NOCA
National Office of Clinical Audit

IMPACT REPORT 2026

FROM AUDIT TO ACTION:
A CULTURE OF IMPROVEMENT

NATIONAL OFFICE OF CLINICAL AUDIT (NOCA)

The National Office of Clinical Audit (NOCA) was established in 2012, and is funded by the Health Service Executive, through the office of the Chief Clinical Officer (CCO), and is managed by HSE Quality and Patient Safety via the HSE National Centre of Clinical Audit (NCCA). Audits are commissioned by the NCCA. NOCA is based in the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (RCSI) and is independently governed by a voluntary Board. NOCA manages the largest portfolio of national clinical audits and registries in the Irish healthcare system. Our audits include public and private healthcare providers and inform the general public about how specific areas of the healthcare system are performing against recognised standards of care.

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Preface

Dear colleagues

I am pleased to introduce our second audit impact report, which summarises the impact of the National Office of Clinical Audit across multiple areas within the health service, most importantly through our National Clinical Audits with their associated improvements, as impressively detailed in chapter 3.

However, the breadth and depth of our impact is much wider than this essential and core function.

Our impact on patient and public involvement and representation in clinical audit in the past number of years has been another success story. The significant recent momentum is apparent from the detail of chapter 2. I commend all our patient and public interest representatives and the support provided to them by the NOCA teams for this developing partnership, which has impacted greatly on patient and public involvement in audit and improvement in healthcare in the formal setting of clinical audit.

Chapters 3 and 4 detail impact of our audits at a local, national and systemic level. We recognise the importance of audit and its associated improvements at all three levels as being equally important. The impact of a local audit can be made national or systemic when adopted by the corresponding national audit, as has occurred over the past number of years with many of our audits.
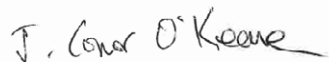
It is important to recognise the concept of audit maturity. We illustrate the level of maturity of each audit from the initial process of reliable data gathering, to data analytics and then to improvement, assurance and our intended final outcome of patient reported outcomes.

The report also highlights the evolution of our data analytics function, with increasingly effective data presentation, for example in the form of run charts and special cause variation (improvement), and in our analysis of evaluation of impact strategies.

Research publication is critical to impact in the wider academic community and is another success story summarised in chapter 4.

Finally, the report outlines how communication of all of the above impacts effectively on all stakeholders, most importantly our patients.

Professor Conor O'Keane
Quality Improvement Lead
NOCA

"Clinical audit has matured from measurement to meaningful improvement."

Chapter 1
Introduction

Chapter 1 **Introduction**

This is the second National Office of Clinical Audit (NOCA) Impact Report. This report builds on the first Impact Report published in 2023, which highlighted individual clinical audits. This report will focus on the developments and outputs from all areas of NOCA during 2023-2025.

About NOCA:

NOCA was established in 2012 and is funded by the Health Service Executive (HSE), through the office of the Chief Clinical Officer (CCO) Dr Colm Henry, and is managed by HSE Quality and Patient Safety via the HSE National Centre of Clinical Audit (NCCA). Audits are commissioned by the NCCA via the CCO. NOCA is based in and operationally supported by the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (RCSI), and is independently governed by a voluntary Board.

NOCA manages the largest portfolio of national clinical audits and registries in the Irish healthcare system. NOCA audits include public and private healthcare providers and inform the general public about how specific areas of the healthcare system are performing against recognised standards of care. They also support healthcare staff, management and policy-makers to plan and improve patient care. NOCA's focus has shifted in recent years from how to collect quality data, to harnessing its full potential for quality improvement, in alignment with the HSE Quality Improvement Toolkit and Guide (HSE, 2024). NOCA's location in the RCSI is a valuable one due to the synergies with the current RCSI Strategy for health and societal wellbeing, research and innovation and building foundations for sustainable impact (RCSI, 2023).

The NOCA Strategy 2021-2025 focused on strategic pillars for national clinical audit excellence, audit development and promotion of national clinical audit via a number of strategic enablers including finance, people, information technology, HSE and Department of Health support, partnerships and stakeholder engagement. This report will emphasise growth and expansion in the key areas identified. It will also point towards key areas for the new strategy due to be published in 2026.

Through NOCA, there now exists a robust structure for the management, development and promotion of national clinical audits. Building on the first impact report, and previous NOCA strategy this report will take a broader focus on the work of NOCA, which will include the involvement of our Patient and Public Interest Representatives (PPIs), the impact of our clinical audits across four main areas including National/ System, Local, and Public. A further chapter will focus on all of the other areas of work NOCA is involved in, including audit development, communication and events, quality improvement, research, advisory services, analytics, information technology and governance, education and audit promotion.

Since its inception in 2012, NOCA has continued to evolve and expand and this is captured in the timeline of evolution in Figure 1.

The progress of NOCA between 2012-2025 is documented in the timeline shown in Figure 1, some key highlights include:

- the inaugural NOCA Annual Conference in 2015
- the first NOCA Strategy 2017-2020
- audit data supporting trauma system reform in 2018
- development of the Best Practice Tariff for hip fracture in 2018
- the addition of the cardiovascular audits (stroke and heart attack) in 2019
- involvement in the development of the National Review of Clinical Audit in 2019
- acceleration of the ICU-Bed Information System (ICU-BIS) to support ICU bed capacity and management of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020
- development of dashboards for reporting in 2020
- the second NOCA Strategy 2021-2025
- expansion of our PPI membership across audits and board
- using audit data for research, national guidance and surveillance
- development of the national audit platform in 2024
- longer term data collection is now also a growing feature in some of the audits
- launch of the national audit platform in 2025.

FIGURE 1: NOCA TIMELINE 2012-2025

Timeline (top row, left to right):

2012 — Launch of NOCA / National Office of Clinical Audit / NOCA

2013 — IHFD joins NOCA / MTA rolls-out

2014 — Alignment of NPEC to NOCA audit governance structures / NATIONAL PERINATAL EPIDEMIOLOGY CENTRE

2015 — The Irish National Intensive Care Unit Audit and NAHM roll-out begins / Inaugural NOCA conference

2016 — INOR roll-out begins / MTA receives National Clinical Effectiveness Committee endorsement

2017 — NOCA Strategy 2017-2020 published / INOR Patient Reported Outcome Measures (PROMs)

2018 — 'A Trauma System for Ireland' Report published / European Clinical Audit Network established / Best Practice Tariff introduced for IHFD

Timeline (bottom row, left to right):

2025 — Launch of new NOCA National Audit Platform / NOCA QI collaborative / Moving audits beyond hospitals

2024 — 2024 IBIR development begins / New NOCA IT platform / Equity Stratifiers / 25 Patient & Public Interest representatives

2023 — SSI surveillance pilot through IHFD / NOCA Audit Impact Report 2023 published / IMPACT REPORT 2023

2022 — 17 active Public and Patient Interest representatives / Research focus expands / IPDA development begins / HSE National Centre for Clinical Audit established

2021 — NOCA Strategy 2021-2025 published / First report from IPCCA published

2020 — ICU-BIS launched / NPMR joins NOCA / Audit feasibility studies commenced / Quarterly dashboard reporting commences

2019 — NOCA welcomes INAS and IHAA / GDPR guidance published / National Review of Clinical Audit published
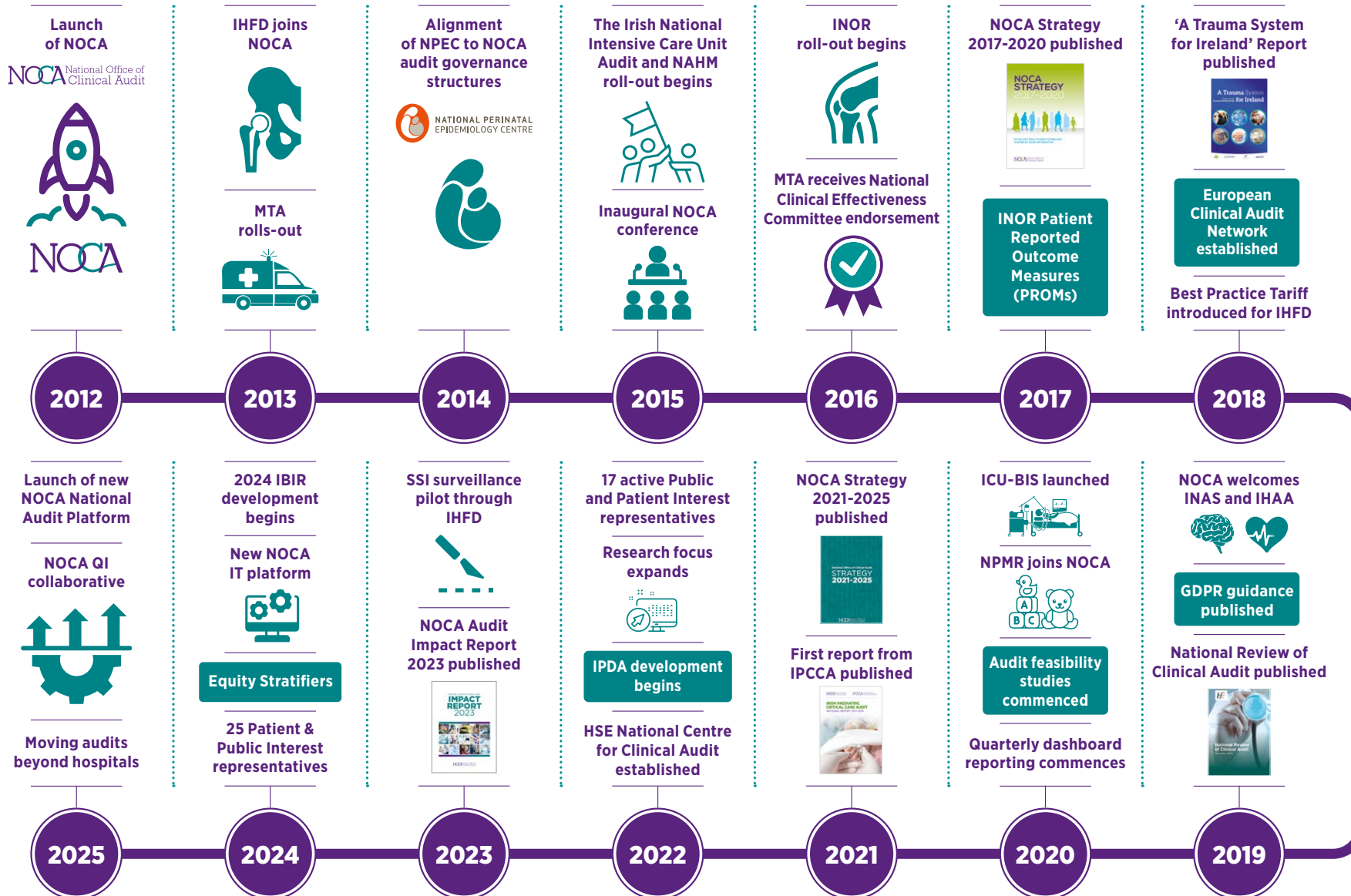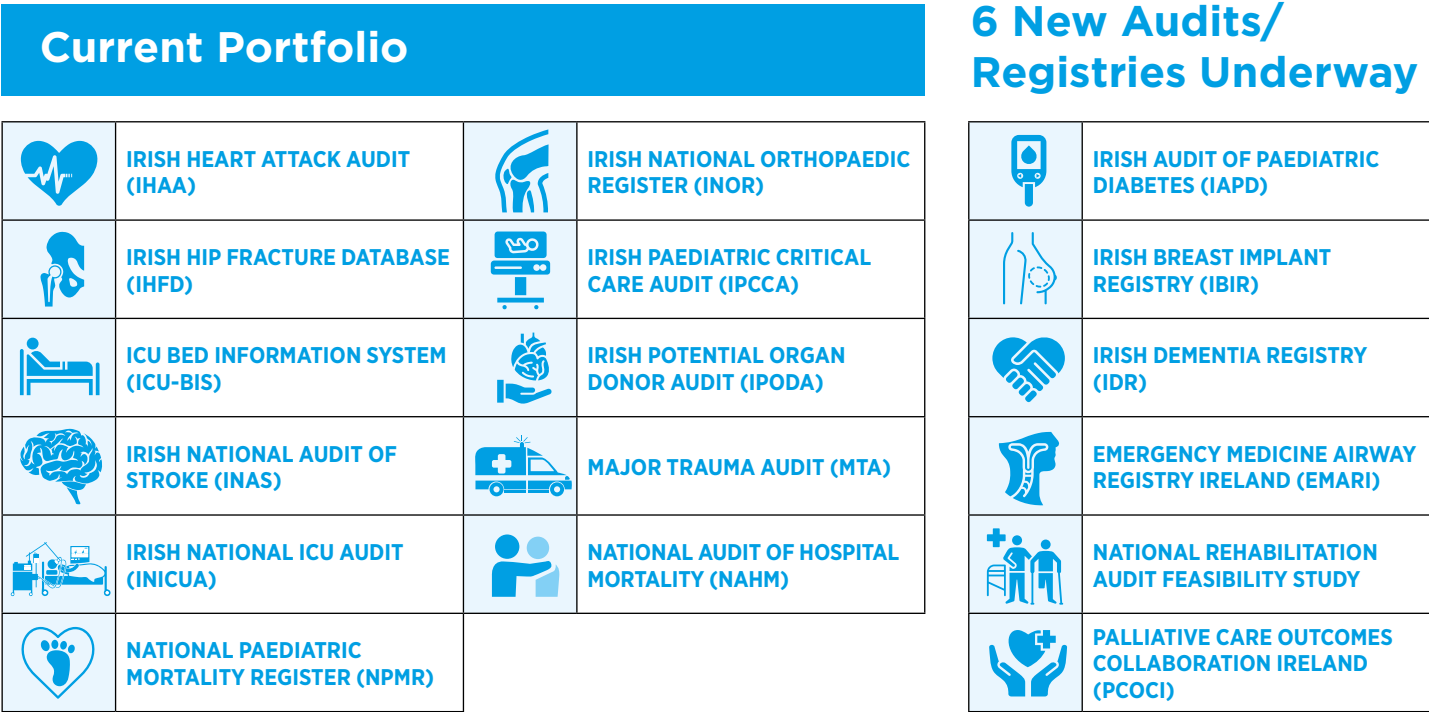
Key to NOCA's success has been its expanded audit portfolio. Figure 2 includes the current and emerging audits in development. To achieve this, the NOCA team has expanded its expertise, with a growing number of functional areas including Audit Management, Audit Development, Communications, Operations and Quality Assurance, Data Science, IT and Information Governance, Finance, and Research.

The majority of the current audit portfolio is focused mainly on acute hospital care. However, a number of audits now collect data from a growing number of private hospital providers. NOCA is conscious that there is a real need to expand beyond the acute hospital system and is currently developing a number of audits that will include the community e.g. Irish Dementia Registry and Palliative Care Outcomes Collaboration Ireland and will further expand into areas like rehabilitation, cosmetic clinics through the Irish Breast Implant Registry and more audits are incorporating longer-term outcomes and patient-reported outcome measures.

Current Portfolio

	IRISH HEART ATTACK AUDIT (IHAA)		IRISH NATIONAL ORTHOPAEDIC REGISTER (INOR)
	IRISH HIP FRACTURE DATABASE (IHFD)		IRISH PAEDIATRIC CRITICAL CARE AUDIT (IPCCA)
	ICU BED INFORMATION SYSTEM (ICU-BIS)		IRISH POTENTIAL ORGAN DONOR AUDIT (IPODA)
	IRISH NATIONAL AUDIT OF STROKE (INAS)		MAJOR TRAUMA AUDIT (MTA)
	IRISH NATIONAL ICU AUDIT (INICUA)		NATIONAL AUDIT OF HOSPITAL MORTALITY (NAHM)
	NATIONAL PAEDIATRIC MORTALITY REGISTER (NPMR)		

6 New Audits/ Registries Underway

	IRISH AUDIT OF PAEDIATRIC DIABETES (IAPD)
	IRISH BREAST IMPLANT REGISTRY (IBIR)
	IRISH DEMENTIA REGISTRY (IDR)
	EMERGENCY MEDICINE AIRWAY REGISTRY IRELAND (EMARI)
	NATIONAL REHABILITATION AUDIT FEASIBILITY STUDY
	PALLIATIVE CARE OUTCOMES COLLABORATION IRELAND (PCOCI)

FIGURE 2: NOCA AUDIT PORTFOLIO

292,000 EPISODES OF CARE AUDITED

DATA USED FROM OVER **5 MILLION** PATIENT EPISODES

55 HOSPITALS

The amount of data collected to date is almost three hundred thousand episodes of care, from 55 hospitals both public and private across Ireland. In addition, NOCA uses existing data sources too to supplement many of the audits.

It is hoped that this report will continue to demonstrate the importance and impact of clinical audit on the care and outcomes of the patients in the Irish Hospital System.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

PPI

30 PPI representatives

17 advocacy agencies

NOCA charity partnership for Clinical Audit Awareness Week

Development of a patient information video for hip fracture recovery

AUDIT

11 audits producing annual reports

Expansion of long term data collection (IHFD)

National surveillance programme built into an audit

Public awareness campaign for stroke 'Stroke: Every Second Counts' (INAS)

In-hospital mortality improving (NAHM) and child deaths deceasing (NPMR)

National guidance for older adults with trauma (MTA)

Collaboration with Euroheart (IHAA)

Daily ICU occupancy and acuity available ICU-BIS

ICU bed capacity needs expansion but standard of care is excellent (INICUA/IPCCA)

>43,000 patients on the INOR register

Organ donation audit driving awareness of organ donation and transplant services

NOCA

Audit development framework and expertise

Launch of the NOCA Audit Platform

NOCA representatives on >25 national and international committees

QI training embedded across NOCA

Extensive engagement across multiple social media platforms

Impactful events

>80 research publications

Analytical developments to support creation of dashboards across multiple audits

Chapter 2
Patient Partnerships

Chapter 2 **Patient Partnerships**

NOCA remains committed to embedding the patient voice at the heart of its work. To support this work Marina Cronin, Head of Quality and Development and Aisling Connolly, Head of Communications Operations and Quality Assurance co-lead the PPI activities throughout the year. During 2023-2025, this commitment was reflected in a wide range of activities designed to meaningfully involve patients and the public in clinical audit and healthcare improvement. NOCA has a shared vision and long-standing collaborative relationship with many patients and advocacy groups. Each audit seeks two Patient and Public Interest Representatives (PPI) representatives to sit on audit governance committees and there are also two PPI representatives on the NOCA Governance Board. This representation is continued on internal committees such as the Audit Impact Committee. It is a priority for NOCA to have PPI representatives engaged at every level of the organisation to support and shape the data captured in the audits, as well as NOCA itself.

There are currently 30 PPI representatives, representing 17 advocacy organisations and people with experience, who play a vital role in shaping NOCA's clinical audit work and enhancing the quality and safety of healthcare across Ireland.

Patient and Public Interest Activities

Throughout 2023-2025, NOCA took steps to ensure that the patient voice was not only heard but amplified. These included:

- PPI participation in audit governance committees, NOCA Governance Board, NOCA Risk Committee and the NOCA Audit Impact Committee.

- Collaborative learning, where PPI representatives Pauline O Shea, Irish Heart Foundation and Tibbs Pereira, Patients for Patient Safety Ireland, led discussions on the 'Patient voice in clinical audit' and 'Health and health data literacy' in November 2023.

- NOCA hosts an annual PPI Celebration Event in November each year, which is attended by NOCA staff and PPI representatives. The purpose of these events is to acknowledge the invaluable contributions of PPI representatives and workshop opportunities for further partnership. In 2024, these events were addressed by health service leaders, such as Iolo Eilian, Assistant National Director, Patient and Service User Engagement, HSE and by Prof Áine Carroll, Rehabilitation Medicine Consultant & Professor of Integrated Care and Improvement Science, UCD. In 2025, there were presentations from Niamh Dillon, PPI in Research Programme Manager in the RCSI and Dr Grace Lavelle and Dr Malak Naim PhD from RCSI.

- Virtual coffee catch-ups were held which provide an informal, safe space for the entire PPI group to connect bi-monthly, share experiences, and raise any matters for open discussion and mutual support.

- In 2024, NOCA engaged with external organisations, including a knowledge-sharing partnership with the Dutch Institute for Clinical Auditing (DICA) to support the development of their own PPI programme, and the HSE National Screening Service to explore shared approaches to public involvement in quality assurance processes.

- The introduction of a Charity Partner for Clinical Audit Awareness Week in 2024. NOCA collaborated with Arthritis Ireland in 2024 and the Irish Neonatal Health Alliance in 2025, both of whom were randomly chosen from nominations from NOCA's PPI representatives, as part of fundraising and awareness campaigns, demonstrating our commitment to giving back to the PPI community.

- NOCA was represented with a stand at the HSE Patient and Public Partnership Conference in 2024 and 2025, showcasing the organisations work and engaging with wider stakeholders in the patient advocacy space.

- Throughout 2024, NOCA contributed to the development of a resource to support patient and public membership on Institutional Research Ethics Committees, published by PPI Ignite (2024).

- In 2024 and early 2025, a patient and public information video about hip fracture recovery was developed through workshops with patient and public representatives and collaborators from University College Dublin, Sage Advocacy, and Age & Opportunity.

Patient and Public Interest co-design in development of NOCA audit and registries

PPI representatives were active collaborators in the development of new data collections. A co-design approach from inception was used to agree a quality improvement aim, objectives, scope, dataset and metrics for new data collections such as the Irish Potential Organ Donor Audit (IPODA) and the Irish Breast Implant Registry (IBIR). PPI representatives generously supported NOCA to engage with the wider healthcare community and general public to promote the fledgling data collections. With support of the Irish Kidney Association, Dr Maria Kehoe PhD, Audit Development Manager presented the findings of the IPODA at Dáil Eireann in November 2023. PPI representative contributions ensure that data collections are relevant, patient centered and focused on quality improvement in patient outcomes.

> *"PPI REPRESENTATIVES WERE ACTIVE COLLABORATORS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF NEW DATA COLLECTIONS."*

Patient and Public Interest Impact in NOCA reports

- A patient experience narrative was included in the majority of national audit reports. The patient story provides the reader with a detailed understanding of the lived healthcare experience of the patients, enhancing audit reports with 'personal, interpretive, and uniquely human' insight's on the audit topic (Prof. Áine Carroll, personal communication 28 Nov 2024).

- Summary Reports, in particular, are co-designed with PPI representatives and their insights featured prominently in these reports. Many of the PPI representatives also contributed to the national report and participate in national conferences, webinars, panel discussions, media engagement and report launches during 2023-2025. Capturing the insights of PPI representatives broadens perspective on the audit topic and increases the focus and engagement with quality and safety issues highlighted by NOCA clinical audits.

- A PPI perspective was incorporated into a quality improvement project, further supporting the integration of lived experience into clinical audit and improvement.

What NOCA PPI representatives value - co-producing impactful NOCA audits for the Irish health service

During 2025, a number of focus groups led by Dr Malak Naim and Dr Grace Lavelle (from the School of Physiotherapy at RCSI) were carried out to evaluate how NOCA PPI representatives understand their involvement within NOCA and how it can be improved. Four virtual focus groups were held, lasting between 30-90 minutes. Each group explored topics relating to NOCA committee membership, experience in national reports and general reflections. All sessions were recorded with consent and fully transcribed. A framework analysis (Richie & Spencer, 1994) was applied, involving familiarisation through listening and reading transcripts, followed by coding to identify themes that are currently shaping a detailed report outline. Preliminary findings include:

- PPI representatives bring a broad range of perspectives to NOCA committees, informed by their lived experiences as patients, carers, and parents, as well as professional backgrounds in areas such as nursing, advocacy, and academia. Their initial experiences of joining the committees were described as both a privilege and a challenge. The induction process varied considerably; while some representatives received clear, tailored support, others found the experience daunting and overly medicalised.

- PPI representatives report active involvement across NOCA committees, national reporting, and dissemination activities. They highlight strong collaboration with advocacy organisations, which enhances the credibility and reach of the audits. Representatives consistently feel respected, heard, and valued, with their contributions meaningfully influencing committee discussions.

- PPI representatives contribute significantly to ensuring patient-centred national reporting. Their perspectives help shape recommendations during committee meetings. They support the inclusion of patient stories alongside audit data, helping to humanise the findings. Including direct quotes from PPI representatives enhances the authenticity of national reports, while their involvement in developing plain-English summaries improves the accessibility of report content.

- PPI representatives identified areas for improvement to ensure more effective participation. The use of jargon and medicalised language at times make discussions difficult to follow. Practical challenges such as travel, IT access, and inconsistent expense support were also noted. Some representatives feel their input is not always fully integrated into discussions and highlight the need for stronger feedback mechanisms to demonstrate how contributions are used.

Work continues to generate detailed findings, to re-enforce good practices and identify areas for improvement. A final report will be available on the NOCA website later in 2026.

CONTENTS   PRINT

PPI Important partnerships

Currently, there are 17 advocacy agencies participating in NOCA governance committees, providing oversight to national audits and registries.

Patients for Patient Safety Ireland

AnamCara
Supporting Parents After Bereavement

VOICES 4 CARE
Improving the Palliative Care Experience

ICU steps Dublin

Cairde
Challenging ethnic minority health inequalities

A Gift of Life
Strange Boat Donor Foundation

CROÍ
Fighting Heart Disease & Stroke

Heart Children

Arthritis Ireland

Sage Advocacy

Spinal Injuries Ireland

Irish Cancer Society

LauraLynn
IRELAND'S CHILDREN'S HOSPICE

Irish Neonatal Health Alliance

Irish Heart Foundation

THE Alzheimer
SOCIETY OF IRELAND

Diabetes Ireland

Conclusion

With 30 PPI representatives embedded across NOCA's work and meaningful input received throughout 2023-2025, NOCA continues to integrate patient and public voices into national clinical audit from inception right though implementation.   PPI contributions are instrumental in making healthcare in Ireland safer, more transparent, and more responsive to the needs of those it serves.
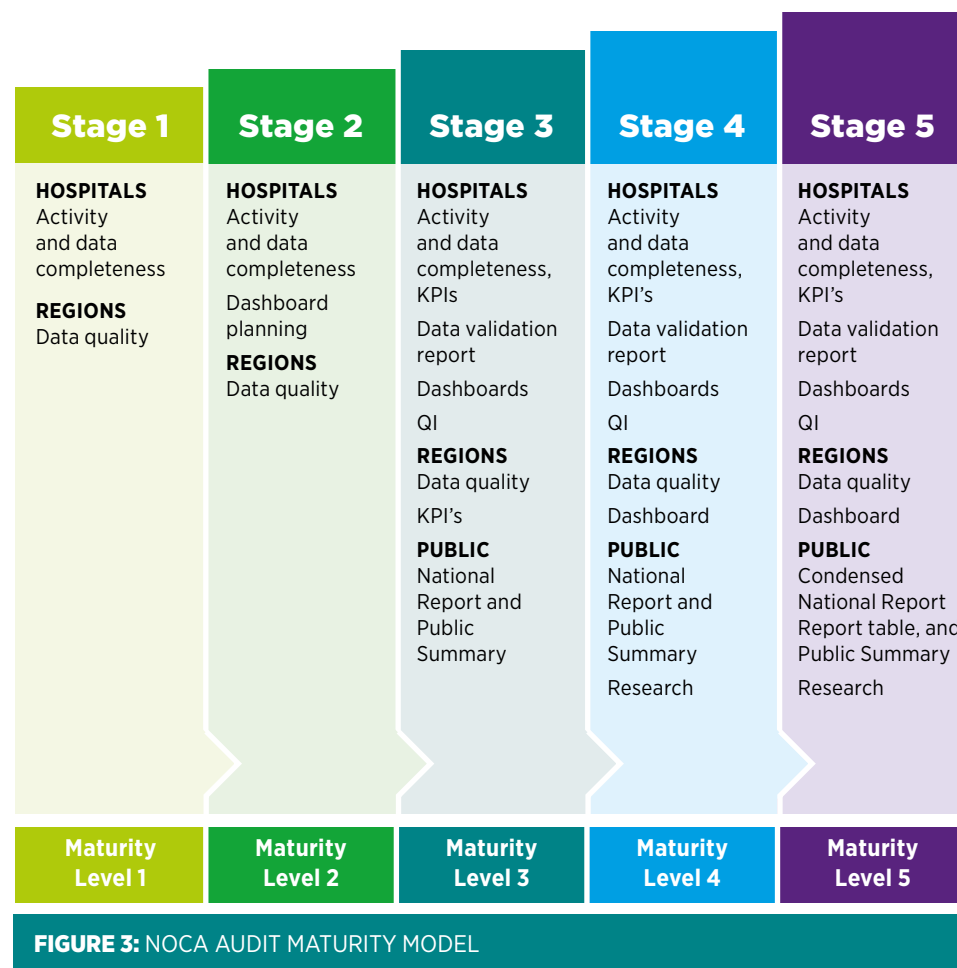
Chapter 3
Audit Impact
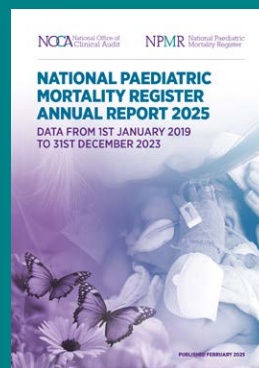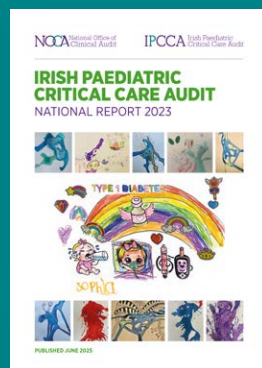
Chapter 3 **Audit Impact**

This chapter summarises the key impact of each NOCA audit between 2023-2025, being cognisant of the maturity of each audit (Figure 3).

NOCA wishes to acknowledge the clinical leadership of each of the audits. There is at least one clinical lead per audit, all of whom are listed in Table 1. NOCA audits could not exist without their leadership and support and the wider support of our audit governance committees, hospital clinical leads and hospital audit coordinators. This chapter will reflect the great impact all of our leaders made through their audit work under the following headings national/ system, local and public.

Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	Stage 4	Stage 5
HOSPITALS Activity and data completeness	**HOSPITALS** Activity and data completeness	**HOSPITALS** Activity and data completeness, KPIs	**HOSPITALS** Activity and data completeness, KPI's	**HOSPITALS** Activity and data completeness, KPI's
REGIONS Data quality	Dashboard planning	Data validation report	Data validation report	Data validation report
	REGIONS Data quality	Dashboards	Dashboards	Dashboards
		QI	QI	QI
		REGIONS Data quality	**REGIONS** Data quality	**REGIONS** Data quality
		KPI's	Dashboard	Dashboard
		PUBLIC National Report and Public Summary	**PUBLIC** National Report and Public Summary	**PUBLIC** Condensed National Report Report table, and Public Summary
			Research	Research
Maturity Level 1	Maturity Level 2	Maturity Level 3	Maturity Level 4	Maturity Level 5

FIGURE 3: NOCA AUDIT MATURITY MODEL

NATIONAL/SYSTEM LEVEL
How NOCA audits enable national improvements and health system development and changes

LOCAL
How NOCA supports local healthcare providers to make local improvements

PUBLIC
How data from NOCA audits have been used for public health messaging and/ or advocacy

TABLE 1: CURRENT CLINICAL LEADS AND FROM 2023-2025

AUDIT	CLINICAL LEAD
ICU Irish National ICU Audit	**Professor Rory Dwyer**
Irish Hip Fracture Database IHFD	**Professor Tara Coughlan, Mr Terence Murphy Dr. Emer Ahern and Associate Professor Conor Hurson (tenure completed in 2024)**
MTA Major Trauma Audit	**Professor Conor Deasy**
IHAA Irish Heart Attack Audit	**Professor Ronan Margey**
INAS Irish National Audit of Stroke	**Professor Joe Harbison**
IPODA Irish Potential Organ Donor Audit	**Dr Catherine Motherway Dr Alan Gaffney (resigned in 2025)**
INOR Irish National Orthopaedic Register	**Professor John Quinlan (Mr James Cashman resigned in 2024)**
IPCCA Irish Paediatric Critical Care Audit	**Associate Professor Martina Healy**

AUDIT	CLINICAL LEAD
NPMR National Paediatric Mortality Register	**Associate Professor Martina Healy**
NAHM National Audit of Hospital Mortality	**Vacant (Dr Anne Dee tenure completed in 2025)**
IBIR Irish Breast Implant Registry	**Ms Éilís Fitzgerald (Mr Brian Kneafsey resigned in 2024)**
IAPD Irish Audit of Paediatric Diabetes	**Professor Nuala Murphy**
ICU Bed Information System (ICU BIS)	**Professor Rory Dwyer**
PCOCI Palliative Care Outcomes Collaboration Ireland	**Dr Michael Lucey**
IDR Irish Dementia Registry	**Professor Antoinette O' Connor**
EMARI Emergency Medicine Airway Registry Ireland	**Professor Fergal Cummins**

IMPACT AT A NATIONAL/ SYSTEM LEVEL

How NOCA audits/ data collections enable national improvements and health system development and changes

AUDIT	IMPACT		IMPROVEMENT OPPORTUNITY
Irish Hip Fracture Database (IHFD)	In the 2024 report, additional data on surgical site infection and longer term outcomes were presented in the **IHFD National Report 2024** The IHFD helped inform the development of national guidelines: • **for older adults with trauma** • **framework for surgical site infection** data collection through the IHFD	**CLICK TO VIEW** **CLICK TO VIEW** **CLICK TO VIEW**	• Long term data coverage • Pressure ulcer prevention • Nutrition and delirium screening • Occupational therapy engagement.
Irish National Audit of Stroke (INAS)	INAS findings and recommendations support and monitor the implementation of the **HSE National Stroke Strategy 2022 – 2027** (HSE 2022). The **INAS National Report 2024 and Organisational Audit Report 2025 report** shows a sustained increase in the number of patients with a stroke admitted to acute hospitals annually. Organisational change has led to meaningful improvements in many of the time critical metrics in stroke care, however, deficits in stroke unit beds and human resourcing is evident, limiting the ability of the stroke service nationally to meet its key performance indicator targets. Spotlight audits facilitate an in-depth look at specific areas within stroke care. In 2023, a focus was put on the delivery of thrombolysis and on the care provided to those who have a stroke while already an inpatient with another condition.	**CLICK TO VIEW** **CLICK TO VIEW** **CLICK TO VIEW**	• Improvement in access to stroke unit care • Introduction of a best practice tariff • Improved patient outcomes.

Maturity Level 1	Maturity Level 2	Maturity Level 3	Maturity Level 4	Maturity Level 5

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AUDIT	IMPACT		IMPROVEMENT OPPORTUNITY
National Audit of Hospital Mortality (NAHM)	NAHM publishes reports on 6 key diagnoses and the data shows that in-hospital crude mortality for AMI (Acute Myocardial Infarction), heart failure, ischaemic stroke, haemorrhagic stroke and pneumonia conditions has declined over the last 10-years. Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) crude mortality rate has remained constant over the 10 year period. The NAHM National Report 2022 and 2023 focused on health equality in data from NOCA audits for the first time. The National Quality Assurance and Improvement System (NQAIS) NAHM tool provides assurance that any outliers in mortality are examined by hospitals, not just in the 6 key diagnoses focused on in national reports. Identifying complexities of diagnostic categories and associated demographics for the purposes of QI.	**CLICK TO VIEW**	• Improved data model • Attention and focus on health inequities.
Major Trauma Audit (MTA)	Older adults are the largest population (aged 65 years and older) and low falls are the leading cause of major trauma. In 2024, the focus on Older Adults with Major Trauma complemented and supported the publication of **National Guidance of the care of Older Adults with major trauma**. The new standards of care were embedded in the MTA Older adult report (2017-2021).	**CLICK TO VIEW** **CLICK TO VIEW**	• Support the development of national standards for the Trauma System • Collect meaningful data on rehabilitation • Support public health awareness for falls prevention.
Irish Heart Attack Audit (IHAA)	The findings and recommendations of the IHAA have revealed that the goals set out within the Acute Coronary System Model of Care (HSE, 2012) are not being achieved. The findings indicate systemic inefficiencies and highlight the need for targeted reforms. The findings and recommendations of the IHAA support the National STEMI QI Collaborative. Through collaboration with the EuroHeart Ireland team and the IHAA, we can ensure that cardiology data collections are designed to effectively support the clinical and public health needs of the Irish population.	**CLICK TO VIEW**	• Opportunity to develop QI projects to maximise access to timely treatment • Improved patient outcomes • Opportunity to benchmark against other European countries.

Maturity Level 1	Maturity Level 2	Maturity Level 3	Maturity Level 4	Maturity Level 5

AUDIT	IMPACT		IMPROVEMENT OPPORTUNITY
Irish National ICU Audit (INICUA)	The INICUA 2023 report shows that our critical care services are providing very high quality care, but are operating at overly high capacity levels and further expansion of critical care beds in Ireland is essential to safely meet the needs and demands for this service. The audit recommends to continue the ongoing HSE programme to expand ICU capacity in line with the HSE Critical Care Strategic Plan (2020) to increase the number of both Level 2 (HDU) and Level 3 (ICU) beds in order to enhance the efficiency and safety of admissions and discharges. A QI project with St James's University Hospital regarding delayed discharges was showcased in Chapter 11 of the report on 2022 data. A QI project from the Mater University Hospital regarding delayed admissions was showcased in Chapter 11 of the report on 2023 data.	**CLICK TO VIEW**	• Progress QI culture through INICUA.
Irish National Orthopaedic Register (INOR)	INOR functions as both a national clinical audit and an implant register collecting data on patients who have hip and knee arthroplasty (replacements). It has captured data on over 43,000 patients since 2014. In 2025, PROMs data from INOR was included in the OECD Health at a Glance 2025 Report	**CLICK TO VIEW**	• Harness full impact of PROM's data • Improved reporting from the National Audit Platform.
Irish Potential Organ Donor Audit (IPODA)	The IPODA is now an active audit and will be reporting in 2026 to build on the work done in development. This audit aims to support the system to increase organ donation rates	**CLICK TO VIEW**	• Align the IPODA to national guidelines for organ donation and monitor the impact of the opt-out organ donor legislation. **CLICK TO VIEW** • Support the development a national clinical forum to discuss cases highlighted by the audit as 'learning/ missed opportunities).

Maturity Level 1	Maturity Level 2	Maturity Level 3	Maturity Level 4	Maturity Level 5

AUDIT	IMPACT		IMPROVEMENT OPPORTUNITY
Irish Paediatric Critical Care Audit (IPCCA)	Mortality in paediatric critical care units (PCCUs) reduced.	**CLICK TO VIEW**	• Expand critical care capacity across the service and raise awareness of DKA • Explore potentially preventable deaths in teenagers.
National Paediatric Mortality Register (NPMR)	While there has been a welcome decline in child and young person mortality rates, many potentially avoidable deaths continue to occur across all age groups.	**CLICK TO VIEW**	• Improve formal recording and reporting of child deaths • Optimise utilisation of post-mortem data to inform review of CYP mortality • Detailed evaluations of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) deaths.
Intensive Care Unit - Bed Information System (ICU-BIS)*	ICU-BIS collects daily data on occupancy and acuity across all 33 ICU units, including paediatric and private hospitals, and tracks COVID-19 year-round, with RSV and influenza monitored seasonally. This comprehensive surveillance supports system-wide coordination, pandemic response, and strategic development of critical care services in Ireland. HPSC uses our data to liaise with hospitals re viral infections. • Daily data is distributed to support several key stakeholders (HPSC, SDU, HSE, DOH, ESRI, & RHA's). • Weekly report sent to the ECDC via HPSC on Number of Patients in ICU, Bed Availability and COVID-19 specific data for European COVID comparative data. Contributed data for OECD Health at a Glance Reports.		• ICU-BIS supports timely public health responses and informs long-term strategic development of ICU services, ensuring resilience and equity across Ireland's healthcare system.

* Intensive Care Unit- Bed Information System (ICU-BIS) data is reported within INICUA

Maturity Level 1	Maturity Level 2	Maturity Level 3	Maturity Level 4	Maturity Level 5

IMPACT AT A LOCAL LEVEL

How NOCA supports local healthcare providers to make local improvements

AUDIT	IMPACT		IMPROVEMENT OPPORTUNITY
Irish Hip Fracture Database (IHFD)	St. James's Hospital won the Golden Hip Award in 2023 and 2024, this is awarded to the hospital meeting the highest proportion standards. **They described their QI approach to improvement** and further **how they sustained the improvement.** Number of QI projects submitted to the HIPFEST Conference 2023 (to celebrate 10 years of the IHFD): 44.	CLICK TO VIEW CLICK TO VIEW CLICK TO VIEW	• Learn from the Golden Hip Award hospital to translate excellence to other hospitals • Focus on standard 1 (admission through ED within 4 hours) and 3 (pressure ulcer) for further improvement.
Irish National Audit of Stroke (INAS)	The INAS dashboard was modified in 2025 to support the Swallow Screening in Acute Stroke: National Quality Improvement Project in all participating hospitals. The INAS dashboard was modified in 2025 to monitor access to early supported discharge in hospitals with early supported discharge (ESD) teams. All findings from the INAS National Report 2024 and Organisational Audit Report 2025 are available at hospital level. **INAS Organisational Audit Reporting Table 2025** All local QI projects published within the national reports annually and presented at report launch webinars.	CLICK TO VIEW CLICK TO VIEW CLICK TO VIEW	• Improve access to timely swallow screening • Improve access to early supported discharge.

Maturity Level 1	Maturity Level 2	Maturity Level 3	Maturity Level 4	Maturity Level 5

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AUDIT	IMPACT		IMPROVEMENT
National Audit of Hospital Mortality (NAHM)	All hospitals can access data locally on all conditions their patients presented with, not just those 6 key conditions focused on in the National Reports. Quality improvement measures were identified and described by Beaumont Hospital and Connolly Hospital to address data quality and clinical reviews.	CLICK TO VIEW	• Encourage further hospitals to undertake QI initiatives.
Major Trauma Audit (MTA)	During 2023 & 2024, a cyberattack in the University of Manchester occurred, impacting access for the hospitals in the Republic of Ireland to collect data and report. During this challenging period the hospitals all reverted back to paper data collection but continued their engagement locally and with NOCA ensuring the focus on the care of these patients was not forgotten.	CLICK TO VIEW	• Improvement in local hospital governance establishment for MTA • Embed use of dashboard reporting into local governance.
Irish Heart Attack Audit (IHAA)	The IHAA dashboard allows the PCI centres to monitor the care provided to their patients. The IHAA supports the establishment of PCI networks in order to ensure that PCI centres and other referring non-PCI capable hospitals utilise the information from the IHAA to identify QI projects that will enable timely treatment. All local QI projects published within the national reports annually and presented at report launch webinars.	CLICK TO VIEW	• Build a culture of QI between hospitals within PCI networks.

Maturity Level 1	Maturity Level 2	Maturity Level 3	Maturity Level 4	Maturity Level 5

AUDIT	IMPACT		IMPROVEMENT
Irish National ICU Audit (INICUA)	The ICU units around Ireland have demonstrated high levels of efficiency to meet the demands placed upon them. The clinical leadership, ICU audit coordinators and ICU staff are commended for their dedication and commitment to the audit and high standard of care delivered. ICU audit workshop featured in Chapter 12 focused on the new Quarterly Quality Reports (QQR) layout, QI projects, and analysis. Several hospitals shared examples of QI.	**CLICK TO VIEW**	• Build on the momentum of QI throughout all the hospitals.
Irish National Orthopaedic Register (INOR)	In 2025, INOR was transferred onto a new IT platform allowing for much easier access locally to the data. This could not have happened without the incredible support of our clinical leads, audit coordinators and teams in each hospital.		• Improve hospital governance committee development and reporting • Use of data for reporting and improvement.
Irish Potential Organ Donor Audit (IPODA)	Expand the IPODA to further sites including Children's Health Ireland (CHI)..		• Focus on expanding the IPODA to more sites and monitoring the impact of the new opt-out legislation for organ donation.
Irish Paediatric Critical Care Audit (IPCCA)	Chapter 8 features a QI project from CHI at Temple Street describing the introduction of a scan prompt card for timely radiology transfers from paediatric intensive care units (PICU) in 2024. CHI Crumlin featured two QI projects about a neonatal information pack for sick neonates in a paediatric intensive care unit and a newborn care bundle for sick neonates in a PICU.	**CLICK TO VIEW**	• Consider sharing resources that may benefit all sites like the neonatal information pack and the newborn care bundle.

Maturity Level 1	Maturity Level 2	Maturity Level 3	Maturity Level 4	Maturity Level 5

AUDIT	IMPACT		IMPROVEMENT
National Paediatric Mortality Register (NPMR)	NPMR featured improvement projects to Implement structures to facilitate the standardised reporting of child deaths across the healthcare system in order to improve the quality of CYP mortality data in Ireland. Learnings from the child death notification process in CHI at Temple Street. Updating a common Irish reference set for systemised nomenclature of medicine clinical terms: standardisation of coding for documenting cause of death for CYP in Ireland. These can be found in Chapter 8.	**CLICK TO VIEW**	• Continue to support the system to standardise how child deaths are reported.
Intensive Care Unit - Bed Information System (ICU-BIS)*	At a local level, ICU-BIS empowers individual hospitals and ICU teams with timely, accurate data to support daily operational decisions. It helps clinicians and managers monitor bed availability, patient acuity, and infection trends (COVID-19, RSV, influenza), enabling better resource allocation, staffing, and patient flow.		• The system supports timely staffing adjustments and facilitates benchmarking against national data, fostering continuous improvement and alignment with best practice standards in critical care delivery.

* Intensive Care Unit- Bed Information System (ICU-BIS) data is reported within INICUA

Maturity Level 1	Maturity Level 2	Maturity Level 3	Maturity Level 4	Maturity Level 5

IMPACT AT A PUBLIC LEVEL

How data from NOCA audits have been used for public health messaging and/or advocacy

AUDIT	IMPACT		IMPROVEMENT OPPORTUNITY
Irish Hip Fracture Database (IHFD)	The IHFD continues to highlight the need for home safety, falls prevention awareness and bone health assessment.	**CLICK TO VIEW** **CLICK TO VIEW**	• Dissemination of the patient information video supporting patient on their hip fracture recovery journey. **CLICK TO VIEW**
Irish National Audit of Stroke (INAS)	The 2025 HSE **'Stroke: Every Second Counts'** campaign draws on findings and recommendations from the Irish National Audit of Stroke to shape its messaging, priorities, and goals. Prompt reaction to symptoms of stroke is vital: 44% of people with stroke do not arrive at a hospital within the 4.5 hours where emergency treatment can be provided. 1 in 3 men (33%) and 1 in 5 women (21%) who suffer a stroke are 65 years old or younger.	**CLICK TO VIEW**	• Improvement in public awareness of stroke symptoms and importance of urgent action.
National Audit of Hospital Mortality (NAHM)	NAHM gives reassurance to the public and health service about the monitoring and improvements in mortality.		• Consider nuancing the model to include factors like frailty.

Maturity Level 1	Maturity Level 2	Maturity Level 3	Maturity Level 4	Maturity Level 5

AUDIT	IMPACT		IMPROVEMENT OPPORTUNITY
Major Trauma Audit (MTA)	In 2024, the report on older adults focused key messages on injury prevention, in particular, in the home.	CLICK TO VIEW	• Work with the HSE, Public Health and Population Health specialists to share awareness of falls prevention.
Irish Heart Attack Audit (IHAA)	The findings and recommendations of the IHAA will support the design, messaging, and goals of a proposed public awareness campaign on heart attack. Publication of the cardiovascular risk factors in patients with STEMI compared to the general population can inform public health messaging e.g., smokers have a heart attack 11 years younger than those who never smoked.	CLICK TO VIEW	• Improvement in public awareness of heart attack and the need to call 112/999 urgently in order to access care in the right place at the right time.
Irish National ICU Audit (INICUA)	The quality of care is excellent for patients admitted to ICU. Almost one third (32%) of patients admitted to ICU had sepsis. Common reasons for admission to ICU were respiratory failure, sepsis, malignancy, trauma, cardiac arrest and for post-operative care.		• Improve public awareness about symptoms of sepsis.
Irish National Orthopaedic Register (INOR)	INOR provides the public with assurance that in the event of an implant issue or recall that patients from the register can be identified and notified easily.		• Harness the information about patient reported outcomes.
Irish Potential Organ Donor Audit (IPODA)	The IPODA creates awareness about organ donation rates in Ireland and potential areas for improvement.		• Support the public to understand the importance of organ donation and the new opt-out legislation.

Maturity Level 1	Maturity Level 2	Maturity Level 3	Maturity Level 4	Maturity Level 5

AUDIT	IMPACT	IMPROVEMENT OPPORTUNITY
Irish Paediatric Critical Care Audit (IPCCA)	Encouraged the uptake of the RSV vaccine for small babies to prevent admissions to PICU.	• Continue to promote public health messaging about vaccinations
National Paediatric Mortality Register (NPMR)	Highlight the preventable child deaths from trauma and safe practice for the prevention of SIDS.	• Explore areas where child deaths could be prevented including water safety and farm safety.
Intensive Care Unit - Bed Information System (ICU-BIS)*	ICU-BIS strengthens transparency, trust, and public health responsiveness. By providing national visibility into ICU capacity, patient acuity, and infection trends (COVID-19, RSV, influenza), it supports informed public health messaging and policy decisions. • Brought greater understanding to the public on the role of ICUs and ICU Teams in the provision of care within the Health Service during the COVID Pandemic.	• This visibility helps reassure the public during health crises, strengthens trust in the healthcare system, and promotes informed engagement with health services.

* Intensive Care Unit- Bed Information System (ICU-BIS) data is reported within INICUA

Maturity Level 1	Maturity Level 2	Maturity Level 3	Maturity Level 4	Maturity Level 5

Chapter 4
NOCA Impact

Chapter 4 **NOCA Impact**

This chapter describes the areas where NOCA has developed in alignment with to the pillars of the NOCA Strategy 2012-2025.

STRATEGIC PILLAR 1
## NATIONAL CLINICAL AUDIT EXCELLENCE

Reflecting back to the recent strategy and what success for pillar 1 would look like? *The NOCA portfolio of clinical audits has expanded across the healthcare system and is providing data on a quarterly and annual basis across all of its audits. NOCA is routinely reporting on patient-reported outcome measures (PROMs).*

Chapter 3 highlighted much of the key developments in audit excellence under the headings national/strategic, local and public. Audits and registries have continued to grow during this time with 11 active audits/registries and 6 further projects in development. Within the expanded portfolio of work, there are plans to expand data collection beyond the acute hospital system to more private hospitals, cosmetic clinics and community settings. Longer term outcome data has been embedded into the Irish Hip Fracture Database, in addition to the PROMs data collected in INOR.

Collaborations

NOCA works closely with the HSE National Centre of Clinical Audit (NCCA) and the HSE Quality and Patient Safety (QPS) to maximise the impact of our audits across the system. Some key areas of focus included a reporting process for all recommendations from the NOCA reports and other audit providers to the NCCA. The NCCA toolkits for clinical audit and quality improvement are used as core resources for all audit providers.
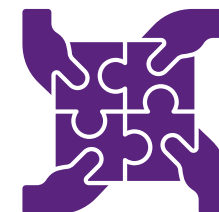
NOCA works closely with a number of academic partners to continually advance the impact of national healthcare registries and audits including the RCSI School of Population Health and Healthcare Outcome Research Centre. In 2025, a workshop was held with the Joanna Briggs Institute, which is a global organisation promoting and supporting evidence-based decisions that improve health and health service delivery.

NOCA is one of the co-founders along with the Dutch Institute of Clinical Audit (DICA) of the European Network of Clinical Audit (ECAN). Membership includes organisations from Ireland, Scotland, England and Denmark. The aim of the network is to share common issues and successes and collaborate on projects to advance our registries and audits. There are plans to further extend the network in 2026.

NOCA works closely with clinicians across the Irish healthcare system and they provide vital expertise and insights on promoting improved outcomes for patients.

Membership on national/ international committees/groups

NOCA is a trusted and valued member on several national and international committees and groups to share its expertise relating to the development and management of secondary healthcare data sets. These include:

- HIQA European Health Dataspace (EHDS) Work Package 8 Data Quality Enhancement
- HIQA - Advisory Group Information Standards
- EHDS WP5, WP7, WP8 & WP8.4
- DOH CSO Data Liaison group
- DOH NHQRS – National Health Quality Reporting System (DoH)
- DOH NCEC – National Clinical Effectiveness Committee
- HSE HPO - HIPE Governance
- HSE Community Connect working groups
- HSE DAIM - Data Access and Information Management
- HSE DSMP - Dataset Management Process
- HSE Chronic Disease Data Management Group - Diabetes/Renal/HSS
- HSE Patient Safety Act Implementation Working Group
- HSE Consent Policy and Research Consent Policy
- HSE Data Strategy
- RCPI – National SQI Steering Committee
- Future of Audits & Registries Working Group (FORT)
- HSE Irish National Falls Audit
- HSE Irish Fracture Liaison Service Database
- Older Adults Health & Wellbeing Profile (OAHP) Data Advisory Group
- Irish Clinical Audit Network (ICAN)
- European Clinical Audit Network
- Fragility Fracture Network Hip Fracture Audit Special Interest Group
- National Major Trauma Registry Steering Group
- National Transfusion Advisory Group (NTAG)
- International Society of Arthroplasty Registries (ISAR).

Operational Excellence and Quality Assurance

Between 2023 and 2025, NOCA strengthened its approach to operational excellence and quality assurance to support the safe, compliant, and effective delivery of national clinical audits and registries. The Quality Assurance (QA) function provided structured assurance for national reports across multiple data collections each year, ensuring alignment with legal obligations, HIQA information standards, and NOCA's internal governance documentation. In parallel, a rolling programme of internal audit was implemented using NOCA's internal audit tool, with findings documented through a standardised audit report template to support consistency, transparency, and learning. QA also led the regular review and updating of Statements of Information Practices and Statements of Purpose, ensuring ongoing compliance with data protection and information governance requirements.

As part of NOCA's Section 39 Service Level Agreement with the HSE, QA oversees staff training governance, including maintenance of the training log and certification records, with consistently high completion rates achieved across the organisation. During this period, QA and the Operations team coordinated onboarding and induction for new staff and managed organisational systems supporting quality and compliance, including QPulse and Moodle, contributing to a strong culture of assurance, accountability, and continuous improvement across NOCA.

STRATEGIC PILLAR 2
AUDIT DEVELOPMENT

The NOCA Audit Development Hub is working on a programme of new audits as well as various audit development projects.

Audit / Registry development expertise

This table describes a number of projects of work undertaken by the audit development team, including feasibility work, independent reviews and audit development project report. There is now a very clearly established process within NOCA for the development of national clinical audits and registries from the beginning or augmenting existing audits that were underway to align them with the NOCA audit and governance standards.

YEAR	EVENT	DETAIL	IMPACT
2021	**National Office of Clinical Audit Strategy 2021 –2025**	Audit Development is identified as a key pillar of NOCA strategy.	A successful outcome was deemed to be a concentration on new national clinical audits, supporting clinical priorities and aligning national health care strategies. Additionally there was a emphasis on internal assurance of NOCA audits, recognising that for national audits and registries to remain relevant to the health system that change may be required.
2021	**Deteriorating Patient Audit Feasibility Study report published**	The National Deteriorating Patient Recognition and Response Programme (now amalgamated with the Sepsis Programme) commissioned NOCA to explore the feasibility of a national clinical audit of clinical deterioration (NOCA 2021).	The key recommendation for an in-hospital cardiac arrest audit was funded by the HSE Quality & Patient Safety Division. A development project, funded by the HSE National Centre of Clinical Audit was commenced by the HSE Ireland East Group in 2023 and was continued by HSE Dublin and South East in 2024.
2022	**Potential Donor Audit Feasibility Study Report published**	HSE Organ Donation and Transplant Ireland (ODTI) commissioned NOCA to undertake a feasibility study to appraise the need for a national clinical audit of organ donation practices. A steering committee was convened to guide a review of national and international datasets on organ donation and, to identify processes of care prone to variation that are responsive to measurement and improvement.	The key recommendation for an audit of organ donation practices was funded by HSE ODTI and development commenced in 2022.

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YEAR	EVENT	DETAIL	IMPACT
2022	**National Paediatric Diabetes Audit Feasibility Study report published**	With seed funding from Diabetes Ireland and guided by a multi-disciplinary steering committee and PPI representatives, NOCA examined the feasibility of an audit of paediatric diabetes for the Irish health system.	The key recommendation for an audit was successfully funded by the Department of Health through the HSE Service Plan in 2023. A project manager was appointed in 2024 to lead the development project.
2022	**An independent review of the National Audit of Hospital Mortality report published**	The NOCA Governance Board commissioned an independent review of the National Audit of Hospital Mortality to explore its effectiveness in terms of healthcare quality assurance and improvement. The report made 12 recommendations focusing on statistical methods and on healthcare information, all focusing on collaboration and continuous improvement.	Extensive analysis was carried out to establish the impact of the proposed recommendations on the tool and risk model. The analysis has been presented to the NOCA Board and a business case is being developed to implement the recommended amendments.
2023	**Potential Donor Audit Development Project Report published**	With funding from HSE ODTI, NOCA commenced its first audit development project. Building on previous feasibility work (NOCA 2022), the Irish Potential Organ Donor Audit was developed and phase 1 tested across six tertiary hospitals. A report detailing the methodology and results was published.	The Potential Donor Audit Development Project Report was welcomed by clinicians, patient representative groups, and culminated in a presentation to members of the Oireachtas. Key recommendations included were • Clinical guidelines for organ donation are currently being developed by the Intensive Care Society of Ireland • The Organ Donation and Procurement Quality Improvement Group has been established by ODTI and quarterly meetings are underway • A list of Absolute Medical Contraindications (to organ donation) has been agreed by National Organ Donation Transplant Advisory Group.
2023-2025	**Irish Breast Implant Registry**	In 2022, NOCA was requested by the HSE Expert Advisory Group on Breast Implant Associated Anaplastic Large Cell Lymphoma (BIA-ALCL) to submit a proposal on the development of a Breast Implant / Device Registry to collect population-based risk and intervention data, to ensure patient safety.	This proposal successfully achieved funding in 2022 and a project manager and clinical lead were appointed in 2023. In 2024, the newly formed steering committee oversaw the work of the IBIR, such as approval of aim, objectives, scope of registry, development of a dataset and quality metrics. Work commenced in mid 2025 to design, build and test an IT solution for data collection and reporting, which will be tested across a number of early adopter sites in 2026.

YEAR	EVENT	DETAIL	IMPACT
2024 -2025	**Irish Audit of Paediatric Diabetes (IAPD)**	With appointment of a clinical lead and project manager, a governance committee was convened to oversee this development project. This governance committee brought together stakeholders across the diabetes community with a focus on quality improvement.	Throughout 2025, the team planned and carried out a detailed gap analysis project to identify the feasibility of implementing a truly digitised dataset. A report will be published in Q2 2026.
2024 -2025	**Emergency Medicine Airway Registry Ireland (EMARI)**	Throughout 2024, NOCA collaborated with the HSE Emergency Medicine Programme and EMARI clinical leads to develop a preliminary report from EMARI. At the end of 2024, NOCA was granted funding to develop EMARI, with a project manager appointed in September 2025.	The preliminary report was launched at the HSE Emergency Medicine Programme event 'Launching the Future of Emergency Care' held at the RCSI in September 2025.
2024-2025	**Irish Dementia Registry (IDR)**	In collaboration with the HSE, National Dementia Services, NOCA developed a proposal for development of a registry. Proposal was funded and included in the current Programme for Government.	A Clinical Lead, Project Manager and Data Analyst have been recruited. A governance committee for the Irish Dementia Registry was convened for its first meeting in December 2025.
2024-2025	**Irish Heart Attack Audit (IHAA)**	Work commenced to evaluate the impact of the European Society of Cardiology registry platform (Euroheart) on IHAA and make recommendations on feasibility for NOCA.	The IHAA impact study identified opportunities to enhance the IHAA dataset and highlighted potential for international benchmarking through participation in the EuroHeart initiative and auditing Non ST Elevation Myocardial Infarction care in Ireland. It also highlighted the significant resource demands for NOCA in adopting EuroHeart as the data source and made a recommendation for EuroHeart to assign a dedicated resource to NOCA. This will ensure that EuroHeart incorporates all of the IHAA data items in the EuroHeart Platform and enable subsequent reporting.
2024-2025	**National Paediatric Mortality Register (NPMR)**	Work commenced on the implementation of national dataset for notification of deaths. This will extend an electronic reporting system to health providers, improving data coverage, thereby improving understanding on this topic.	Stakeholder workshops were held at Children's Health Ireland and University Hospital Limerick. Participants contributions were instrumental in identifying NPMR roles and shaping a robust methodology for the register's implementation. Work is ongoing in designing, building and testing an electronic notification system which will be tested in 2026 across a number of early adopter sites.

Throughout 2024–2025, the NOCA audit development team has collaborated with several external agencies to support and share knowledge in audit development processes. These collaborations include the Sepsis Working Group convened by the HSE Sepsis Office, the National Cardiac Arrest Audit developed by the HSE Dublin and Midlands Health Region (formerly the Ireland East Hospital Group), and the Cerebral Palsy Registry and Steering Committee convened by the RCSI CP Life Centre. The Cerebral Palsy Registry project, which aims to establish a national registry in Ireland, is part of the ELEVATE Programme of research. This programme is funded through the Science Foundation Ireland Strategic Partnership Programme, with co-funding from the Cerebral Palsy Foundation. Collaboration with the Irish Paediatric Diabetes Audit and the HSE National Diabetes Registry has focused on developing a shared approach and preventing duplicate data collection for people living with diabetes.

Collaborative working offers significant benefits for both NOCA and other agencies. NOCA has shared the collective intelligence in development of new national data collections, sharing standards and minimising development burden. For NOCA, it broadens access to different expertise available to audit development and supports innovation in the audit development team. Ultimately, these partnerships enhance the quality and impact of national audits and registries, driving meaningful improvements in care and better outcomes for patients.

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Quality improvement (QI)

NOCA has intentionally focused on the use of clinical audit data for quality improvement over recent years. This includes the establishment of the NOCA Audit Impact Committee chaired by Professor Conor O'Keane. Since 2023, each national report includes a chapter on QI and each governance committee has been asked to nominate a QI lead.

Internally in NOCA, all staff have completed the Fundamentals of QI on HSeLanD and the Foundation Programme of QI.

Several staff within NOCA have also completed higher training in QI including the RCPI Postgraduate Certificate in Quality Improvement Leadership in Healthcare, with two further staff in the current cohort, and one team member has completed the Postgraduate Certificate in QI Leadership in Healthcare. In 2025, two staff members commenced the HSCQI/HSE Quality Coach Development Programme. This will further expand the QI capacity and support culture of QI within NOCA. Four project clinics were run in 2025, establishing a supportive forum for national audits and registries to test QI ideas.

NOCA has been featuring the Quality Improvement Champion Award at the annual conference for several years and showcasing the QI submissions either via poster or platform presentation. The IHFD has embedded a programme of QI throughout the audit, supporting teams in each hospital to undertake a foundation in QI and this is now being brought into other audits with INICUA being the most recent participant.

NOCA QI Collaboration session 2025

NOCA hosted a collaborative session for the team in 2025 which built on the the Foundation Programme of QI. During the session, QI bingo was used to refamiliarise the team with QI terminology. There was a session focused on refreshing the team about the QI tools in the HSE QI Toolkit, where teams were giving problem statements and asked to use the QI tools. There was also a session focused on measurement for QI. This involved a lot of fun but also the practical application of QI.

NOCA Research

NOCA audits have produced more than 80 peer-reviewed publications, with strong contributions from IHFD, INAS and MTA. Publications have appeared in national and international peer review journals e.g. the IMJ (Irish Medical Journal), QJM (International Journal of Medicine), Health Research Board (HRB) Open Research, Age and Ageing, Injury, European Journal of Public Health, European Journal of Geriatric Medicine, Osteoporosis International and the majority of these publications are available on the RCSI Repository https://www.repository.rcsi.com/

The IHFD stands out with the highest volume of research output, reflecting a mature audit with well-established clinical engagement and research partnerships. INAS and MTA also show growing activity, particularly in recent years, while NPMR, INOR and IPCCA are beginning to contribute publications as their datasets mature and analytical capacity increases. In recent years, NOCA has been a collaborator in a number of HRB funded studies (Maximising the Quality of Stroke Care in Ireland – Development of a National Stroke Audit, HipFORGE, HipCOG and TRAUMA) demonstrating the quality of the data for research.

Awards

Eva Cummins Award- British Geriatric Society Conference 2025
Top rated abstract RCSI Research Conference 2025
3rd Prize Short Oral Presentation Public Health Winter Conference 2024 & Poster tour
2nd Place Poster General Patient Safety, NPSO Conference 2024

Health Economics

NOCA has traditionally focused on driving improvements in clinical care through robust audit programmes and is now integrating health-economic methodologies into its workstreams e.g

A COST ANALYSIS OF SURGICAL SITE INFECTIONS AMONGST HIP FRACTURE PATIENTS

CLICK TO VIEW PAPER

NOCA's incorporation of these health-economic analyses into its audit cycle marks a pivotal expansion of its remit. By embedding health-economic analyses into its audits, NOCA can help turn clinical audit data into cost-saving insights, flag high-cost complications early, and advocate for value-based funding. NOCA will roll out these methods across other audits and collaborate with policy makers to weave economic evidence into budgets and guidelines—driving more efficient, patient-centered care.

Health Equity

NOCA shares the HSE's commitment to promoting the adoption of the Introduction to Ethnic Data Collection and facilitating the development of the Inclusion Health Framework within the National Service Plan 2025 (HSE, 2025). NOCA has incorporated health equity stratifiers within NOCA Core Dataset for Clinical Audits and Registries. Patients and the public representative were actively involved in the development of the dataset.

NOCA is committed to reflecting health equity in its data and reporting. All of NOCA audits include age and sex breakdown. Where data is available, other health equity stratifiers, such as ethnicity are included. All new audits in development include health equity measures where feasible to collect.

NOCA effectively utilised published data by creating conference posters that spotlight health equity within its audits:
• RCSPI Winter Scientific Meeting: *Older Adults are now the face of Major Trauma in Ireland*
• SPHeRE Conference: *Assessing Inclusion of Health Equity Stratifiers in National Clinical Audits*
• Advancing Women's Health conference: *From Data to Action: Lessons Learned from National Irish Heart Attack Audit in Women's Health Poster.*

NOCA has produced an academic paper utilising published data, that investigated differences in trauma characteristics, injury mechanisms, and outcomes of older adults compared to all younger patients with major trauma on a national level. The paper was published in a peer-reviewed medical journal Injury: *The Effect of Age on Major Trauma Profile and Characterisation: Analysis from the National Major Trauma Audit in Ireland.*

Additionally, NOCA's data is being utilised to explore the effect of sex on key time intervals in heart attack care. The study is ongoing, and will be published within the upcoming months.

A focus on health inequalities: analysis of in-hospital crude mortality was featured in the NAHM National Report 2022-2023 and included age, sex, civil status, and socioeconomic status derived from medical card. It signalled the importance of equity variables and further work required to embed this fully.

NOCA Audit Platform

NOCA launched the NOCA audit platform (NAP) in February 2025, designed to enhance the accuracy and efficiency of data entry, validation, and reporting for NOCA's audits and registers. The NAP is a cloud-based platform developed to provide a data collection, validation, implant scanning, device management, and reporting system.

The first audit to go-live on the NAP was the Major Trauma Audit (MTA) in February 2025, with the Irish National Orthopaedic Register (INOR) as the first implant register in May 2025, with further audits expected to join shortly including National Paediatric Mortality Register (NPMR) and the Irish Breast Implant Registry (IBIR).

The primary goals of the new platform are to:
• Provide a scalable data collection platform which can support multiple audits and registers
• Improve the accuracy of input, update, and management of patient data for NOCA data collections
• Ensure information is organised, accessible, and easily retrievable for analysis, reporting, decision-making, and operational tasks
• Improve efficiency in the management of national clinical audit information
• Enhance data privacy, data security and integration capabilities

This milestone marks significant progress in delivering a robust, user-friendly system that will enhance data accuracy and reporting across NOCA's audits.

We would like to thank all the people involved in supporting and working with us to achieve this milestone; hospital staff, IT, IPMs & Networks teams, DPOs, Risk and Cybersecurity teams, Service Introduction teams and especially the Project Management support from the HSE.

Data Science: From data to improvement

PERIOD	MILESTONES
2012 – 2016	• National reports produced in PDF format.
2017 – 2018	• Power BI dashboards developed & piloted • Annual reports enhanced with branded infographics
2019 – 2021	• Power BI dashboards rolled out to hospitals. • ICU-BIS launched, giving real-time ICU-bed data (vital for reporting during COVID-19)
2022 – 2023	• INAS open-access data table published on NOCA website • Public data dictionaries released for 5 audits (all audits to follow)
2024 – 2025	• Partnership with NEC to build National Audit Platform for NOCA for data collection and reporting. • Core equity-focused demographic dataset developed, with a list of stratifiers included in the new Irish Potential Donor Audit (IPDA) IPDA Supplementary Data 2023 • National reports move to Quality-Improvement style using SPC charts NPMR Report • A Health Region dashboard is under development to facilitate reporting and planning within the new regions.
Future	• All audits will be included in the NOCA dashboard. • Public data dictionaries available for every audit. • Stronger focus on health equity and health economics in reporting. • Preparation for EHDS compliance through strengthening use of data standards, documentation • Investment in education and innovation for developments in statistical methodology, data management, machine learning and AI

Data burden and interoperability

NOCA is a data driven and evidence-based organisation which recognises the challenges and workload involved in the collection and validation of data. NOCA works closely with others to minimise the burden of data collection while maximising the usefulness of these data through development and implementation of data standards focused on interoperability. The organisation is recognised for its subject matter expertise and actively participate in national working groups such as HIQA National Standards for Information Management in Health and Social Care (HIQA, 2024), the Data Specification Management Process (HSE Technology and Transformation, 2024), SNOMED-CT working group (HSE Chief Data and Analytics Office, 2024).

NOCA develop audit datasets considering the data and information life cycle using HIQA guidance on a data quality framework for health and social care (HIQA, 2018).

NOCA works with participating health service providers to improve data quality at point of entry and provide resources to sites to validate, use and view their own data through reports and dashboards. NOCA publishes audit reports, each report includes a data quality statement to inform the reader of any data limitations that need to be considered. To increase transparency, NOCA provide aggregate data from the Irish National Audit of Stroke via the NOCA website and intend to do this with all audit data over time

NOCA are actively engaged with developments in the digitisation journey of the Irish health ecosystem through our reviews of proposed standards for electronic health records and our membership of the European Health Data Space Health Data Quality Enhancement Working Group (HIQA, 2025).

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STRATEGIC PILLAR 3
PROMOTION OF NATIONAL CLINICAL AUDIT

- National clinical audit and related quality improvement work is valued and resourced across the healthcare system.
- National Clinical Audit data is routinely used for the management and improvement of the Healthcare System.
- The value and impact of national clinical audits are assessed and published.
- Patient and public/service user involvement is visible across all aspects of NOCAs work

Events, Communications, Social Media

As part of NOCA's ongoing commitment to promoting the value of clinical audit in enhancing patient safety and driving healthcare improvement, significant progress was made between 2023-2025 to expand the organisation's visibility, foster engagement, and strengthen stakeholder relationships.

NOCA delivered a comprehensive range of communications, events, and engagement initiatives spanning educational webinars, collaborative campaigns, media activity, and participation in key healthcare forums. These initiatives were designed to highlight the importance of clinical audit, share insights from NOCA's national audits, and support a culture of continuous quality improvement across the Irish health service.

NOCA Annual Conferences

Hosted in association with RCSI Charter Week in February each year, the conference attracts over 400 attendees. It features the presentation of the NOCA Quality Improvement Champion Award and the NOCA poster awards, celebrating innovative audit and improvement work across the country.

Quarterly e-Newsletter

Distributed to over 4,000 subscribers each quarter, the NOCA newsletter provides updates on audit activity, reports, events, and relevant national and international developments in clinical audit and quality improvement.

Website Upgrade

A full upgrade of the NOCA website was completed in 2024, improving functionality, accessibility, and user experience, with a particular focus on making audit data and resources more accessible to stakeholders.

Social Media Engagement

NOCA's digital presence expanded significantly, with over 7,500 followers on X (formerly Twitter) and 2,000 followers on LinkedIn. New accounts were also established on Instagram and Bluesky, supporting NOCA's strategic aim to reach a broader and more diverse audience.

Audit Report Launches and Events

NOCA delivered a structured programme of webinar-based audit report launches and events to support the dissemination and use of national clinical audit findings. A dedicated webinar accompanied each national audit report launch, providing an accessible forum to present key findings, highlight trends and outline recommendations.

Webinars brought together clinical leads, audit teams and PPI contributors to support shared understanding of variation in care, alignment with national standards and the practical application of audit findings to local quality improvement activity.

Clinical Audit Awareness Week

This annual event, initially established in the UK by the Healthcare Quality Improvement Partnership and The National Quality Improvement (incl. Clinical Audit) Network (N-QI-CAN), underscores the importance of clinical audit and quality improvement in healthcare. Over the past three years, NOCA has proudly aligned with this initiative and run a series of engaging activities throughout the week, such as report launches, information webinars, social media campaigns and charity work.

In 2024, NOCA collaborated with the HSE NCCA team on a special QPS Talktime event and conducted a stakeholder survey. A dedicated social media campaign ran which featured Clinical Leads, Audit Managers, members of NOCA's Governance Committees, and PPI representatives sharing personal reflections on the impact of clinical audit.

NOCA Attendances at conferences and events

NOCA staff actively engaged in key healthcare conferences and events including:
• Exhibition stands to promote clinical audit and engage with stakeholders
• Oral presentations sharing audit findings and their impact on healthcare improvement
• Poster presentations highlighting quality improvement initiatives and audit insights.

Education

NOCA has been invited on several occasions to provide educational lectures or presentations about clinical audit for various undergraduate and postgraduate healthcare groups in a number of universities including RCSI, University College Cork and the South-East Technological University.

From 2022 to 2025, the IHFD collaborated with researchers from University College Dublin to develop an eLearning module to host on HSeLanD on the topic of hip fracture recovery.

These engagements enabled NOCA to foster relationships with healthcare professionals, policymakers, and patient advocates, ensuring that clinical audit remains central to discussions on healthcare quality and safety.

Chapter 5
Conclusion

Chapter 5 **Conclusion**

Over the past three years, NOCA has strengthened its role as a cornerstone of quality assurance, improvement, and transparency across the Irish health system. This second Impact Report demonstrates how far the organisation has progressed since its inception in 2012, not only in expanding the breadth of its audit portfolio but in embedding a culture of patient partnership, data-driven improvement, and system-wide collaboration.

Central to this progress has been the authentic integration of the patient and public voice. The involvement of 30 PPI representatives across governance committees, audits, and advisory activities has ensured that clinical audit continues to be guided by lived experience. Their contributions have amplified the relevance and accessibility of NOCA's work, making healthcare more responsive, transparent, and patient-centred.

The individual audits themselves have delivered measurable impact at national, local, and public levels. From informing national trauma guidance and stroke care improvements, to highlighting areas for public health advocacy such as falls prevention, sepsis awareness, and organ donation, NOCA audits are driving tangible change. At the local level, hospitals across the country are leveraging audit data to lead their own quality improvement initiatives—proof that audit is not a passive exercise but a catalyst for frontline innovation.

Beyond its audit portfolio, NOCA has broadened its influence through education, research, analytics, and advisory services. The establishment of the National Audit Platform IT system, the integration of health-economic analysis, and the embedding of health equity stratifiers signal an evolution in how audit data can shape not just clinical outcomes but also policy, funding decisions, and equitable access to care.

As NOCA looks ahead, the next phase of its strategy will build on these achievements, strengthening partnerships, maximising the digitisation of healthcare and exploring AI, enhancing reporting, and continuing to invest in quality improvement capacity. The commitment to transparency, patient involvement, and evidence-based decision-making will remain at the heart of its mission.

Clinical audit continues to demonstrate its unique power to transform patient care. By aligning robust data with clinical expertise, we are driving real improvements that save lives and shape a safer, more responsive health system.

At the heart of NOCA's work is a belief that better information leads to better care. By uniting patients, clinicians, and policy-makers around high-quality data, NOCA has established itself as a trusted agent of change in the Irish healthcare system. With strong foundations and a clear strategic vision, the organisation is well positioned to deliver even greater impact in the years ahead—ensuring safer, fairer, and better care for all patients.

We would like to sincerely thank everyone who contributes to the NOCA audits from the HSE, Department of Health, RCSI, NOCA Governance Board, Clinical Leads, committee members, PPIs representatives and whole NOCA team.

> **"OVER THE PAST THREE YEARS, NOCA HAS STRENGTHENED ITS ROLE AS A CORNERSTONE OF QUALITY ASSURANCE, IMPROVEMENT, AND TRANSPARENCY ACROSS THE IRISH HEALTH SYSTEM."**

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References and useful links

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HSE National Service Plan 2025 https://about.hse.ie/publications/hse-national-service-plan-2025/

HSE Quality Improvement Toolkit: www2.healthservice.hse.ie/organisation/nqpsd/featured-articles/new-year-quality-improvement-toolkit/

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