

Cleft Care Scotland

Annual Report

2025/26

The Network is supported by a dedicated programme team within Public Services Delivery Scotland (PSDS), consisting of:

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This document has been prepared by National Services Directorate (NSD) of Public Services Delivery Scotland (PSD Scotland) on behalf of Cleft Care Scotland (CCS). 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. CCS is a collaboration of stakeholders involved in care of people born with a cleft lip and/or palate who are supported by a PSD Scotland Programme Team to drive improvement across the care pathway.

Introduction

Around one in every 600 children are born with some form of cleft lip and/or palate in Scotland. Care for cleft patients is delivered by a multi-disciplinary team of professionals throughout childhood and into adulthood.

Cleft Care Scotland (CCS) provides a framework to facilitate delivery of standardised quality care for patients with cleft lip and/or palate throughout Scotland. The network's aim is to achieve the best possible clinical and other outcomes for children and adults living in Scotland who were born with a cleft lip and/ or palate, and reduce the burden of care for cleft patients and their families. This is achieved through better access to high quality specialist care by enabling Scottish Government and Health and Social Care Department (SGHSCD) policy aims of safe, effective, person-centred care delivered as close to home as possible.

Current Position

Activity during 2025/26 reflected national prioritisation set during a period of review. Alongside evolving national planning arrangements, Managed Clinical Networks were asked to focus activity on a number of core priorities.

Looking ahead, and consistent with the direction set by the Health and Social Care Service Renewal Framework and Scotland's Population Health Framework (June 2025), and recognising that Chief Executive Letter 29 (2012) *Managed Clinical Networks: Supporting and Delivering the Healthcare Quality Strategy* remains the extant mandate for Managed Clinical Networks, Cleft Care Scotland will build on its established approach by undertaking a Strategic Needs Assessment to inform the 2026/27 workplan and ensure priorities remain aligned to population need, current pathways, available data and stakeholder perspectives.

The priorities for Cleft Care Scotland in 2025/26 were:

Priority Action	Progress
Explore with network members/NSD what a 'stepped down model' will encompass and how this will be resourced.	This action was paused pending further clarity on the future model of networks and understanding of the model required going forward will be informed by the strategic needs assessment to be carried out in 2026/27.

All business-as-usual objectives in the 2025/26 workplan were completed. This included ensuring appropriate network governance, strengthening communication and stakeholder engagement, delivering education and progressing audit and continuous improvement activities.

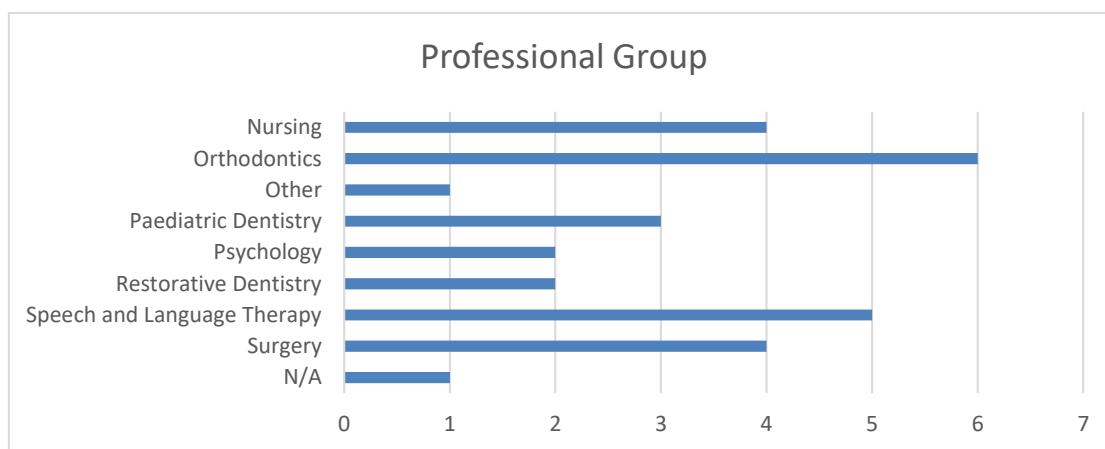
The network continued to make use of technology and remote communications to progress work this year. This has continued to be effective, saving time on travel and promoting economic and climate friendly practices.

Highlights

Audit Event

The network hosted an Audit Event in Perth on 29 May 2025 where specialty leads from across Scotland presented the audits of five-year-olds born in 2018 focussing on key findings, successes and challenges, and future actions. The event also provided the opportunity for stakeholders to share their latest research in cleft care and include dedicated time for professional networking.

The event was held in person in Perth Royal Infirmary with 27 people from the professional group mix noted below attending:



Evaluation forms were completed by 14 attendees (52%):

- Most respondents 'strongly agreed' (50%) or 'agreed' (50%) that the event had met its objective by giving them 'a greater understanding of the audits undertaken in cleft care'
- Attendees were asked to score each session. The results reflected that the majority of attendees agreed that the 'delivery' and 'content' of each was 'excellent' or 'very good'
- When asked what people valued most about this event, respondents highlighted the benefit of discussing the cleft audits and the opportunity to network in person with the wider multi-disciplinary team supporting cleft care.
- All respondents said the event would be 'very effective' (29%) or 'effective' (71%) in changing their practice.

Some of the ways attendees stated this event would change their practice included:

- Understand the outcomes of treatment and how interdisciplinary management influence patient's outcomes.
- Reinforcement of importance of consent and missing data.
- Present practice reinforced.
- More awareness of consent, further awareness of what the other specialties are doing for audit and how that fits with what I am doing.
- Greater awareness of CRANE and management of cleft patients.
- Will take comments on new psychological measure back to Clinical Excellence Network.

When asked to rate the event for event organisation, event format and event advertising the responses were:



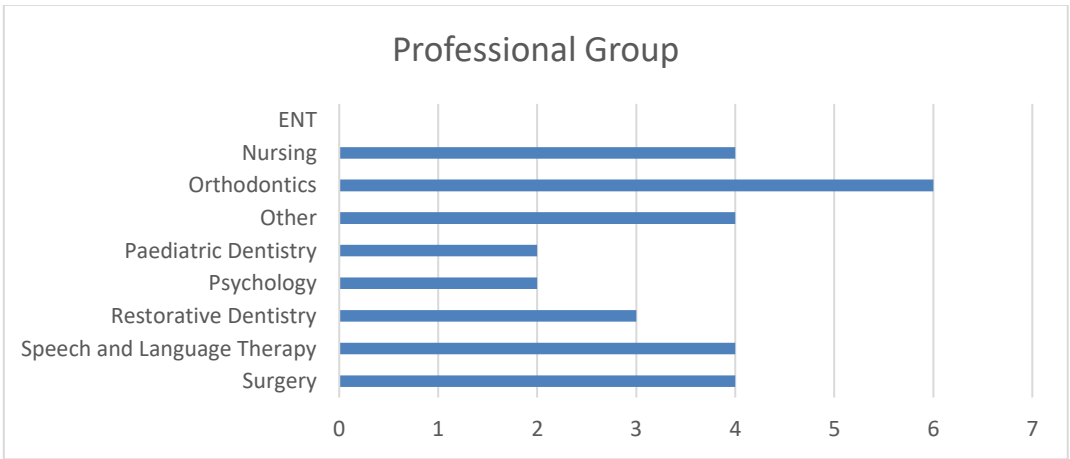
Nine respondents said the learning from this session would contribute to their Continuing Professional Development (CPD) requirement for revalidation. Four people said this was not applicable and one said it would not. All respondents said they would recommend the event to their colleagues. The event provided 174 hours of CPD to health care professionals.

Annual Education Event

Education is a core objective for all Managed Clinical Networks and a key action within the network’s Education Strategy is to host an annual education event for staff supporting cleft care in Scotland.

The CCS Annual Education Event was held on 29 January 2026 in Perth Royal Infirmary with the theme ‘Paediatric Cleft Surgery in Scotland. What does the future look like?’. In addition to presentations on this theme from the multidisciplinary team involved in providing cleft care, the event offered clinicians the opportunity to share their latest research in cleft care and professional group networking.

In total, 29 people attended the event with the professional group mix noted below:



Evaluation forms were completed by 13 participants (35%):

- Most respondents 'strongly agreed' (54%) or 'agreed' (38%) that the event had met its objective by giving them 'a broader understanding of Paediatric Cleft Surgery in Scotland and what the future looks like'. One respondent provided a 'strongly disagreed' response but this may have been an error as the respondent responded very positively in all of the other questions in the evaluation.
- Attendees were asked to score each presentation. The results reflected that the majority of attendees agreed that the 'delivery' and 'content' of each was 'excellent' or 'very good'.
- When asked what people valued most about this event, respondents highlighted the opportunity to expand knowledge of Cleft Services in Scotland and collaborate with colleagues.
- All respondents said the event would be 'very effective' (8%) or 'effective' (92%) in changing their practice.

Some of the ways attendees stated this event would change their practice included:

- Better understanding of cleft surgery in Scotland
- More efficient with my time management post surgery for patients and families
- Trial virtual Alveolar Bone Graft (ABG) clinics
- The impact of the funnel plots will elevate my efforts to get the required audits in time for submission
- Work together with team to implement suggested changes.

When asked to rate the event for event organisation, event format and event advertising the responses were:



Eleven respondents said the learning from this session would contribute to their Continuing Professional Development (CPD) requirement for revalidation, two people said this was not applicable. All respondents said they would recommend the event to their colleagues. The event provided 174 hours of CPD to health care professionals.

The feedback received, including suggested topics for future events, has been considered by the Steering Group to inform planning for future education events.

Looking forward – 2026/27

The Network will undertake a strategic needs assessment to inform the workplan for the next 3-5 years and agree clear, evidence-based, and measurable outcomes.

Audit and Education will remain the key focus for the Network through delivery of an Audit Event on 21 May 2026 and the Annual Education Event on 28 January 2027. The Network is currently scoping the opportunity to deliver an education event for Health Visitors to provide information on support and pathways in place for babies born with a cleft. Network members will continue to be supported through professional group networking on an ongoing basis and through dedicated sessions at education events.

This year the Network will trial six monthly Alveolar Bone Grafting (ABG) virtual clinics to bring together the staff involved in this procedure to discuss each case individually to ensure the best outcomes for each patient. The first virtual ABG clinic is planned to take place in October 2026.

The Network is currently scoping delivery of a quality improvement project to improve experiences for children and young people attending cleft multidisciplinary (MDT) clinics across Scotland. Previous research undertaken found that children and young people attending the cleft MDT clinics wanted more autonomy and person-centred care, and they shared some suggestions for improvements. The Network is hoping to progress the findings from this research by involving children and young people and their families to inform improvements in practice and development of child friendly resources to better meet their needs. Routes to secure funding for leadership of the project is currently being explored with support provided through the Network Core Team and governance through the Network Steering Group to deliver project outcomes.

Finance

The Network is funded through Public Services Delivery Scotland and operated within its approved budget during 2025/26.