

NEWSLETTER

August 2026

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

National Cardiac Audit Programme publishes 2026 interim summary reports

The [National Cardiac Audit Programme \(NCAP\) has published its 2026 interim summary reports](#). The 10 speciality clinical domain reports cover the period 1 April to 30 September 2025.

We commend the work of all those who have submitted data on many thousands of hospital episodes, but some hospitals are not complying with the commissioner requirements for complete and frequent data submissions. Where possible we have identified hospitals that have submitted no data, but our analyses suggest that some hospitals have not yet submitted all cases they treated between April and September 2025.

Overall, the data submissions for some domains are around 85-90% of those expected for the period. This raises the possibility of an inclusion bias when examining performance metrics, and this must be kept in mind when interpreting the results. For the newer structural heart disease procedure registries, some hospitals have still not registered with NICOR for their data submissions and so their activity and clinical performance cannot yet be reported.

A more complete analysis will be available with our next report on the full 2025/26 financial year.

Data & reporting

Data verification and analysis taking place for NCAP 2026 annual reports

NICOR's deadline for hospitals to submit their data for the National Cardiac Audit Programme (NCAP) 2026 annual reports was 31 May. Following the verification process, analysis has started to identify where hospitals are meeting the quality indicator (QI) measures, where improvements have been made and where any challenges have been identified.

We would like to thank everyone for completing their data submissions. The data collected are vital to the continuous benchmarking of hospitals and networks against national standards. The analysis allows early detection of outliers and supports focused QI initiatives. This systematic approach promotes organisational learning and accountability to reduce preventable harm and procedural complications. The NCAP annual reports will be published on 11 December 2026.

The importance of data submission deadlines

We recognise the significant pressures faced by clinical teams and understand that submitting data each month can be challenging. We are grateful for the effort involved in collecting and submitting data alongside the delivery of high-quality patient care.

However, regular and timely data submission remains an essential requirement. Accurate, complete, and up-to-date data enable us to help you monitor care, identify opportunities for improvement, support service planning, and ultimately improve patient outcomes. The value of this work depends on the quality and completeness of the information submitted by every organisation.

While we do not routinely publish monthly reports, we are regularly asked by commissioners, clinical leaders and other stakeholders to undertake bespoke analyses and provide insights that support service improvement and decision-making. These analyses and the decisions they inform are only as robust as the data available to us, making timely and complete submissions from all hospitals critically important.

Each year, we ask all hospitals to adhere to the published year-end submission deadline of **31 May**. We appreciate that organisations can face operational challenges and competing priorities; however, we are unable to grant extensions to this deadline. Our analysis and reporting schedules are carefully planned to meet contractual commitments, support national reporting requirements, and ensure the timely publication of annual findings. Meeting these deadlines is a collective responsibility and is essential to ensuring that the data can be used effectively to drive improvements in patient care and outcomes across the NHS. Thank you for your continued support.

If you have any questions about data submission or the annual reports, contact nicor.auditenquiries@nhs.net

The analytic process

Once the data submission deadline closes, NICOR's analytical teams begin processing thousands of records that shape and form the NCAP national reports, dashboards and performance benchmarking.

Before any analysis takes place, submitted data undergo a rigorous programme of validation, quality checks, cleaning and processing. These datasets are then combined and prepared for reporting across each clinical domain. At this stage, the reporting process is already well underway, meaning that even minor late additions or corrections can have a significant impact. Small changes often require elements of the analytical process to be rerun to ensure results remain accurate, consistent and comparable across all participating organisations.

Late submissions also miss a critical part of the process: external linkage to mortality and Hospital Episode Statistics (HES) data. These linkages are fundamental to many of NICOR's most important

outcome measures and key findings. Because they rely on external partner organisations and large-scale processing, it is not feasible to repeatedly rerun these linkages for individual late submissions.

Timely data submission ensures your organisation's data are fully represented in NICOR analyses, contributing to a complete picture of cardiac care across England, Wales and Northern Ireland. These insights help identify successes, highlight opportunities for improvement, inform commissioning decisions, and ultimately drive better patient outcomes for cardiac services. Meeting submission deadlines also enables NICOR to publish high-quality reports on time in line with NHS England requirements.

Collect, Analyse, Report (CAR) latest developments

To date, six clinical domains has been added to the CAR platform:

- Transcatheter Aortic Valve Implantation (TAVI)
- Left Atrial Appendage Occlusion (LAAO)
- Percutaneous Foramen Ovale Closure (PFOC)
- Transcatheter Mitral and Tricuspid Valve procedure (TMTV)
- National Congenital Heart Disease Audit (NCHDA)
- National Adult Cardiac Surgery Audit (NACSA)

Two more clinical domains, the National Heart Failure Audit (NHFA) and National Audit of Percutaneous Coronary Interventions (NAPCI) are undergoing user acceptance testing, with anticipated rollout dates of 2 and 9 September 2026 respectively. Work is also in progress for the National Audit of Cardiac Rhythm Management (NACRM) and Myocardial Ischaemia National Audit Project (MINAP) (with ambulance).

A duplicate checker tool designed to help identify duplicate patient records and procedures or admissions is in development and will be tested in the coming months.

As with the QREG platform, the applications in CAR come with a set of quality indicator (QI) metric reports which allow hospitals to check and validate data, at any time, ahead of the annual report release, or for regular data validation purposes. These may differ slightly from the annual reports as they do not currently exclude duplicates. We are actively reviewing the logic to ensure these reports are aligned with the annual report, but if you find any that do not appear correct, please contact the NICOR helpdesk for investigation.

In the spotlight

NCAP Operational and Methodology (NOM) group workshop

Representatives from across NICOR's cardiovascular audit programmes came together on 29 June to reflect on recent progress and identify opportunities to strengthen future reporting and analysis.

The workshop recognised significant improvements in the delivery of NICOR reports despite ongoing organisational change and resource pressures. Interim reports were delivered more efficiently than in previous years, supported by earlier analytical planning and closer collaboration between analysts and clinical leads. Participants also highlighted greater consistency across reports in terms of layout, graphics, messaging and interpretation, alongside growing analytical capability through linked datasets and cross-registry working.

Looking ahead, discussions focused on the importance of continuing to improve data quality and completeness, increasing the use of linked data from sources such as HES and ONS, and expanding analyses that draw insights across multiple registries. There was strong support for greater automation of routine reporting processes, reducing duplication of effort and enabling analysts to spend more time on interpretation and innovation.

The workshop also explored the future purpose of NICOR reporting. Future outputs will increasingly focus on answering the questions that matter most to patients, clinicians, commissioners and quality improvement teams. There was particular emphasis on incorporating longer-term outcomes, patient-reported measures and health inequalities analysis, ensuring that reports not only describe activity and performance but also demonstrate the real-world impact of cardiovascular interventions on patient outcomes.

On a final note

FINAL THOUGHTS

NICOR hosting arrangements

In July 2025, it was announced by the government that Commissioning Support Units will close and some services will transfer to NHS England in the interim until services transfer to the Department of Health and Social Care as part of the NHS England transition. The expectation is NICOR will transfer to NHS England before the end of 2026, but this is still to be confirmed. Once hosting arrangements are confirmed including the timeline, further information will be shared.

Farewell to Kal

At the end of June, we said farewell to Narinderpal Kalirai (Kal) who has left NICOR to pursue new ventures and spend more time with his family. Kal has been with NICOR for over three years and over 20 years in the NHS. He was a valuable member of the Project Delivery team. We would like to thank Kal for his dedication and hard work over the years. We wish him all the best for the future.

NICOR contact details

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

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

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

For the latest news, you can follow [NICOR's X](#) account and [LinkedIn](#).

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