

# National Cancer Medicines Advisory Group (NCMAG): Maximising opportunities for improved efficiencies, governance, equity and patient outcomes

## Our purpose

- To provide national advice on the routine use of cancer medicines that fall outwith SMC remit.
- To complement the current local/regional review processes for cancer medicine requests by independently reviewing the clinical and cost-effectiveness evidence of proposals.

## Background

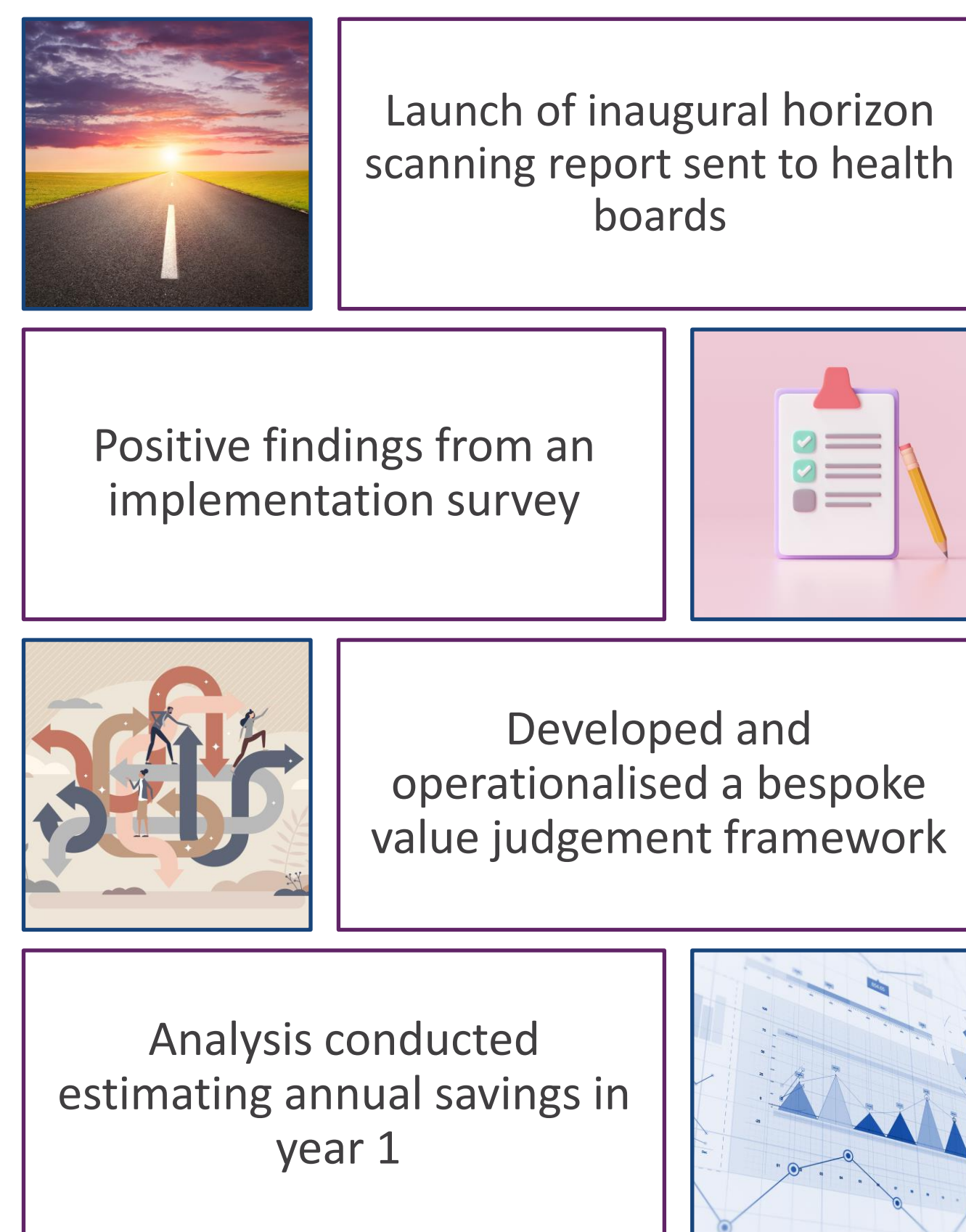
- Territorial health boards or regional cancer networks consider high numbers of individual patient and group requests for uses of cancer medicines, including high-cost medicines.
- There are no standardised criteria for reviewing clinical evidence or cost-effectiveness of these proposals across Scotland.
- This has resulted in duplication of effort, variation in decision making, inequity of patient access to some cancer medicines and unpredictable health board expenditure on cancer medicines.
- The NCMAG programme was established in 2021 to address these issues (See Figure 1).

## Our advice

NCMAG has issued advice on 11 proposals to date (9 supported and 2 not supported). Four of the supported proposals provide cost savings and 7 of these have reduced or had no significant impact on service capacity. Some recent examples of advice are below and key achievements are in Figure 2.

- Off-patent abiraterone in adults with high-risk hormone-sensitive non-metastatic prostate cancer: **prolonged life in better health with a low-cost generic medicine.**
- Off-label once weekly (rather than on-label twice weekly) use of intravenous carfilzomib in previously treated multiple myeloma: **reduced patient time attending hospital and improved service capacity.**
- Off-patent use of sunitinib for the treatment of adult patients with cell carcinoma who have received nivolumab in combination with ipilimumab as first line treatment: **addressed a long-standing governance issue; reducing inconsistent access to treatment across Scotland; with potential for financial and resource savings** through avoidance of individual patient requests for expensive on-patent medicines in this indication.

Figure 2 | Key achievements 2023 to 2024



## Our collaborations

NCMAG has worked in collaboration with the Scottish Cancer Network (SCN) and the Cancer Medicines Outcome Programme (Public Health Scotland [CMOP-PHS]) to identify areas of clinical need and incorporate Scottish real-world data into evidence review and decision-making. Figure 3 provides more information about this engagement.

## Benefits of NCMAG

- Addresses an important gap in the broader medicines policy.
- Reduces unwarranted variation in access to medicines for cancer patients.
- Improves patient care, outcomes and experiences.
- Addresses areas of clinical need; proposals are submitted by clinicians.
- Provides an efficient Once for Scotland process in place of current local processes.
- Follows an agreed approach to appraisal of health economics
- Provides information to health boards to help budget planning

Figure 1 | How the NCMAG programme works

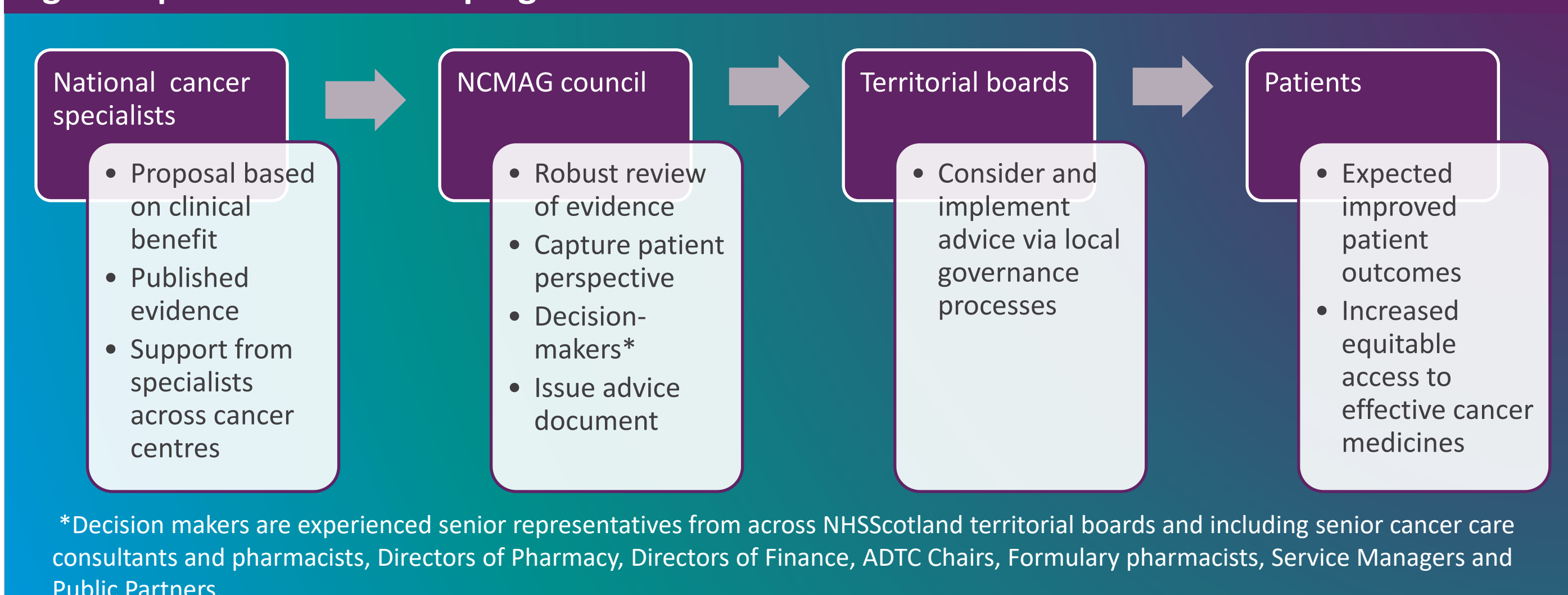


Figure 3 | NCMAG and SCN collaboration

