NOCA National Office of Clinical Audit

IFLSD Irish Fracture Liaison Service Database

IRISH FRACTURE LIAISON SERVICE DATABASE SUMMARY REPORT 2025

The Irish Fracture Liaison Service Database (IFLSD) is a national clinical audit of the care provided to people aged 50 years and over who experience a non-hip fragility fracture and are seen by participating Fracture Liaison Services (FLS) across Ireland. The audit looks at 11 internationally recognised Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) covering how patients are identified, assessed, treated and followed up. The results help services identify where care is working well, where it varies and where improvements are needed to reduce the risk of future fractures.

WHAT IS CLINICAL AUDIT?

NOCA was established in 2012 to support national clinical audits of healthcare in Ireland.

National clinical audits regularly examine different areas of healthcare to understand how services are performing and where improvements can be made.

National clinical audits look at:

- how healthcare services are organised
- how care is delivered
- the outcomes experienced by patients

NOCA works with healthcare providers to help them understand and use this information so they can learn from it and improve patient care over time.





WHAT ARE OSTEOPOROSIS AND FRAGILITY FRACTURES?

Osteoporosis is a condition that weakens bones and makes them more likely to break. It often causes no symptoms until a fracture occurs. In Ireland, it is estimated that 1 in 3 women and 1 in 5 men aged over 50 years will experience an osteoporosis-related fracture during their lifetime.

A fragility fracture is a broken bone caused by a minor injury, such as a fall from standing height, that would not normally cause a fracture in healthy bone. It is often the first sign of underlying osteoporosis. After a fragility fracture, the risk of another fracture increases significantly. Early assessment of bone health and falls risk can help prevent future fractures.

WHAT IS A FRACTURE LIAISON SERVICE (FLS)?

A Fracture Liaison Service (FLS) is a specialist service for people aged 50 years and older who have experienced a fragility fracture. It helps identify osteoporosis, assess falls risk, arrange treatment and support, and reduce the risk of future fractures. Strong international evidence shows that Fracture Liaison Services improve secondary fracture prevention and patient outcomes.



KEY FINDINGS 2025

These results relate to patients identified by the 11 hospitals participating in IFLSD in 2025. Not all hospitals or Fracture Liaison Services in Ireland currently participate, so the findings do not represent all people with fragility fractures nationally.

WHO WAS INCLUDED?

11
11 hospitals participated in IFLSD during 2025

3,894
A total of 3,894 cases were included

82%
82% were female

73%
73% were aged 65 years and older

42%
42% of fractures were forearm fractures, making them the most common fracture recorded.

32%
32% of patients were admitted to hospital for treatment of their fracture.

WERE PATIENTS IDENTIFIED?

KPI 1: DATA COMPLETENESS
30% of participating services met the data completeness standard.
At least 80% of the required information recorded for 8 or more of the 11 KPIs

KPI 2: IDENTIFICATION OF FRAGILITY FRACTURES
29% of the expected fragility fracture population was identified by participating services.

KPI 3: IDENTIFICATION OF VERTEBRAL FRACTURES
29% of the expected number of vertebral (spinal) fractures were identified.

WHAT HAPPENED AFTER PATIENTS WERE IDENTIFIED?

KPI 4:
72% of identified patients were assessed by an FLS team member within 90 days of their fracture.

KPI 5:
Among patients who required a DXA scan, **36%** underwent scanning within 90 days of their fracture.

KPI 6:
79% received, were referred for, or were advised to have a falls risk assessment.

KPI 7:
62% were recommended anti-osteoporosis medication to reduce the risk of another fracture.

PREVIOUS FRACTURES
Among patients who had previously experienced a fragility fracture, **34%** were already taking anti-osteoporosis medication when they attended the service.

WHAT FOLLOW-UP DID PATIENTS RECEIVE?

KPI 8:
24% self-reported they had started strength and balance exercises within 16 weeks.
Among eligible patients recommended osteoporosis medication who were advised or referred to a strength and balance programme.

KPI 9:
50% of patients recommended anti-osteoporosis medication received follow-up contact 12–16 weeks after their fracture.

KPI 10:
36% started or continued anti-osteoporosis medication within 16 weeks.
Among patients who were recommended treatment.

KPI 11:
33% of eligible patients were confirmed as continuing their prescribed anti-osteoporosis medication one year after their fracture.

PROGRESS IN 2025

Performance improved across 8 of the 11 key performance indicators compared with 2024, demonstrating continued progress in Fracture Liaison Service delivery nationally. There remains wide differences between hospitals, highlighting opportunities for further improvement and sharing of good practice.

WHY THESE FINDINGS MATTER

A fragility fracture is often the first sign of osteoporosis. People who experience one fragility fracture are at significantly increased risk of another. Fracture Liaison Services help identify osteoporosis, assess falls risk, recommend treatment and support patients to reduce their future fracture risk. These findings show encouraging progress in assessment, falls prevention and treatment, while highlighting the need to identify more patients who could benefit from these services.

PATIENT AND PUBLIC INTEREST REPRESENTATIVE



As the NOCA Patient and Public Interest Representative with the Irish Hip Fracture Database for the last four years, I welcome the Irish Fracture Liaison Service Database coming under the governance of NOCA and the publication of this national report.

For many people, a fragility fracture is much more than a broken bone. It can affect confidence, mobility and independence. Fracture Liaison Services help patients understand why their fracture occurred, identify osteoporosis and access the treatment and support needed to reduce the risk of another fracture. Through my involvement with the Irish Hip Fracture Database, I have seen the impact a hip fracture can have on a person's life. Services that help prevent future fractures and support independence are invaluable for patients and their families.

Anne O'Shea Clarke, Patient and Public Interest Representative, Irish Hip Fracture Database

RECOMMENDATIONS

These are plain-language summaries of the IFLSD 2025 recommendations. The full recommendations are available in the main IFLSD report.

RECOMMENDATION 1

IMPROVE IDENTIFICATION OF PEOPLE WITH FRAGILITY FRACTURES

Only 29% of the estimated fragility fracture population was identified by participating services during 2025. Improving identification and referral pathways will help ensure more people can access Fracture Liaison Services, assessment, treatment and support to help prevent future fractures.



RECOMMENDATION 2

BETTER UNDERSTAND FRACTURE LIAISON SERVICE PROVISION ACROSS IRELAND

A national organisational survey, administered by NOCA, will gather information about Fracture Liaison Services, including staffing, access to DXA scans, service organisation and multidisciplinary supports. This will provide a clearer picture of current service provision and help inform service evaluation, quality improvement and future participation in the IFLSD.



WHAT THIS MEANS FOR PATIENTS

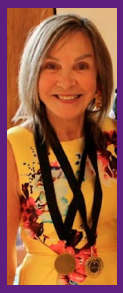
For many people, a fragility fracture is not simply a broken bone. It can affect confidence, mobility, independence and overall wellbeing.

Early assessment through a Fracture Liaison Service can help identify osteoporosis, assess falls risk and support patients to access treatment and advice that may help reduce the risk of another fracture. The findings in this report highlight the importance of ensuring that everyone who experiences a fragility fracture has the opportunity to access these services.

Mary's experience shows that recovery is about more than healing a fracture. It is also about maintaining independence, rebuilding confidence, staying active and receiving the right support at the right time.



A PATIENT'S PERSPECTIVE: MARY LANDY'S STORY



Mary fractured a bone in her spine after a fall in 2022 and spent 12 weeks wearing a brace. Following a DXA scan, she was diagnosed with osteoporosis and referred to her local Fracture Liaison Service. The team helped her understand her diagnosis, discussed treatment options and worked with her GP to develop a plan for her bone health.

Through walking, exercise and dancing, Mary gradually rebuilt her strength and confidence and continues to live an active and independent life.

MARY'S MESSAGE:

"HOLD YOUR HEAD UP HIGH, KEEP MOVING AND KEEP LIVING."

READ MARY'S FULL RECOVERY JOURNEY IN THE IFLSD NATIONAL REPORT 2025. SCAN THE QR CODE TO READ HER STORY ON PAGES 11 AND 12.

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