

Scottish Obstetric Cardiology Network

Annual Report

2024/25

Lead Clinician: Vacant

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This document has been prepared by NHS National Services Scotland (NSS) on behalf of the Scottish Obstetric Cardiology Network (SOCN). Accountable to Scottish Government, NSS 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. SOCN is a collaboration of stakeholders involved in care of obstetric cardiology who are supported by an NSS Programme Team to drive improvement across the care pathway.

Introduction

The Scottish Obstetric Cardiology Network (SOCN) was established on 1 September 2018 in response to the MBRRACE-UK report, “Saving Lives, Improving Mothers’ Care”, published in December 2016, which highlighted that cardiac disease remains the leading indirect cause of death in pregnancy.

The aim of the network is to facilitate clinical and other improvements in the area of obstetric cardiology. The network encompasses care for women who either have a pre-existing cardiac condition before pregnancy or go on to develop cardiac conditions during pregnancy.

The development of pathways, guidelines and documentation to support the delivery of services that are evidence based has been prioritised by the network. This will improve outcomes for women with cardiac disease and support implementation of optimal care to any women with a cardiac condition who is contemplating a pregnancy or has a pregnancy in Scotland. Where relevant, SOCN continues to collaborate with other Networks, Societies, Organisations and Policy Teams to increase awareness of cardiac obstetrics and develop guidance, standards and support implementation.

The network facilitates collaboration within and across the multi-disciplinary teams involved in a woman’s care at local, regional and national levels. This work is being supported through the development of a data set and data collection programme to identify areas for improvement.

Current Position

The SOCN Steering Group agreed to pause network activity for much of 2024 and therefore the 2024/25 Terms of Reference and 2024/25 workplan were not agreed. Work was initially paused pending the expected recruitment of a new lead clinician in early 24/25. Following delays in this process it was shared with the network in October 2024 that this recruitment would no longer be possible. Interim leadership arrangements have been in place during 2024/25, ensuring continuity of activity while formal recruitment is aligned with national review outcomes.

In November 2024 an extraordinary meeting of the Steering Group took place with members of NSD Senior Management in attendance. The purpose of this meeting was to reach a shared understanding of the current situation and give network members the opportunity to influence the way forward. At this meeting it was agreed that SOCN would resume some activity to finalise the draft guidance, pathways and information materials with the aim of launching these before the end of March 2025. It was agreed that once the wider landscape for networks was known members would consider what additional activities the network would focus on in future.

Highlights

Finalisation of SOCN guidance, pathways and information materials

Following the extraordinary meeting of the SOCN Steering Group in November, members

of network met to agree the plan for reviewing the draft pathways and guidance documents. A MS Teams channel was set up to host the draft documents to allow reviewers access and comment on the documents. Members of the review group met again in person in Glasgow to discuss and finalise the documentation prioritised for completion before the end of March.

Documents were updated following comments from the review group and shared with the Steering Group at the end of March for final review and endorsement. As part of the review process it was agreed to undertake the previous service mapping exercise. Publication of the documents and completion of service mapping is expected in Q1, 2025/26 and a further meeting of the Steering Group is planned to agree a dissemination/implementation plan and discuss the next steps for content not signed off as a priority.

Looking forward – 2025/26

Due to ongoing review of national networks, networks have only been asked to plan business as usual activity for Quarter 1, 2025/26. SOCN have agreed to prioritise the publication of the guidance, pathways and information materials and host a virtual education event in June to promote the launch of these.

Finance

The network operated within its allocated budget in 2024/25, focusing on low-cost, high-impact activities such as virtual education and digital resource development.”.

Risks & Issues

Interim leadership arrangements have been in place during 2024/25, ensuring continuity of activity while formal recruitment is aligned with national review outcomes.

The network recognises the importance of maintaining national coordination in areas such as education, clinical guidance, and quality improvement. Continued support will be essential to sustain these benefits for patients and professionals.

Stakeholders have highlighted the importance of maintaining national coordination to sustain improvements in care. Continued support will be essential to build on existing progress and deliver future benefits.

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