



Annual Report 2025/26



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This document has been prepared by the National Services Directorate (NSD) of Public Services Delivery (PSD) Scotland on behalf of the Scottish Perinatal Network (SPN). Accountable to Scottish Government, PSD Scotland 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. SPN is a collaboration of stakeholders involved in maternity and neonatal care who are supported by an NSS Programme Team to drive improvement across the care pathway.





Foreword

We are pleased to share this 2025/26 Annual Report from the Scottish Perinatal Network (SPN).

We would first like to extend a warm welcome to our newly appointed Lead Obstetric Clinician, Dr Caroline Chiswick, and our new Lead Neonatal Clinician, Dr Allan Jackson. The Programme Team has also welcomed a new Assistant Programme Manager, Lyn Steel.

Following the completion of the Scottish Government's review of NHS Scotland Networks, the SPN team has begun prioritising future work streams to shape the delivery plan for the coming year. Although no new work streams were commissioned during the past year, the Network has remained actively engaged in progressing and completing several significant projects. This includes the publication of the Urgent Unscheduled Transfers Guidance, developed by the Remote and Rural Transport Group. This work complements previous outputs from the group, including the Intrauterine Transfer Pathways and Extreme Obstetric Emergency Pathways.

The Maternal Medicine Group undertook a national mapping exercise of maternal medicine services across NHS Scotland using Health Board self-assessment returns. The resulting Maternal Medicine Landscape Scoping Report was published to support evaluation of service availability, workforce capacity, specialist clinics, referral pathways, multidisciplinary team structures, and opportunities for service improvement.

The Safeguarding Midwives Group, hosted by the SPN, also published their National Mapping of Service Provisions in Scotland report. The findings have informed a forward action plan for the group's ongoing work. In addition, the Safeguarding Midwives collaboratively redesigned a Wellbeing Assessment Tool, which is now awaiting development for integration into the BadgerNet digital maternity record used by the majority of Health Boards across Scotland.

The neonatal community has continued the development of national guidance and collaborative working. This is focused in particular on working with colleagues in local Health Boards on ongoing management of the legacy West Of Scotland Neonatal Monographs and guidelines.

The progress outlined in this report would not have been possible without the continued expertise, support, and engagement of the Network's stakeholders. The Network Programme Team extends its sincere thanks to all members for their ongoing commitment and contributions, with particular appreciation to those who have chaired the SPN working groups, and to the pregnant women and families who have shared their experiences and insights with us.

We would also like to offer particular thanks to Tara Fairley, who stepped down from the role of Obstetric Lead Clinician in September 2025. Tara's contribution has been instrumental in shaping and advancing the Network since its inception, and she will be greatly missed.

Jennie Wild and Allan Jackson, Lead Clinicians



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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 (now Public Services Delivery (PSD) Scotland) to set up and host the two networks in 2019 (Neonatal) and 2020 (Maternity). Both networks were initially established as separate national strategic networks, and they subsequently merged into a single Scottish Perinatal Network (SPN).

"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

The SPN strategy is centred around 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**

Delivery of these strategic goals is focussed on six priorities:

1 - Governance and Communications

2 - Development, Peer Support and Education

3 - Clinical Guidance

4 - Service Improvement and Re-Design

5 - Person centred / family integrated care

6 - Data



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Network Activity in 2025/26

The following pages summarise the network activities in 2025/26 to deliver on each of the six strategic priorities.

Progress is marked using the RAGB status in line with the definitions stated below.

Key to progress RAGB status:

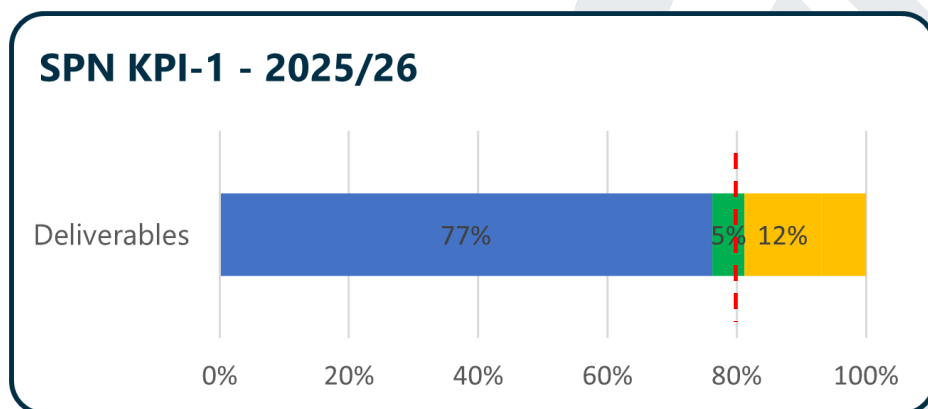
- | | |
|---|--|
|  The network is unlikely to achieve the objective by the agreed end date / major barriers to progress. |  The network is on track to achieve the objective by the agreed end date. |
|  A risk the network will not achieve the objective by the agreed end date, but progress has been made. |  The network achieved the objective. |

Key Performance Indicators

The network has a set of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to measure delivery of its agreed work programme, impact and engagement with its stakeholders. The KPIs below give an overview of delivery against the network's work objectives in 2025/26. Additional KPIs are included on the following pages alongside the summary of key network activities under each strategic priority.

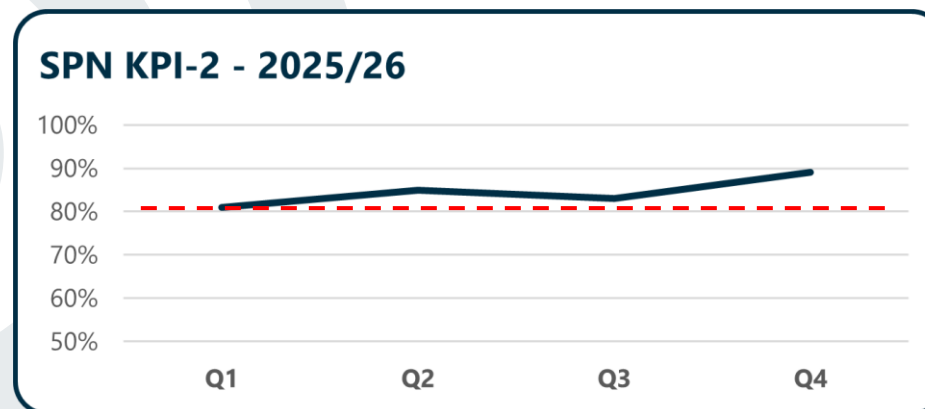
KPI – Annual work plan deliverables achieved

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



KPI – Quarterly work plan milestones achieved

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



1 - Governance and Communications

Develop, maintain and support effective governance and communication processes to facilitate effective decision-making, leadership and engagement in the network.

I. Governance

Progress

- Three SPN Core Steering Group (CSG) meetings were held in May and November 2025 and in March 2026.
- Recruitment of new neonatal and obstetric lead clinicians was completed, with Allan Jackson joining as neonatal lead in September 2025 and Carolyn Chiswick taking up the obstetric lead role in April 2026.
- The SPN was represented on a range of national governance groups, such as the Scottish Government Midwifery Directors and Obstetric Clinical Directors groups, the Pregnancy and Newborn Screening Programme Board, the Scottish Patient Safety Programme (SPSP) Perinatal Programme Board, the Healthcare Improvement Scotland's Maternity Standards Development Group.

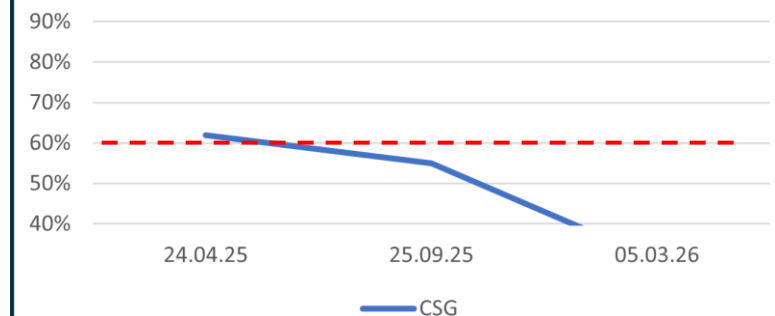
Next Steps for 2026/27

Following the conclusion of the Best Start Implementation Programme Board, consideration will be given during 2026/27 to the future governance arrangements for the Scottish Perinatal Network, including Core Steering Group membership, terms of reference and the Network's oversight function, to ensure these remain aligned to the Network's strategic priorities. The review and refresh of Core Steering Group membership will also strengthen participation and engagement with Core Steering Group meetings in future.

KPI – Attendance at Core Steering Group meetings

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

SPN KPI-5 - 2025/26



II. Communications

Progress

- The priority focus in SPN communications was on direct email contact with stakeholders, as well as the website and monthly newsletters.
- SPN hosted a Perinatal Strategic Partners Forum, which is co-chaired with the Scottish Patient Safety Programme Perinatal and aims to facilitate discussion, collaboration and share learning on perinatal workstreams across Scotland.
- Work has commenced to transition the SPN website to a sustainable future platform as part of Public Services Delivery Scotland's wider suite of national network websites. This will help support the long-term sustainability, consistency and ongoing development of the Network's online resources. The transition is being undertaken in a carefully managed way and with as little disruption to stakeholders as possible.

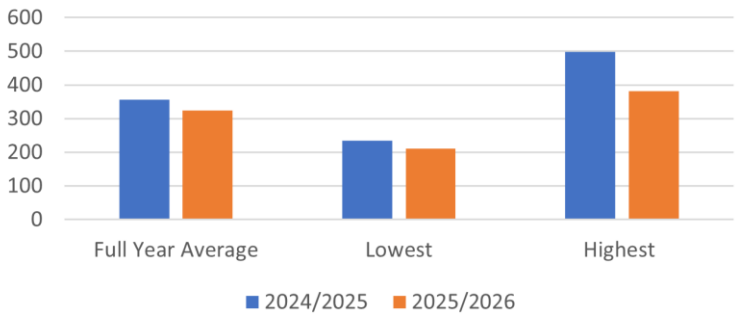
Next steps in 2026/27

Continue website improvement to move the existing SPN content to the same format as other NSD-hosted national networks.

KPI – Newsletter engagement

(target: increase in views on previous year)

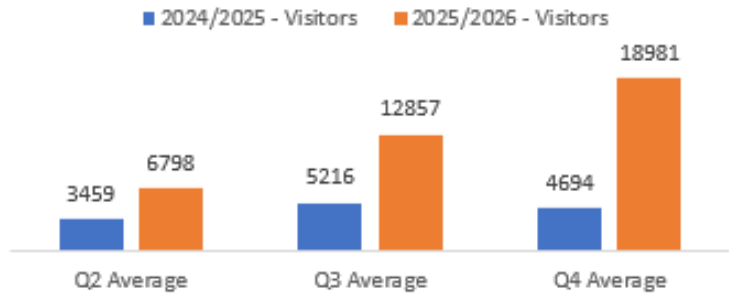
SPN KPI-6 - 2025/26



KPI – Website engagement

(target: increase on the previous year)

SPN KPI-7 - 2025/26



2 – Professional Development, Peer Support and Education

Create and maintain mechanisms for ongoing professional development, peer support and education and build an open, transparent and collaborative organisational culture within the network.

I. Professional Education

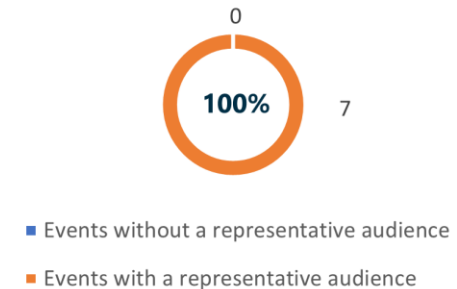
Progress

- A Medical Emergency in Pregnancy Simulation Course (a simulation course on medical emergencies during pregnancy) was piloted in September 2025. This was led by the Maternal Medicine Group, with funding support from the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh. RCPE hosted a Medical Emergencies in Pregnancy symposium on 9 September, and thereafter a small cohort attended the sim centre at Forth Valley Royal Hospital. The aim is to offer this simulation once or twice a year.
- Nine neonatal grand rounds were held in 2025/26, sharing best practice and learning from case studies across neonatal services. Recordings can be accessed via <https://www.perinatalnetwork.nhs.scot/professionals/grand-rounds/>. All linked content has been appropriately reviewed to ensure there is no patient-identifiable, confidential or otherwise inappropriate content accessible via the recordings. Furthermore, any requests to access the recordings require approval by the SPN team.
- A fifth annual SPN case review learning event on babies born <27 weeks outwith a neonatal intensive care unit took place in August 2025. 90 colleagues from across Scottish maternity and neonatal services attended to share learning from cases in 2024. Feedback from registered delegates will inform the 2026/27 case review learning event.

KPI – Attendance at SPN education events

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

SPN KPI-4 - 2025/26



- The annual Scottish Cooling Group (SCG) Neuroprotection Study Day supported by SPN took place on 2nd March 2026 in person in Glasgow. There were 27 delegates and this included cooling equipment demonstrations, workshops and teaching of best practice.

Next Steps in 2026/27

Ongoing delivery of a programme of relevant and appropriate education for maternity and neonatal staff.

II. Host channels for professional peer support and development

Progress

- The Network has continued to support a range of channels for peer support and development across Scottish neonatal services. This included monthly planning calls, quarterly Neonatal Consultant Forum meetings, the Neonatal AHP Forum and the Community Nurses Group.
- The SPN has also continued to facilitate peer support channels for maternity services, including the Maternal Medicine Group, Safeguarding Midwives Group and a monthly support call for Safeguarding Obstetricians.

Next Steps in 2026/27

Develop further channels for maternity staff peer support, development and engagement. This may include an expansion of the existing programme of grand rounds to include additional perinatal-focused sessions, supporting greater multidisciplinary learning and collaboration across maternity and neonatal services. Delivery of the support channels for Scottish neonatal services will be ongoing in 2026/2027.

SCG Neuroprotection Study Day delegate feedback

“I found this training day to be really beneficial. The sessions were very informative and the day broken up nicely with talking sessions and practical stations. I enjoyed hearing parent experience of HIE, cooling and recovery. Felt that I learnt a lot from this, even how to use the CFAM more efficiently. The video's of is this a seizure was a very good session and fun interaction along with important learning. Thank you all.”

“Valuable course, the content was succinct and informative.”

“This was an excellent course from the perspective of a resident doctor. I would not change anything.”

“great day, very useful lectures and discussions, good networking.”

3 – Clinical Guidance

Develop nationally consistent clinical guidance to minimise unwarranted variation in clinical practice and support the delivery of safe and effective maternity and neonatal care across Scotland.

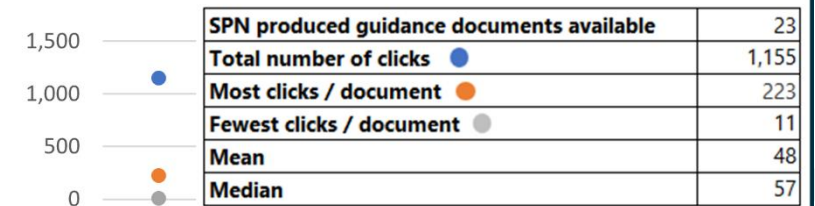
Progress

- The SPN developed and published **two new national guidelines** in 2025/26:
 1. [Pathway for Urgent Unscheduled transfers from a Community Maternity Unit to a Consultant Led Unit](#)
 2. Framework for maternity healthcare professionals to support individualised care for women who choose alternative / non-standard birth choices
- Additionally, reviews and updates were made to the following guidelines:
 1. [Neuroprotection Care Pathway for Infants with Hypoxic-Ischaemic Encephalopathy](#) on behalf of the Scottish Cooling Group
 2. [Accessing Neonatal Advice and Pathways for Transfer of Newborn infants delivered in Community Maternity Units \(CMUs\) to Neonatal Units \(NNUs\) & Maternity Units](#)
- Development work has been started for the following national guidance:
 1. Enteral Nutrition for Preterm Infants is under development.
 2. Pre-hospital emergency transport guidance for paramedics

KPI – Uptake of SPN Guidance

(target: SPN guidance accessed on the SPN website in the 2025/26 reporting period)

SPN KPI-3 - 2025/26



N.B.: Detailed data on individual documents accessed was only available up to the end of October 2025. The SPN website guidance page was viewed 4210 times between 1 November 2025 and 31 March 2026.

Next Steps for 2026/27

Review and update existing national guidance:

1. Management of Intrapartum Maternal Pyrexia in Hospital
2. Home Oxygen in Neonates

In Q1 26/27 finalise and publish guidance on:

- Enteral Nutrition for Preterm Infants is under development.
- Pre-hospital emergency transport guidance for paramedics

Review and update governance for legacy guidance and drug monographs developed through the previous West of Scotland neonatal network, with a view to moving towards national guidance as a priority.



4 – Service Improvement and Re-Design

Support the development and implementation of improvement and re-design initiatives in line with evidence-based best practice and Scottish Government policy such as Best Start.

Progress

- A refreshed mapping survey of maternal medicine provision in Scotland was completed in March 2026. The results provide an update to the service provision throughout Scotland compared to earlier mapping of pre-pandemic services. The report will be used to aid the Maternal Medicine Group to identify areas of improvement to achieve greater consistency in service provision across Scotland.
- National patient information was developed to support women with the signs of early labour: [What to do? Possible signs of labour before 37 weeks of pregnancy \(Preterm\)](#)
- The network has been supporting ongoing work to implement the Best Start model for neonatal intensive care.

Next Steps in 2026/27

Consider improvements to address maternal medicine service gaps and variation across Scotland that have been highlighted by the maternal mapping exercise that was carried out in 25/26.

5 – Person-centred / Family Integrated Care

Support maternity and neonatal services across Scotland to engage effectively with service users and facilitate pregnant women and families to be active partners in their care

Progress

- Service user engagement was maintained via Maternity Voice Partnership and Third Sector representation on the Core Steering Group, as well as representatives from the neonatal parental advisory group (PAG).
- The Family Integrated Care (FiCare) resources on the SPN website, providing accessible core information about Scottish neonatal units to families, were evaluated. The questionnaire remains open to support continued improvement. Units are asked to confirm contact details twice yearly to ensure details remain correct. An overview of the SPN FiCare and Transport work was presented at the European Neonatal Conference in Serbia in October 2025.

Next steps in 2026/27

SPN plans to engage with families as part of a wider programme of work to strengthen family involvement in the overall work of the Network and ensure that the experiences and perspectives of parents continue to inform national maternity and neonatal improvement activity.

6 – Data and Evidence

Develop Network capacity to interrogate relevant maternity and neonatal service data, produce data analysis and reporting and use data to identify areas for improvement.

Progress

- Support participation in National Audits – SPN Neonatal Data Sharing Event 2026 took place on 3 March 2026, providing clinicians a platform for discussing data with peers to ensure consistency and data quality ahead of the next submission to the National Neonatal Audit Programme (NNAP).
- Neonatal reporting, In-utero transfer (IUT) outcomes data linkage – The data linkage agreement with Public Health Scotland (PHS) has now been re-established to reflect that access to this data is an ongoing requirement. Data relating to calendar years 2023 and 2024 has been shared with neonatal units. This data is used to present the number of women who deliver a baby within 7 days of having an IUT. This allows clinicians to better understand if women are being transferred appropriately.
- There have been challenges in establishing timely data flows for national reporting on IUT data generated by the Scottish Ambulance Service (SAS).
- SPN has not yet been able to access the routine national reporting functionality available within BadgerNet Neonatal. Work is ongoing to identify a sustainable approach to accessing this information to support national reporting, benchmarking and quality improvement activity.

Next Steps in 2026/27

Discuss with SAS how IUT data sharing can be streamlined to ensure reporting takes place on a quarterly basis.

SPN Governance

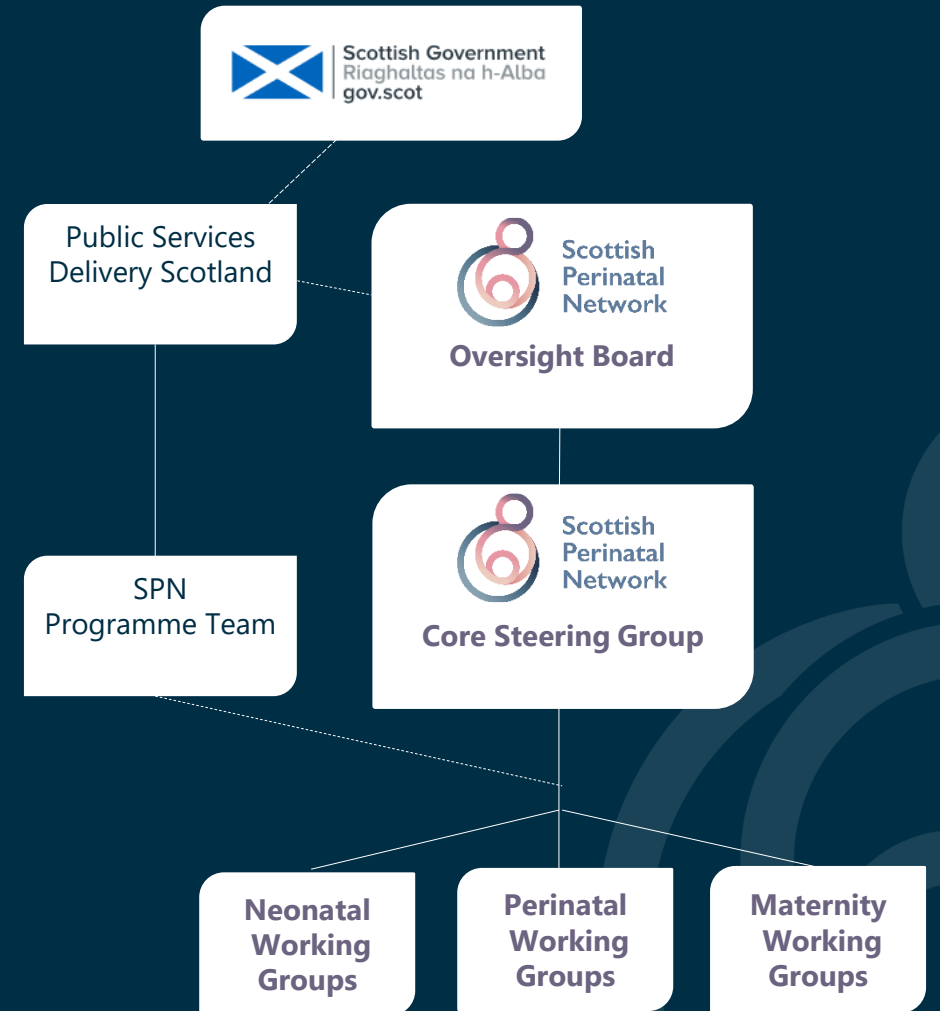
The SPN **Core Steering Group (CSG)** is responsible for delivery of the SPN work programme and making recommendations to the Oversight Board. It applies 'Once for Scotland' principles to the planning and delivery of maternity and neonatal care in Scotland.

The SPN **Oversight Board (OSB)** 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.

The SPN OSB was co-located with the Scottish Government's Best Start Implementation Programme Board (IPB). Following the conclusion of the Best Start Implementation Programme Board, consideration will be given during 2026/27 to the future governance arrangements for the Scottish Perinatal Network, including Core Steering Group membership, terms of reference and the Network's oversight function, to ensure these remain aligned to the Network's strategic priorities.

SPN Programme Support

The National Services Directorate (NSD) of Public Services Delivery Scotland provide programme management support and coordination and clinical leadership to the Network.



Future oversight arrangements to be confirmed



Finance

Public Services Delivery Scotland is funded by Scottish Government to host and support the Scottish Perinatal Network. The funding supports Network staffing, programme management and coordination activities required to deliver the Network's agreed priorities and work programme.

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

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This resource may be made available, in full or summary form, in alternative formats and community languages. Please contact us on **0131 275 6000** or email **altformats@nhs.scot** to discuss how we can best meet your requirements.

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