

# NEWSLETTER



**May 2025**

Welcome to NICOR's latest e-bulletin. This edition focuses on the latest news and developments at NICOR.

With the dedication of the clinical teams in hospitals, technology enhancements, and the analytical transformation of data into information, we are committed to support local teams in their drive to improve patient outcomes.

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# Publications

## NICOR publishes 2025 annual reports



The landscape for cardiovascular disease is changing. There is evidence of good practice, but the challenges and pressures continue to be seen across the NHS, including cardiovascular services. In some areas, the data show waiting lists for cardiovascular elective treatment are getting worse, patients are experiencing longer delays for urgent admissions, and there are significant inequalities and variances in care across the country.

On 13 March 2025, NICOR published its National Cardiac Audit Programme (NCAP) 2025 Annual Report supported with 10 interactive sub-specialty clinical reports. The interactive reports provide more detailed domain-level analyses and commentary allowing focus on the information that is of most interest to the reader (for example drilling down to explore the performance of different parts of the country and individual hospitals). Alongside the annual report, a dedicated Annual Report for Patients, Carers and the Public was published. The 2025 annual reports cover the 12 months from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024 (or between 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2024 for sub-specialties that report on a three-year period).

Despite the many challenges and in what remains a turbulent time for the NHS, progress is being made on the overall quality of care in many areas of cardiology care, with hospitals achieving excellent results for many specific national quality standards. However, of particular concern are the substantial inequalities and variances in care across the country. More work is needed to understand these and to determine which variations are unwarranted and how things can be done to ensure universal and equal access to treatment for everyone.

You can read the 2025 annual reports in full and delve in to the data of the interactive reports via the [NICOR website](#). If you have any feedback or questions on the reports, email Senior Delivery Manager [Anthony Bradley](#).

# Data & reporting

Annual reports 2025/26 – data submission deadline

It is important hospitals continue to submit data in a timely manner and it is their responsibility to ensure the data are complete and accurate since we will be reporting on the data we receive from them.

The data submission deadline for the next report cycle is **31 May 2025**. All NHS hospitals are required to complete the data submissions by this date, extensions are not available. This will enable NICOR to complete the downloads and produce the next annual reports for 2025/26 (2024/25 data or for 2022/23 to 2024/25 for sub-specialties that report on a three-year period). The data submission deadlines can be downloaded from the [NICOR website](#).

A helpful user guide is available on NICOR's [interactive reports webpage](#). To ensure data security, it is essential that hospitals submit their data via the NICOR secure web portal. Please **do not** send any patient-identifiable information via email. Guidance on how and where to submit hospital data is provided below. If you have any questions, please email us at [nicor.auditenquiries@nhs.net](mailto:nicor.auditenquiries@nhs.net).

## **Structural Heart Intervention Registries – Data import facility**

We are pleased to announce that NHS England has approved the provision of data import facilities for the Left Atrial Appendage Occlusion (LAAO), Percutaneous Forman Ovale Closure (PFOC), and Transcatheter Mitral and Tricuspid Valve (TMTV) registries. These will be available to users from **1 May 2025**.

As with all existing import processes, only CSV files that adhere strictly to the required format will be accepted. The dataset spreadsheets available on the NICOR website detail the correct order of fields for each registry. It is essential that submitted files contain all required fields in the specified order to ensure a successful upload.

Users are reminded to review the import log following each upload, as it may contain warnings or errors that require attention. Where issues are identified, data must be corrected within your local system, and a new, valid CSV file should then be generated and re-uploaded to NICOR.

We would like to take this opportunity to emphasise the importance of **timely data submissions** to support national reporting and continuous service improvement. Moving forward, data submission activity will be actively monitored, and we will be contacting hospitals that fall behind in their reporting obligations to ensure national compliance.

## **Aortic Dataset integration**

National Adult Cardiac Surgery Audit (NACSA) Aortic Dataset – upcoming v6 release.

We are pleased to announce the forthcoming release of the NACSA Aortic dataset (version 6). This updated version introduces an expanded range of aortic-specific fields, along with various enhancements and additions to the current dataset (v5.2.0).

Notable updates include the introduction of fields to support future EuroSCORE 3 calculations, as well as the inclusion of a Frailty Score. In anticipation of this release, please be advised that the v5.1.0 dataset is expected to be closed to further imports. It is essential that centres begin preparations to transition to the new dataset at the earliest opportunity.

Further communications will follow with detailed guidance, including the revised dataset specifications and the official launch date for version 6.

## **Important Notice: Submission of patient-identifiable information**

NICOR is committed to maintaining the highest standards of data security and patient confidentiality. We would like to formally remind everyone that patient-identifiable information must not be transmitted via email under any circumstances, including communications with the NICOR technical helpdesk and clinical audit enquiries mailboxes. Email, even when seemingly secure, presents a risk of interception or unauthorised access and is therefore not an appropriate channel for the transmission of sensitive data.

All patient data must be submitted solely through the secure NICOR web portal, which is specifically designed to ensure compliance with national data protection regulations. Secure processes and support arrangements are in place to assist hospitals with the submission of their data.

Detailed guidance on how and where to submit hospital data is available on the [NICOR website](#).

If you are uncertain about any aspect of the data submission process, please contact the [NICOR helpdesk team](#) for further guidance.

We appreciate your cooperation in upholding these essential data governance practices.

### **NICOR contact details**

This is a reminder, if you have any technical queries, are a new user looking to register or have any access issues, please email [nicor.helpdesk@nhs.net](mailto:nicor.helpdesk@nhs.net).

For any NICOR audit enquiries (for anything specific to a particular audit) email [nicor.auditenquiries@nhs.net](mailto:nicor.auditenquiries@nhs.net).

For the Data Access Request Service (DARS) and application process, please visit the [Researchers](#) area of the NICOR website.

## Latest developments

### **EuroHeart**



NICOR joined the EuroHeart programme in 2024. Coordinated by the European Society of Cardiology, there are now 14 countries involved in EuroHeart across Europe, sharing aggregate data from the individual country registries on a range of topics. This allows countries to compare themselves with others and highlights various issues of national and international importance.

The Acute Coronary Syndrome project is currently the most advanced within the programmes portfolio. With expert contributions from Dr Clive Weston (Myocardial Ischaemia National Audit Project - MINAP) and Professor Mamas Mamas (National Audit of Percutaneous Coronary Interventions - NAPCI), NICOR anticipates being able to share initial summary data from this project in the next month. You can access the latest EuroHeart report [here](#). Plans are also underway to release similar aggregate data for both valve disease and heart failure.

Professor Raj Kharbanda, Consultant Cardiologist, John Radcliffe Hospital and University of Oxford, and Clinical Lead of the NICOR UK Transcatheter Aortic Valve Implantation (TAVI) Registry, has been appointed as the Clinical Lead for the EuroHeart Valve programme. As the EuroHeart family increases, this expands the audit capacity for the participating countries, allowing international benchmarking, and will hopefully provide future research opportunities for the many hospitals that provide data.

## In the spotlight

## **New Clinical Leads appointed**

NICOR is pleased to welcome newly appointed elect Clinical Leads for three of the clinical speciality domains within the National Cardiac Audit Programme. They have extensive knowledge of their speciality areas and current experience in frontline NHS services. They will take over their full roles after a handover period with the current Clinical Leads.

### **Dr Chris Gale, Clinical Lead Elect, Myocardial Ischaemia National Audit Project (MINAP)**

Chris Gale is Professor of Cardiovascular Medicine, Honorary Consultant Cardiologist at Leeds General Infirmary, and Co-Director of the Leeds Institute for Data Analytics at the University of Leeds.



*Dr Chris Gale*

“It is a privilege and honour to be appointed NCAP’s Clinical Lead for MINAP. MINAP is the largest continuous collection register of heart attacks and is a critical tool for informing heart attack care quality in the NHS.

“I have been involved with MINAP for nearly 20 years, as a clinical, committee member and researcher. I strongly believe that effective use of routinely collected NHS data is essential for patient benefit. I am looking forward to working with NICOR, MINAP, and the local MINAP teams so that we can improve care and outcomes for people with heart attack.”

### **Dr Suzanna Hardman, Clinical Lead Elect, National Heart Failure Audit (NHFA)**

Suzanna trained clinically and academically in London and was appointed Senior Lecturer/Consultant Cardiologist with an interest in Community Cardiology at University College London (UCL), and the UCL and Whittington hospitals in 1995. This allowed for an exciting and innovative career in the emerging heart failure discipline, developing services across primary, secondary and tertiary care. She has extensive involvement in London, national and international heart failure initiatives at many levels including as Chair of the British Society for Heart Failure (BSH). She was involved with and supported the NHFA from the outset and has been the deputy clinical lead for some years.



*Dr Suzanna Hardman*

On appointment to the role of Clinical Lead Elect, Suzanna reflected: “The challenge is twofold: 1. To maintain the high data standards, the audit independence and clinical engagement which has allowed the heart failure audit to deliver Quality Indicator improvements for people hospitalised with acute heart failure over many years, and 2. To embrace new opportunities with enthusiasm integrity and thoroughness. Both may be challenging given the current financial and other constraints, but it is a privilege to continue to work with the heart failure audit team as the incoming lead, the wider NICOR membership and to continue to liaise closely with the BSH in these endeavours.”

### **Mr Uday Trivedi, Clinical Lead Elect, National Adult Cardiac Surgery Audit (NACSA)**

Uday is a consultant cardiac surgeon at the Royal Sussex County Hospital, where he has worked since 1999. His interest in cardiac data goes back to his days as a registrar with the involvement of data collection and analysis since 1995. As a consultant he is the local unit audit lead (a role he has held for nearly 20 years) and nationally he is the audit lead for cardiothoracic surgery at the Society for Cardiothoracic Surgery (SCTS) in Great Britain and Ireland.



*Mr Uday Trivedi*

Uday added: “My appointment to this role is a great honour as I believe that all data in the NHS should be used to improve the quality of care and inform all stakeholders to make better decisions. The NACSA data collection is one of the oldest audits in the UK that has consistently had excellent support from surgeons, units and SCTS to maintain the quality of the data collection.”

# On a final note

FINAL THOUGHTS

## **New Head of Clinical Registries and Audits appointed**

We welcomed Ashley Bolton, Head of Clinical Registries and Audits in April. Ashley is employed by NHS Arden & GEM CSU with NICOR in her portfolio. She is passionate about data analytics with an experienced history of working in the health care industry, in providers and commissioning. Welcome Ashley to NICOR, we look forward to working with you.

## **Moving on**

We said farewell to two valued colleagues recently, James Chal and Professor John Deanfield. James and John have been instrumental leaders at NICOR for many years, and have been strong advocates of NICOR and the collection of data to help improve cardiovascular health services across the country. Professor Deanfield, Director of NICOR since its inception in 2011, will remain aligned to the programme as a strategic advisor to the National Clinical Director for Heart Disease. We wish them both all the best for the future and thank them for their time at NICOR. We also said goodbye to Sarah Ajayi and Akosua Donkor, two of NICOR's Project Managers, who have moved on to work on another programme within Arden & GEM from 1 May. We wish them all the best in their new roles and thank them for all their hard work and dedication.

## **In memoriam**

In recent months, we have been informed of the very sad news that two of our colleagues and friends have passed away. Sheila Marcial worked at NICOR since 2018 and was known as the 'voice of NICOR' managing the support helpdesk. Over the years, many of you will have interacted with Sheila, benefiting from her knowledge, professionalism, and dedication. Richard Corder was a patient representative and invaluable member of the NCAP Operational and Methodology Group for many years. He brought a wealth of lived experience as a cardiac patient, patient advocate and his significant business experience. We appreciate their dedication and unwavering support over the years, they will be missed by everyone.

If you would like to submit an article for NICOR's next newsletter, please send it to [sarah.colston@nhs.net](mailto:sarah.colston@nhs.net). If you do not want to receive this newsletter, email [nicor.auditenquiries@nhs.net](mailto:nicor.auditenquiries@nhs.net) to be removed from the distribution list.