

# **Scottish Clinical Biochemistry Network**

## **Annual Report 2023/24**

**Lead Clinician:** Mr Jim Allison

**Network Scientific Manager:** N/A

**Programme Manager:** Dr Catherine Colquhoun

**Programme Support Officer:** Mrs Nurjan Rakymova/Mrs Stephanie Hales

## **Introduction**

Managed Diagnostic Networks are defined as co-ordinated groups of health professionals that support diagnostic services to continuously improve service delivery, in order to ensure equitable provision of high quality, clinically effective services. Diagnostics, whether delivered in primary, community or secondary care, has an important role to play in achieving NHS Scotland quality ambitions by contributing to early, accurate and cost effective diagnosis, monitoring and self-management.

The role of the Scottish Clinical Biochemistry Network (SCBN) is to improve clinical biochemistry services by developing and delivering a workplan, that will:

- Steer modernisation, including service change and redesign
- Improve quality
- Support provision of safe, clinically effective, high quality, resilient and equitable biochemistry laboratory services.
- Anticipate and respond to user needs and future requirements (and)
- Fosters cross-board communications for departments to meet national guidelines

## **Current Position**

SCBN achieved 50% of its set service development objectives in 2023/24. The other objectives are close to completion and reasons for delay have been noted, several objectives linked to the CA125 audit and the Saproterin business case.

CA125 audit conclusion: This has been a challenging audit, however great strides have been made towards obtaining the data required, and engaging with all the contacts within NHS Boards to support the collation of this data. This was completed in advance of the cessation of the ethics for the audit in October 2023. The final draft of the slides are being prepared and will be circulated to the clinicians for feedback in advance of more widely promoting this audit to several national level groups.

Saproterin monitoring business case: The core team have continued to engage with colleagues working in the laboratory monitoring of the Saproterin treatment. Challenges have been faced in gaining data and consensus on the pathway to follow. Conversations are on-going and SCBN will continue with support of SSND to achieve a national approach and develop a business case during 2024-25.

Safer staffing: The WFE sub group primary focus has been to ensure the laboratory community have a voice in how new safer staffing legislation should be addressed in laboratories. This is being discussed with colleagues in other areas, and cross disciplinary discussions are being supported through the SCBN sub group. The core team have been seeking an NES (national education Scotland) representative to present and answer questions at the next WFE group.

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 economically friendly practices.

## Highlights

### EDUCATION EVENT

There were 59 attendees in person, with an additional three attendees participating virtually as seen in fig. 1. This represented nine different NHS Boards as seen in fig. 1. The attendees verbally and in the survey reported they were very satisfied with the event fig.2.,fig. 3. and fig.4., particularly enjoying the talk given by a patient who has benefited from the diabetes tested pathway that was driven by the SCBN. It was a very successful event, not only supporting established colleagues but trainees, and provided a good networking opportunity for colleagues across NHS Scotland and valuable discussions on the presented topics.

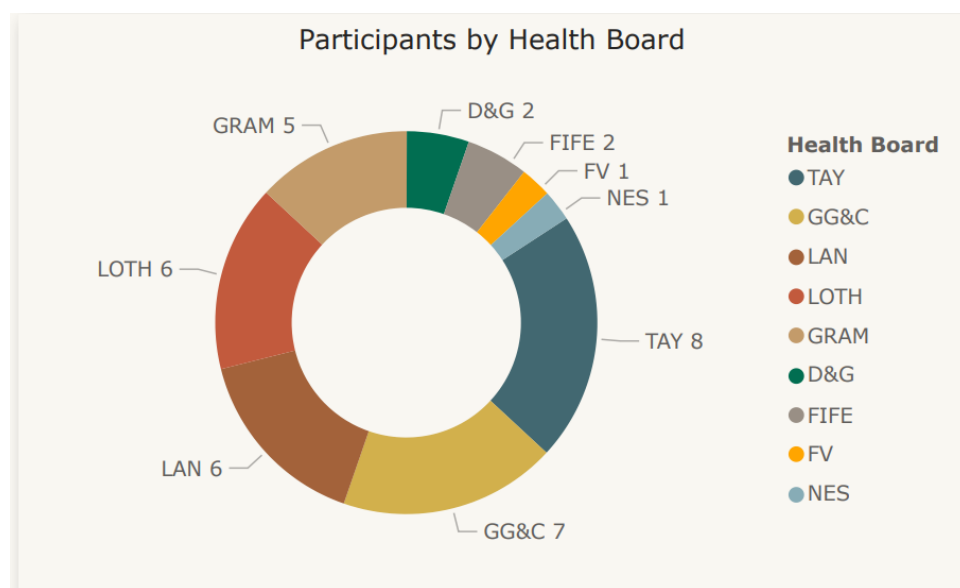


Fig 1

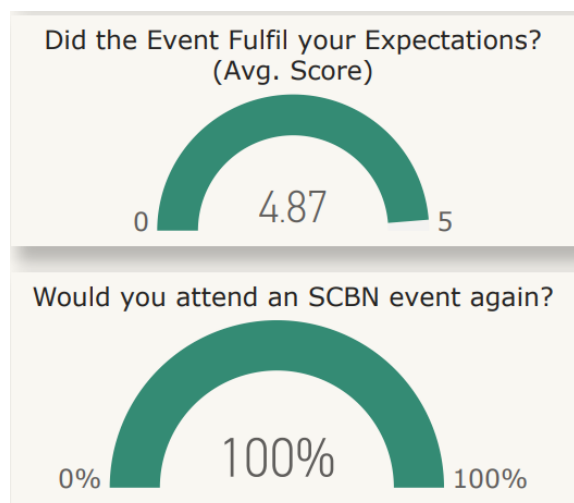


Fig 2

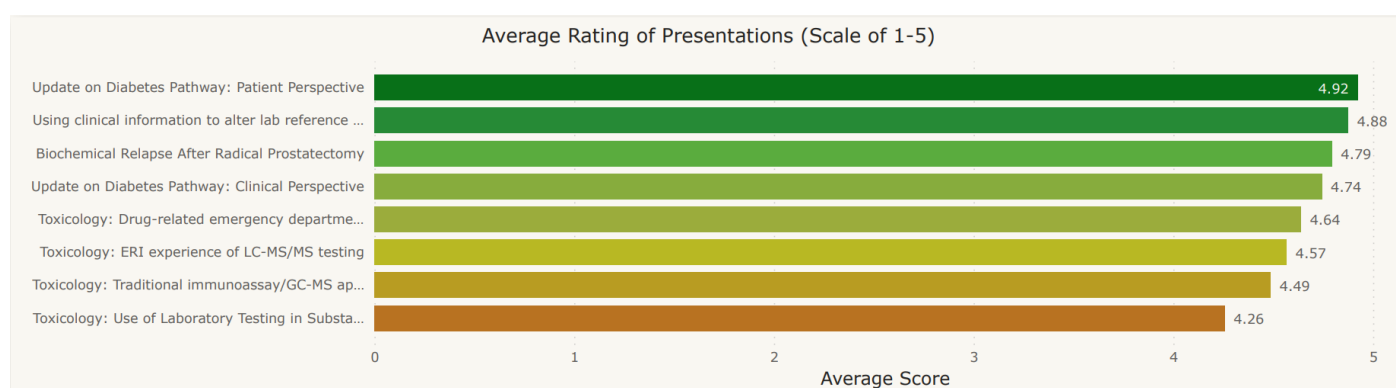


Fig 3

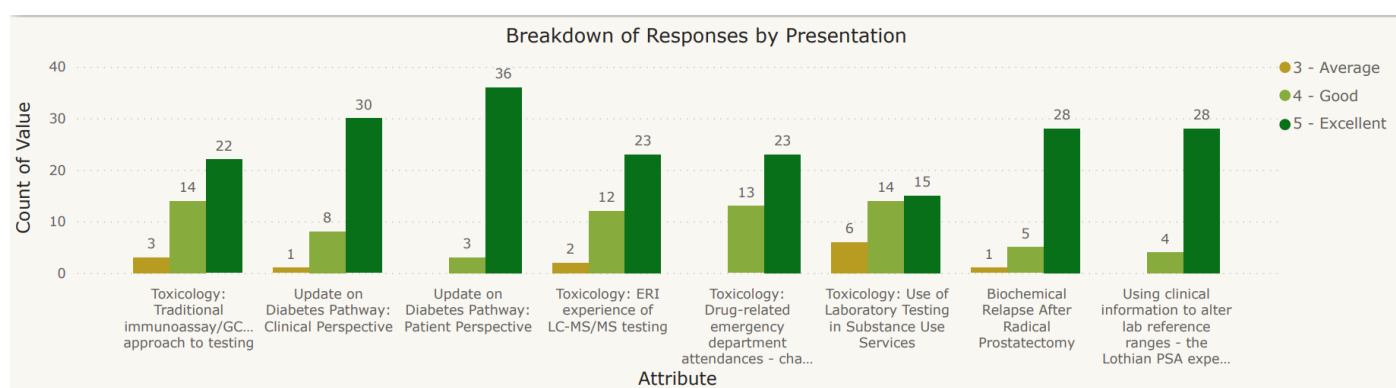


Fig 4

## Benchmarking

This year marked further successful collaboration between SCBN's Network members and the Information Management Service (IMS) in relation to quality and performance benchmarking. The report provides an insight into the performance of individual clinical biochemistry departments, set in the context of other NHS Health Boards in Scotland. The ability of the network to determine and shape the template for the data requests, ensures the information being gathered, best supports the on-going projects and horizon scanning of the projects coming up for the network. As seen

below fig 5, is the dashboard at the beginning of the benchmarking report that highlights the extent of the workload that is carried out in Clinical Biochemistry, staff profile and efficiency of the board based on the population and the number of WTE (whole time equivalent) staff.

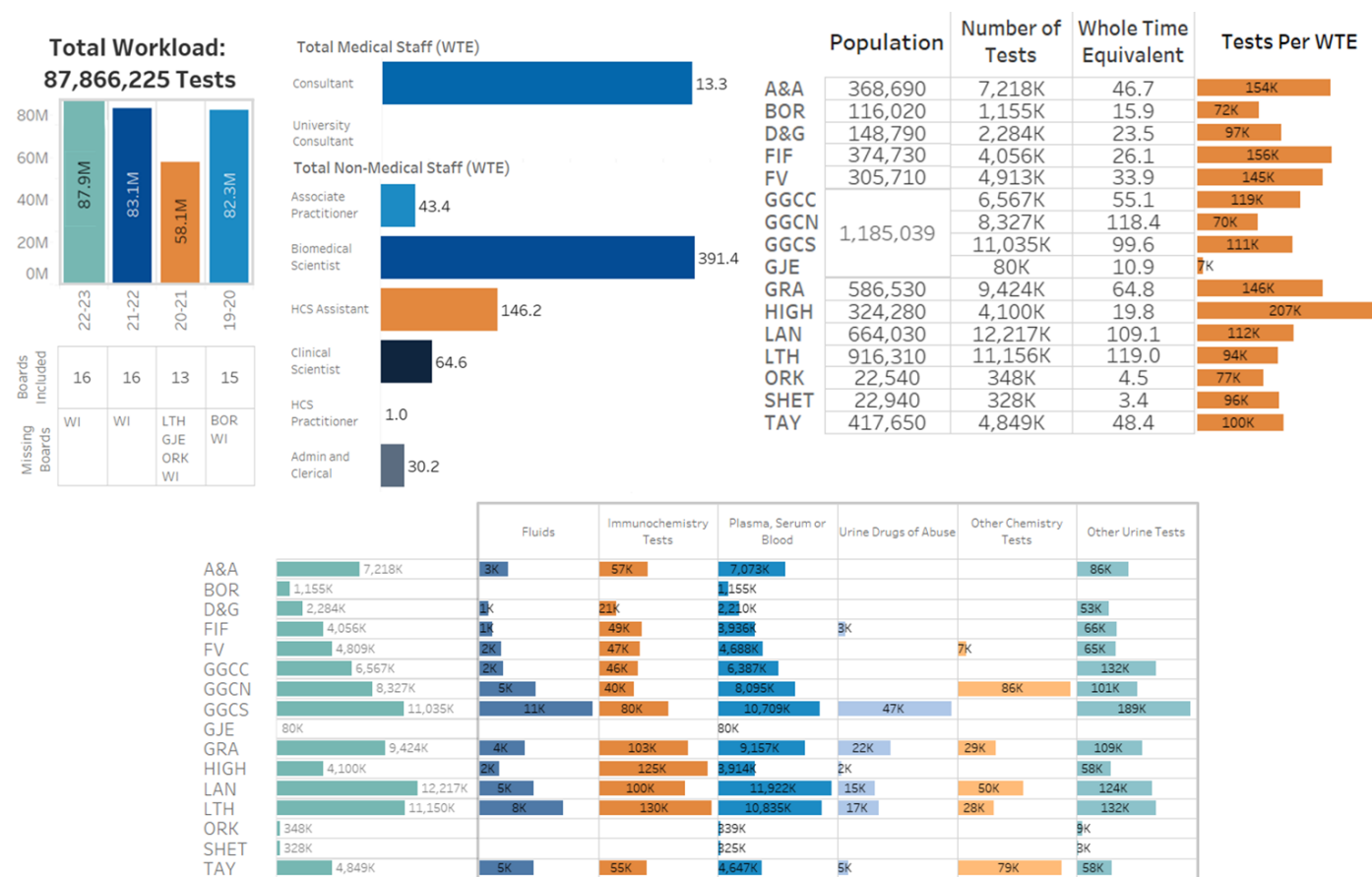


Fig 5

Feedback from network members indicates the benchmark reports are highly valued. SCBN began collecting data for network benchmarking in 2018, which included data from 2017-2018. This now enables the network to compare trends and changes across a data bank of seven years of reports, with the 8<sup>th</sup> template out for collection at present. The SCBN benchmarking allows national and local monitoring of service effectiveness and supports departments to measure their performance against others and a National average. SCBN benchmarking data is reviewed, and new data collection is performed when areas for monitoring performance or improving quality is identified. Future work will include collecting benchmarking data to support the evaluation of various relevant pathways.

## National Collaborative LIMS Specification and Scoring

During 2023/24 SCBN have continued to support and drive the preparatory work required to implement the new Laboratory Information Management System (LIMS). Activity has focused on the accelerated LIMS implementation for Orkney, Shetland and Fife Health Boards. Mr Jim Allison our Lead Clinician has been a key link between the National LIMS Programme Board and the other networks. Through the SCBN key contacts across disciplines have been identified and ensured appropriate representation on the important area of LIMS standardisation with key

members receiving ontology server training in order to facilitate the adoption of SNOMED CT codes for all laboratory tests. The SCBN will continue to provide a key role in driving forward the national roll out of LIMS across Scotland and facilitating communications across the networks.

The core team have also played a key role in identifying a national solution for the CE marking of the iLFT (intelligent liver function test) algorithm which will be incorporated into the national LIMS. Through meetings and communications with the HIS Right Decision Service an optimal route forward has been identified and this will be supported and progressed through 2024-25 to support NHS Boards who require CE marking in order to use the algorithm.

**Supporting standardisation of CA19-9 method and communicating risk of variation across Scotland**

The network cancer sub group has explored several options for introducing a standardised method for CA19-9 testing across Scotland. Due to delays in implementing a new equipment tender in NHS GG&C the implementation of the best option has been delayed. However, the sub group chair has produced an SBAR and the network has continued to support and drive the development of electronic messages to appear alongside test results to highlight the potential variation and to ensure the profile of the risk is raised.

**Network value survey**

There were 13 responses to the network value survey from SCBN members. By reaching out to network members to gauge their views and experience of the network, it will enable the network to develop key areas where stakeholders feel improvements would be beneficial.

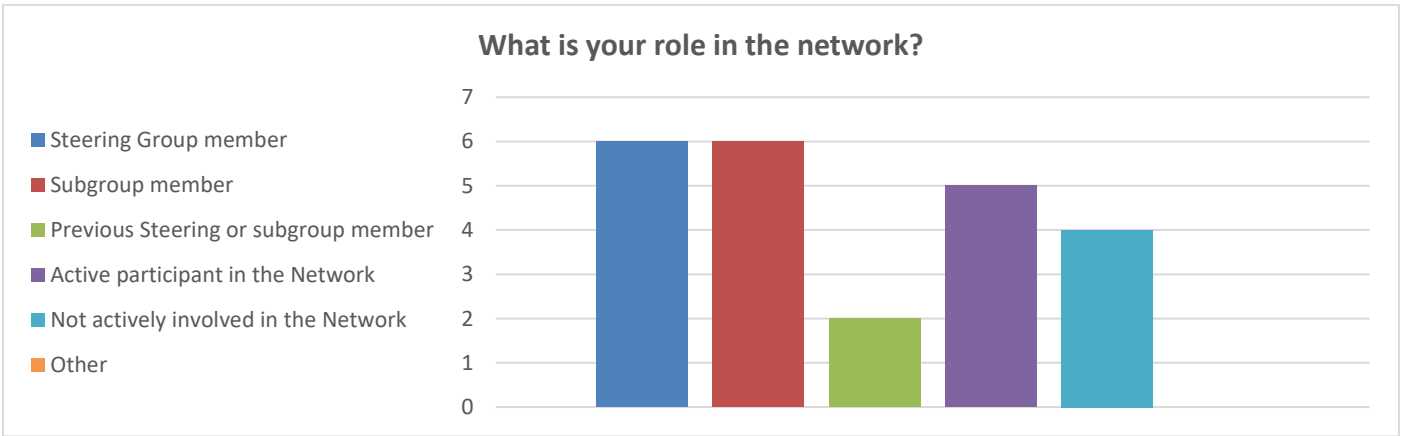


Fig 6.

Fig 6. denotes what role the survey responder has in the SCBN network, or association with the network, where it was previously involved or currently actively engaged in work streams of the network.

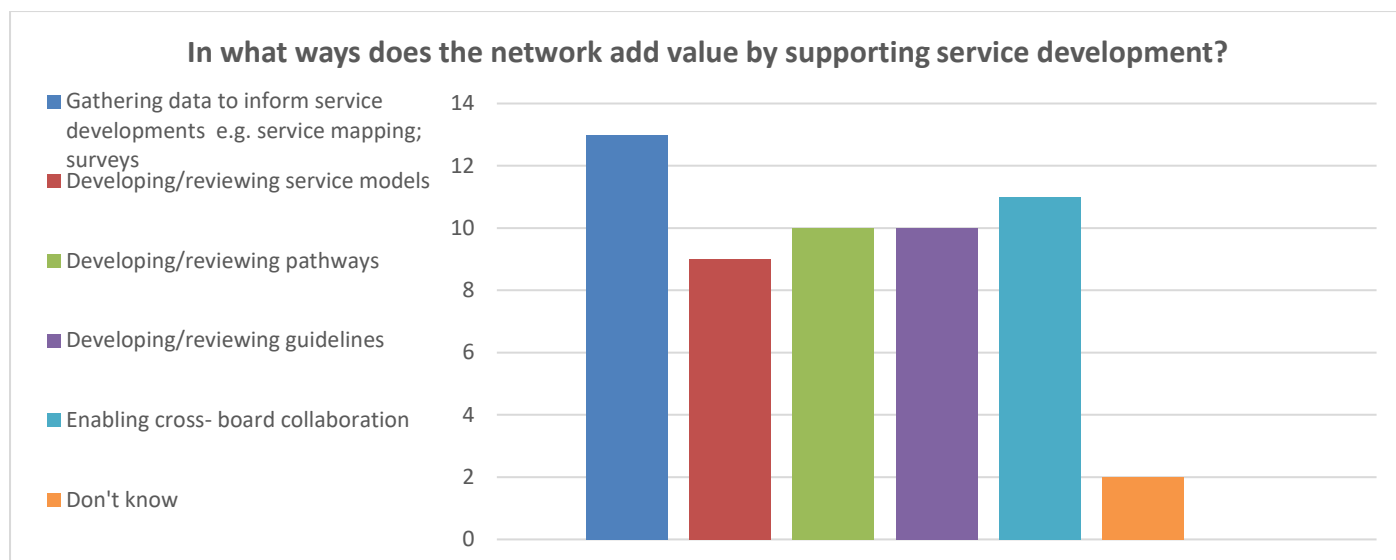


Fig 7

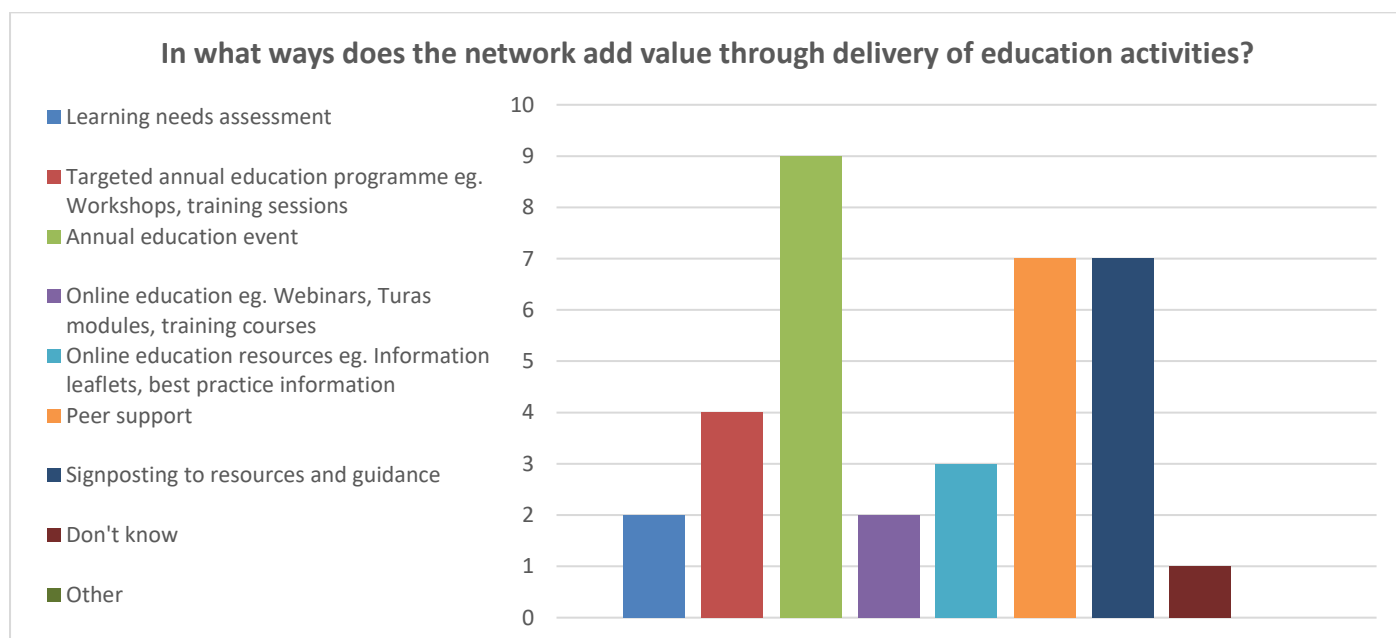


Fig 8

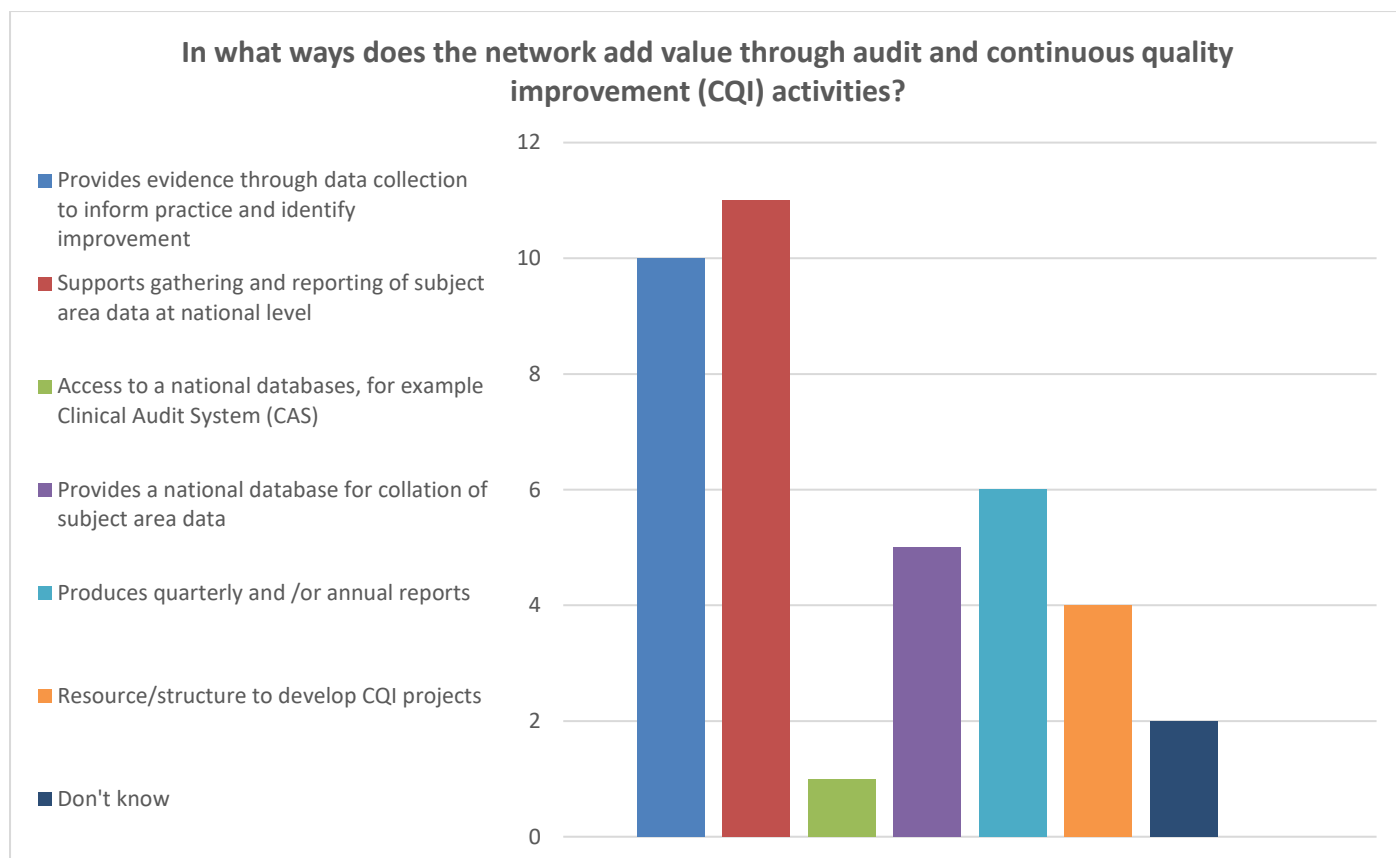


Fig 9

## Looking forward – 2024/25

The role of the SCBN is to improve clinical biochemistry services by:

- steering modernisation, including service change and redesign,
- improving quality
- supporting the provision of a resilient, high quality, clinically effective biochemistry laboratory services that anticipates and responds to user needs, future requirements and national guidelines.

Our Lead Clinician Jim Allison is a key conduit between the networks and the development of the SSND, as the representative on the SSND steering group and chairs the SSND core group meetings. The continued work and development towards being integrated into the SSND is key, in Dec 2023 the Board of Chief Executives made decision for the five managed diagnostic networks to become integrated with the SSND. During 2024/25 work will continue to fully integrate the networks into the structure.

## Finance

SCBN spent a total of £2,499.00 from an allocated budget of £5,000.

Annual Education Event	£2,499.00
Travel costs	£0
Printing	£0

## Risks & Issues



Clinical pressures mean that there is an ongoing risk that the community may not have time to support the business plan for 2024/25. Progress against the business plan will be actively monitored throughout the year in order to assess if this becomes an issue.

The recruitment of the NSM on hold is a risk for the network, as this post would provide invaluable support to the network.

### **Leadership post end dates**

Mr Jim Allison in Lead Clinician post until end of March 2025, the NSM post is currently vacant.