once for Scotland’ approach to person-centred, equitable and accessible cancer care. The network receives £1.6million Scottish Government funding for delivery.

Clinical Management Pathways:

National Services Scotland were commissioned by Scottish Government in 2021 to establish a consensus process for defining clinical management pathways for cancer. Whilst regional, national and international guidelines existed, it was a challenge to ensure these were timeously maintained and aligned to latest cancer care developments and to manage variation across Scotland.

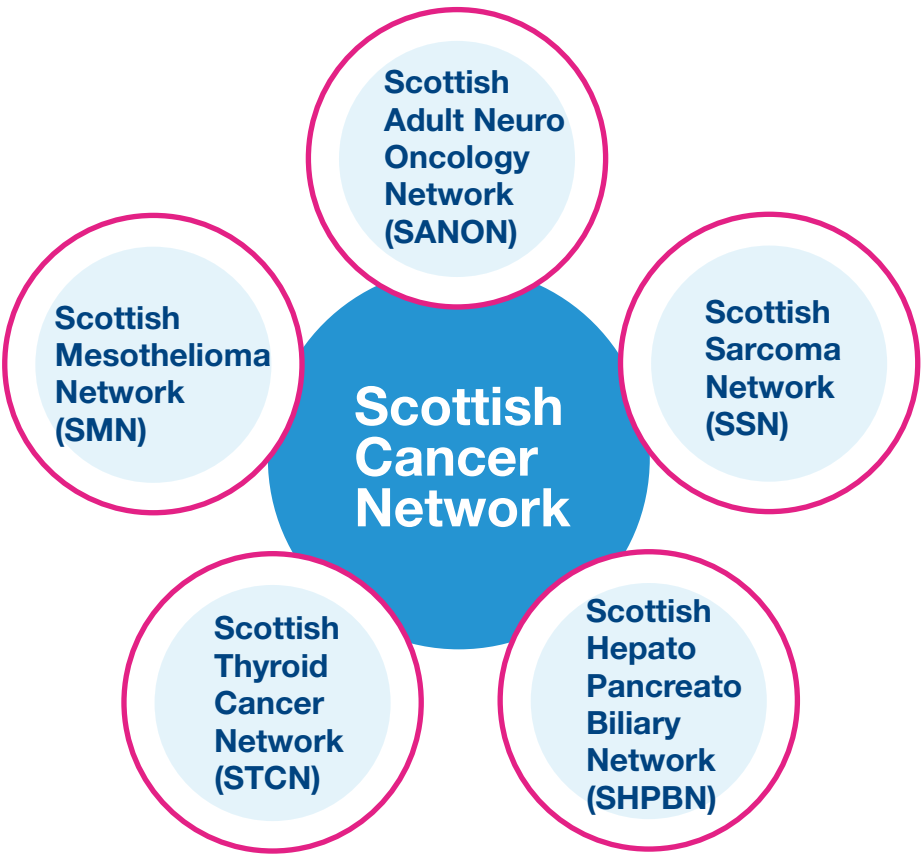
Through consultation, health-care professionals agreed it would be helpful for teams across Scotland to reach consensus on which treatment options might be considered at points across patient pathways from diagnosis right through to survivorship or end of life care.

Achievements:

- CMPs providing best practice guidance for breast cancer, lung cancer and adult brain tumours published on the Right Decision Service platform, with new CMPs for Prostate and Head & Neck Cancers due to be published imminently. Systemic Anti-Cancer Therapy (SACT)-only CMPs for Renal and Melanoma cancers are also currently under development.
- 293 stakeholders involved within the Prostate, Head and Neck, Melanoma and Renal Cancer Pathways across 18 specialist subgroups.
- Over 4.5k users accessed the 3 published CMPs (Breast, Lung and Adult-Neuro) since launch in September 2023 accumulating over 40k site views.
- Processes have been developed to support final sign-off for new CMPs and updates to existing CMPs including a process for Scottish Medicines Consortium and National Cancer Medicines Advisory Group advice.

National Managed Clinical Networks – Cancer

The Scottish Cancer Network hosts five cancer networks that bring together a wide range of stakeholders to design optimal pathways, measure quality and drive forward improvements in cancer care and treatment.



Collaborative Projects

National Oncology Transformation (OTP) programme:

The SCN have provided funding for programme management support for the ongoing development of a national Oncology Target Operating Model, which is being led by Scottish Government.

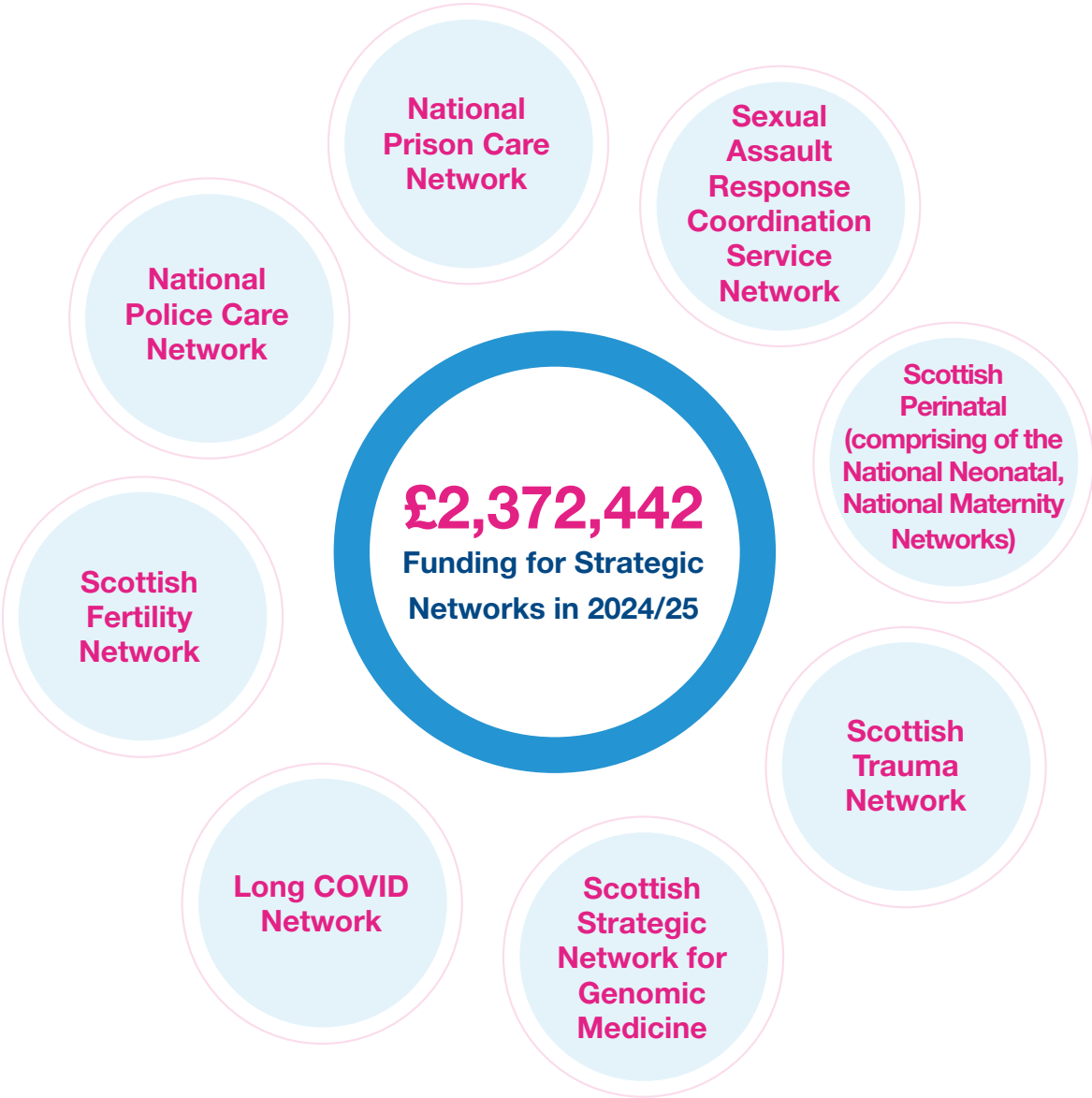
Network and Governance Scoping:

The SCN were commissioned to undertake scoping around future models for several national cancer governance groups and potential new network models for two new tumour sites. While the scoping was completed in 24/25, within the recommendations provided to Scottish Government from these reports, there was recognition of the evolving and changing cancer landscape and a greater need to understand future requirements.

Strategic Networks

Strategic networks are commissioned when nationally focused, large major change across whole pathways of care is required.

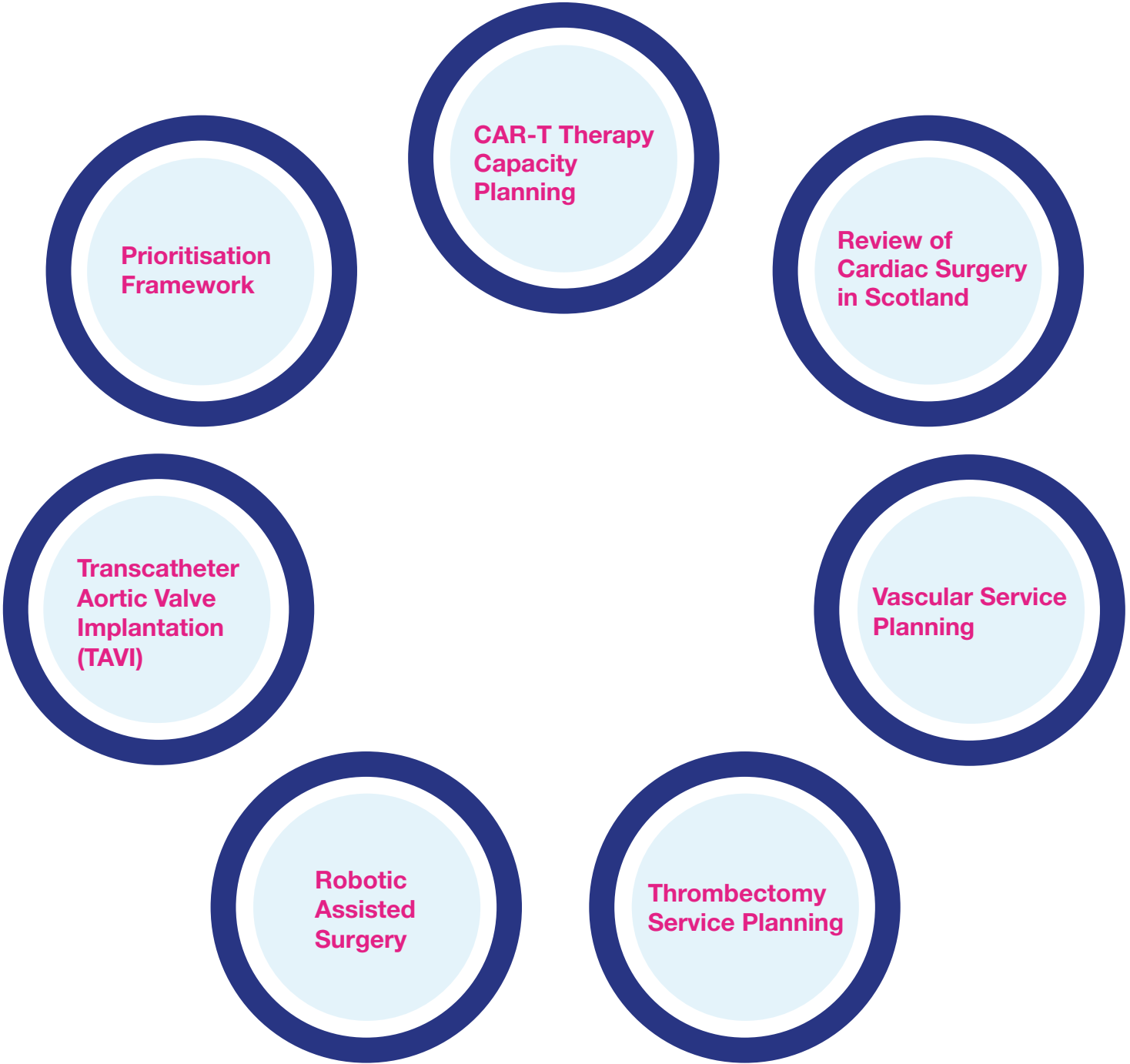
In 2024/25 there were eight Strategic Networks funded by Scottish Government and managed and governed by NSD:



National Planning

Funded by the Scottish Government, the National Planning Team operates within NSD and reports to the Strategic Planning Board, which in turn reports to the NHS National Executive Group.

Key National Planning workstreams across 2024-25 were:





# Spotlight on...

## New screening commissioning team established

National Screening Oversight (NSO) and National Services Division (NSD) both have roles in relation to the population screening programmes, and both are based in NSS. Since 2021 NSO has provided oversight and assurance across the screening pathway, whilst NSD for many years provided coordination support to the national screening programmes, and as the national commissioner for NHSScotland it also commissions some elements within the screening pathways (eg Cervical Screening, Bowel Screening, Breast Screening, Newborn and Pregnancy Screening).

With the agreement of Scottish Government, the Scottish Screening Committee and NSS a programme of work was completed to reorganising the teams to simplify the landscape at the national level and to increase clarity in roles and responsibilities.

On 1 April 2024, the responsibility for coordination support for the national screening programmes passed from NSD to NSO. That meant the NSD screening team – Senior Programme Managers and other staff - moved out of NSD to join NSO in the Clinical Directorate of NSS establishing a new, larger team at the national level (Screening Oversight and Assurance Scotland, or SOAS) that is entirely dedicated to supporting the national screening programmes.

NSD continued to have responsibility for the commissioning arrangements for the nationally commissioned screening services. From October 2024 a new team has worked to undertake screening commissioning aligning this with existing process in place for all NSD nationally commissioned specialist services.

## Prioritisation Framework supports national decision making

Scottish Government and NHSScotland are facing increasingly complex and challenging decisions over resource allocation. To address this, a Prioritisation Framework was developed by National Planning, which built on existing prioritisation resource. This included National Specialist Services Committee (NSSC), tools, evidence and knowledge from Public Health Scotland (PHS) and NHS Forth Valley.

The Framework supports evidence-based and transparent prioritisation with value-based healthcare embedded at the centre. Stakeholders from a wide range of disciplines were involved in developing the tool, ensuring it is fit for purpose in a range of settings: locally and nationally, as well as services, innovations, and other proposals. The Framework allows proposals to be assessed qualitatively and quantitatively, providing a robust and multidimensional scoring methodology, facilitating realistic comparison between competing proposals.



## Review of Adult Cardiac Services in Scotland

Heart disease remains a major cause of death and disability in Scotland, accounting for over 9,000 deaths each year. In 2023 there were 2,366 adult cardiac surgery procedures undertaken in Scotland, an increase on the previous three years.

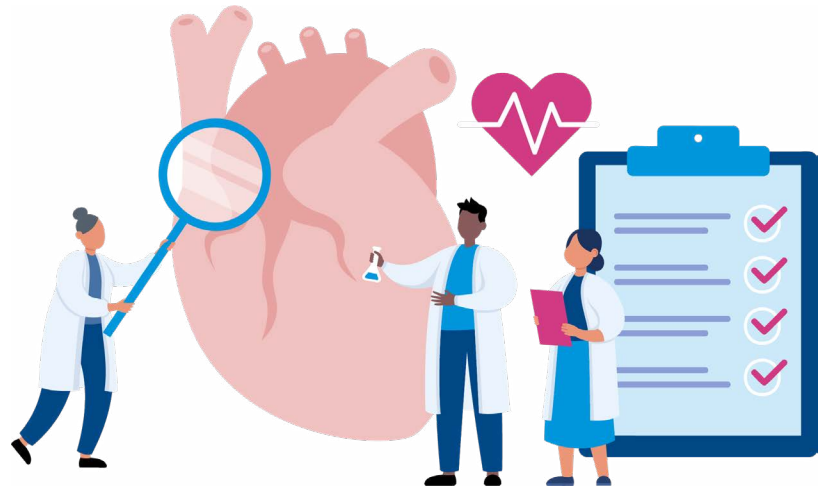
In April 2024 National Planning commenced a review of adult cardiac surgery in Scotland, services currently provided by the Golden Jubilee National Hospital, Aberdeen Royal Infirmary and Edinburgh Royal Infirmary.

Commissioned by Scottish Government Heart Disease policy team, the review was a key output from previous work carried out by National Planning. The case for change in adult cardiac surgery centres in Scotland is driven by several factors: significant variation in service provision across the three centres, shifting trends towards minimally invasive techniques, and the rapid emergence of new technologies and procedures.

Chaired by Dr. Anna Lamont, Medical Director, NHS Orkney, the collaborative review included clinical, operational and management stakeholders from across surgical and non-surgical sites, regional colleagues, NHS England representatives and a patient representative.

Engagement with the cardiac community and wider stakeholders was critical in compiling the review information and National Planning are grateful for their support during the short period of the review. Upon conclusion of the review group in March 2025 a report was submitted to the planning and delivery board for consideration. The review identified the following areas for focus:

- Commitment to regional working to provide care closer to home
- Redefine SLAs where necessary to support regional referrals and pathways
- Regional development groups to support regional working
- Shared national roles where possible
- Shared learning on improved outcomes
- Develop Standards for Cardiac Surgery in Scotland
- Define core/complex procedures – determine what should be provided where, as part of development of standards





# Improving guidance to support the delivery of sexual assault response services

*This section highlights work of the Sexual Assault Response Coordination Services (SARCS) Network. There is reference to sexual assault and rape in the article. We are extremely cognisant that this can be a sensitive topic and could potentially be distressing to some. If you wish to find out more about SARCS, or would like to access available support, please visit <https://www.nhsinform.scot/turn-to-sarcs>*

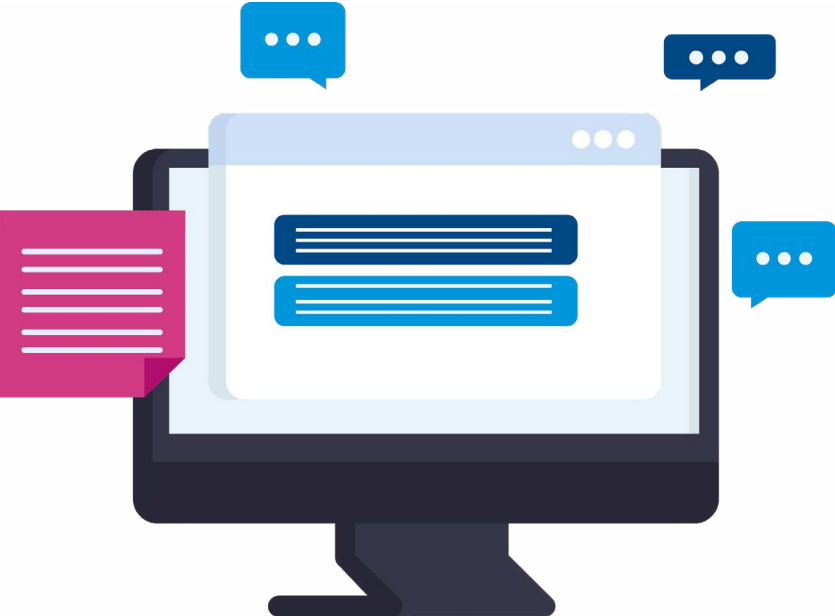
The Sexual Assault Response Coordination Services (SARCS) Network updated [guidance to ensure that healthcare professionals working across NHS Scotland can appropriately support people who disclose rape or sexual assault](#). The guidance was co-produced with a range of professionals working across the NHS including pharmacy, maternity services, psychology and primary care. The guidance supports the delivery of the Network’s vision to ensure that people have access to coordinated, holistic, person-centred, trauma-informed healthcare and forensic medical services following a rape or sexual assault regardless of where they disclose.

The Network collaborated with NSS Communications to digitise the guidance and Healthcare Improvement Scotland to host on the Right Decisions Service website, ensuring a “one stop shop” approach to accessing the guidance.

Launching the guidance at the 2024 NHSScotland Event, it sets out:

- the steps healthcare professionals should take following a disclosure of rape or sexual assault,
- the referral options available.
- links to further support
- a resource to check all necessary steps have been taken

Since the guidance was launched on 10 June 2024, to 31 March 2025, it has been accessed online over 9000 times, by over 3000 users. During this time, referrals into SARCS from healthcare professionals have increased by 12%, in particular from hospital wards and pharmacies, demonstrating a positive impact. A video to raise awareness of the guidance is currently in development. The Network also collaborated with NES and PHS to create an e-module to support healthcare professionals to respond and provide appropriate support following disclosure of rape and or sexual assault.



# Evaluation of Perinatal Mental Health Service Improvements

In 2019, the Perinatal Mental Health Network Scotland (PMHNS) published the [Delivering Effective Services](#) (DES) report. It set out a series of 28 recommendations to further develop perinatal mental health services, across all tiers of service delivery, to improve care for women, their infants and families who require support during pregnancy and/or the first year postnatally.

Following the significant advancement to service provision since the publication of the DES report, the Network carried out an evaluation of its implementation in 2024/25. This reviewed the progress made against each of the DES recommendations and looked to identify future clinical priorities and potential areas for further improvement and development of specialist perinatal services.

Each DES recommendation was reviewed, and specific questionnaires were developed for each tier of specialist perinatal mental health service – Community Perinatal Mental Health Teams (CPMHTs), Maternity and Neonatal Psychological Interventions (MNPI) services, and Mother and Baby Units (MBUs) – to focus the review on the specific DES recommendations relevant to each service. Additional data was gathered from other sources, such as NHS Education for Scotland (NES) who provided information on perinatal mental health staff education and training. Twelve Health Boards returned questionnaires covering 27 perinatal mental health services across Scotland.

The findings of the evaluation clearly demonstrate that there has been a huge expansion of service provision, availability of specialist services, implementation of new specialist roles, and workforce education in recent years. Many areas of good practice have been shared as part of this evaluation. Since publication of DES in 2019, services have continued to evolve but demand has also grown. There were emerging themes in the evaluation around capacity, funding sustainability and the ability to meet the demands of the population. The report captures key considerations which are intended to help inform local, regional and national conversations about future priorities for further development and improvement.



# PELiCaN Police Scotland and SAS Occurrence Markers

The number of children living with a life-threatening/life- limiting condition (LTLLC) is increasing in Scotland.<sup>1</sup> As a result of medical and technology advances, children with LTLLC are surviving longer<sup>2</sup> and are requiring palliative care in the community over a longer period of time.<sup>3</sup>

The Scottish Government set out an expectation that:

“All children and young people with palliative care needs should be cared for and die in their preferred place of care”

Framework for the Delivery of Palliative Care for Children and Young People in Scotland (2012)

Several situations were reported by health boards where there was an un-measured response by emergency services in situations where child death at home was expected, leading not only to distress for families but also professionals involved.

PELiCaN worked with the Scottish Ambulance Service and Police Scotland to develop a process to identify:

- Patients who are unstable or deteriorating and vulnerable to sudden deterioration that may result in death at home
- Patients who are ‘actively dying’ and receiving end of life (EoL) care at home

This enabled emergency services to use information on the child’s situation to provide a proportionate and sensitive response, avoiding unnecessary actions and reducing further trauma to the grieving family.

The process was implemented through tests of change, enabling the process to be adapted in response to feedback, including feedback from families. Markers are placed against the patient’s home address and flags key information across systems for emergency services.

The process has now been adopted by 9 out of 14 health boards and 12 of 13 police divisions. SAS currently have 38 active markers across 9 health boards and Police Scotland have 28 live markers.

Feedback to date suggests the process has:

- Avoided unnecessary transfers of deteriorating patients by SAS through having key information in advance.
- Increased confidence amongst clinicians
- Empowered families when considering EoL choices for their child by reducing fear, as result of hearing other parent’s negative experiences.
- Consistent and robust working with SAS and Police Scotland since the process was implemented.
- Improved patient safety.

“Feedback from frontline staff confirms that the markers have positively impacted their ability to provide appropriate care, ultimately improving the overall service provision for children requiring emergency assistance” Scott McKinnon, Scottish Ambulance Service (2025). Whilst we cannot change the outcome, for those children who are palliative, we can influence the quality of support and care provided.

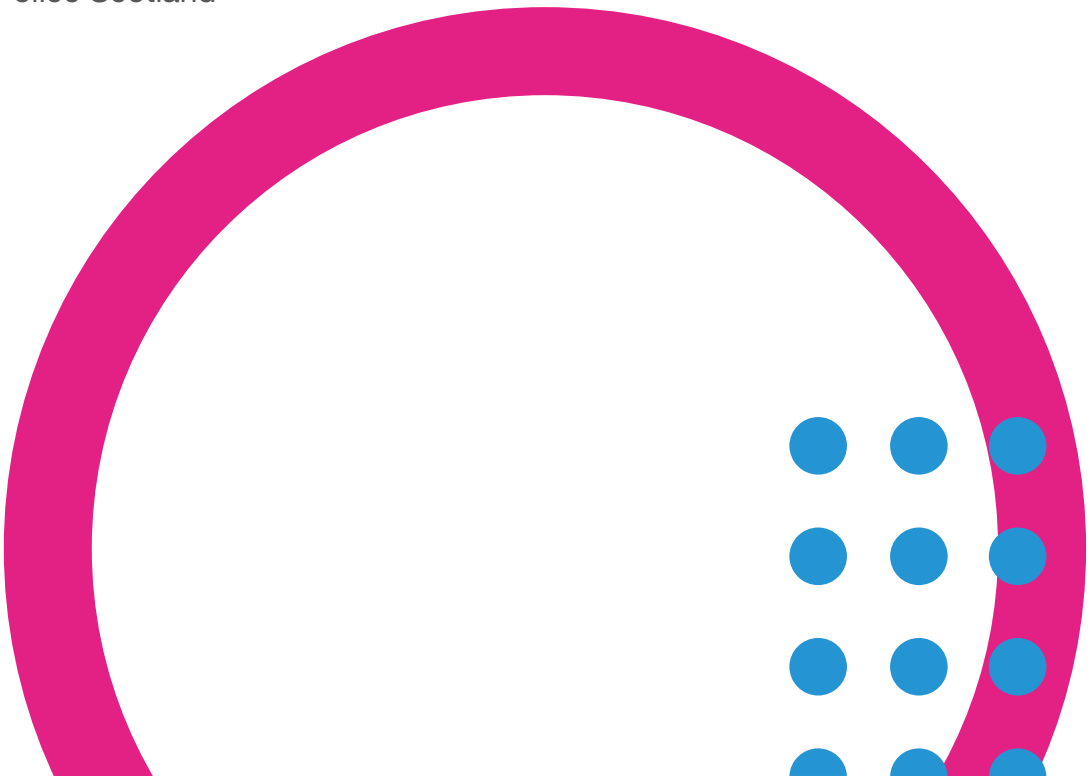
<sup>1</sup><https://pure.york.ac.uk/portal/en/publications/children-in-scotland-requiring-palliative-care-identifying-number>

Children in Scotland Requiring Palliative Care: identifying numbers and needs (The ChiSP Study).

<sup>2</sup><https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/31625623/>

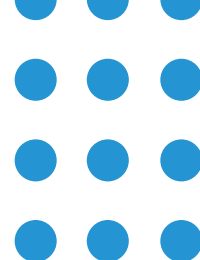
Survey of paediatricians caring for children with life-limiting conditions found that they were involved in advance care planning.

<sup>3</sup><https://bmcpalliatcare.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/1472-684X-12-18> Evidence-based planning and costing palliative care services for children: novel multi-method epidemiological and economic exemplar.<sup>4</sup><https://www.gov.scot/publications/framework-delivery-palliative-care-children-young-people-scotland/> A Framework for the Delivery of Palliative Care for Children and Young People in Scotland.



# Further Information

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