



Scottish  
Perinatal  
Network



# Scottish Perinatal Network Annual Report 2023/24



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## Foreword

We are pleased to share this 2023/24 Annual Report from the Scottish Perinatal Network (SPN), the national strategic network incorporating the National Maternity Network (NMN) and the National Neonatal Network (NNN).

Throughout the year the SPN continued to work in partnership across traditional organisational and geographical boundaries to progress a challenging and wide-ranging programme of work to support the delivery of high-quality maternity and neonatal care in Scotland.

Key priorities for this year related to:

- Continuing the development of best practice across Scotland for engaging with maternity and neonatal service users to enable lived experience to inform service planning and delivery,
- supporting Boards to improve how they carry out perinatal significant adverse event reviews, and exploring where national investment could be most effective
- progressing national guideline developments based on robust processes,
- guidance for the safe and effective transfer of women and babies across Scotland to enable timely access to the right level of care,
- the development of nationally consistent family integrated care approaches in neonatal services.

We also started the process of refreshing our Network Strategy and we are grateful for the insights and engagement from our colleagues across the Network to support us in developing and refining the new draft Strategy.

It would not have been possible to achieve the progress described in this Annual Report without the significant time, commitment and expertise the Network's stakeholders have continued to invest in working collaboratively, even in the face of pressures on NHS services in a challenging financial context.

The Network Programme Team would like to take this opportunity to thank members for their ongoing commitment and contributions, with particular thanks to those who have given their time to chair the SPN's working groups, and to the pregnant women and families who have shared their experiences and insights with us.

*Tara Fairley & Jennie Wild, Lead Clinicians National Maternity Network,  
and Lesley Jackson, Lead Clinician National Neonatal Network*



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## Introduction

In 2017, the Scottish Government published *The Best Start*, a review of maternity and neonatal services in Scotland, providing a five-year forward plan for the improvement of maternity and neonatal services in Scotland. This included recommendations to create National Maternity and Neonatal Networks to promote sharing of experience and expertise and ensure integrated working across NHS Board boundaries.

Scottish Government commissioned NHS National Services Scotland to set up and host the two networks in 2019 (Neonatal) and 2020 (Maternity). Both networks were established as separate national strategic networks but they have increasingly been managed together under the umbrella of the Scottish Perinatal Network (SPN) since then.

"A single Maternity Network Scotland should be created to promote sharing of experience and expertise and to create regional or national protocols, for example to manage the most complex conditions at a national level."

*Best Start,  
Recommendation 73*

"There should be a single Neonatal Managed Clinical Network for Scotland with the new model to ensure integrated working across NHS Board boundaries, including input from service management and clinical staff. The maternity and neonatal networks should come together formally on at least an annual basis to promote integrated services."

*Best Start, Recommendation 74*



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## Progress in 2023/24

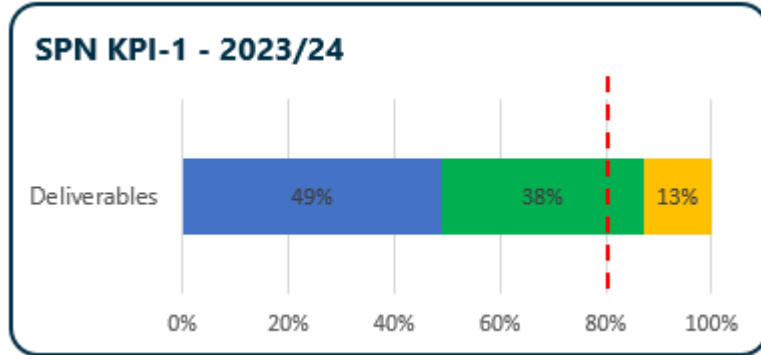
The Network has been working towards delivery of a range of maternity, neonatal and perinatal strategic objectives in line with its 2022-2024 Strategy.

This report summarises the progress achieved in 2023/24 and describes next steps from 2024/25 onwards as the network refreshes its strategy.

# Key Performance Indicators - Network Impact

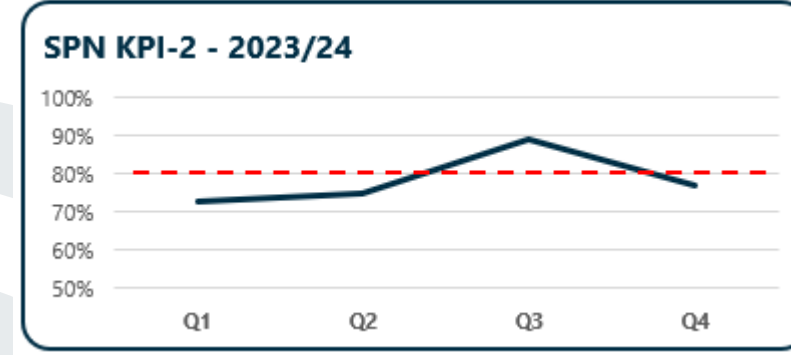
## KPI-1 – Annual work plan deliverables achieved

(target: RAGB status blue and green combined = 80% or above)



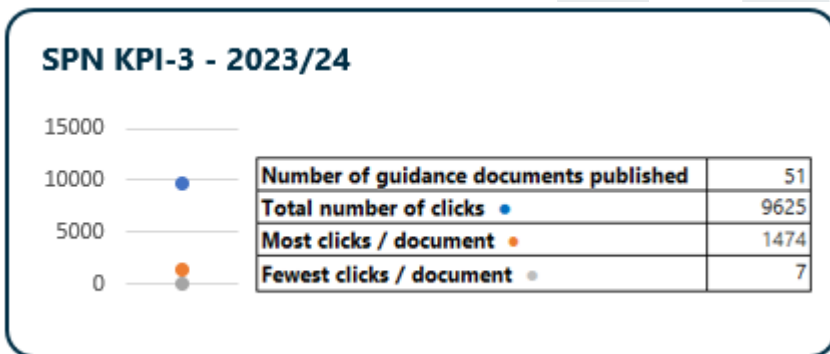
## KPI-2 – Quarterly work plan milestones achieved

(target: 80% or more of project milestones met in each quarter)



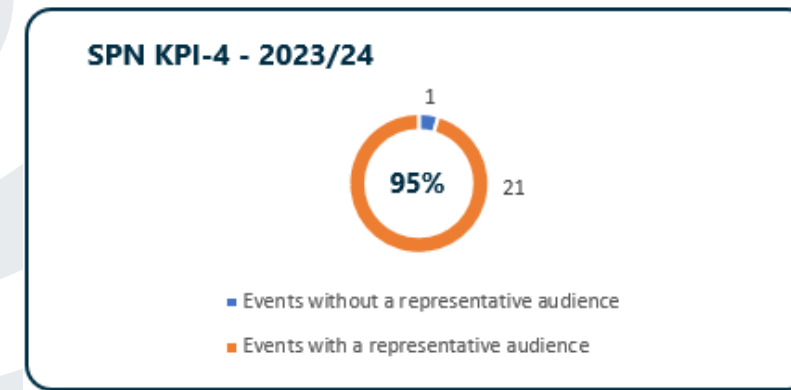
## KPI-3 – Uptake of SPN guidance

(target: guidance published in the 2023 calendar year has been accessed on the SPN website in the 2023/24 reporting period\*)



## KPI-4 – Attendance at SPN education events

(target: 80% of SPN educational events had an audience that represented 10 or more Health Boards)



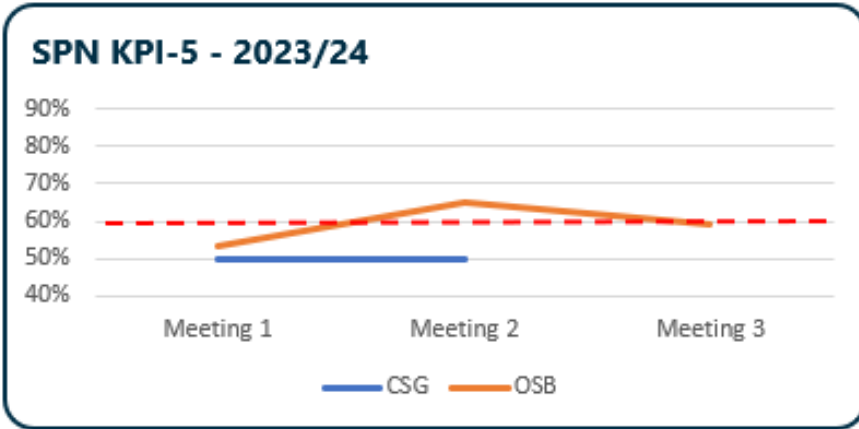
\* Due to technical issues with website analytics data, KPI-3 figures only cover the period July 2023 – March 2024.



# Key Performance Indicators - Network Engagement and Reach

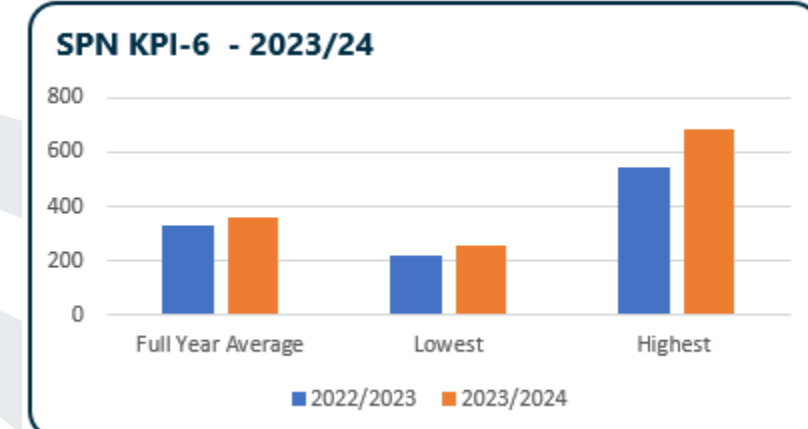
## KPI-5 – Attendance at Core Steering Group and Oversight Board meetings

(target: >60% of members attend each meeting)



## KPI-6 – Newsletter engagement

(target: increase in monthly views on previous year)



## KPI-7 – Website engagement

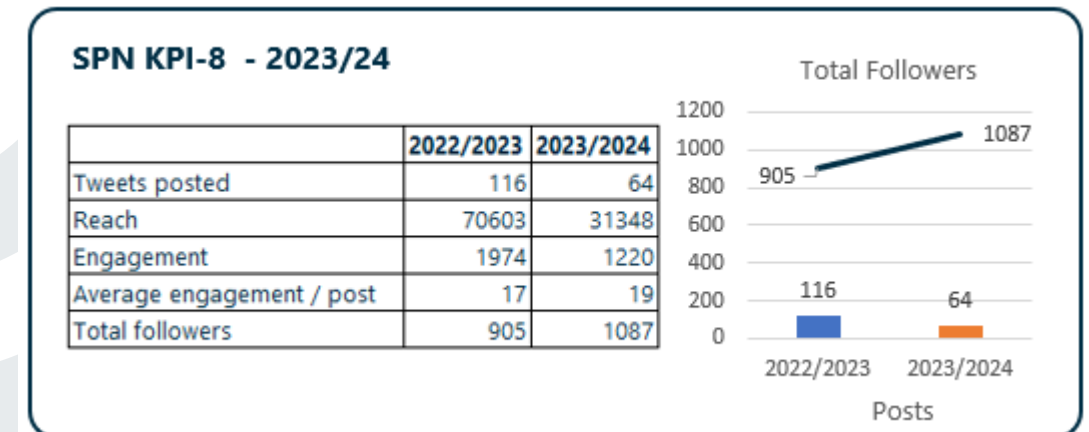
(target: increase in activity on the previous year)

Due to technical issues with website analytics data, it was not possible to collect the same metrics in 2023/24 as previous years. It was therefore not possible to provide a like-for-like comparison of website usage between 2022/23 and 2023/24.

In 2022/23, there were on average 3,300 monthly site visits. In 2023/24 there were on average 7,800 monthly clicks recorded on the site.

## KPI-8 – Twitter engagement

(target: increase on the previous year)





# Stakeholder Feedback

## Neonatal AHP event

"Fab day, great to hear about different projects in different units, which can then apply to own working. Really great to come together with colleagues who work in neonatal and develop my knowledge."

## Neonatal FICare Event

"Excellent organisation and comms. We're so grateful for the opportunity to contribute."

"Very well organised and clear information about what the day would involve."

"Fantastic! It's great to see the work that is done behind the scene to make every neonatal journey the best it can be!"

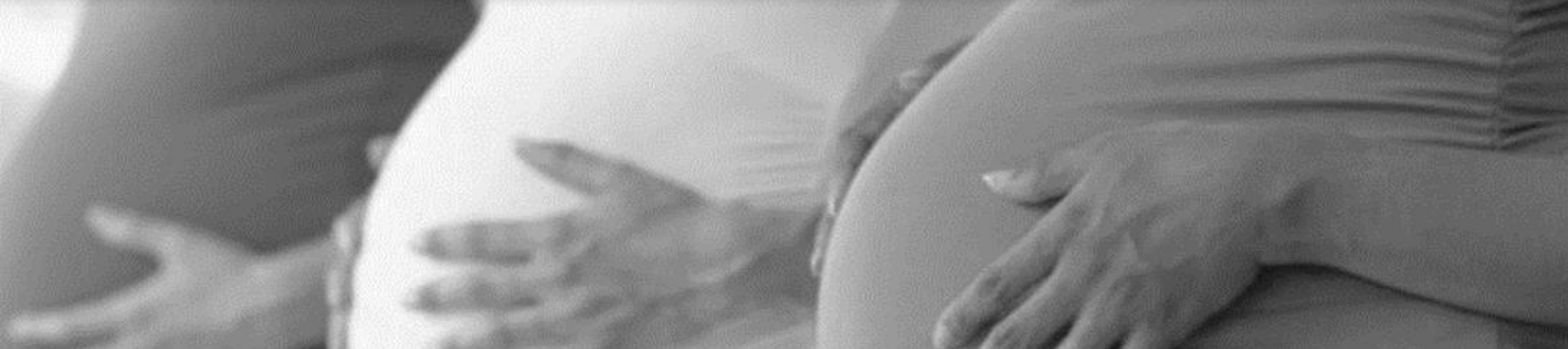
"You should all be proud of the amazing work you do."

"The website means you know there is one place to go to find the most up to date information"

"The newsletter is fabulous and a brilliant way of sharing information"

"Newsletter and twitter posts are really useful and helpful"





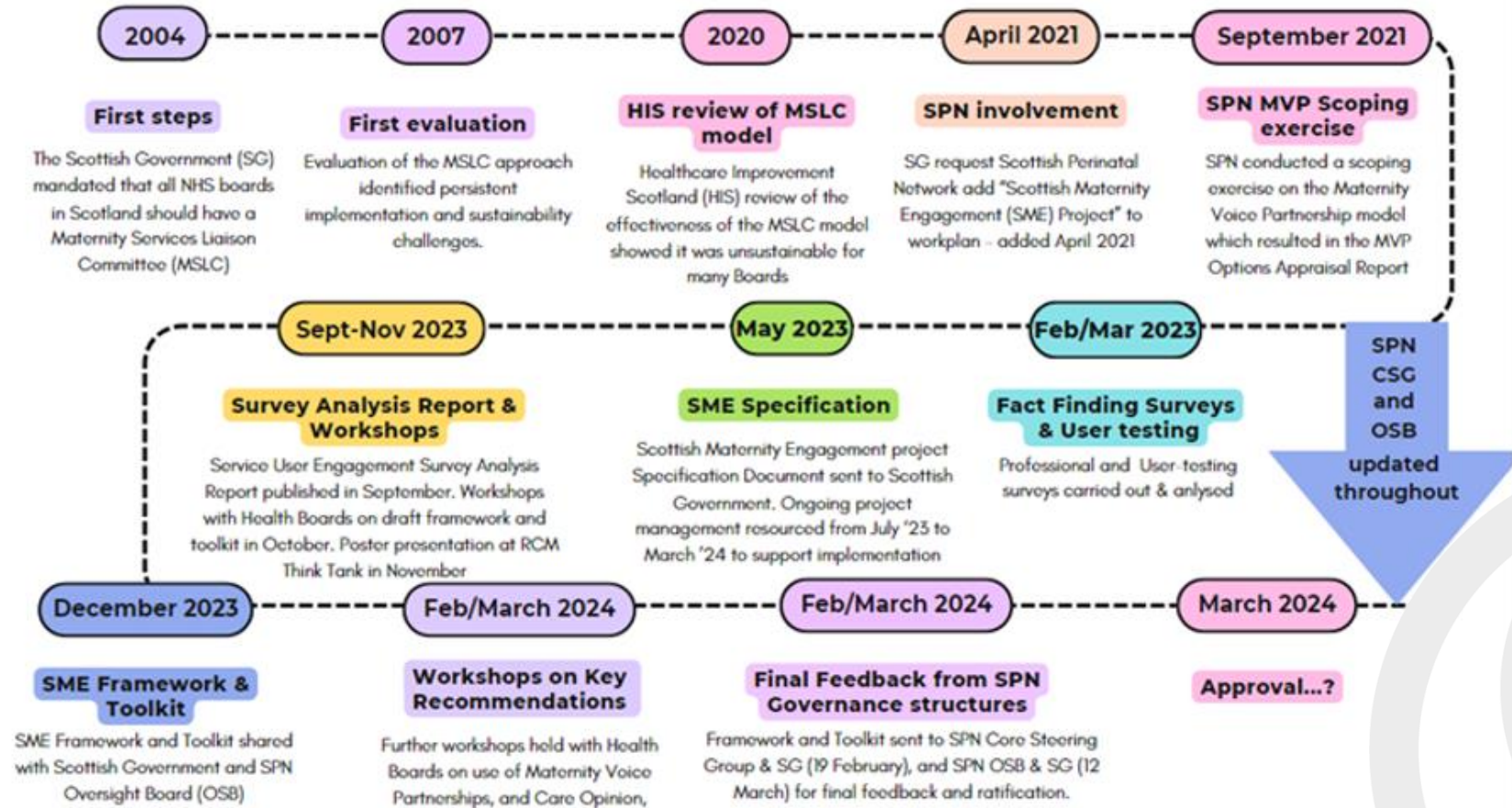
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# Maternity Priorities



# Service User Engagement

The [Scottish Maternity Engagement project](#), to develop a more nationally consistent model of maternity service user engagement, utilising and building on existing infrastructure, concluded on 31 March 2024. The new framework had been ratified by SPN Core Steering Group and Oversight Board, and final approval to publish is expected in Q1 of 2024/25.



## Miscarriage Care

- Supported delivery of the Scottish Government programme for government commitment on miscarriage care:
  - Collaborated to develop a suite of resources for parents led by Tommy's
  - Conducted research on miscarriage as a public health problem in Scotland and presented findings as a [poster](#) at Association of Early Pregnancy Units (AEPU) and Scottish Government Conferences (November 2023)
  - Mapped public facing contact details for [Early Pregnancy Units in Scotland](#) to support people who may be worried about their pregnancy to access early pregnancy care

## Guidelines and Pathways

- Established a [Guidelines Development Standard Operating Procedure](#), through which to prioritise and develop national maternity and neonatal guidance documents
- Planned for transition of the existing Fetal Medicine Group from Best Start to SPN governance in 2024-25
- Transitioned the existing Maternal Medicine Group from Best Start to SPN governance (September 2023) and developed a prioritised work plan. Progress includes:
  - Established a working group to scale up NHS Lothian Stroke in Pregnancy guidance for national use
  - Started to develop guiding principles primarily for Emergency Department staff to support early identification and treatment of diabetic ketoacidosis (DKA) in pregnancy, in collaboration with Scottish Diabetes Group, and Diabetes Specialist Midwives.
  - Feasibility study of running simulation courses (M-Moet), mapping specialist pregnancy clinics in Scotland and collaboration with NES re Scotland-accessible Acute Maternal Medicine Fellowship / Credentials courses.

## Safeguarding

- Established a group to strengthen the strategic voices of midwives with remit for safeguarding pregnant women and babies most likely to be impacted by inequalities. Representation from 14 boards was identified. The group is working to:
  - Develop a national picture of safeguarding midwife roles and variation in how they are delivered locally
  - Develop a Once for Scotland '*Wellbeing Assessment*' for all pregnancies, based on GIRFEC principles.
- Established a group to strengthen the strategic voices of obstetricians with safeguarding remits. The group is working to:
  - Raise awareness of safeguarding as an obstetric sub-speciality
  - Collaborate across specialities to develop minimum standards of obstetric care for teenage parents
- Established a suite of national forums on MS Teams through which to facilitate confidential peer support for midwives and obstetricians in safeguarding roles, multi-professional collaboration and shared information, learning and support.





# Neonatal Priorities



## Neonatal Capacity

- The 'What matters to me' parent passport launched on 17 November 2023, hosted on the v-create platform. It allows parents to follow their baby's neonatal journey, even if it involves a transfer to another neonatal unit in Scotland.
- A national Family Integrated Care (FICare) planning event was held on 8th June 2023, with 61 delegates representing most neonatal units and parents, to share learning and develop common, national approaches to delivering FICare. A follow-up event took place on 26th January 2024 in Dundee. Five priority workstreams have been initiated for 2024/25 to look at transition, AHP support, psychology support for parents, orientation in neonatal units, and parental access.
- A first Scottish Community Neonatal Nurses (SCNN) shared learning event took place 8th November 2023, to support development of neonatal community outreach capacity and national consistency of practice.

## Guidelines and Monographs

- A Guidelines Development Standard Operating Procedure through which to prioritise and develop national maternity and neonatal guidance documents was finalised and published on SPN website in June 2023.
- As part of a rolling programme of review and refresh, 45 existing neonatal guidelines and monographs were updated.
- New national guidance for Decontamination and Storage of Breast Milk Equipment was published on 20th March 2024.
- A new national guideline on the management of the extreme preterm infant was published on 11th January 2024.
- 3 new national neonatal blood borne viruses guidelines developed, published May 2024.

## Neonatal AHP Provision

- Neonatal AHP provision impacts on earlier discharge, lower re-admission rates and improved longer term outcomes. Building on workforce analysis work in 2022, scoping work has been undertaken to understand gaps in neonatal AHP provision and develop recommendations to build more capacity and better access to neonatal AHP expertise across all neonatal services. A report is due to be submitted late May 2024.
- A first national neonatal AHP shared learning and peer support event took place 20th March 2024.



## Neonatal Follow-Up

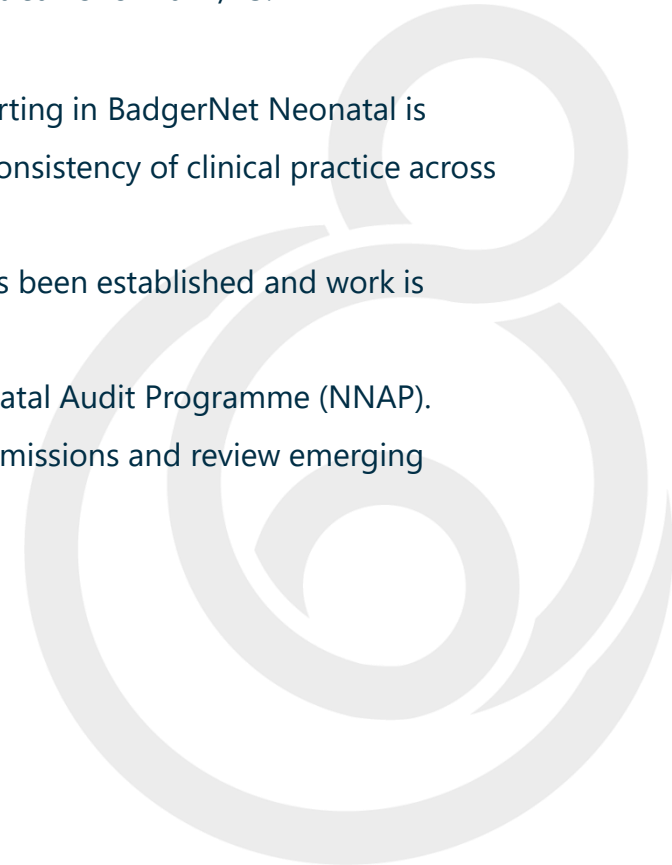
- Ongoing discussions with System C (provider of BadgerNet) to streamline national data extraction process for a national audit of 2-year follow-up clinics to inform development of a common approach to follow-up.

## Parental Engagement

- Parental engagement was a key success factor in the development of the 'What matters to me' parent passport
- Input from the Neonatal Parent Advisory Group to the Network Core Steering Group has also been established.
- Links with circa 50 families whose baby required neonatal care were established through a survey linked to the FICare event in January 24. Consent was given by the families for further network involvement.
- Family input continues to be an essential part of the five FICare priority workstreams for 2024/25.

## Neonatal Audit

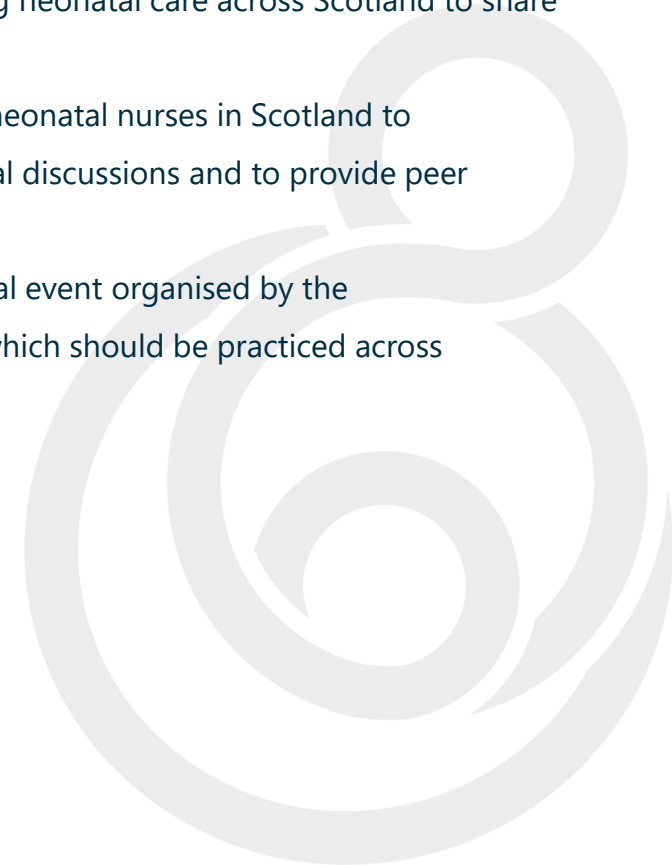
- Information governance approvals for Network access to routine national reporting in BadgerNet Neonatal is being progressed. This will enhance network access to key intelligence about consistency of clinical practice across Scotland and help identify areas for improvement.
- National and unit level routine reporting for in-utero and ex-utero transfers has been established and work is underway to determine pregnancy outcomes linked to in-utero transfers.
- The Network continued to support effective participation in the National Neonatal Audit Programme (NNAP). Data sharing meetings to support units in improving data quality of NNAP submissions and review emerging themes from the data took place November 2023 and March 2024.





## Education and Peer Support

- Monthly Grand Round provides opportunity for neonatal units to present a case review or share learning or a topic to the community. The programme encourages a different unit from across Scotland to present their chosen topic each month.
- Monthly planning call which provides all interested in and part of the neonatal community (including nursing, education, clinical, AHP, SG colleagues etc.) a platform to hear updates from across the country from BAPM, Scottish Government, NNN and each neonatal unit and to discuss any concerns collectively.
- AHP forum which provides a forum where members from all AHP disciplines involved in delivering neonatal care can come together and share best practice, areas of concern, general discussion and peer support.
- Consultant Forum which provides a forum for all consultants involved in delivering neonatal care across Scotland to share best practice, areas of concern, general discussion/learning, and peer support.
- Scottish Community Neonatal Nurses Group provides a platform for community neonatal nurses in Scotland to come together to discuss best practice, areas of concern/for improvement, general discussions and to provide peer support.
- Neonatal Cooling Education Day took place on 5th October 2023, This is an annual event organised by the network aimed to share education regarding neuroprotection cooling protocols which should be practiced across Scotland.





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# Perinatal Priorities



## Effective Transport

- Developed a pathway for the [Transfer of Women from Community Maternity Units in an Extreme Obstetric Emergency](#) to enable safe and effective maternity and neonatal transport in remote and rural areas (published September 2023). Work is ongoing on the next pathway in this suite with remote and rural context, for less extreme emergencies.
- Developed a pathway to facilitate effective [Consultant Led Unit to Consultant Led Unit](#) in-utero transfers and management of preterm labour (published March 2023). This work also looked at cost-effective access to fetal fibronectin tests for the risk assessment of postnatal transfers, using the national procurement framework. Work is ongoing around *IUT Information Sharing Between Referring & Receiving Units* on BadgerNet, in collaboration with Digital Midwives, QI & Labour Ward Leads, ARHAI and the SPSP Perinatal work on preterm passport.
- Supported implementation of exception reporting and case reviews for babies born < 27 weeks' gestation at a unit without a NICU and host an ongoing annual schedule of anonymised case review learning events.
- Established a working group to develop guidance for *Unplanned Pre-hospital Emergency Maternity and Neonatal Care*, to support paramedics providing first-responder care to labouring women and just-born babies, unexpectedly in the community (e.g., homes or shopping centres). The work aligns with SPSP Perinatal Maternal Deterioration work, the BAPM framework and potentially the [Major Trauma Triage Tool](#).

## Collaboration with Strategic Partners

- Facilitate ongoing collaboration with strategic partners to share learning through a range of channels
- Established and facilitated a Strategic Partners Forum, co-chaired with colleagues from HIS, through which to optimise synergies, efficiencies & opportunities to collaborate towards shared priorities
- Co-produced and delivered a learning event on MS Teams with SPSP-Perinatal on the Perinatal Approach to Extreme Preterm Births (Jan 2024), focused on <22-week perinatal optimisation, collaboration, quality improvement and person-centred, evidence-based care.

## Significant Adverse Event Reviews

- Provided national coordination and supported implementation of Scottish Government perinatal SAER guidance
- Maintained alignment and represented perinatal voices in the redesign of broad national SAER processes by the HIS Adverse Events team, and educational elements of supporting reviews led by NES, EC4H and other strategic partners.
- Scoped and analysed strengths and areas for improvement in current perinatal SAER approaches across 14 Health Boards
- Collaborated with strategic partners and Boards to co-produce a report with recommendations for Scottish Government, defining where national support could be most efficient and effective, which was ratified by the SPN Oversight Board and [published](#) in December 2023.
- Submitted a supplementary business case to Scottish Government for interim funding to coordinate perinatal SAER work until it could integrate with the broader national work taken forward by the HIS Adverse Events team.
- Maintained and facilitated an ongoing schedule of anonymised case-review learning events presented by NHS Boards, in parallel with a suite of EC4H peer support and training workshops for staff with Key Contact remits for involving families in perinatal reviews.

## SPN Communications

- Restructured the SPN website for a professional, perinatal audience (unless otherwise stated), with improved alignment of project pages with the SPN work plan and a new public facing page with [information for families](#)
- Continued to publish monthly SPN newsletters ([issues 30 – 41](#)) to approximately 1,000 perinatal professionals per month
- Managed SPN Twitter / X account, promoting SPN interests, sharing information and signal-boosting communications from strategic partners
- See KPIs on Engagement and Reach (page 7)



## **SPN Strategy Refresh**

During 2023/24 the Network also started to work on updating its strategy, which concludes in 2024. At the end of the reporting period (31 March 2024), the Network has concluded its consultation with its stakeholders on a draft strategy ahead of ratification through the SPN governance structure in early 2024/25.

# SPN Strategy Refresh

A refreshed SPN strategy needs to address a range of key challenges to ensure the Network remains fit for purpose as it evolves. These are:



Coordination and collaboration across all maternity and neonatal services to work effectively and efficiently as a joined-up perinatal system



Clarifying the remit of the SPN and its unique contribution to the perinatal system in Scotland



Effective decision making that provides strategic direction, guidance and support, balances competing priorities and delivers accountability to both SPN stakeholders and commissioners



Demonstrating how SPN work benefits its stakeholders and adds value



Long term sustainability of the network and its outputs, taking account of the challenging financial context for NHS Scotland

In consultation with Network stakeholders, a new draft strategy has been developed that provides a framework for effective decision making and accountability for the Network, focused on six overarching strategic goals:

1



**Perinatal Focus**

2



**Integration and Partnership Working**

3



**Agile Work Planning and Delivery**

4



**Effective Governance**

5



**Strategic Use of Data and Measuring Impact**

6



**Sustainability**

## SPN Governance

The SPN **Core Steering Group** is responsible for delivery of the SPN work programme and making recommendations to the Oversight Board. It applies 'Once for Scotland' principles to the planning and delivery of maternity and neonatal care in Scotland.

The SPN **Oversight Board** determines the strategic direction of the network in response to emerging needs and priorities of the perinatal community. It provides the authorising environment for SPN work programmes and outputs, as well as provide an escalation route for managing risks and issues.

## SPN Programme Team

The **Programme Team** is hosted by NHS National Services Scotland and provides programme management support and coordination and clinical leadership to the Network.







## **Finance & Sustainability**

The Network is funded entirely by an allocation from Scottish Government to cover SPN Programme Team staffing costs and non-pay expenditure. It operated within budget for the financial year 2023/24.

This was supported by the continuation of virtual meetings, and in-person meetings were only scheduled when there was a business need.

For more information about the Network please visit: <https://www.perinatalnetwork.scot/>

You can contact the SPN Programme Team at: [nss.perinatalnetwork@nhs.scot](mailto:nss.perinatalnetwork@nhs.scot)

or via Twitter [@ScotPerinata1](https://twitter.com/ScotPerinata1)

