

Annual Report

2024/25



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1. Summary

The Scottish Government's [Cancer Strategy for Scotland 2023 to 2033](#) describes a 'Once for Scotland' vision for the next ten years to improve cancer survival and provide excellent, equitably accessible care. The aligned three-year [Cancer Action Plan for Scotland](#) sets out the key ambitions and highlights the need for a focus on prevention, earlier and faster diagnosis pathways, and improved support prior, during and after treatment.

At the heart of these strategic ambitions, the Scottish Cancer Network has been commissioned to define Clinical Management Pathways from the point of diagnosis, host national cancer networks, and to provide support to implement Once for Scotland working where there are clear benefits to cancer treatment and care, and effective use of clinical time (Action 135).

Alongside delivering the annual commission, the key focus for FY24/25 has been to establish a SCN Portfolio Team and embed robust processes and governance. This End of Year Report outlines some of the key successes and challenges of delivering this within 2024/25.

We would like to thank all our stakeholders who have shared our journey so far by engaging with our work and offering their time and support to enable successful delivery of the SCN.



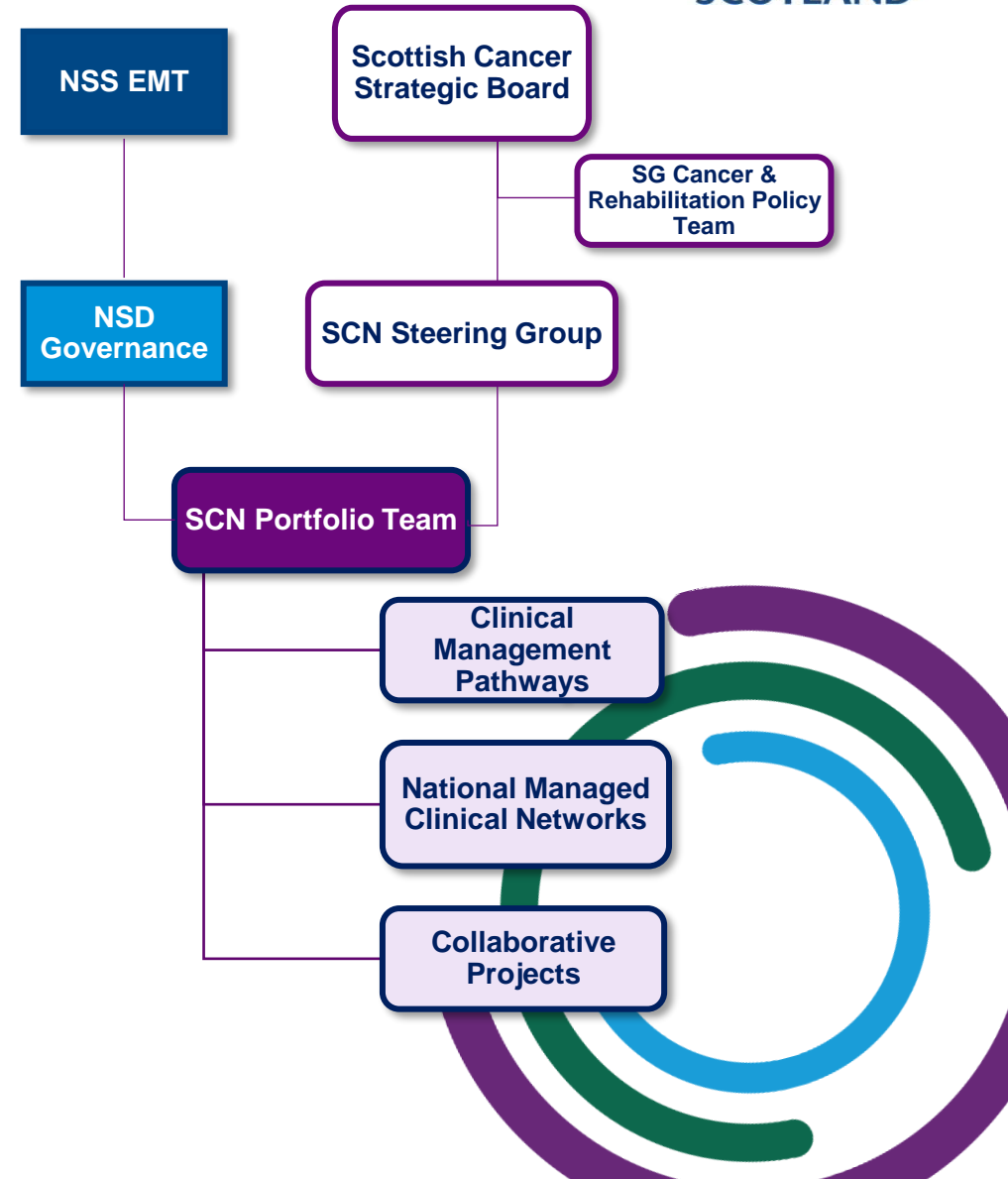
2. SCN Purpose & Governance

The Scottish Cancer Network (SCN) was established in 2021 as national resource to support and facilitate a 'Once for Scotland' approach to cancer services. The main objectives were to:

- Develop and operate a system for the production, review, and hosting of National Clinical Management Pathways.
- Oversee and drive improvement of existing National Managed Clinical Networks and adopt similar national network approaches for other areas that may benefit.
- Deliver other collaborative projects as agreed with Scottish Government.

The SCN works collaboratively with already established regional and national Cancer Networks to support and clinically agree best practice, assuring people living with cancer of common standards no matter where they live.

Directly commissioned by the Scottish Government via the Cancer & Rehabilitation Policy Team, the Scottish Cancer Network reports via dual routes into the SCN Steering Group and the national Scottish Cancer Strategic Board, and also via NSD/NSS Governance arrangements.



2. Network Scope

Described as being at the heart of the strategic ambitions set out in the national Cancer Action Plan 2023-26, The Scottish Cancer Network scope is aligned to six key actions and detailed in the 2024/25 commission:



ACTION 135: Delivery of Clinical Management Pathways and hosting national Managed Clinical Networks. Driving Once for Scotland approach where there are clear benefits treatment and care and effective use of clinical time

ACTION 134: Review Cancer governance and structures with purpose of simplifying the overall landscape.

ACTION 125: Contribute and learn from data analysis being conducted through the International Cancer Benchmarking Partnership (ICBP) – Representing Scottish Jurisdiction

ACTION 63: Establishing and delivering the Oncology Transformation Programme

ACTION 57: Ensure CMPs include appropriate guidance on the minimum number of times individual clinicians should provide specific treatments to ensure best possible outcomes and safe effective treatment.


ACTION 45: Invest in improving the pathways of less survivable cancers, particularly hepatocellular carcinoma (HCC) and pancreatic cancer (PC) to shorten the time to staging and agreeing treatment options.

	Deliverable	RAG	Comment
New Clinical Lead Clinical Management Pathways	Recruit a new clinical lead for the SCN Develop new CMPs as decided by prioritisation process carried out last year. Maximise opportunities for efficiencies in development process, using lessons learned from initial process. Ongoing programme support to the CMP editorial group; work with HIS and MCNs to include guidelines on the Right Decision Service.	On track	Clinical Lead for SCN appointed in Sept 24, however resigned from post in Jan 25. Recruitment for replacement is underway. CMPs for prostate and head & neck have recently been submitted for final governance approval, with small slippage due to resourcing challenges and complexity. Clinical lead recruitment underway for 25/26 CMPs. CMP toolkit also under development.
National Managed Clinical Networks for Cancer	Continue management of national cancer MCNs. Develop an MCN model for ovarian cancers and scope optimal model for NET cancers. Identify and embed any opportunities for consolidation of work and resourcing across the networks, including those arising from introduction of the new model for oncology services. Take forward any relevant recommendations from the review of networks by the Strategic Planning Board.	On track	SCN continue to host and manage 5x national cancer MCNs. Scoping reports for optional model of ovarian and NET cancers completed and submitted to SG – Ovarian to be taken forward as CMP for 25/26. Still awaiting outcome of SG networks review but progressing workplans on a risk-based approach in the meantime.
National Oncology Coordination Group (NOCG)	Continue to provide secretariat support for the National Oncology Coordination Group (NOCG). Support any reforms to the NOCG emerging from the Oncology Transformation Programme and new oncology model.	On track	SCN continue to provide secretariat support.
Scottish Care and Coordination Service for HPB cancers	Develop and agree plans for delivery of similar outcomes for HPB cancers within the wider NHS	On track	The SCOT HPB project was closed on 22nd November following decision by Cab Sec. Pathway development work is ongoing with support from the SHPBN network

On track
Complete

3. 2024/25 Commission (cont.)

	Deliverable	RAG	Comment
International Cancer Benchmarking Partnership (ICBP)	Continue to provide representation on behalf of the Scotland jurisdiction for the partnership	On track	SCN continue to provide representation.
National Cancer Quality and Improvement Board	Working in collaboration with the new board, the SCN will advise on the benefits, risks, practicalities and timescales of the SCN ultimately hosting the National Cancer Quality programme.	Complete	Reports drafted and submitted to SG who have taken forward.
Managed Service Network for Children and Young People with Cancer	Working with SG, NSS and SCN will advise on possible new models for the MSN that would align with existing NSS governance, to inform SG's future funding and commissioning of the MSN including through alternative models.	Complete	Reports drafted and submitted to SG who have taken forward.
SACT, Radiotherapy and Molecular Radiotherapy Programme Boards	Working with SG, transfer responsibilities of the SACT and RT programme boards, taking forward relevant recommendations for them as outlined in the governance review. This will be actively supported by SG policy teams, chairs of the current groups and the SG National Radiotherapy Lead.	Complete	Reports drafted and submitted to SG. SG have confirmed that transitions to be considered as part of Oncology Transformation Programme.
Oncology Transformation Programme	Provide programme management support for the OTP SLWG, including supporting the stakeholder engagement and communication strategy, as the new model for an NHS Scotland Oncology Service is developed	On track	SCN continue to provide programme management support to Cancer Policy team via NSS PgMS.

 On track
 Complete



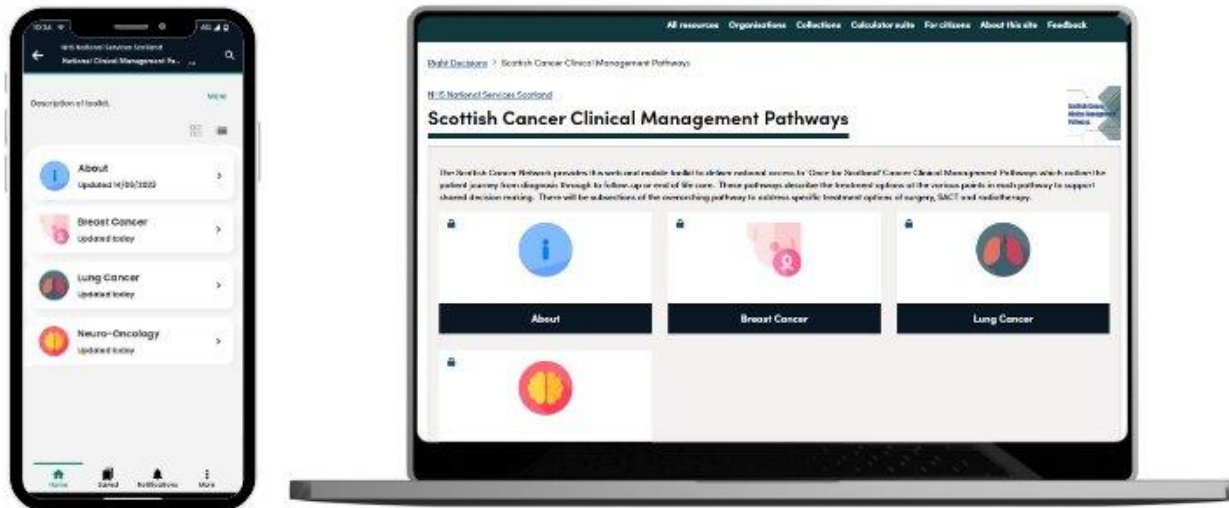
3.1 Clinical Management Pathways (CMPs)



3.1 Clinical Management Pathways (CMPs)

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. Treatment variation across Scotland prove an additional challenge.

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.



3.1 CMP Achievements

New CMPs

- Prostate Cancer CMP has been submitted for approval following final QC checks.
- Head and Neck Cancer CMP has been submitted to the CMP Editorial Group for sign-off.
- Renal and Melanoma SACT only CMPs are under development.

Governance

- The CMP Editorial Group has been established, and work is underway to split this group into a Quality control Group and Oversight Group.
- 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.

Engagement

- 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.

Recruitment

- Permanent Programme Management team employed to support CMPs.
- Employment campaign was successful and 2x CMP Clinical Leads have been recruited to support 6 new CMPs
 - **Gynae**; Ovarian, Endometrial, Cervical, Vulva
 - **Lower GI**; Colorectal & Anal

CMP Strategic Direction

- Planning is underway to support the review and development of a CMP long term workforce plan and strategy.

3.1 CMP Editorial Group Overview

The Clinical Management Pathway Editorial Group was established to govern the final stages of content publication and management of Scottish Cancer Clinical Management Pathways (CMPs) developed for Healthcare Professionals on the Right Decisions Service (RDS) platform. There is a need to refine the existing group into two separate functions to support the CMP Programme.

**Quality
Control
Group**
will:

- Ensure that all Clinical Management Pathways remain consistent.
- Govern the readiness and quality control process, ensuring new CMPs meet the defined requirements.
- Govern the readiness and quality control process, ensuring updates to existing CMPs meet the defined requirements.
- Ensure CMPs meet the standards as set on the Right Decisions platform.

**Oversight
Group**
will:

- Provide overarching quality assurance on CMP development and business-as-usual (BAU) change processes.
- Inform evaluation frameworks and benefits realisation for CMP implementation.
- Identify areas for improvement or standardisation across CMPs.
- Support workforce planning and the development of medium to long-term strategy for CMPs.
- Report and escalate significant issues or strategic considerations to the SCN Steering Group.



3.1 CMP Development Overview

Published CMPs

Breast

Lung

Adult Neuro

CMPs 2025-2026

In development

Prostate

Head & Neck

Renal (SACT only)

Melanoma (SACT only)

Due to start

Colorectal

Anal

Ovarian

Endometrial

Cervical

Vulva

To be scheduled

Upper GI

•Gastric + Oesophageal

Germ Cell

•Testicular + others

Penile

Bladder

•Including Urothelial

Neuroendocrine

•Appendiceal, Duodenal, Gastric, Pancreatic, Lung, Rectal, Small bowel

Non Melanoma Skin

•Merkel Cell, Squamous Cell, Basal Cell

Renal (Non-SACT elements)

Melanoma (Non-SACT elements)

Leukaemia

•ALL, AML, CML, CLL, Hairy Cell, MDS

Lymphomas

•Burkitt, DLBCL, Hodgkin, T-Cell, Mantle Cell, Marginal Zone, NLPHL, Primary CNS, Primary Cutaneous, Waldenstrom macroglobulinaemia, Follicular, Plasmacytoma

Myeloma

National Network Pilots (*tbc*)

Sarcoma

HepatoPancreatoBiliary

Thyroid

Mesothelioma

Pilot FY25-26

3.2 Managed Clinical Networks (MCNs)



3.2 MCNs – Overview

The Scottish Cancer Network host the following National Managed Clinical Networks:

- **Scottish Sarcoma Network (SSN)**
Clinical Lead: Ms Louise McCullough
[24/25 Annual Report](#)
- **Scottish Mesothelioma Network (SMN)**
Clinical Lead: Prof Kevin Blyth
[24/25 Annual Report](#)
- **Scottish Adult Neuro Oncology Network (SANON)**
Clinical Lead: Dr Sharon Peoples
[24/25 Annual Report](#)
- **Scottish HepatoPancreatoBiliary Network (SHPBN)**
Clinical Lead: Mr Euan Dickson
[24/25 Annual Report](#)
- **Scottish Thyroid Cancer Network (STCN)**
Clinical Lead: **Vacancy**
[24/25 Annual Report](#)



3.2 Managed Clinical Networks (MCNs) – 24/25 work planning

While awaiting outcome of the SG National Networks review, programme teams supporting national networks across wider NSD were asked to identify their top three priorities for delivery within FY24/25 workplans, in addition to BAU activity:

- Governance arrangement in place, including Steering Group and ensuring subgroups have appropriate representation
- Annual Education Event
- Guidelines developed and approved via require national governance arrangements
- Website content reviewed in accordance with NSS guidance to ensure its accurate and up to date.

SCN MCN top priorities were identified as follows in next slide.

3.2 MCN 24/25 workplan priorities

Network	Priority Deliverable	BRAG	Updates
Scottish Adult Neuro-Oncology Network (SANON)	Clinical Audit of Brain/CNS cancer QPIs	Green	2023 report published, continuing via annual reporting calendar.
	Annual Education Event	Complete	Held on 25/10/24
	Review of CMG for Radiotherapy and SACT	Green	<i>No specific medicines/treatments to be discussed at present.</i>
Scottish HepatoPancreato Biliary Network (SHPBN)	Clinical Audit of HPB cancer QPIs	Green	2023 report published, continuing via annual reporting calendar.
	Morbidity and Mortality Review	Complete	Tenth and eleventh National Morbidity and Mortality Reviews were held during 2024/25.
	National CMP for HPB cancer	Green	BOSCARD developed for HPB Pathway project – CabSec request.
Scottish Sarcoma Network (SSN)	Clinical Audit of Sarcoma QPIs	Green	Continuing via annual reporting calendar
	Delivery of Sarcoma Educational Event	Complete	Event held on 22/03/24
	Data benchmarking with Sarcoma Pathology	Paused	Dependent on case ascertainment by the Scottish Pathology Network (SPaN), paused pending SG network review
Scottish Mesothelioma Network (SMesoN)	Clinical Audit of Meso cancer QPIs	Green	2023 report published, continuing via annual reporting calendar.
	National Clinical Management Guidelines	Amber	Clarifying national governance for approval of CMGs
	National Education Event	Complete	Event held on 06/02/25
Scottish Thyroid Cancer Network (STCN)	Development and implementation of thyroid cancer quality performance indicators to audit the optimal thyroid cancer pathway	Paused	Currently no data collection resource available within LBHs and no identified escalation route to resolve. Escalation route being sought.
	Thyroid Cancer Genomics Testing Pathway	Complete	New pathway is now operational.
	National patient and carer experience survey in collaboration with British Thyroid Foundation.	Complete	Survey and initial analysis complete.

3.2 Managed Clinical Networks (MCNs) – 25/26 Planning assumptions

While we continue to wait for the outcome of SG network review, NSD have advised the following risk-based approach to planning for FY25/26, with workplans **only to include activities which can be delivered within Q1/Q2, to avoid any projects not being completed prior to transition to any new network model:**

- BAU activities, review of ToRs, comms plans, QPIs to continue.
- Top 3 priorities to be delivered from 24/25 if not complete.
- Critical activities that are linked to patient care.
- Activities to support transition planning, once further clarity around outcome(s) of SG network review is known.



3.3 Collaborative Projects



3.3 Collaborative projects

Network Scoping

Ovarian and Neuroendocrine (NET) cancers

SCN were asked to *“Develop an MCN model for ovarian cancers and scope optimal model for NET cancers”*.

Stakeholder engagement and associated scoping workshops were completed over a period of six months by the SCN team, with recommendations submitted to SG October '24.

Managed Service Network for Children & Young People with Cancer (MSN CYP)

SCN were asked to *“Working with SG, NSS and SCN will advise on possible new models for the MSN that would align with existing NSS governance, to inform SG’s future funding and commissioning of the MSN including through alternative models”*

Similarly, stakeholder engagement was undertaken by an independent provider for SCN, with structural and strategic findings following this discovery exercise submitted to SG in Oct '24,



3.3 Collaborative Projects

SACT, Radiotherapy and Molecular Radiotherapy Programme Boards and NCQIB reviews

SCN were asked to “Working with SG, transfer responsibilities of the SACT and RT programme boards, taking forward relevant recommendations for them as outlined in the governance review. This will be actively supported by SG policy teams, chairs of the current groups and the SG National Radiotherapy Lead”.

And “Working in collaboration with the new board, the SCN will advise on the benefits, risks, practicalities and timescales of the SCN ultimately hosting the National Cancer Quality programme”.

Stakeholder engagement and associated structured interviews were completed over a period of four months by an independent provider for SCN, with reports submitted to Scottish Government in December '24, recognising the evolving and changing wider landscape during this time.



3.3 Collaborative Projects

SCOT HPB

The Scottish Government (SG) funded the Pancreatic and Hepatocellular Cancer Pathway Improvement Project (PHCC PIP) initially from April 2022 to March 2024. The project sought to reduce the delays in patient pathways and improve communication for healthcare professionals, patients and their families. When the PHCC PIP ended, the SCN was directed by Scottish Government to host the programme on a temporary basis until March 2025 and was renamed the Scottish Care and Coordination Service for Hepato Pancreato Biliary Cancers (SCOT HPB).

Within the 24/25 commission, SCN were also asked to: *“Develop and agree plans for delivery of similar outcomes for HPB cancers within the wider NHS”*.

Despite six months of engagement with key stakeholders, no viable option was identified for the ongoing delivery of a national service, and therefore it was recommended that the service was withdrawn in a phased manner before the end of financial year 2024-2025.

Subsequently, in Nov 24, a decision was been made by Scottish Government that SCOT HPB would cease to operate; further to a risk assessment carried out by National Services Directorate (NSD), which identified that going forward the current service could not be delivered reliably or safely.

SHPBN was requested by the SG to take forward the emerging consensus from 2024 engagement workshops to develop national pathway(s) for HPB cancers, working with the wider Scottish Cancer Network (SCN) and other key stakeholders as appropriate. Scoping work is now underway, which makes clear the roles and responsibilities of those most appropriate to deliver development of optimal pathways.

3.3 Collaborative projects

Oncology Transformation Programme

The National Oncology Taskforce was established in 2022 with a role of commissioning and approving the Oncology Workforce Review Report. The review offered 50 possible system changes for further consideration. Subsequently, the Oncology Transformation Programme (OTP) was established, with a report outlining prioritised changes submitted to SG in November 2023 to inform the next phase of the Oncology Transformation Programme, which would be led by a dedicated Oncology Task and Finish Group during 24/25.

SCN were commissioned in 24/25 to *“provide programme management support for the OTP SLWG, including supporting the stakeholder engagement and communication strategy, as the new model for an NHS Scotland Oncology Service is developed”*.

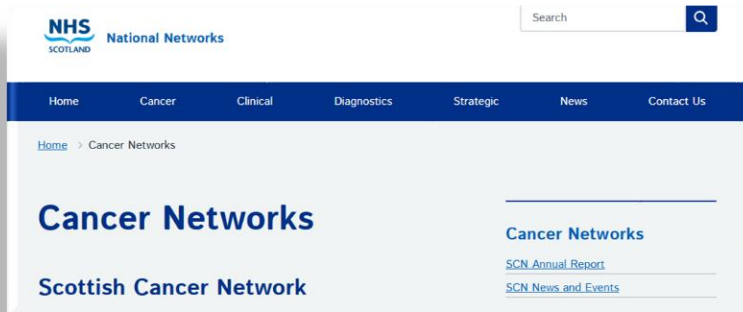
Programme management support has been funded by SCN and delivered via NSS Programme Management Services (PgMS).



4. Communications & Engagement



4. Communications & Engagement



Comms and engagement activities were limited within 24/25 due to several key vacancies within the SCN portfolio team and adherence to guidance around reduction of NHS discretionary spend and associated in-person events.

Vacancies within the portfolio team have recently been filled, therefore we are now planning for development of our 2025/26 comms strategy, with an aim to deliver quarterly newsletters and improved activity in this space.

SCN newsletter that was published in 2024 attracted over 4,000 views.

Ongoing updates to our websites have continued to be made across the year however:

[Cancer Networks – National Networks \(nhs.scot\)](https://nhs.uk/cancer-networks)

5. Look ahead



5. Look ahead – 25/26

While SCN is awaiting formal 25/26 commission from Scottish Government, along with further clarity on the outcome of the SG Network Review, we are continuing with 24/25 commissioned activity around CMPs, MCNs, and funding of programme management support for Oncology Transformation Programme.

Once the outcome of SG Network review is known, the SCN will look to align accordingly, continue building on successes to date and focus on team development to ensure we retain valuable knowledge and experience for the future.



6. Contact

For more information or to contact the SCN Portfolio Team,
please email nss.scottishcancernetwork@nhs.scot

[Cancer Networks – National Networks \(nhs.scot\)](#)