

2024

ANNUAL REPORT

EAST OF ENGLAND
NEONATAL
OPERATIONAL DELIVERY
NETWORK



ODN

Achievements

Care Coordinator Team & Family Engagement Lead

- Parent Portal - inclusion and development
- Support with BFI and Bliss
- Listening events
- Lactation after loss leaflets
- Think Neonatal
- Launch and develop repatriation within the region: informative webinars, patient flow policy, IUT policy
- Outreach regional networking
- QIS FiCare training
- You Made a Difference Award for Care Coordinator Team
- Presentation at National and International Conferences
- Recruiting FEL into substantive role
- Publication of FiCare Benchmark tool

Nigel Gooding-Lead Pharmacist

- Review and gap analysis of pharmacist workforce to each neonatal unit
- Publication of supporting statement for use of electronic prescribing in neonates
- Roll out of regional IV monographs to neonatal units, with rolling update of monographs (46 reviewed in 2024)
- Monthly newsletter sent to each unit to provide update on IV monographs reviewed and to highlight major changes
- Development of WhatsApp group for all EoE neonatal pharmacists to provide a support network.

Contents

Title	Page Number
Liz Langham & Claire O'Mara	4
Katie Cullum	6
Teresa Berry	7
Julia Cooper	12
Wendy Rogers	18
Nigel Gooding	21
AHP & Psychology Team	23
PaNDR	28
Our Units	30
MSE-Basildon	31
MSE-Broomfield	33
MSE-Southend	35
ESNEFT-Colchester	37
ESNEFT-Ipswich	40
NWAFT-Peterborough	43
NWAFT-Hinchingbrooke	45
Bedfordshire Hospitals	47
Cambridge University Hospitals	51
Norfolk & Norwich	54
Princess Alexandra-Harlow	56
James Paget	59
Queen Elizabeth	61
Lister	63
Watford	65
West Suffolk	67



Liz Langham
Director



Claire O'Mara
**Deputy Director/Senior
Lead Nurse**

We would like to start by saying thank you to all of our fantastic team for another amazing year. We continue to achieve our objectives and drive change across neonatal care despite the challenges; it is a privilege to work with you all. This thanks also extends to all of the dedicated teams in every unit across the EoE. Without your expertise and dedication none of the achievements would be possible.

Matthew James stepped down as clinical lead for the ODN and we would like to say a huge thank you to him for his support over the last 5 years.

As a network we are proud to see all of the changes and improvements you all continue to make, and the full engagement with the ODN.

We have continued to support you through your journeys to achieve the NCCR, with Bliss and BFI accreditation and are seeing such amazing engagement and hard work on all sites. The work the AHP's and psychology teams, whilst they only have a small amount of time has been fantastic.

We continue to deliver education and have expanded our team with some consultant input from Dr Sankara Narayanan, who we welcome to our team. Our education events are well attended and evaluated, but this is due to the great work the ODN and network wide educators carry out.

We were also fortunate to receive an allocation of funding from NHSE to support QIS training in the region. The funding has enabled us to pay travel expenses to 2 of our units following the cessation of the QIS course at UEA and 2 additional QIS places at one of our LNU's. We have also utilised some of the funding allocation to appoint an 8a Senior PDN to the ODN team, as many of you will know this is Teresa. Teresa will be working closely with UEA to develop an ODN Foundation Module (SCBU) that will be accessible to all nurses across the region, registered and non-registered. The course will launch in the new year. As part of her role she will also be ensuring all of our current QIS providers are compliant with the national QIS recommendations.



Liz Langham
Director



Claire O'Mara
**Deputy Director/Senior
Lead Nurse**

We have continued to work closely with both maternity and our LMNS teams, to bring maternity and neonatal services together. Our planned capacity review was paused for a while, but we are now moving forward which is positive. The ODN team and Maternity team worked together on the transitional care project supporting development and improvements across the region.

The Letby trial was a low point for both staff and families, but again we were proud to see how services supported each other and families through what continues to be a difficult part in our progress. We await the Thirlwall review, and we know each team will engage with the recommendations and any changes we are required to make.

The new service specifications were released, and we continue to look to understand how these may impact use as a region.

Overall 2024 had some huge challenges with industrial action and Letby. The teams you have continued to deliver outstanding care to the babies and families in your units and with the support from the ODN we hope this continues.



Katie Cullum

Lead Nurse for Innovation & Quality Improvement

Supporting Safer, More Joined Up Neonatal and Maternity Care Across the Region

This year, my work within the Neonatal Operational Delivery Network has continued to focus on improving safety, supporting families, and strengthening collaboration across maternity and neonatal services.

A key part of my role involves reviewing neonatal mortality across the region. I attend and support Perinatal Mortality Review meetings at tertiary centres and Chair our regional mortality meeting, where doctors, obstetricians, midwives, and nurses from all 17 units come together. This forum provides a vital space to share learning from deaths, identify themes, and improve practice. One such theme led to the development of a regional Preterm Counselling Workshop, held in March. The event was a great success and is being reviewed by BAPM to be launched as a national best practice training package. I was also pleased to publish the East of England Neonatal Mortality Report, supporting transparency and shared learning.

Together with Wendy Rogers, we have embedded a process for involving an external neonatal consultant reviewer in all tertiary centre PMRTs, supported by a Consultant Standard Operating Procedure. In addition, a monthly exception report covering neonatal deaths, serious incidents, and care delivered outside service specifications is now submitted to the Clinical Oversight Group, enabling earlier escalation and action. From this work, we identified a need to strengthen infection prevention and control practices and are now developing a regional neonatal IP&C audit workstream.

Over the past year, I have continued to provide peer support to neonatal governance leads and supported the joint maternity and neonatal governance forum. This collaborative space has helped build stronger working relationships between services, with shared learning across pathways of care.

The Transitional Care workstream has also progressed. Alongside maternity colleagues, we have supported providers to map their current services, share good practice, and create a regional Transitional Care Guideline. The Regional TC Forum remains a valuable platform for providers to connect and explore challenges together.

Education continues to be a core part of my role. I lead the National Transitional Care Course and contribute nationally through my work with BAPM, including the development of the upcoming Neonatal Mortality Governance Framework and national guidance on routine pulse oximetry screening for newborns. I was also pleased to present at this year's BAPM Annual Conference.

Thank you to all colleagues across the region for your continued engagement, collaboration, and support. Your contributions are central to the improvements we are making together to enhance the safety and quality of care we provide.



Teresa Berry Senior PDN

It was a busy year for education provisions again in 2024. Thank you so much to everyone who has attended study days, helped to facilitate or been involved in the planning of the education we deliver.

Nationally many ODNs noticed a decrease in the sign-ups for face-to-face study days in 2024, this was the case in our region too. This was mainly due to trusts being unable to release staff from shifts and unable to cover the costs associated with face-to-face study days. We responded to this by adapting some of our study days and took the decision to run these virtually. These training sessions and updates are so important and so we wanted to ensure it was more accessible. The feedback from these days has been positive so we will look to continue this in 2025/2026.

We did also sadly have to postpone some of our study days due to faculty availability. If you are passionate about a specific neonatal subject and would like to be involved in helping us to facilitate study days and education please do contact me.

Overall the feedback for the study days that we have run this year has been very positive. As always, we have taken on board any constructive feedback received and adapted our study days to reflect this where possible. Some of the feedback we have received can be seen below.

Study Day Feedback



I feel the day could be slightly longer. Some good points made especially at the last session which could have been explored more.

Thank you for providing this day

The length of the day and the breaks were timed really well. Some really great topics delivered too. Thank you for all the effort put into running this day for us.

Excellent planned and well timed. Maybe just warning speakers so they don't go over time limits. Thank you for a great study day.



All relevant
Maybe Educators away day in future if possible

Medical teams should have specific training on in civility and the impact on patient care. This could be mandatory training for all since the risks of poor patient outcomes are high.

No, appreciate it being virtual. Right length of time. Thank you for organising it :)



Teresa Berry Senior PDN



Study Day Feedback

Emotional but amazing study day. Thank you so much. I learnt a lot.

It was a really good day that I'm really pleased I attended! Really well organised and very informative

The day was very well run and the fact that each session wasn't too long didn't feel too heavy and the speakers felt like were talking to us and not giving us lectures.

Fantastic day, well organised. A tough topic to cover

End of Life and Bereavement Study Day Feedback

Thankyou for the lovely day

Great study day, lovely lunch, thanks for your hard work putting the study day together. Would love the recipe for the rocky road!!!

Nothing the study day was good. One thing that can't always be helped but to make the room cooler! Other than that it was a really good day!

Study Day Feedback



"Excellent workshops. Really well organised. Lovely venue. Thank you"

"Found the day really good would strongly recommend"

"All sessions were informative and practical"

"Very informative"

"I feel much more confident about my approach to neonatal emergencies, thank you"

Emergency Skills Study Day Feedback

"Amazing day. Looking forwards to more study days"

"Lots of talk through needed more time for practice"

"I really enjoyed the day. I have not got much experience so found the day very beneficial"

"Learnt a lot"

"All the faculty members were knowledgeable, approachable and supportive"

"All the sessions had some new information for me to learn and I will put into practice"

"It would have been great if we had some chance to practice more in each workshop"

Study Day Feedback



"Overall a great day, well thought out, interactive and engaging"

"I found the whole day really good and at the right level"

"Was nice to refresh things and go over the new prostin policy"

"It was excellent, keep up the good work"

"Please organise more nursing skills days, I believe it was very beneficial to neonatal nurses"

Nursing Skills Study Day Feedback

"The parent session helped a lot with parent perspective"

"I'll take a lot back from today"

"Every topic was excellent"

"The day was so well organized, great workshops and great venue"

"All sessions were delivered well and great lunch too!"

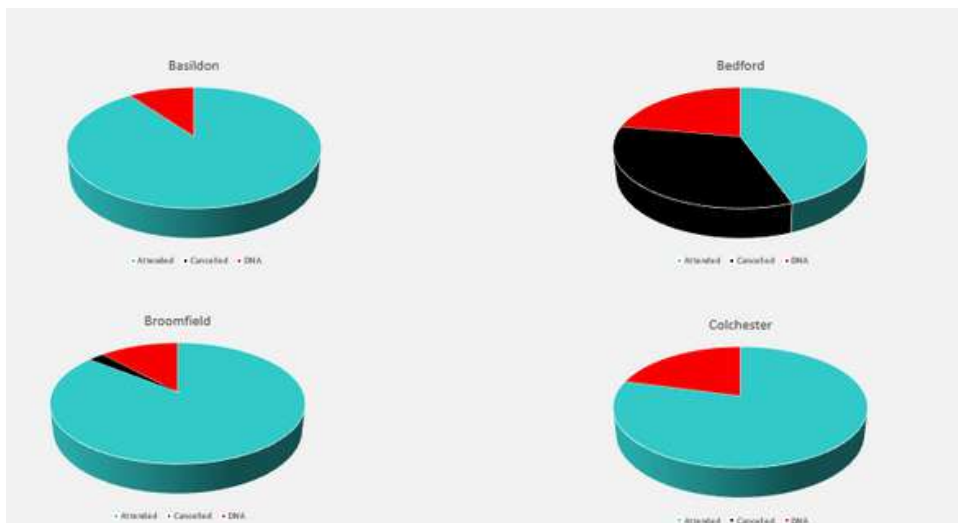
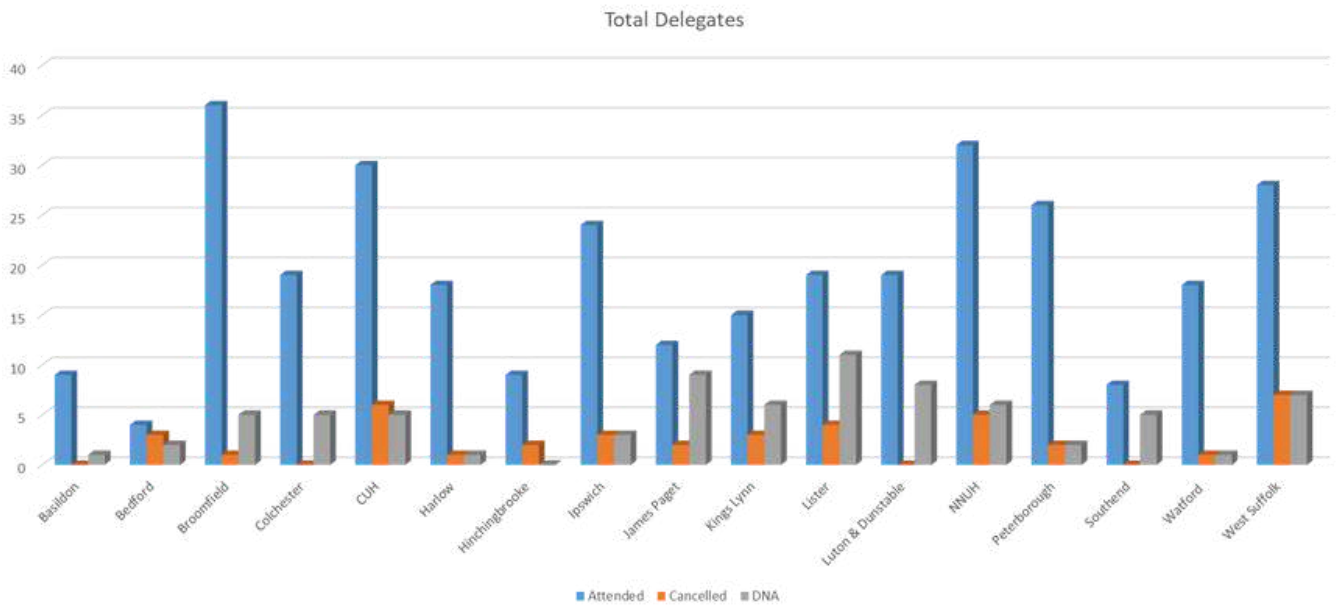
"No changes needed"

"Having the practical side of the study day was brilliant"

Teresa Berry Senior PDN

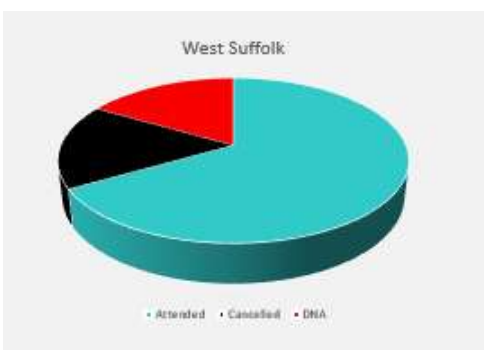
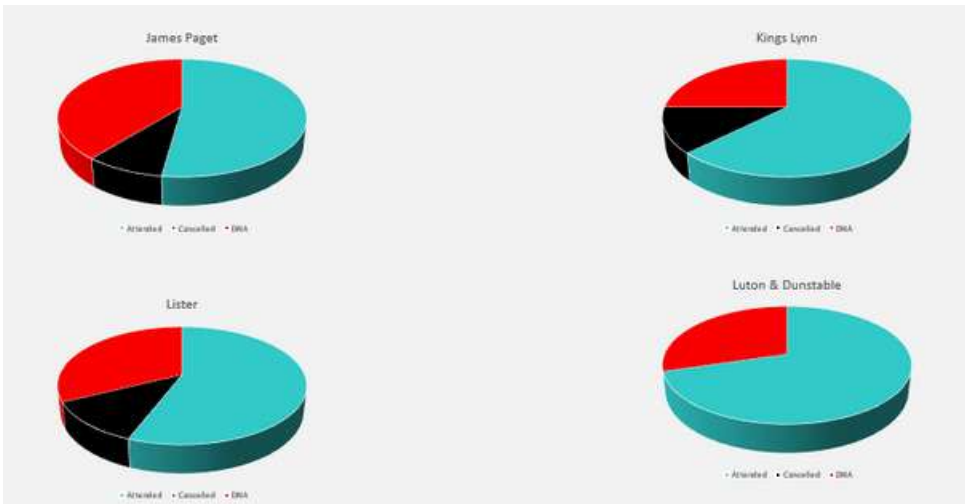
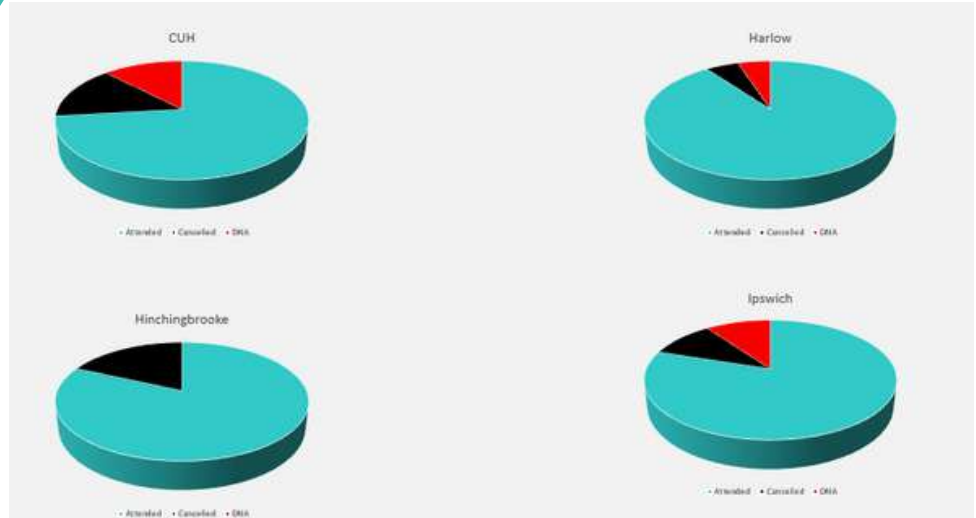


We have attached some data relating to each study day and the delegates who attended, cancelled or did not attend. If you would like any specific information relating to this data please don't hesitate to contact Kelly or myself.



Teresa Berry

Senior PDN





Teresa Berry

Senior PDN

The biggest challenge for 2024 came from the changes to QIS provisions following two HEIs within our region removing their QIS modules. We have made the decision to set up and deliver an ODN Foundation Module, which we will aim to launch in late 2025/early 2026 to fill this gap in provision. The ODN Foundation module will be equivalent to the Special Care Module and we are working closely with the existing HEI's in region with the aim that they will accept the ODN Foundation Module as entry to their Speciality Modules, which would allow movement of staff around the region.

All in all, 2024 has been a busy but exciting year with many more exciting opportunities on the horizon. I am incredibly grateful to have such an amazing team of PDNs and neonatal educators around the region who really do have a passion for furthering education within our region. Thank you and keep up the amazing work.

Teresa

Practice Development Lead Nurse

Julia Cooper

Lead Care Coordinator

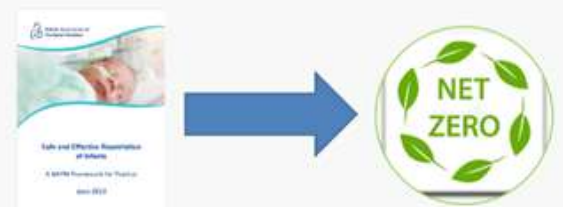


We are also listening to families regarding their experience of repatriation. The Repatriation QIP started on February 2nd, 2024, a project that aims to have two themed benefits to the region. Both to improve the experience of families moving between units; making the transition a positive experience and to improve the flow around the region, ensuring that the right care is delivered in the right place at the right time.

The engagement from the region has been superb. Repatriation Link Nurse (RLN) roles were created in all 17 units, with information about each RLN and unit included for handouts for the families or viewed on the East of England ODN Website for digital inclusion. Following a successful training day, repatriation meetings have been held weekly to increase communication regarding babies receiving care outside of their local designated unit. Support forums and a WhatsApp group have increased communication between units. A digital platform was created, designed for information sharing including feedback from the teams and families. Within the first year of commencement 366 families have been supported through their repatriation journey. This is a conservative number which we suspect does not represent the total. Not all the data is complete as this QIP is run by RLNs who are not always awarded time to complete the audit which informs us. The average time protected for RLNs around the region is one hour per month – so much is achieved with so little time!

Two colleagues Minu (RLN) and Rita (FIC) -from PAH presented with Nina and Julia at the NHS Sustainability Conference in March. Highlighting how the QIP aligns with the longer-term plan of the NHS. This demonstrates the dedication and commitment of teams to improve the experience of families moving around the region, along with how repatriation, with a team approach can be so much more successful. Here are some of the families comments:

Aligning Repatriation with .zero emissions



Julia Cooper

Lead Care Coordinator



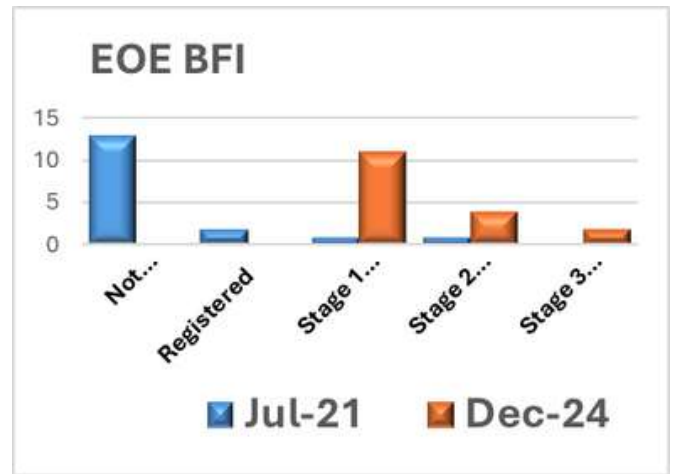
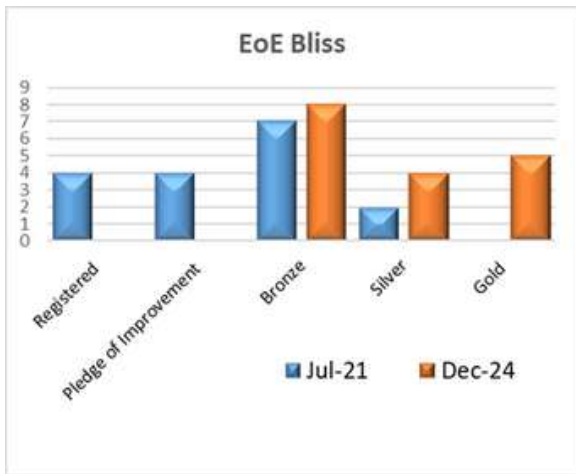
The Care Coordinator team in 2024 have supported the Outreach teams across the region increasing networking, sharing resources – such as the paracetamol leaflet which was regionally reviewed from the Ipswich parent leaflet and is now available to all families. The positive networking and collaboration also resulted in a regional response being sent and included in the BAPM Outreach framework draft, celebrating good practice in the East of England. Collating the regional response led to a collective review of the data gathered by Outreach in comparison to what will be needed in the future, enabling the EoE Outreach teams to be prepared in advance of the framework publication. A WhatsApp group was created for networking to continue between well attended and welcome face-to-face meetings facilitated by the Care Coordinator team. Hearing how families experience Outreach was facilitated by listening events hosted by Kelly in her role of Family Engagement Lead.

Julia Cooper

Lead Care Coordinator



Family Integrated Care. Our commitment to support teams to continue their Bliss and BFI journey continues to embed Family Integrated Care throughout the region. 2024 saw teams achieve the following accreditation:



- Bronze
- QEHL
- Silver
- Bedfordshire
- Gold
- Broomfield
- Ipswich

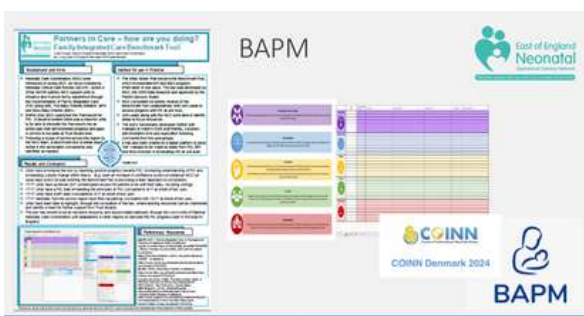


- Stage 1
- Basildon
- Ipswich
- James Paget
- Stage 2
- Broomfield



East and North Herts

Supporting the units to embed FIC using the BAPM FIC Framework was presented at the BAPM spring conference in poster format along with presenting the work at the COINN conference in Denmark.



A portrait of Julia Cooper, a woman with blonde hair, looking directly at the camera. The portrait is set against a white background with a teal and grey decorative graphic behind it.

Julia Cooper

Lead Care Coordinator

Part of embedding FIC included a gap analysis of the accommodation across the region. Despite only two units meeting the building regulations for facilities, the scope of practice returned identified use tended to be in peaks and troughs with 53% of units having at least one family waiting at least one day to be able to stay with their baby. However, it was also identified that the parent bedroom spaces for families were only utilised 30-40% of the time. This will guide the 2025 workstream to better understand where the why some families must wait, and others don't:

- What barriers are there to prevent families staying?
- What policies for room usage are in place?
- How can we help avoid the separation of parents and babies?

Along with the accommodation scope, the Care Coordinators gathered information on the food provision across the region – highlighting vast differences in how families can maintain their nutrition while caring for their baby. We have seen a move to all units providing food now, but the variation has been noted in terms of:

- Person(s) entitled
- Type of food
- Number of hot meals/day
- Funding

Comparative data between 2024 and 2022

Parent Advisory Group (PAG) members have continued to be involved in various workstreams and the review and development of ODN resources. In addition to what has been mentioned previously, they have contributed to the development of the Antenatal Pre-term Birth Counselling workshop by sharing their experiences both in advance and providing recordings for the day.

Two listening sessions were hosted by Kelly to obtain PAG members' experiences and perspectives to submit to the House of Lords Pre-term Birth Committee, to ensure neonatal parents voices from the East of England would be integrated.

Julia Cooper

Lead Care Coordinator



The ODN hosted an event, #ThinkNeonatal, aimed at key stakeholders that support neonatal families outside of the neonatal unit. Several PAG members were co-facilitators for the event and hosted various activities throughout the day, in addition to being part of a Q&A panel. The event received highly positive feedback, especially due to having the PAG members present to bring the topics discussed to reality.

The Care Coordinator Team would like to thank all the unit teams for their dedication, engagement and commitment to improving the care and experience of babies and families partnering in neonatal care leading to a successful 2024.

CUH Team award 2024.



Wendy Rogers Lead Nurse for Neuroprotection



2024 flew by, and here we are already halfway through 2025 - where does the time go? It's certainly been a busy year for all of us, and I would like to start by thanking everyone for their continued support.

Neuroprotection study day 20th June

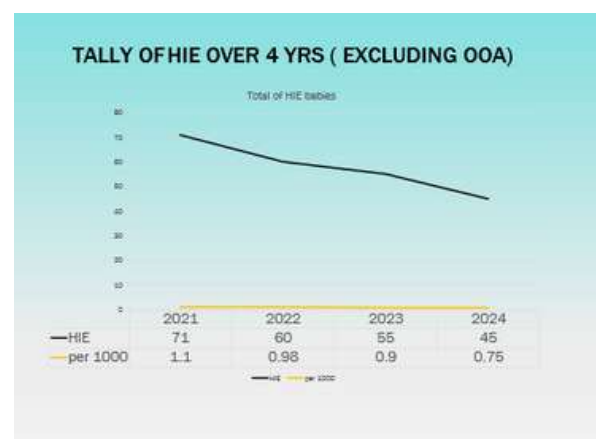
In 2024, we held a face-to-face study day focused on providing practical demonstrations in CFM and ultrasound. We were fortunate to have the support of Addenbrooke's, who kindly loaned us their new SIM doll, an advanced training tool that offers realistic ultrasound simulations to help practitioners refine their skills. Although we had to make some last-minute adjustments to the programme, resulting in the loss of one workshop, the feedback remained overwhelmingly positive. In fact, 100% of attendees said they would recommend the study day. We're always open to suggestions for future topics, so please don't hesitate to get in touch with any ideas you may have.

Teaching within the region

It has been a pleasure supporting the Trusts with regional and maternity training and will always aim to accommodate and support you with your training needs

Collection of cooling data

We began collecting data using the new format on 1st July 2024, and so far, it's been working exceptionally well. The chart is colour-coded for clarity: Green – confirmed HIE and cooled; Pink – RIP; Orange – missing data; White – out-of-region baby; and Grey – confirmed as not cooled. With the inclusion of MRI reports, this data will be invaluable for future follow-up of these patients to review their outcomes at two years, something I hope to explore as a future project.

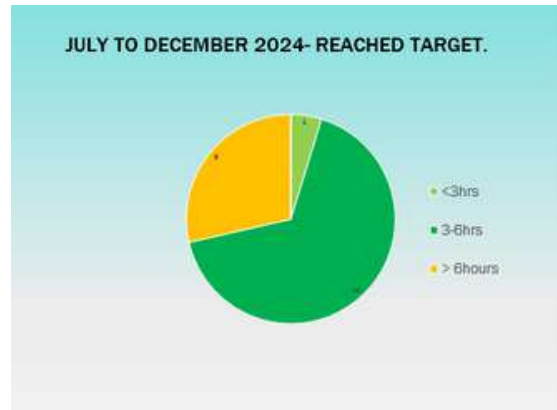
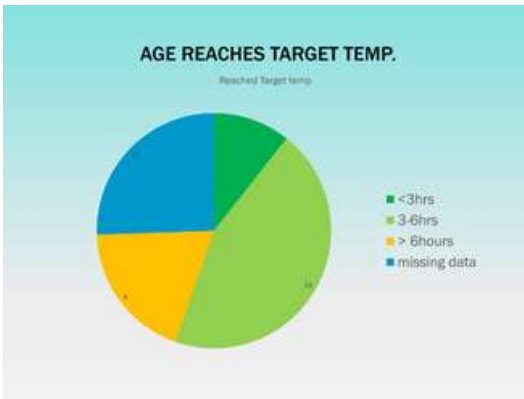
A grid table with multiple rows and columns. The cells are color-coded: green, pink, orange, white, and grey, representing different categories of HIE data as defined in the legend.

Wendy Rogers Lead Nurse for Neuroprotection



As a region, we had 47 babies receive therapeutic cooling in 2024, continuing the downward trend seen since 2021. Notably, the rate of missing data for in-region babies has dropped to 0% since the introduction of the new audit tool. A heartfelt thank you to everyone who has played a key role in collecting this data on my behalf, it is greatly appreciated.

The graph on the left shows all babies who received therapeutic cooling in 2024. Overall, 55% of these babies reached the target temperature within six hours. Notably, in the latter half of the year, when complete data was available, this figure rose to 72%.



Wendy Rogers Lead Nurse for Neuroprotection



The Baby Brain Protection Group Update on BBPG Structure and Leadership

It has been increasingly challenging to find suitable dates for meetings that are quorate for the BBPG core members and our workstreams. After careful consideration, we've decided to streamline the core group to a smaller team that can make timely decisions and maintain momentum.

At the same time, our Chairs, Topun Austin and Nazakat Merchant have expressed that it is the right moment for them to step down, making space for new leadership to take the group forward. We are incredibly grateful for their dedication and the significant contributions they have made in establishing BBPG and driving improvements in neonatal neuroprotection across the East of England and beyond.

Looking ahead, and to ensure representation from all levels of neonatal care, we're pleased to announce the formation of a new core group of consultants:

- Oluseun Tayo – SCBU (James Paget)
- Nipa Mitra – LNU (Lister)
- Hilary Wong – NICU (Cambridge)

We look forward to continued collaboration and progress under their guidance.

I am looking forward to the coming year, continuing to support and promote neuroprotection within our region. If you work within the East of England and have an interest in neuroprotection or have any suggestions to improve neuroprotective care for our babies, please contact me via email.

wendy.rogers3@nhs.net

*Have a great Summer!
All the very Best for 2025
Wendy*

Nigel Gooding

Lead Pharmacist



This has been my first year 'officially' working with and supporting the Neonatal ODN and our neonatal units.

It has been a privilege to work with so many different professionals who provide outstanding care and want to continue to improve the care that is provided for our babies and parents /carers. I have seen some excellent examples of practice around medicines management on the peer reviews I was involved in this year.

When I started in post it was important to identify the current position of the East of England network with regards to medicines and pharmacy provision. I distributed a survey to pharmacists in each of our units asking for data around the themes of pharmacy workforce and activities, technology (EPMA and smart pumps), use of the regional IV monographs and training requirements.

Compared with national standards, our pharmacy workforce is significantly below the expected level, with a deficit of almost 12 WTE pharmacists across the region, against a requirement of 17.7 WTE. I have started work on preparing a template business case that can be adapted by Trusts to help support the requirement to increase pharmacy establishment.

With regards to technology, it is good to see many Trusts have implemented EPMA (Electronic Prescription and Medication Administration), including neonatal units. However there are some units that have highlighted their EPMA system does not fulfil all their prescribing requirements.

I prepared a Supporting Statement from the ODN to assist neonatal units having discussions with their Trusts about EPMA systems and specific neonatal requirements to ensure that the system procured meets the needs of all patients in the Trust and not just adult patients. I am very happy to be involved in supporting any of those discussions that you have with your Trusts.

Much of my time has been spent updating regional neonatal IV monographs and I have a rolling plan for how the monographs are reviewed. The majority of neonatal units are using these monographs and I have had discussions with the couple of Trusts that have not yet implemented them yet to see how they could be introduced.

Earlier in the year I surveyed monograph users and the feedback was generally very good and this work was presented at the Neonatal and Paediatric Pharmacist Group conference in November.

Nigel Gooding

Lead Pharmacist



I am pleased to be working closely with the pharmacy teams across the region and set up a WhatsApp group, which has been very active over the last year and a chance for pharmacists working alone to connect with other colleagues in the region. We have a pharmacist study day planned during 2025.

At a national level I support the BAPM/NPPG drug safety group, where various discussions have taken place on how medicines recommendations from the GIRFT report can be implemented. This has supported the work around the neonatal infusion concentrations that have been included in the national infusion standardisation framework. We are expecting this framework to be published soon and then I will be looking to work with you all in 2025 to introduce this framework into our practice across the region. I recently presented at the BAPM conference on use of smart infusion pumps and use of the infusion framework.

I have enjoyed meeting many of you this year and am looking forward to working with you all in 2025. Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can help in any way regarding any aspects of medicines use in neonates.

AHP & Psychology Team



Laura Baird,
Lead Speech



Rebecca Chilvers,
Lead



Karen King, Lead
Dietitian



Jane Fenton-
Smith, Lead



Rachel Stamp,
Lead

We said goodbye to our wonderful lead dietitian Lynne Radbone in December 2024. Lynne was an integral member of the ODN team for many years, even before AHPPs were brought into the team and well known to many of you. She will be missed, but we have been very fortunate to welcome Karen King into the team as Lead Dietitian and look forward to her continuing to progress Neonatal Dietetic work in the region.

At national levels we all remain involved with our national professional groups, feeding into and supporting projects that are in progress. A number of the team are involved in BAPM working groups and the responses to the Government's Inquiry into Preterm Births and the Birth Trauma Inquiry. Rebecca has also been involved in working with NeoLeaP and Bliss in a reworking of the psychosocial standards to ensure they are in line with the Neonatal Critical Care Service Specification and delivered the opening keynote for the very first Neonatal Psychological Professionals conference in June 2024. Rebecca has also published two papers with NeoLeaP this year, with the publication on Intrusive Thoughts in Neonatal care attracting international interest.

You can access the full text of this here:



AHP & Psychology Team

Recruitment/ Workforce

Recruitment into new posts continued throughout 2024 thanks to Ockendon Funding and in some cases additional funding from Trusts. We have seen some movement within these posts with staff leaving and not always being replaced as quickly as we would like. Some posts remain vacant.

We continue to have a deficit in terms of recommended staffing in all professions, but we have been excited to see staff settling into their roles on the neonatal units. We will continue to advocate for increased funding of these posts to bring them closer to the recommended levels, and ensure units and families are able to experience the benefits that having AHPPs in post brings.

Clinical supervision remains a challenge for all neonatal AHPP professionals nationally. The Neonatal ODN AHPPP team has continued to offer regular peer supervision, communities of practise, ad-hod clinical supervision and check-in meetings/ update meetings with professionals in the region. Nationally there has also been some additional support in terms of national communities of practise, education and peer support. This will be an area of focus for the AHPPP team in 2025.

Education

We continued our education delivery in 2024, starting with our AHPP workshop in March. This brought together AHPPs from around the region for a day of collaborative and profession specific learning, aimed to support staff in working together to improve outcomes for infants on the neonatal unit.

In June we had our Complex Feeding Study Day, which now holds the record for the highest number of registrations of any event! We had a number of incredible speakers who presented on the day, including the entire Lead AHPP team, SLTs, Dietitians, Infant Feeding, nursing and our Expert by Experience, Clare. We will take a break from this study day in 2025 but hopefully will return in 2026 with some new enlightening talks.

Psychology contributed to the regional Antenatal Counselling training working reciprocally with the team at Oxford to deliver intensive face to face training. Key to the model was the opportunity to practice skills and consultation with actors consolidating learning and giving opportunity for live feedback and learning. The training is likely to be adopted nationally and we hope to run the course again this year after excellent feedback.

AHP & Psychology Team

In November, the very first entirely co-produced #thinkneonatal event was held, welcoming professionals from neonatal units, acute trusts and community teams to think about the needs of neonatal families post discharge. This highly interactive event (including a life sized 'Snakes and Ladders' board) was co-facilitated by parents. We also welcomed Dr Katherine Sabin from King's College London to present her data from the Expand study. Throughout the day attendees were encouraged to take their learning into practice, and an event Padlet allowed them to access a range of resources to continue their learning including examples of service development and the full text access to relevant research papers and resources.



The event was written up and presented as a poster at the BAPM Spring conference with parents included as co-authors.

AHPPs were strongly featured in the 2024 ODN Conference with presentations and posters by professionals from all AHPP groups in the region. We received positive feedback on these presentations which we have passed on to the presenters. It was great to see them showcase the amazing work they do on the units.

Members of the Lead AHPP team continue to support with ODN study days, with talks delivered on the Special Care Study Day, the Infant Feeding Study Days and regional SpR training, to name a few.

QIS was a focus for 2024 and will continue to be in 2025. The Lead AHPP team continue to teach on the QIS courses delivered in the East of England. Additionally, with the release of the National Standards for QIS Framework, to which members of our AHPP team contributed, there is work being done nationally to develop and standardise our teaching at a national level. Members of our Lead AHPP team are heavily involved in this work.

AHP & Psychology Team

Guidelines/ Resources

The AHPPP Team continues to develop, publish and update a number of guidelines and resources in 2024. All completed guidelines have been published and are available on the EoE ODN Website.

The following guidelines were produced or updated

- Oral Feeding Guidelines
- Enteral feeding guideline updated and ratified Dec 24
- Human milk fortification SOP - completed and ratified with updated enteral feeding guidance
- 6 month review done of the iron and vitamin guideline including updating the flowchart - revalidated Dec 24
- Preparation and handling of EBM, DBM and PIF - ratified June 24 and audited at the end of 24

Work on an update to the Developmental Care guidelines has begun, with documents due for review in early 2025. Additionally, a document about Follow Up after neonatal care is in development.

Projects

Slings/ Baby Wearing

An information poster and leaflet on babywearing specifically aimed at those families who have had a neonatal experience was ratified and is available on the EoE website. Jane and Rachel have presented this project nationally to AHP colleagues and work is ongoing on the next phase of promoting safe babywearing with our neonatal population.

Feeding Readiness Assessment Tool

Following the development of the Oral Feeding Guidelines we identified a need for a more standardised approach in the region with regards to readiness to commence oral feeding. The team, with support from highly skills professionals in the region, have been developing a tool for this which we hope to trial and then roll out in 2025.

AHP & Psychology Team

The EOE Neonatal Parent Portal

This year has seen the development of a parent portal hosted on our website which aims to increase coproduction across the network and be a resource for parents. Look out for posters for parents on your unit and others that will give you a QR code to submit your projects where you're looking for parents to coproduce them with you.



Find out more here:

Access the EOE Neonatal Parent Portal

We have LOADS on our workplans for the year ahead and look forward to continuing to support and engage with the East of England as we work through these.





**Paediatric & Neonatal Decision
Support & Retrieval Service**

Director: Dr Rajiv Chaudhary
Neonatal Lead: Dr Sam O'Hare
Matron: Lorraine Highe
Operational Lead: Eileen Clarke



Activity

April 2024 to March 2025 has been a busy year for the PaNDR neonatal team with the team providing:

- 407 Transfers for Emergency uplift of care
- 130 Planned emergency transfers for specialist review/surgery
- Decision support for 231 patients
- Cot / bed coordination for 690 in-utero transfer requests
- 553 Repatriation transfers



Workforce and staff support

Dr Rajiv Chaudhary was appointed as PaNDR Director in February 2024.

We also welcomed a new PaNDR consultant and Band 7 nurse to the team along with a Trainee ANNP and several new trainees and clinical fellows.

Our EBS team have taken on coordinating emergency calls for the EoE Adult Critical Care Transfer Service – we appointed our first EBS shift leader to support training and the additional workload associated with this and welcomed a new team member to our data coordinator role.

A number of new St John ambulance technicians have joined the team in recent months.

We are fortunate to have 4 hours of Clinical Psychology support per week to facilitate Debriefs and provide one-to-one support as needed. We have also started to hold monthly wellbeing sessions for the team.





Education and Training

Internal: We have continued to develop our internal education programme including joint NIC and PIC simulation sessions, 'Bitesize' teaching posters, daily '5 minute teaching' and MDT development days. We have further enhanced our comprehensive induction programme with a structured 'Competency Passport' for both medical and nursing clinicians and hold monthly Mortality & Morbidity meetings to learn from difficult cases.

External: Over the last year we have enjoyed visiting all 17 of the regional neonatal teams for multi-disciplinary Outreach meetings where we have discussed challenging cases and shared regional and local transport data. In addition to Outreach meetings, team members have continued to provide regional education sessions - we recently delivered our first nurse-led NIC/PIC webinar, have supported regional registrar training days and will be running an MDT Neonatal Stabilisation day in May.

Quality Improvement and Research

In 2024 we were delighted to collaborate with colleagues at CUH to fund and appoint to our first PaNDR research fellow post. We hope this joint post will continue and prove popular with regional trainees/fellows.



We worked closely with the ODN team to help in the launch of the BAPM Repatriation Framework. We have recently commenced a QI project around stabilisation times.

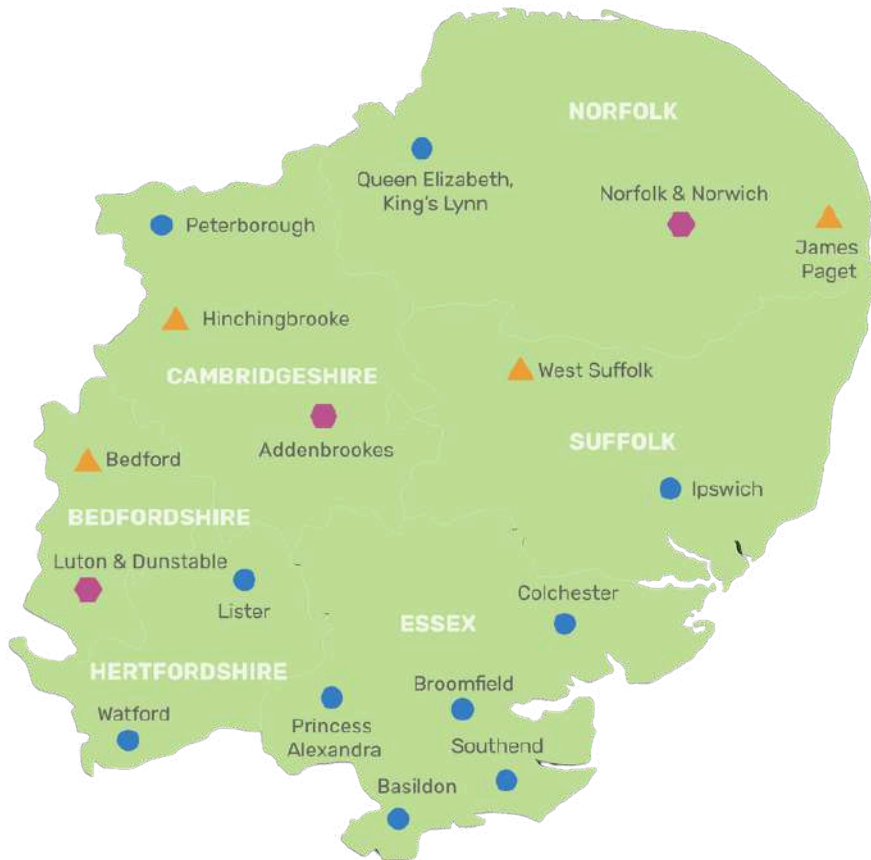
Aims/ambitions for 2025

We are progressing a business case to fund a twin trolley, which would enable us to move twins in a single journey.

We are working towards moving our in-utero referral requests onto EPIC (our electronic patient record system).



OUR *Units*



Basildon

Lead clinician: Poorva Rathod

Matron: Raji John

Raji John joined us as our new Neonatal Matron on Basildon NNU, bringing with her a wealth of experience from the Royal London Hospital. Raji has settled into the team and has embraced her new role!

HIGHLIGHTS

- Lucy Lisle, our Transitional Care Lead won a prestigious Trust Shine Award in the category Outstanding Achievement aware (individual) for her work around neonatal preterm optimisation, ATAIN, Neonatal Safety Champion and her role as a PNA.



Kat Smith was awarded a Trust Values award for consistently receiving service user feedback of an exceptionally high standard, we are extremely proud of this recognition.

- We celebrated World Prematurity Day with all things purple and a celebration tree, where parents could commemorate their stay on the NNU



Basildon

Lead clinician: Poorva Rathod

Matron: Raji John



· We also enjoyed World Book day and used it as an opportunity to encourage families to choose a book and read to their baby. Nurses and Doctors had fun dressing up as book characters, and we have decided to keep the bookshelf as a permanent feature as families are enjoying using it.

Training and development

- Criticool training is complete for all staff and babies are now benefiting from this important piece of equipment
- New Phillips monitors have been installed, training completed and successfully being used on all patients
- Hamilton ventilator training has been completed for all staff
- We had a jaundice awareness week which was combined with maternity and involved teaching, scenarios
- 1 Nurse has started her PNA course
- 1 nurse has completed her QIS and 4 are currently undertaking their QIS training
- Simulation sessions for both medical and nursing staff have been underway and are included in mandatory updates
- We have been funded for a new resus trolley which has been purchased and is being used

Ambitions for 2025-2026

- Bliss Silver Award
- BFI stage 2 accreditation
- Sepsis awareness week

Broomfield

Lead Clinician Ahmed Hassan

Lead Nurse Tracy Fox

Ward Manager Jackie Kane



Broomfield Neonatal Unit has had a very positive 2024! We proudly achieved our BFI Stage 2 Accreditation, our Bliss Charter Silver Accreditation and then Bliss Charter Gold Accreditation!!!

As a unit we completed a group fundraising challenge, raising over £7500! 57 members of our team, both nurses and doctors completed 100km each in November to coincide with World Prematurity Day. This was a very positive, morale boosting experience for our team. The group chat was a particular highlight of the event!!

We have been lucky to receive very generous donations throughout the year from various families, local Christmas Tractor run, and our peer support group Broomfield Buddies. We have gratefully received a large donation of developmental care aides from AHP funds, and a new transport incubator complete with new ventilator and accessories from "Friends of Broomfield Hospital Charities."

We will be using these funds to improve our facilities and provisions further for our neonatal families. We are proud to report, our team has been nominated for a Shine Award again this year.

We have said goodbye and celebrated with some staff who have retired, gone to pastures new and off for maternity leave. We found our 6 months secondment data quality post extremely beneficial for the unit and was sad to say goodbye to her at the end of the posting. We have welcomed a new ward clerk and members of the nursing team. We have successfully recruited to a fixed term maternity leave cover, job-share post for PDN, and they are embracing the role and continuing to provide excellent support for our team.

We will shortly be welcoming 2 new band 5 nurses, and other than maternity cover posts currently out to advert, we are at full establishment.



Broomfield

Training and opportunities for staff continue, to include:

- Qualified in Speciality Course,
- Newborn Life Support,
- BFI,
- East of England study days,
- FINE (Family and Infant Neurodevelopmental Education),
- Equipment training,
- As well as in-house neonatal specific and collaborative with maternity study days.

Our QIS compliance will be 70% when our current 3 nurses complete their QIS modules later this year but the senior non bedside nurses continue to support as ever. Further 2 to commence later in the year.

We have a programme in place for equipment replacement. So far, we have upgraded to new Phillips monitors for all our ITU and HDU cot spaces. Ventilators and incubators are next for the changeover with planned training to make a smooth transition for the team which commences May 2025.

We continue to review our care and provisions for all our neonatal families by means of service user feedback, audit, and reviews (internally and externally). We value all results and feedback and continually strive to provide excellent care and provisions. We update and maintain sources of information for families and staff within the unit on our Information QR Code Wall, Parent Leaflet/Information Folders, Displays and Education Board. We celebrate to raise awareness such as Kangaroo Care Day, World Book Day, and World Prematurity Day.

We attend and present at events, study days and conferences to support wider teams and share practice and positive change, such as Scottish Bliss and East of England days. We welcome change and look forward to the progress we can make over the coming years.

Goals for the coming year:

- Maintain Gold Accreditation for Bliss Charter and work towards Platinum
- Work towards Stage 3 BFI Accreditation
- Develop and implement outreach service
- Develop Nurse led ROP screening



Southend

Lead Clinician Raj Gupta
Ward Manager Jen Foster
Transitional Care Lead Mandy Brown
Practice Educator Tanya James

Over the past year



We have been lucky enough to have capital replacement and investment in the unit's equipment. We have a brand-new transport incubator and transport ventilator, all new networked patient monitors and syringe drivers with a Neonatal drug library and configuration.

We have also started a loan pump service for our families with 6 new loan pumps and 4 new unit pumps available

Training

We have recommenced our MDT simulation/skills days with the nursing team and medical teams- covering topics such as CFM monitoring, needle placements, ventilation, blood gases, we rolled out our new equipment training on these days to ensure a safe roll out. We took the opportunity on these days to really imbed the AHP team as they delivered sessions on the new vitamin guidance and positioning/handling of preterm babies.

We also took the opportunity to teach staff on the EZIO access and how to insert/when would be needed etc.


All consultants and trainees have had 'hands on' sessions on CFM tracing and LISA administration procedures.

All trainees now have NLS resus council training as part of their induction, and we now have 3 nurse NLS and 2 consultant instructors with a further nurse completing the GIC course in the next year.


We have started ad hock SIM sessions as an MDT to cover preterm deliveries, PPHN and pneumothorax care.

All babies now have Tiny Tickers screening following a roll out for staff training.

Southend




We have utilised the card medic application which aids communication with multi language families, deaf families and families with poor sight. The application has Neonatal specific information cards for staff to use as a reference or free text




Our AHP team are well established on the ward, and they have a board to let parents know when they will next be on the unit.

They also have an information board in each parent area



We have a parent information board with FAQs for families to use for reference. We also have a revised parent guide with lots of information for families and support available to families

Lots of celebrations of events as a team with families - World prematurity day, Mother's Day, World book day and Christmas!

- 
- Plans for the Coming Year
 - Drager ventilator installation to replace existing SLE ventilators
 - BLISS silver award- in progress
 - BFI Stage 3 assessment booked for May 25
 - More SIM sessions and MDT working
 - We have our new Practice educator starting May 25

Colchester

Lead Clinician Ramona Onita

Matron Emma Hart

Lead Nurse Sheena Moloney

ACHIEVEMENTS

2024 has been another year of change for Colchester Neonatal Unit. We have welcomed new team members into new roles and wished others well in their next ventures. We successfully recruited Emily Perrott into the fixed term ESNEFT cross site Transitional Care lead position and four new nursery nurses. This will provide an exciting start to our service development keeping mothers and babies together next year in our new transitional care service. Back on the unit, having worked at Colchester for many years Sheena Moloney was recruited into the Ward Manager role on a permanent basis following an initial secondment. Sheena has a passion for involving the whole team in quality improvement and service development. Ramona Onita remains our clinical lead and has been committed to improving the neonatal pathway for babies with complex antenatal diagnoses. Monthly joint maternity and paediatric MDT meetings have been set up to allow MDT discussion and agree delivery and neonatal plan.

The Colchester PDN, medical and nursing team are renowned for their passion to provide high quality teaching, ensuring our teams are confident and competent to undertake their roles, and this continued throughout 2024. This included Neonatal skills days attended by both nursing and MDT members of the Colchester and Ipswich teams, the organising and delivering of regular NLS training days, along with attending ODN/PANDR study days and regional perinatal mortality and morbidity meetings. An IV study day was delivered for the new starters on the Neonatal Unit and Children's Ward. This year has also seen the launch of SIM sessions held within the clinical area in collaboration with the paediatric and obstetric teams. The team have been commended on the quality of the sessions and the positive learning environment created, a huge thank you to all involved.



Our nursing workforce continues to fulfil the 70% QIS requirement; one member of staff successfully passed in 2024, with two nurses currently undertaking the QIS course, which they are due to complete in July 2025, with further staff planning to undertake the course in September. They will be well supported in their journey to become qualified in speciality as we have another Band 6 member of the team who has started the journey this year to become a PNA, to accompany our current PNA.

A year on, the Neonatal Outreach teams Clacton Outreach Clinic has been well received, and continues to be well attended with positive feedback from families. The clinic provides an opportunity for parents not only to meet the outreach team but also other families for peer support with friendships being forged. Due to the success of this service the Outreach Team aim to extend this to the Colchester area.

Cross site and cross services collaboration has gone from strength to strength and now includes guidelines (e.g. LISA technique) competencies, equipment, checklists, BFI training, documentation, study days and staffing. New Resuscitation Trolleys across ESNEFT have been introduced, along with a standardised equipment checklist. Neonatal Resuscitaires have also become standardised across the Children's, Maternity and Neonatal services. The Band 6 in charge development programme was launched, to include specific study days, a reviewed competency document, a supernumerary period and reflections for staff new to the role. Audit has also played a big role over the past year, it saw us take part in a number of neonatal specific audits, pulse oximetry, hypoglycaemia and VT vs antenatal steroid. This, along with journal club, provides opportunities for learning and development.



Commitment to research has also continued with the unit participating in a number of trials and projects, for example the Wheat, Elfin and the PREM projects.

The unit has also seen a number of equipment changes over the last year. The Fresenius Agilia Volumetric and syringe pumps have been introduced into practice, as well as the Fabian machine and Panda Infant Resuscitaire. Our PDN Gemma has been instrumental in bringing these to NNU and the staff have been amazing at learning and using the new equipment. We are really looking forward to the opportunities to minimise separation that this equipment brings. Our current ward layout does not support a parent bed which at times prevents mothers coming to the unit. This equipment will enable the neonatal team to move baby to mother whilst maintaining thermal control and ventilator support.



Family Integrated Care remains a focus within the Neonatal Unit. We have successfully recruited into our Band 6 and Band 4 quality roles. The team are focusing on achieving Bliss Silver accreditation, working alongside the AHPs to promote family integrated care and listening to service user feedback. Feedback from parents has led to improvements to the parent's bedrooms and the unit obtaining new feeding chairs. This collaboration has led to a number of health promotion events including Safe Sleep Week, World Prematurity Day and World Book Day. World Book Day saw the team give out 90 books! There was a special focus on Dads, and the team enjoyed some lovely interactions with Dads-to-be, Dads of premature babies and even grandads!

In addition to World Book Day the benefits of reading to your baby are celebrated daily on the neonatal unit through the wonderful reading project. Posters promote the team's favourite books and babies are presented with a book when they leave the unit signed with memories and messages of support from the team.

The wonderful work and commitment of the neonatal team was recognised this year when we were finalists in the ESNEFT Team of the Year category. Whilst not winning it was great to raise the profile of our speciality and learn from other award winning teams.



Challenges

The clinical space in each nursery continues to remain a challenge along with the limitations of the current parent and staff facilities. Whilst we are unable to make immediate changes to the layout or facilities we have rearranged our intensive care nursery and introduced procedure trolleys to maximise the space available.

We have an ongoing business case in progress for future redevelopment.

Transitional care continues virtually on the postnatal ward. We are working hard to prepare for our new BAPM compliant transitional care, meeting with our MNVP and midwifery colleagues to help bring this service to Colchester in 2025.

Our retinopathy of prematurity screening provision is due to expand in August 2025, with another ophthalmologist joining the team. This will ensure seamless provision during periods of annual leave as this can currently be challenging due to the service being provided by single ophthalmologist.

Ambitions for 2025

- To provide transitional care as per the BAPM guidelines
- BFI stage 2 accreditation
- Bliss Silver Accreditation to demonstrate our high quality approach to family-centred care
- To work closely with our senior leadership team to make progress on the neonatal expansion business case
- Embed and use our new Electronic Patient Record (Epic) to support patient safety

Lead Clinician Prathiba Pai
Matron Emma Hart
Lead Nurse Danielle Mitchell

ACHIEVEMENTS

2024 brought us a new clinical lead. Having worked at Ipswich for many years Dr Pai was a great choice to help us continue to grow and develop our service. Her enthusiasm and dedication to her role brings excitement and optimism for the years ahead. Following a successful business case we were able to recruit for a new Interim Transitional care lead. Emily Perrott has taken on the challenge of initiating the transitional care service and is working hard to help ensure we are providing high quality transitional care as per the BAPM guidelines. Along with these changes 2024 also saw the start of Haydee Faeldo's journey to becoming an Advanced Neonatal Nurse Practitioner.



Throughout 2023 we saw a huge amount of cross site working with our ESNEFT counterparts in Colchester and this relationship has continued to grow and develop in 2024. Our teams have worked hard to standardise our resuscitation trollies ensuring greater consistency of care and provision of equipment in all areas where neonatal practice occurs. PDN's cross site have worked together to develop a Band 6 in charge development programme. This comprises additional study days specific to the role, supernumerary time, along with additional competencies. Our PDN is then supporting through practice and ensuring time for staff reflection to guide appropriate development. The continuation of joint study days for QIS skills and IV study has helped strengthen working relationships allowing greater access to cross site staff support.

We have secured funding for provision of quality roles to help ensure consistency of provision within our BFI and Family integrated care teams. Once recruitment has taken place these roles will provide protected time to help us continue to ensure we are providing high quality family integrated care. It will also help support us in our work towards achieving BFI stage 2 accreditation in 2025.

Within the ward we have been extremely busy; July 2024 saw our assessment for BLISS silver accreditation and due to the efforts of the team we were successful in achieving this! But why stop there? After lots of hard work and dedication from the whole team and with the leadership of Sharon Ward, our Bliss Charter lead nurse; we were also successful in October in obtaining our BLISS Gold accreditation. This huge achievement wouldn't have been possible without the hard work and commitment of the whole team. As part of our work towards BLISS accreditation, we have a greater presence of AHP's on the ward. The value they bring to the team has not gone unnoticed and we are seeing a more multidisciplinary approach to our care, which is fantastic for our families!



As a unit, we were finalists within the ESNEFT team of the year awards. Unfortunately we didn't claim the prize, with it going to another very deserving team. However, due to her outstanding efforts with all things BLISS, Sharon Ward was recognised with an ESNEFT Trust Commendation for exceptional contribution! On the unit we celebrated World Prematurity day and Kangaroo Care Week along with lots of exciting events around other festivities and Mothers/Father's day. These events help us highlight the value of families as partners in care and bring everyone together to provide some light relief from the stress of the neonatal environment.



Having been based in the current 'temporary' neonatal unit for the last 15 years it was about time for a makeover. The staff undertook the huge task of relocating to our old premises within the maternity block, so our current unit could undergo a transformation. The move was essential to allow us the opportunity to replace significantly damaged flooring, rectify other environmental issues and deep clean the unit. This was no easy task but was supported by the region, midwifery and adult services. We had significant support from our estates colleagues to be able to make the move and get the works completed. The unit was revamped with new flooring, fresh paint and lots of additional decorative features to help make it more welcoming for our families.

Ipswich

Research has also played a big role over the past year, and we participated in the SurfON Trial. A huge thank you to our research team, Consultant Sofia, ANNP Sally and NNU Nurse Sophie, as throughout the study, we have been commended for our monthly recruitment rate.



Challenges

Although we have seen some improvement with ATAIN and reducing our term admissions, this continues to be a challenge. We are working hard to make improvements for this and have introduced cross-site ATAIN meetings; continue to share learning and help service improvement. We are proceeding to work towards providing transitional care, as per the BAPM guidelines. November saw the start of preparations for our new Transitional care service. Once implemented, it will hopefully help support in a reduction in our term admissions, whilst also providing a more holistic approach to the families care. The new service should aid in ensuring that both babies and parents have a more multidisciplinary approach to their care. We look forward to seeing the service grow and develop in 2025.

The QIS trained staff percentage is increasing, with two additional staff completing the QIS course, as well as another nurse externally recruited and joining our team. Next year we are on track for a further three staff training and becoming QIS.

We have seen an increase in HAI's over the past year, however these have reduced since the neonatal unit refurbishments and closer work with our IPC colleagues. This work will continue along with vigorous screening and the upcoming infection control guidance from the region.

Ambitions for 2025

- As a trust are undergoing plans for Electronic Patient Records and as a neonatal team we hope to contribute to making this system effective and safe for our patients
 - Epic
- To provide transitional care as per the BAPM guidelines
 - BFI stage 2 accreditation
 - Recruitment into quality roles

Peterborough

Lead Clinician Katharine McDevitt

Lead Nurse Tracy James

Ward Manager Katie Barke



Another busy year at Peterborough City Hospital.

The team have remained committed to providing outstanding care and commitment to the families and babies.

Achievements:

We continue to have a great working relationship with Hinchingsbrooke SCBU, with many of our successes being shared cross site.

We continue to strive to provide outstanding family integrated care to the families and babies, with the added expertise of the AHPs and psychology. This is reflected in the unit achieving BLISS Silver accreditation.

In April the innovative new role of Specialist Neonatal Nurse Counsellor was implemented. The role has been an integral part of developing the family support services within NICU. We were fortunate to be able to share the development and successes of the role at the East of England ODN conference.

Active research portfolio includes, WHEAT, NeoGASTRIC and SurfsUp.

As a team we enjoyed welcoming members of the ODN for our PEER review. We received positive feedback, and as an MDT are working towards achieving subsequent recommendations.

The project launch of Snuggle and Read on World Book Day was a huge success, with wonderful engagement and support from all the team to encourage bonding through reading – we even made the News!

At the Trust annual Outstanding Staff Awards, Chevy, a senior staff nurse on NICU, received the award for outstanding contribution. Chevy was acknowledged for her contribution to improving parent information. Chevy has designed, printed and ensured the parent handbook is available at every cot space and online.



Peterborough

We are pleased to confirm that Peterborough City Hospital has been identified as Outstanding for the audit measure Normal temperature on admission.

Unit	Eligible babies	Babies with a recorded outcome	On time and 36.5°C to 37.5°C (%)	Non-compliant (%)
Peterborough City	80	80	75 (93.8%)	5 (6.2%)

Collaborative working with Maternity:

Peterborough NICU have continued to collaborate with Maternity Services to reduce term admissions with weekly ATAIN meetings to review individual cases.

Joint training with Maternity staff continues with embedding joint clinical updates, bespoke Nursery Nurse study days and MDT SENSE Training

Family Integrated Care:

To continue to improve and support parent education and discharge we have recruited to the Neonatal Admission and Discharge Liaison Nursery Nurse role. This role has oversight of discharge planning, teaching and co-ordinating follow up with the neonatal outreach team.

The NICU team continue to enjoy celebrating milestones and special occasions with families on the unit (and beyond). We hosted our annual Christmas party, with a special visit from Father Christmas to the unit on Christmas Eve, as well as Eid, Mother's Day, Father's Day, World Prematurity Day and so many more.

Staffing:

We are passionate in developing our team with a 'grow our own' culture. Recruiting into the nurse counsellor post, we have created opportunities for secondments into both band 7 and band 6 posts to support development of both our band 5 and 6 nurses with amazing feedback and career progression.



Hinchingbrooke

Lead Clinician Hilary Dixon

Lead Nurse Debs Milham

ACHIEVEMENTS



We achieved our BLISS Silver Accreditation!



Currently taking part in the NeoGASTRIC Research Trial and enrolled >10 babies



- Joint Perinatal training days completed with our Maternity Colleagues
- 3 Staff Nurses completed their QIS course and another 2 have started the course - after much hard work we are finally at 74% QIS compliance
- We appointed a Risk & Governance Nurse who works closely with our Maternity Risk Team to provide timely feedback for families and support staff learning
- Expanded our AHP team and welcomed an Occupational Therapist
- Recruited 2 Deputy Sisters, which filled our last vacancies
- We are currently supporting one of our own Nursery Nurses to do her top up degree to a Band 5 Staff Nurse
- 2 of our Nursery Nurses completed Brazelton's Neonatal Behavioural Observation course
- We are still a course centre for the Resus Council NLS and ran 2 courses in November
- Fundraising events - Cake & craft Stall at Xmas & Easter, raising over £1,500 for SCBU, which helped us fund V-Create for another year!

Hinchingbrooke



We supported our monthly Parents Group and reintroduced our reading library on the unit

We launched our weekly 'Coffee with Carys' session, which is a chance for families to come together and have valuable support from each other and the FICare team. We also launched our 'Golden Steps' QI project with the maternity unit. 'The Golden Steps' QI Project promotes early breastmilk expressing and optimises early breastmilk provision for baby. Families are provided with a golden box, which contains everything to ensure expressing gets off to a good start. This QI project has been co-produced with neonatal families who were involved in the development of the project and supported with the production of a parent information leaflet.



We celebrated Easter and organised an Easter Egg Hunt in the Hospital Garden.

Challenges

- Layout of the unit continues to cause challenges
- Transitional Care Delivery continues with Maternity Oversight
- Multiple pieces of equipment will require replacement in 2025

Ambitions for 2025/26

- Going for Gold in the BFI Standards
- Achieving BLISS Gold Accreditation
- Replacing all our tabletop monitors for wall mounted ones with central monitoring at the nurses station in 2025

Clinical Director for Neonatal Services, Bedfordshire Hospitals Jennifer Birch
Neonatal Lead Clinician Bedford Anita Mittal
Lead Nurse-Luton & Dunstable Anthony Baker
Matron-Bedford Linda Queijo-Ridor



Introduction

2024 has continued to see plenty of work going on in both Neonatal Units across the Trust. On the Luton site there has been significant further progress on the new acute services block and it is on track for us to move in before the end of the year. Our research portfolio continues to build, thanks to the hard work of our research team and we achieved the impressive figure of 1056 babies recruited into trials in the 2024/25 financial year. It has been really exciting to see our new purpose built NICU taking shape and we really look forward to the greatly improved space and facilities. This year sees the focus move towards finalising our plans for the physical move and altered clinical pathways related to the new layout. We were all delighted that Bedford achieved Silver Bliss Accreditation at the start of the year, which is a credit to lots of hard work that has been undertaken.

Bedford:

- Transitional care is BAPM compliant –NGT feeding introduced
- Working towards BFI stage 2 accreditation
- Successful completion of 1 more nurse becoming qualified in speciality
- 2 Band 5 nurses to be enrolled onto QIS course
- 4 Band 5 nurses are in the process of completing their ITU course
- Band 8 cross-site Risk and Governance Lead job advertised to work one day a week with Risk Lead
- 1 Nursery Nurse has commenced the Nursing Associate training and will complete her course in April 2026
- SALT education programme completed by all nursing staff
- Doctors handbook was completed
- Education pathway for QIS training is ongoing and we are making excellent progress. Bedford will reach 70% BAPM requirement and MIS in September 2025
- Purchase of video laryngoscope and training of medical staff
- Staff initial training and update training days for BFI infant feeding are 88%;
- Significant improvement in early MEBM for babies born <34/40, 54.8% to 68%
- Slot on all medical rotation induction with very good engagement
- Excellent medical improvement on BFI's eLearning for Paediatricians module – 45% completed

Achievements:

Luton:

- Now 0 vacancies due to international recruitment
- Close Relative Marriage Neonatal Specialist Nurse appointed
- Two staff members finished the Advanced Neonatal Nurse Practitioner course
- Education pathway for QIS training is ongoing and we are making excellent progress in working towards 80% QIS. L&D will reach 80% BAPM recommendation for NICU in January 2026
- Active research portfolio with participation in 8 NIHR multicentre trials (WHEAT, SurfON, FEED 1, NeoGASTRIC, IGBS3, EDEN, DIVO and BASE trials) recruiting a total of 774 participants by the end of 2024
- Redevelopment plans progressing well for our brand-new high-spec NICU. We are now working on finalising clinical pathways for the new unit and finishing touches
- Quality Improvement
- SBLCB Perinatal Optimisation – Targets achieved with significant improvement in: DCC (local target increased to 80%) and Normothermia (80%-100% for 6 months), and uptrend in Early Maternal Breastmilk (50-70%). Continually compliant with VTV and Caffeine. Perinatal Optimisation Focus Group, with regular meetings underway – aiming to improve compliance on Antenatal Steroids, MgSO4 and Intrapartum Antibiotics and improve the process for antenatal discussions with maternity and obstetric
- Metabolic bone disease – Actions already implemented and in progress: Guideline updated, algorithm in place and care bundle to support correct monitoring and management, calcium phosphate calculator and teaching on the bundle launch
- FiCare education programme complete for all nursing staff and working through with medical staff
- Staff initial training and update training days for BFI/infant feeding are >97%. One link nurse now enrolled on a university course to complete lactation specific education training to enable her to sit for her IBCLC exam
- TC – on both sites now compliant with BAPM apart from full pathway for NAS babies



Cross-site/Integration work:

- Continuing to merge all guidelines as they are due for renewal to streamline care & aid rotational medical team experience
- Joint Fundraising efforts continued
- Collaborative cross-site governance meetings
- Cross-site educational opportunities – regular collaborations between education teams, all internal study days offered to staff on both sites
- Full EPR to be implemented across both sites (Badgernet)
- Improved AHP support across both sites

Challenges - Luton:

- Significant work ongoing with maternity to improve perinatal care across both sites
- Maternity capacity and activity having a direct impact on NICU
- Layout of unit does not allow easy flex between ITU and HDU, affecting acceptance of IUT although this will be improved by the new unit opening at the end of 2025
- Maternity capacity affecting acceptance of IUT
- Pharmacy support
- Running at 110-120% HDU as standard



Challenges - Bedford:

- Implementation of quality improvement projects
- Ageing ventilator requiring to be renewed as end of life
- High staffing in maternity leave/long term sickness

Cross-site/Integration work:

- Huge programme of digital work across the trust and working to integrate trust-wide digital systems with systems suitable for NICU use;
- Standardisation of documentation and processes cross-site.

AMBITIONS

Luton:

- Implement full EPR and continue to work towards implementing electronic prescribing
- Move into new unit and ensure smooth transition
- Improve pharmacy staffing levels
- Achieve QIS numbers in line with BAPM recommendations
- Improving early MEBM further – new intervention to alert maternity infant feeding team to mothers of babies needing prompt expressing support and buccal colostrum, SOP being drafted
- Improving expressing at home with better quality pumps, thanks to donation from Luton Family Hubs
- Practical Skills Reviews for BFI (part of initial 2-day training) increasing from minimal to >20% but need to ensure this and about 12 audits per month are over >80% complete and scoring >80%, - link nurses are invaluable in this role, due to time, as well as managerial support for staff engagement
- Once above on track, Stage 2 BFI assessment will be booked – aiming for autumn 2025.

Bedford:

- Reintroduction of simulation training
- Improving early MEBM further for all babies is needed, requiring collaboration with maternity and targeted support on SCBU and TC
- BFI practical Skills Reviews (part of initial 2-day training) increasing from minimal to >21% but need to ensure this and about 12 audits per month are over >80% complete and scoring >80% - link nurses are invaluable here due to time, as well as managerial support for staff engagement
- Working towards BLISS Gold accreditation
- Continual enrolment onto QIS course

Cross-site/Integration work:

- Full alignment of processes and documentation
- Implement EPR
- Ensure all new staff start QIS course within first year
- Receive BFI Stage 2 accreditation
- BAPM compliant TCs on both sites with full adoption of criteria;

Lead Clinician Shazia Hoodbhoy
Matron Claudia Shipp
Lead Nurses Helen Beavis & Stacey Miller



Over the past year, the Rosie neonatal team has continued to deliver expert care to neonates and their families from our local area and across the network. Through close collaboration with families, we have been able to develop the service further and continue to advance neonatal care. This brief report highlights our key achievements and challenges and emphasises our continued dedication to improving neonatal care for every baby and family in the Rosie.

ACHIEVEMENTS

QI

- Our Rosie Preterm bundle continues to improve perinatal optimisation for preterm infants
- We have successfully improved admission temperatures through our Just Right Thermoregulation Project
- There is ongoing development of further projects within our SEED programme



Research

- We continue to have an active research portfolio within the service. There are a number of studies we have been involved in nationally and locally including DIVO, the Generation Study, DOLFIN, Meerkat, NeWTS, EAGLET, FOOTPRINTS, ANIMATE, FUSION (Fast ultrasound), SLEEP and the Cambridge Newborn Perception Study

Staffing

- Despite the challenges of neonatal nursing staffing across the country, we reduced our vacancy rate and turnover through the year
- Following a successful overseas recruitment campaign, we have developed a programme to support our new overseas recruits 2024 and look forward to more recruits joining us in 2025
- We have used Ockenden funding to increase access to AHP support for our babies and families, including dietician, physiotherapist and occupational therapist time
- We established a Nursing Associate programme in the Rosie NICU and are supporting 3 trainee Nursing Associates
- We have developed a joint post with PANDR to support Band 7 nurse development and provision in both services

FiCare and Team care - our Supporting Empowering Enhancing Development (SEED) programme

- Provision of parent food vouchers
- Provision of free parking for parents
- We have developed a dedicated infant feeding team within NICU
- We are able to provide support sessions for families and staff led by our family support team which includes counsellors, psychologists and the chaplaincy
- Our AHPs and Neonatal outreach team have developed Parentcraft sessions
- We have developed a weekly education programme for parents
- We have established the Newborn Behavioural Observation (NBO) clinic, developed by our psychology team
- We introduced our parent communication boards and presented this initiative at BAPM conference
- We worked with the ODN to develop and introduce Little Journeys app for families coming to the Rosie
- We have introduced the POSITIVITEAM to encourage teamwork, positivity and improve morale as part of our staff well-being. The team have introduced bake-offs and social events over the year
- With the support of engagement of local charitable organisations and individual donors, we have been able to provide more support and care for our families through their NICU journey, including emergency clothing packs, toiletries, toys for siblings, snacks for the parent room, note pads and pens for parent diaries
- We have submitted our application for the Silver Bliss Baby Charter certification

Education and training

- We continue to support academic medical trainees through the Academic Clinical Fellowship programme. We are also delighted to celebrate several students having achieved PhDs and MPhils over the past year
- We have been able to use HiFi simulation manikins to enhance learning opportunities within the department
- We celebrated our in-house QIS course going live in January 2024. A huge thanks to our NICU Practice Development team for the tireless work in running the course and supporting students
- One of our clinical fellows has developed a new structured programme for supporting undergraduate medical students completing SSMs in NICU
- We have developed a range of study days to support our established staff, including band 5 nurses' preparation for band 6 roles
- We celebrated two of our nurses completing their ANNP courses who have now joined our tier 1 rota
- We have appointed 4 PNAs with support from the ODN, increasing our total number of PNAs to 6 (ratio 1:25 nursing staff)
- We have been able to provide financial support for specialist training e.g. FINE and Soffi
- Our Trust's Cultural Ambassador has helped us develop a programme of activities to celebrate the diversity within the team and our NICU families

Other highlights:

· We continue to work closely with One Heart CHD ODN to enable more mothers with antenatally diagnosed complex cardiac anomalies from EoE, to deliver closer to home and minimise the length of time spent in specialist cardiac centres. To achieve this, we have increased our fetal medicine counselling for planning postnatal care, including palliative care with RAaft for some families. We have also worked to ensure any non-cardiac surgery is undertaken in the right place with the support of our PECs and anaesthetists.

Unit challenges in 2024

- Recruitment to QIS nursing posts
- Transition of babies >44 weeks to the appropriate paediatric team
- No dedicated funding to support digital role and outlier for the quality of our NNAP data
- Difficulties with repatriation to local units despite all the efforts of the repatriation nurses across the region

Ambition for 2025/26

- Implementation of the peer review action plan
- Continuing our SEED Programme and its current workstreams including:
 - Parent Wellbeing – launch of parent folder and information booklet
 - Access & Environment – refurbishment of facilities for end-of-life care and multipurpose area for staff training and family education
 - Developing an education programme for families after discharge to support their progress through the first year at home
 - Increasing neonatal information and support for families through the Rosie website
 - Exploring innovative ways to use Vcreate for parent feedback and to improve the family journey in NICU
 - Achieved BFI Stage 2 accreditation in June
 - Achieved Bliss Silver in June
- Implement MIS requirements for transitional care aligning with BAPM requirements
- Improving our specialist bereavement support for NICU families and our staff
- Refining our work with genomics to ensure we offer the right tests at the right time
- Implement a POCUS programme for training and clinical use within the NICU
- Future research projects include COLLABORATE, COMET and FIT-PIV and FIT-05

Lead Clinician Florence Walston
Lead Nurses Paula Mellor
Ward Manager Gaby Cawston

PNA Update

- Embedded team includes 2 qualified PNAs, 1 in training and 1 further training place

PNA engagement aligned with:

- New starter induction programme (supporting transition and integration) and mandatory training
- Revalidation and Quality improvement (QI)
- Wellbeing and Access via manager referrals and self-referral
- Automatic hot and cold debriefs / Signposting to individual and ongoing support
- Normalising support as part of nursing culture
- Presented service development at regional PNA/PMA away day
- Joint project with PMAs in maternity to optimise workplace culture



We are the best at Thermoregulation for babies under 32 weeks in the Country from the 2023 NNAP data.

Research Successes

- Achieved NIHR Clinical Research Facility status, leading to the formation of a dedicated NICU CRF team
- Multidisciplinary expertise (medical, nursing, lab) has expanded research portfolio diversity

In 2024:

- 192 participants recruited into 12 trials in the past year
- 8 publications in peer-reviewed speciality journals
- Research presented at national and European scientific meetings
- First UK hospital to recruit to a Phase 1 paediatric commercial vaccine trial
- Top recruiter (100+ participants) among 50 hospitals in the ongoing SurfOn trial



SPOTLIGHT ON THE ANNP TEAM

We are incredibly lucky to have a team of 9 ANNP's, 5 on Tier 2 and 4 on Tier 1 and are actively pursuing the case for a Nurse Consultant role at the NNUH

With over 25 years of having ANNP's as part of our workforce, we want to showcase their work in continued service development alongside their clinical commitment to the Tier 1 and 2 rotas. These include:

- Leading the Neonatal Birth Reflections- 23 successful appointments in 2024
- Developing & running study days for the Multidisciplinary team and wider region
- Chairing the Divisional non-medical prescribers' group
- Having a national survey published in Archives and presented at EAPS 2024
- Leading innovative projects such as the Assessment Room SOP and Neonatal Review Clinic
- Joint lead for the PMRT
- Running the Bayley's Clinics
- Active as Regional NLS Instructors
- Developing a NICU guide (including an App) for Rotational Resident Doctors

NON-MEDICAL PRESCRIBING

AREAS TO ADDRESS

- 1 COMPETENCY**
Annual declaration of competency not achieved anywhere in the trust
- 2 REVIEW OF DECISION MAKING**
Case based discussions with parents both within and outside of room
- 3 UP-TO-DATE EVIDENCE**
To present and share recent evidence
- 4 SHARING BEST PRACTICE**
• The consultation
• The patient
• Prescribing governance
- 5 THE ROLE PLAYED BY AN ANNP**
• Identified the gap
• Set up Division & NNUH forum
• Now sit on the NMP sub group for the NNUH

ANNP NEONATAL REFLECTION SERVICE

2024 **24 clinics** FACE TO FACE VIRTUAL TELEPHONE

Supporting the All Party Parliamentary Group report on Birth Trauma (2024) Referred from the NNUH Birth Reflections Service

Average gestation at delivery: 36 weeks (range 25 - 41)
Average Length of stay: 19.5 days (range 0 - 118 days)

Grief of loss of planned pregnancy and newborns journey	Memory of missed moments of their baby's life	Documentation of their baby's time on the Neonatal Unit and why they were there
Discharge Support Difficulty leaving the safe environment of the trust	Communication Lack of / timing / understanding / language / chaotic / no empathy / alarming / lack of consideration (location/privacy/written - wrong gender/no name/no father details/diagnosis list)	INVESTIGATIONS understanding of decision making and outcomes
Attachment Combination of themes that relate to difficulty in developing a secure bond with their baby		

ANNP Led Study Programme

70 attendees throughout the year

- JANUARY 9TH 2024**
CARDIOLOGY- QUALIFIED NURSES
Sessions included: Fetal circulation, ECG interpretation, Common cardiac conditions, Arrhythmias, Case Scenarios
- APRIL 25TH 2024**
SCBU FOR NMS/MCAS/NEWLY QUALIFIED SM
Sessions included: Jaundice, Hypothermia, Blood gases, Abstinence Syndrome, Observations. Workshops included.
- FRIDAY 18TH OCTOBER 2024**
NEONATAL FOR BAND 5'S
Sessions included: Jaundice, Temperature regulation, Blood sugar regulation, Blood gas analysis, Vapotherm. Workshops included.
- MONDAY 15TH JANUARY 2024**
REGIONAL & AIMED AT MEDICS (NURSING ALSO INVITED)
Sessions included: Ophthalmology, Cardiology, Reducing PPI, SALT and OT, Diagnostics, Chest drain, insertion, DCC & LIFT/ACE, Clinical Psychology. Workshops and Simulations included.

NEXT STUDY DAY: MAY 2024

Lead Clinician Sanath Reddy
Matron Husnara Begum
Ward Manager Beena Paul

Another busy year! A year of progress and transformation in neonatal care.

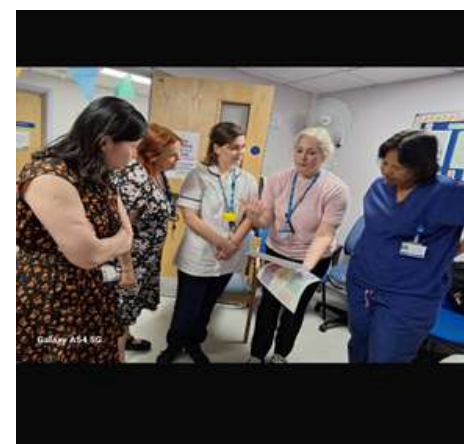
Over the last year, we welcomed a new Ward Manager who has been committed to supporting team building and driving growth within our unit. This leadership has been instrumental in guiding staff through transitions and improvements.

In an encouraging milestone, our unit received glowing feedback during the PEER Review 2024. This invaluable assessment not only recognized our strengths but also identified areas for improvement. Armed with this insight, we developed a targeted action plan to address the identified shortcomings, setting the stage for ongoing enhancement.

Another significant achievement has been our successful transition to the new Electronic Patient Record (EPR) system; Alex Health. While the transition presented challenges, it has ultimately provided us with innovative tools to improve efficiency and streamline patient care.

We are proud to report that we have made substantial progress in filling staffing vacancies. This achievement has positively impacted the quality of care we provide, reinforcing our commitment to supporting families during their most critical times. Our multidisciplinary team (MDT) remains robust and proactive, consistently working together to implement new initiatives. Their collaboration is a testament to our commitment to innovative service delivery and improved patient outcomes.

Our dedication to excellence is evident in our achievement with the Qualified in Speciality (QIS) and the Neonatal Life Support (NLS) course. Additionally, we have substantially improved our compliance ratios to better meet the needs of our unit and patients.





We have improved on the QIS compliance ratio, to meet the unit needs and our workforce calculator is showing that we are on target for meeting our 80% occupancy with our workforce.

This year, Ciara Hibitt has joined the MNVP and is already making significant contributions to the neonatal service, where she champions enhancements to patient experience and service delivery.

Moreover, the introduction of Badger Diaries has been a resounding success, receiving positive feedback and aiding in the transition for families.

Minu Chalapuram, our dedicated repatriation link nurse, has been pivotal in ensuring that parents and babies experience smooth transitions to our care. Her commitment to this role highlights our focus on holistic family support.

We are grateful for the professional development opportunities provided via study days organized by our Trust, Local Maternity and Neonatal Systems (LMNS), and the Operational Delivery Network (ODN). These initiatives have greatly contributed to the continued growth and development of our team.

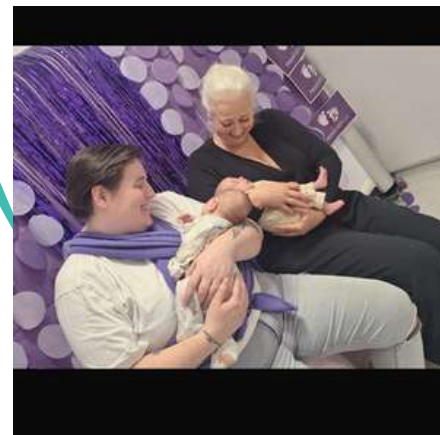
Our ATAIN forum, is robust and able to share the learning with both maternity and neonatal teams, thus improving the outcome.

This year also saw us celebrating diverse cultural events within our unit, a time for staff, parents, and former NICU babies to come together and share in moments of joy and hope. These celebrations not only foster community spirit but also create meaningful connections among families and staff.

Our AHP, FiCare and BFI team have embarked on an impactful skin to skin project aimed at raising awareness about the importance and benefits of skin to skin contact for the families.

Additionally, our discharge parent workshop, has been running successfully and garnering positive feedback from participants. This workshop has significantly enhanced our discharge process, making the transition from hospital to home smoother for families.

In our commitment to supporting parents during their NICU Journey, we have trained nine staff members to provide essential psychological support.



**Challenges Ahead:**

- Limited transitional care facilities
- Shortage of Speech and Language Therapist
- Lack of psychologist available on the unit

Ambition for 2025:

- To successfully complete stage 2 for BFI and work towards achieving Stage 3
- Attain a Silver status for Bliss charter
- Standardise electronic health record (EHR) documentation for improved efficiency

As we look ahead, we are excited for the opportunities and challenges that await us in the coming year. Together, we will continue our mission of providing exceptional care and support to our most vulnerable patients and their families.

Lead Clinician Oluseun Tayo
Lead Nurse Karen Wright



Staffing

- Two staff nurses successfully completed their QIS training
- Recruitment of two new band 5 staff nurses who have completed the Foundations in Neonatal Care module and plan to commence the HD and ITU modules in 2025
- Appointed staff into the following roles:
 - BFi and FiCare lead
 - Neonatal specialist Nurse
 - Repatriation Lead
 - Professional Nurse Advocate
 - Engagement with the NNU MNVP

Achievements

- After months of planning and organising the finishing touches were finally added to our parent bedroom, which has been named 'The Treehouse', and was officially opened by the family who kindly raised the funds to make it possible
 - Two MDT successful completed courses on ventilation lead by a key professional from the University of Suffolk delivered on site
 - Cot side teaching and MDT SIM training continue on the unit
-
- Thanks to the hard work of our BFi Lead we are currently 94% compliant with staff training with plans to achieve 100% in early 2025
 - Successful submission of the application for stage 2 BFI accreditation
 - Improvements in breastfeeding rates from previous year



Gift Bags
for
Parents



Celebrating Christmas with
some special visitors from
Norwich City Football Club
and
The blood bikers
Who kindly donated gifts for
the babies



Challenges

- Finding alternative QIS training whilst UEA course suspended
- Ongoing issues with maternity IT systems not communicating with BadgerNet
- RAAC work due to commence early 2025 - resulting initially in the relocation of the maternity ward, which will affect our Transitional Care and the temporary loss of our parent bedroom. Then work on the neonatal unit to commence later in 2025

Ambitions for 2025

- Continue to work towards achieving Stage 2 BFI accreditation
- 100% compliance in BFI training
- Recruit AHP for Psychology
- Support band 5 staff to complete QIS course to ensure improvement in QIS compliance
- Continue to work with our maternity colleagues to ensure compliance with CNST, GIRFT and NCCR
- In house training including Neonatal Stat days, clinical skills days, cot side teaching, SIM and NLS updates

Lead Clinician Salamatu Jalloh
Lead Nurse Sally Crane
Matron Kit King
Deputy Head of Nursing Laura Morgan
Clinical Director for Children Barbara Piel



ACHIEVEMENTS

- Currently working towards Stage 2 BFI accreditation - assessment booked in November 2025
- Achieved Bronze BLISS Baby Charter Award and working towards Silver – assessment scheduled for July 2025
- Weekly ATAIN and PNRA meetings where reviews of each case take place and learning is shared
- Successful Band 5 recruitment with all vacancies planned to be filled by the autumn
- Further ANNP trainee due to qualify in September 2025
- We have a Professional Nursing Advocate within our team for staff support
- We consistently get positive feedback from our families and service users
- Neonatal AHPs are fully embedded into the NICU MDT, providing support and care for our babies' families and staff. They provide staff training and support both at the cot side and on neonatal study days. They have also been fundamental in supporting:
 - parents and staff to read to their babies, promoting both bonding and development
 - NICU is supported with infant feeding by an International Breastfeeding v Certified Lactation Consultant
 - v We have acquired the LifeStart resuscitaire funded by League of Friends Charity and training is ongoing



All AHP
posts are
filled apart
from the
Pharmacist



NCCR GIRFT Impementation

- LISA embedded in practice with use of GlideScope Video Laryngoscopes
- Kaiser sepsis tool is embedded in practice
- Steps taken towards research involvement
- Continuing clinical site for the WHEAT trial
- Remote sharing of ROP images
- PERIPrem passports are embedded across the maternity and NICU areas
- Patient Safety Incident Review Forum (PSIRF) embedded with incident review meetings taking place three times a week, chaired by the Quality and Safety team
- The perinatal culture programme (Quad) has been set up with the aim of fostering closer relationships and improving patient safety
- Criticool cooling mattress is available, which enables us to commence the active cooling process

Quality Improvement Projects

- As part of the refurbishment of our delivery suite, a donor milk bank storage facility has been developed so that more women in Norfolk can be supported to donate and receive breast milk
- Standardised neonatal resuscitation trolleys set up in NICU, Delivery Suite, Postnatal Ward and Emergency Department
- We continue to be a course centre for the Newborn life support course, running 2 courses a year and are proud of our training rates for the NLS
- Phase 1 of the new hospital planning is complete including plans for NICU
- Purchase of hot cots as part of our quality improvement project on Thermoregulation
- The quality of our quiet time on NICU has been greatly enhanced using our Tonie box The Tonie box was kindly purchased by our Nursery Nurse Debbie Linford, with money raised from selling beautiful baby booties she knits
- Parents are also encouraged to read to their babies during quiet time

Challenges

- Difficulty to recruit QIS staff to increase our QIS percentage
- Continued absence of a Paediatric pharmacist with specialist knowledge



Lead Clinician Ather Ahmed
Matron Laura Kelly

World Prematurity Day 2024

We had our stage 2 BFI assessment in August which we passed. We will be aiming to undertake the stage 3 by the end of 2025

Award Nominations

Senior Nursing team for the trust 'Time to shine' award for Thriving People

Several members of the team received nominations for the PAFTAS, Daisy Awards, Trust ViPs and Time to Shine awards for their hard work and dedication



The following, are the **research** activities we have been involved in, led by Dr. Charu Bhatia:

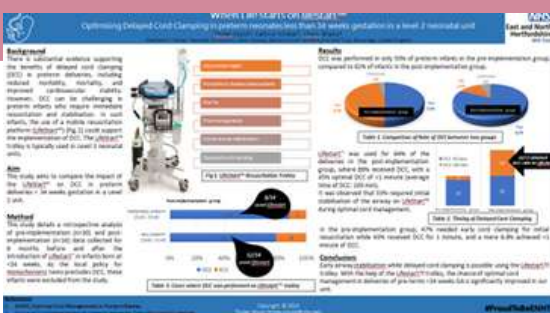
Publication: Initiation of Therapeutic Hypothermia in Neonates with Hypoxic Ischaemic Encephalopathy Nov 2024, INFANT journal

FEED1 trial: RCT on full enteral feeds from day in 30 to 32+6 gestational age preterm infants, compared to standard IV fluid/parental nutrition. Trial completed in Sept 2024. Neonatal nursing team, medical and research teams recognised for their excellent participation, over 100 preterm infants recruited to the trial and we are one of the top 5 recruitment sites in UK among 50 neonatal units

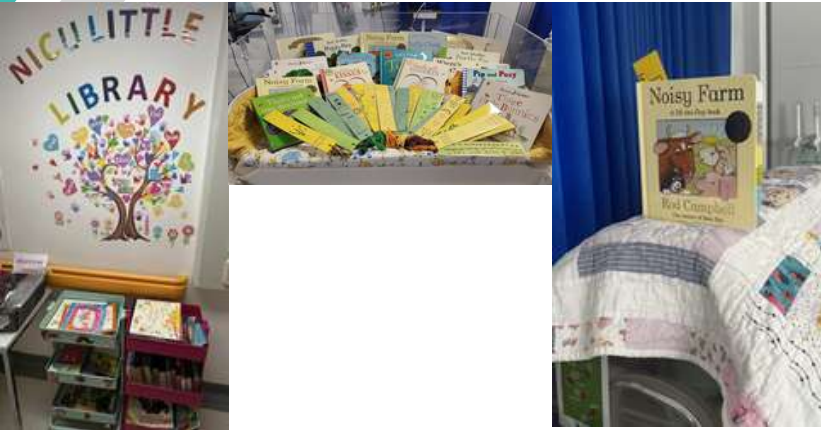
WHEAT trial: With Holding Enteral Feeds Around Blood Transfusion – the WHEAT International Trial In Continuing Care-COLLABORATE: A Neonatal Precision Medicine Platform Trial. We are continuing site for this trial

Posters and Presentations:

- Implementing Evidence Based Medicine into Paediatric Training: A PEER-TO-PEER TEACHING PROGRAMME Conclusion, presented at 12th Singapore Paediatric Perinatal Annual congress Conference Nov 2024
- Delayed Cord Clamping was presented by team in EAP conference 2024
- Neonatal Governance Nurse Vanessa Tingey, presented at the EoE ODN Neonatal Conference. "Working as an LMNS for Neonatal Patient Safety & Improvement"
- Tamboona Karize presented at the EoE Conference on the role of the repatriation role.
- Caroline Chiutare presented at several maternity lead study days; preterm study day, multi-birth study day and bereavement study day

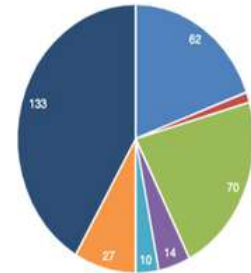


World Book Day



Outreach

We have a 6 day outreach service. 226 babies were referred to the outreach team and they completed 466 visits. There's an increase in babies going home with NGT from 36 in 2023 to 63 in 2024



• NGT • Home Oxygen • Bloods • Other Hospital Referrals • Readmissions • ROP Follow-Up • Breastmilk at Discharge

Education

- 4 nurses finished QIS training
- 1 nurse and 4 nursery nurses completed special care course
- 3 nursery nurses completed transitional care course
- 1 band 6 achieved GIC (NLS trainer course)
- 1 band 7 completed ENNP training

We also had 5 staff complete the BFI (Embedding BFI standards-UNICEF), 4 PNAs, 1 FNF Aspiring Digital Leadership, 1 FNF Safe Cultures and 2 more staff complete the coaching training

Launched

- Early Respiratory Care Bundle
- Medusa
- K2 maternity EPR system
- Alternative Bleep System
- Maternity and Neonatal safety champions walk around

Celebration Event

With the help of the parents support group we organised a very successful celebration event in the parents lounge and garden on the neonatal unit last August. This was an event for all the past patients to come back, play some games, win prizes and eat some food



Promotions/Recruitment

- Transitional Care Lead-Jade Foster (Walsh)
- Family Support Lead-Tamboona Karize (Bangawayo)
- x2 band 5 promoted to band 6 - Chizim & Molly
- 5 new band 5 nurses, 1 nursery nurse and a new data administrator recruited to the team

Lead Clinician Sankara Narayanan

Matron Elvira Baker

ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2024

State-of-the-Art Refurbishment: Families and staff were thrilled to move into our newly refurbished neonatal unit which has enhanced infant, parent, and staff areas - including a dedicated milk kitchen, quiet room, toddler play zone, and breakfast bar. Significant upgrades to ventilation, climate control, and infection prevention measures have further improved the care environment



Digital Excellence: The unit continued to strengthen its use of the Badgernet Neonatal and Maternity Electronic Patient Records, and Badger Diary, embedding digital innovation

Audit & Quality Recognition: For the third consecutive year, we achieved 100% compliance with 2-year developmental follow-up for infants born <30 weeks, alongside consistently high performance across all NNAP quality metrics.

Supporting Parent-Infant Bonding: Two neonatal nurses and physiotherapist completed baby massage training. Community sessions now support families' post-discharge. Unit celebrated 'World Book Day' on the 6th of March 2025

Innovation in Imaging: Unit-wide adoption of point-of-care lung ultrasound led to a 75% reduction in chest X-rays, significantly lowering radiation exposure for neonates with respiratory distress

Investment in Developmental Care: With AHP funding, we procured new developmental aids such as cot tents, Zaky Zaks, and Zaky Hugs. Additional kangaroo care chairs and breast pumps were also purchased to promote bonding and support breastfeeding

External Recognition: The unit received highly positive feedback during the PEER review in September 2024, reflecting our commitment to quality and safety

Standards & Celebration: We maintained strong compliance with BAPM QIS standards and marked World Prematurity Day with a successful celebration supported by families and MNVP partners

Collaborative Improvement Work: In partnership with our LMNS, we advanced key quality improvement projects including the Early Respiratory Care Bundle, Repatriation QI initiative and our Normothermia campaign



Influence Beyond the Unit: Unit consultants contributed to shaping neonatal policy at network, regional, and national levels - LNU/SCU Medical Workforce Framework, the Neonatal Clinical Reference Group, the Expert Working Group on Pricing, and Network Education Faculty.

Celebrating Excellence: Congratulations to the neonatal team for receiving three nominations for the Trust's Star of Herts awards. Sarah Guest, Infant Feeding Lead, won the overall award for her impactful work supporting babies and families.



CHALLENGES IN 2024

Allied Health Professional Recruitment: Ongoing difficulties in recruiting to key AHP roles, particularly the neonatal psychology post, impacting delivery of holistic family-integrated care

Infection Prevention and Control (IPC): The unit faced IPC challenges during refurbishment, including an MRSA outbreak worsened by having only two available isolation rooms

Quality Improvement Staffing: Recruitment to the Quality Improvement and Safety (QIS) roles has remained challenging, affecting progress on some service development initiatives

Medical Workforce Expansion: Funding for a seventh substantive neonatal consultant post is yet to be secured, limiting the unit's ability to fully align with recommended Consultant staffing levels

AMBITIONS FOR 2025/2026

Family-Centred and Coproduced Care:

- Continued co-production with MNVP to improve parent experience
- Progress towards Stage 3 BFI and BLISS Silver accreditation
- Advocacy for ongoing provision of free parent meals
- Strengthened links with maternity for perinatal mental health support

Digital Innovation and Information Systems:

- Recruitment of a Digital Neonatal Nurse and progression to Phase 2 of the BadgerNet project, including system integration
- Improve safety by procuring electronic medication management system (Omnicell)

Workforce Development and Capacity Building:

- Recruitment to key AHP posts, including psychology and physiotherapy
- Complete Nursing establishment review across neonatal and transitional care
- Recruit substantive 7th consultant and expand Tier 1/2 rotas, including ANNP roles
- Increased access to Professional Nurse Advocates for staff wellbeing

Clinical Excellence and Staff Training:

- Ongoing simulation and targeted training delivery
- Increased FINE training uptake & protected time for nursing roles in quality improvement

Lead Clinicians Tayyaba Aamir & Manoj John
Senior Matron Neonatal Services Majia Blagg
Ward Manager Laura Grover

Staffing:

It's been another busy year at WSFT! We have welcomed lots of new staff, including a new Governance Lead: Sarah Thirlby.

We've introduced Neonatal team member of the month award for the neonatal nursing and admin team. The award is voted for by the team and has been really well received!



We achieved BFI Stage 1 and have our BFI Stage 2 assessment booked for December. Due to a change in staff hours, we have been able to allocate three hours per week for BFI. These hours have been allocated to Nursery Nurse Bella, with thanks to the ODN, for funding Bella to attend the 2-day BFI training.

We are BLISS Gold accredited. Reaccreditation is due in September 2025; this means we're in position to go for Platinum accreditation. Sadly however, due to financial constraints, we're not currently able to fund this, so have put it on the back burner while we continue to investigate alternative funding options.

WSFT is part of the new hospital build programme. Designs for the new unit have been shared with the senior team.

Following results from the Staff SCORE survey, four staff across neonates, maternity and obstetrics, have completed 'Culture Coach Training'. The coaches are in the process of facilitating 'MOMENTS' training with all bands, across maternity and neonates.

Training:

- One member of staff is currently undertaking QIS training, due to qualify in June. Currently we are 74%/70% BAPM staffing standard compliant. On successful completion of the QIS course, this will increase to 77% (this includes our non-patient facing team members too)
- We continue our in-house NLS provision
- One member of staff has completed Professional Nurse Advocate training
- One member of staff has completed FINE level 2
- 100% of our nursery nurse team have completed or undertaken either the QIS special care module or the network TC course



Thanks to a kind donation, we have made a library. Providing lots of information for parent's/carers, about the benefits of reading to your baby. The book trolley is kept in the parents sitting room and taken into the nursery every day and parents/carers are encouraged to read to their baby.

Our brilliant AHP team had stickers and biscuits made to help celebrate Kangaroo Care Day.



We are a responsive, truly multidisciplinary service, built around the needs of babies and their families in our care. We are powered by the West Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust values; focusing on quality, safety, and Family Integrated Care.

