National Office of Clinical Audit (NOCA)

National Paediatric Mortality Register (NPMR) Governance Committee

Terms of Reference V2

Terms of Reference

The National Office of Clinical Audit (NOCA) works to promote an open culture of shared learning from national clinical audit to improve clinical outcomes and patient safety. Under the NOCA Governance Board, each National Clinical Audit (NCA) establishes a separate Governance Committee.

The purpose of this document is to set out the governance structures and operational management for the NOCA National Paediatric Mortality Register (NPMR) Governance Committee.

Aim of National Paediatric Mortality Register

To provide a national database of standardised information on all deaths in children and young people (CYP) in Ireland, generating high quality data to provide an evidence base with which to drive improvements in quality of care and services for children in Ireland and reduce the number of CYP deaths.

Objectives

1. Provide a system for continuous national surveillance of all deaths in children aged 0 to 18 completed years in Ireland, regardless of cause, occurring both in hospital and in the community.
2. Collect complete, standardised and timely data from multiple sources on the magnitude and characteristics of CYP deaths in Ireland.
3. Build an epidemiological database of information on all CYP deaths and provide a critical analysis of data to identify trends and subsequent recommendations on factors impacting on CYP mortality.
4. Conduct audit, quality improvement and research studies relating to the occurrence and underlying causes of CYP deaths and use this information to provide evidence for informing policy aimed at improving outcomes and reducing the number of child deaths.
5. Liaise with senior decision makers at both policy and operational level to implement recommendations.

Terms of Reference

The following Terms of Reference clearly set out the responsibilities of the Governance Committee of the NPMR.

1. Responsibilities of the NPMR Governance Committee

- The purpose of the NPMR Governance Committee is to oversee the national clinical audit.

- Shape the strategic direction of the NPMR.
- Ensure NPMR complies with all legal and statutory requirements such as Freedom of Information and Data Protection.
- Oversee compliance with key NOCA Policies e.g. NOCA Monitoring and Escalation Policy.
- Provide assurance to the NOCA Board on identification and management of NPMR risks.
- Review and agree content of annual reports of the NPMR before forwarding reports for review and sign off by the NOCA Governance Board.
- Monitor staffing needs in the NPMR and supporting requests for staff as service grows.
- Act as an escalation point for sub-committees and NPMR clinical lead.
- Ensure that the NPMR adheres to the highest standards of corporate and social responsibility.

The NPMR Governance Committee may delegate specific roles to a sub- committee e.g. preparation of a national report, but retain overall responsibility its execution.

The Clinical Lead supported by the NOCA executive team has operational responsibility for implementation of the NPMR.

2. Membership

Nominations: Members will be invited to achieve an appropriate mix of relevant skills to support the NPMR. Membership should comprise persons with interest, knowledge and expertise on the NPMR and should include stakeholders with clinical and health care professional expertise; academic or methodological expertise, two Public – Patient representatives (NCEC, 2016, NOCA communication) and one senior accountable healthcare manager (NCEC, 2016, NOCA communication). The Public – Patient representatives will be recruited in line with the NOCA Patient and Public Involvement Framework (Ref: NOCA Patient and Public Involvement Framework).

Core Members – NOCA will be represented by the NPMR Clinical Lead and one member of the executive team on NPMR Governance Committee. The NCEC have recommended core membership of the NPMR Governance committee should include public representatives x 2 and a senior accountable health manager (NCEC, 2016, NOCA communication). An outline of NCA core membership is included in Table 1. Membership

Membership of the Audit Governance Committee is multidisciplinary and representative of the core stakeholders. An outline of the membership is included in Table 1.

More details on Membership of the NOCA NPMR Audit Governance Committee are available directly on the NPMR Audit Governance Page.

Table 1: Membership

Core Members
NPMR Clinical Lead
Chair / Royal College of Physicians in Ireland
Paediatric Programme Manager
Paediatric Programme Assistant Manager
Patient & Public Interest (PPI) Representative
HSE Department of Public Health Representative
Coroner's Society of Ireland Representative
Children's Health Ireland Nursing Representative
National Perinatal Epidemiology Centre (NPEC)
General Practitioners Representative
Faculty of Paediatrics
Senior Accountable Healthcare Manager
Paediatric Emergency Medicine Representative
Paediatric Pathology Representative
Paediatric Palliative Medicine Representative
Regional Paediatrician Representative
Patient & Public Interest (PPI) Representative
TCD Department of Statistics Representative
General Paediatric Representative

Confidentiality - The operation of the NPMR must be totally confidential. Members of the NPMR Governance Committee are nominated by professional bodies / representative group. It is part of their role is to keep the nominating body informed about developments in NPMR. **It is a breach of professional confidentiality to divulge any information about specific quality of care issues discussed at the NPMR Governance Committee**

Tenure - In line with the guidelines established by the NOCA Governance Board, membership of the NPMR Governance committee will be for a staggered period of three years. In certain circumstances where members are agreeable they may be asked to stay on for a second term by the Chair of the NPMR Governance Committee.

Resignation - Resignation before completion of tenure will be tendered and accepted only in writing to the Chair and will allow for no less than a two month notice period. In the case of resignation of an individual, who may have been involved, or offering specific advice or guidance in respect of the completion on any particular audit or review of audit data, the Member will first ensure all obligations are fully discharged before tendering resignation. The Chair can invite additional members to fill casual vacancies from relevant cohort or as the need arises in order to ensure adequate specialist expertise is represented.

3. Management of NPMR Governance Committee Meetings

Attendance

It is intended that the NPMR Governance Committee should meet quarterly with additional meetings where necessary. Prior notice is issued by email. In the event a member is not in a position to attend, apologies should be sent to the Paediatric Programme Manager in advance. If a member of the Committee cannot attend it is not appropriate to send an alternate.

Inability to attend and contribute to 3 consecutive meetings per year requires consideration of individual membership and possible re-nomination from relevant nominating body. A record of attendance is maintained at every meeting and this will be published in the appendices of the audit's national report.

Quorum

The NPMR Governance Committee requires the presence of 50% plus 1 member in attendance to establish a quorum for any meeting convened for decision making purposes. The NOCA Clinical Lead and one member of the executive team are included as part of the quorum. The quorum should be maintained throughout the meeting; this is imperative for decision making.

Management of conflicts of interest

In order to ensure the NPMR Governance Committee operates in a transparent and unbiased way, all committee members are required to declare any conflict of interest to the Chair in line with the NOCA Transparency Policy - for the Management of Conflicts of Interest (NOCA-GEN-POL015) at all governance meetings.

Decision Making

NPMR Governance Committee decisions are made by consensus following discussion by members. However in the absence of consensus, members are requested to vote on the decision with the Chair having the casting vote. The NPMR Clinical Lead and Paediatric Programme Manager have one vote each on the NPMR Governance Committee.

Some decisions are reserved for to the NOCA Governance Board e.g. national report approval, approval of data access for research. In these cases, the NPMR Governance Committee reviews and makes a decision to endorse a matter prior to referral to the NOCA Governance Board.

Administrative Support

The Chair and the Paediatric Programme Manager are responsible for the administration of the NPMR Governance Committee.

4. Expenses

The NPMR Governance Committee is convened as voluntary committees and as such no member will be paid for their time. Limited funding will be retained by NOCA for external or Public-Patient representatives to allow for vouched travel.

5. Accountability & Reporting Relationships

The NPMR Governance Committee is accountable to the NOCA Governance Board. The NOCA executive team furnish regular status reports on behalf of the NPMR Governance Committee to the NOCA Governance Board.

6. Indemnity

The Clinical Indemnity Scheme has been engaged by the HSE to provide indemnity cover to NOCA Clinical staff and its executive team, the convened members of the NPMR Governance Committees of NOCA. This is provided in respect of all NPMR activities in the unlikely event that personnel may be sued in a personal injury action alleging clinical negligence arising from the proper discharge of the duties and obligations of the NPMR Governance committee.

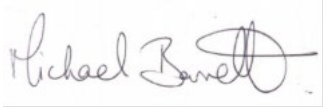
7. Performance

The NPMR Governance Committee shall at least once a year review its own performance and terms of reference and report its conclusions/changes to the NOCA Governance Board. Performance measures include:

- Attendance at meetings by members,
- Review the process of the NPMR Governance Committee to ensure:
  - NPMR objectives,
  - Responsibilities of the NPMR Governance Committee
  - Minutes, reports and other outputs from the committee are of a suitable standard.

8. Approval and Review Date

The NPMR Governance Committee approves its responsibilities and terms of reference at time of set up and reviews performance annually.

Chair Name	Professor Michael Barrett
Chair Signature	
Date	09/Sep/2026

9. Role of NPMR Governance Committee Members

Responsibilities of the Chair of the NPMR Governance Committee

It is the policy of the NOCA Governance Board that there is a clear division of responsibilities between the NPMR Chair of Governance Committee and Clinical Lead. The Chair is responsible for the

leadership of the NPMR Governance Committee and the NPMR Clinical Lead supported by the NOCA executive team has operational responsibility for implementation of the NPMR.
The Chair has a strategic role to play in representing the vision and purpose of the NPMR. He / she brings impartiality and objectivity to the meetings through following actions;

- Sets the agenda for each meeting with the NOCA Executive Team, (Appendix 3: Sample National Clinical Audit Governance Committee Agenda)
- Signs minutes approved by the NPMR governance committee,
- Ensures that there is a quorum for decision making purposes,
- Make the purpose of each meeting clear to members; explain the agenda at the beginning of each meeting,
- Ensures the meeting runs to schedule and keep the meeting moving by putting time limits on each agenda item,
- Ensures the committee work to NOCA policies and procedures,
- Encourages broad participation from members in discussion,
- Resolves any conflict that may arise in the course of meetings,
- Ends each meeting with a summary of decisions and assignments.

The position of Chair of the NPMR Governance Committee is for a period of two years. This can be extended for further 2 years as agreed by the Committee.
It is the policy of the NOCA Governance Board that the key office of Chair should be rotated among all members of the NPMR Governance Committee. This ensures a relatively equal burden of responsibility is placed on all members of the NPMR Governance Committee, allowing members member to contribute meaningfully to the work of the NPMR committee.
In the event the chair is appointed from within the existing membership then a 'request for nomination' should be sent to the relevant body to replace this committee member.
A Deputy Chair can be appointed at the same time as the Chair.

Responsibility of each NPMR Committee Member

Each member should:

- Take a genuine interest in the NPMR objectives and overall success,
- Attend and participate in each NPMR Governance meeting,
- Support open discussion and encourage fellow NPMR Governance Committee members to voice their insights,
- Support new members in understanding the functions of the NPMR Governance Committee and the relationship between it and other stakeholders,
- Adhere to the NOCA Policies e.g. Transparency Policy for the Management of Conflicts of Interest
- Act in a manner which is appropriate and in accordance with the relevant legislation e.g. Data Protection and FOI Legislation,
- Act and uphold the highest standards of ethical and professional behaviour.