

Annual Report 2021/22



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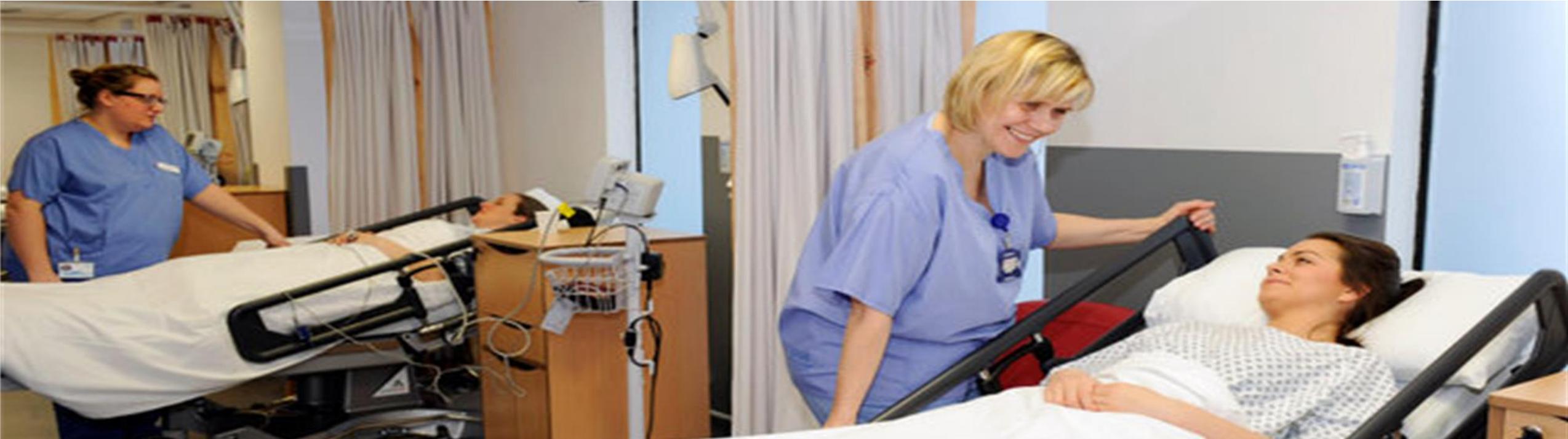


Executive Summary

Welcome to the 2021/22 Annual Report from the Fertility Scotland Network (FSN), the national strategic network for fertility services in NHSScotland.

Fertility Scotland works in partnership, across traditional organisational and geographical boundaries, to realise a programme of work that supports the delivery of fertility services in NHSScotland.

The Network was established in 2021, and despite the challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic the Network has made substantial progress, including the establishment of a Network programme team and the Network governance structure, the development of a Network Strategy as well as a number of working groups and a seminar series. The network has also worked closely with colleagues in Scottish Government to assist with the Covid-19 response in NHS fertility services and support the delivery of the Scottish Government's first national recruitment campaign for sperm and egg donors. The Network looks forward to 2022/23 with ambitious plans.



Introduction

The aim of the Annual Report is to provide stakeholders with an update on the work of the Network, focusing on key achievements during the financial year from 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022.

Achieving the progress outlined in the Annual Report would not have been possible without the energy, time, advice and expertise invested by Network stakeholders.

The Network Programme Team would like to take this opportunity to thank members for their commitment and contributions, with special thanks to those who have given their time to chair Network work streams, as well as to Scottish Government for their continued support.



Governance Structure





Network Oversight Board

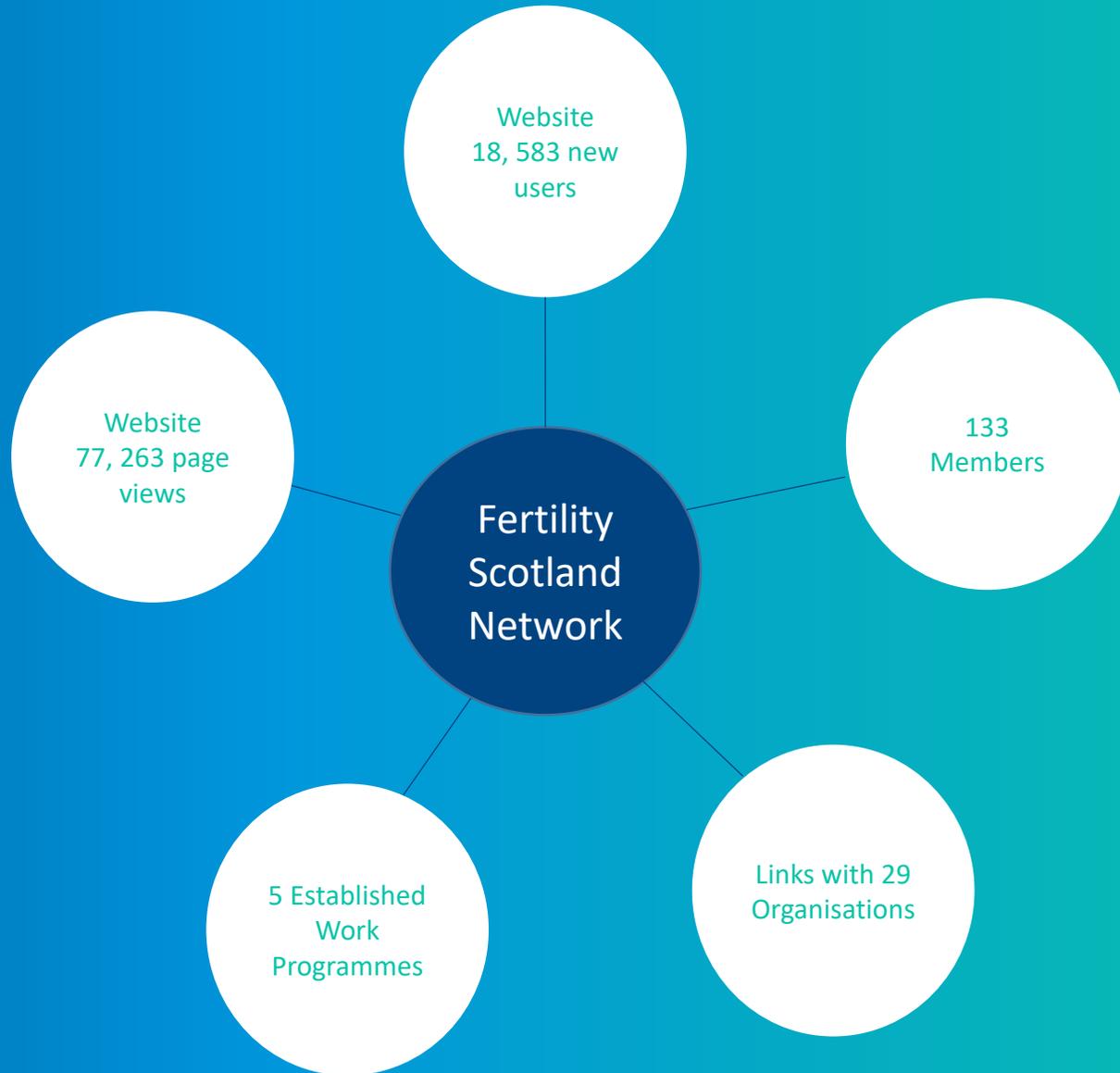
The Fertility Scotland Oversight Board function sits with the Scottish Government's *National Fertility Group*, chaired by Mary Morgan (Chief Executive, NHS National Services Scotland).

The aim of the Board is to provide national strategic leadership to the Network and advise NHS Boards and other partners in relation to the delivery of fertility services in NHSScotland, using the most up to date evidence base and in line with strategic local, regional and national NHS and Scottish Government priorities.



Network Core Steering Group

Reporting to the Network Oversight Board, the Fertility Scotland Core Steering Group is responsible for overseeing the Networks' work programme to deliver on its agreed strategic priorities. The purpose of the groups is to work across geographical and organisational boundaries to support Boards with a 'Once for Scotland' approach to the planning, design and delivery of maternity and neonatal care in Scotland. The Core Steering Group is co-located with the Scottish Government's *Assisted Conception Unit Leads Group*. It is co-chaired by the Scottish Government Policy Lead, Sarah Corcoran, and the Network Lead Clinician, Abha Maheshwari.



Stakeholder engagement



Network Strategy 2021-24

Following engagement with Network stakeholders across NHSScotland fertility services, Scottish Government and patient organisations to identify how best the Network can support and deliver value to its stakeholders, the Network developed a Strategy that defines how the Network operates and what its objectives and strategic priorities are. This has been finalised and is due to be ratified at the first Oversight Board meeting in 2022/23.

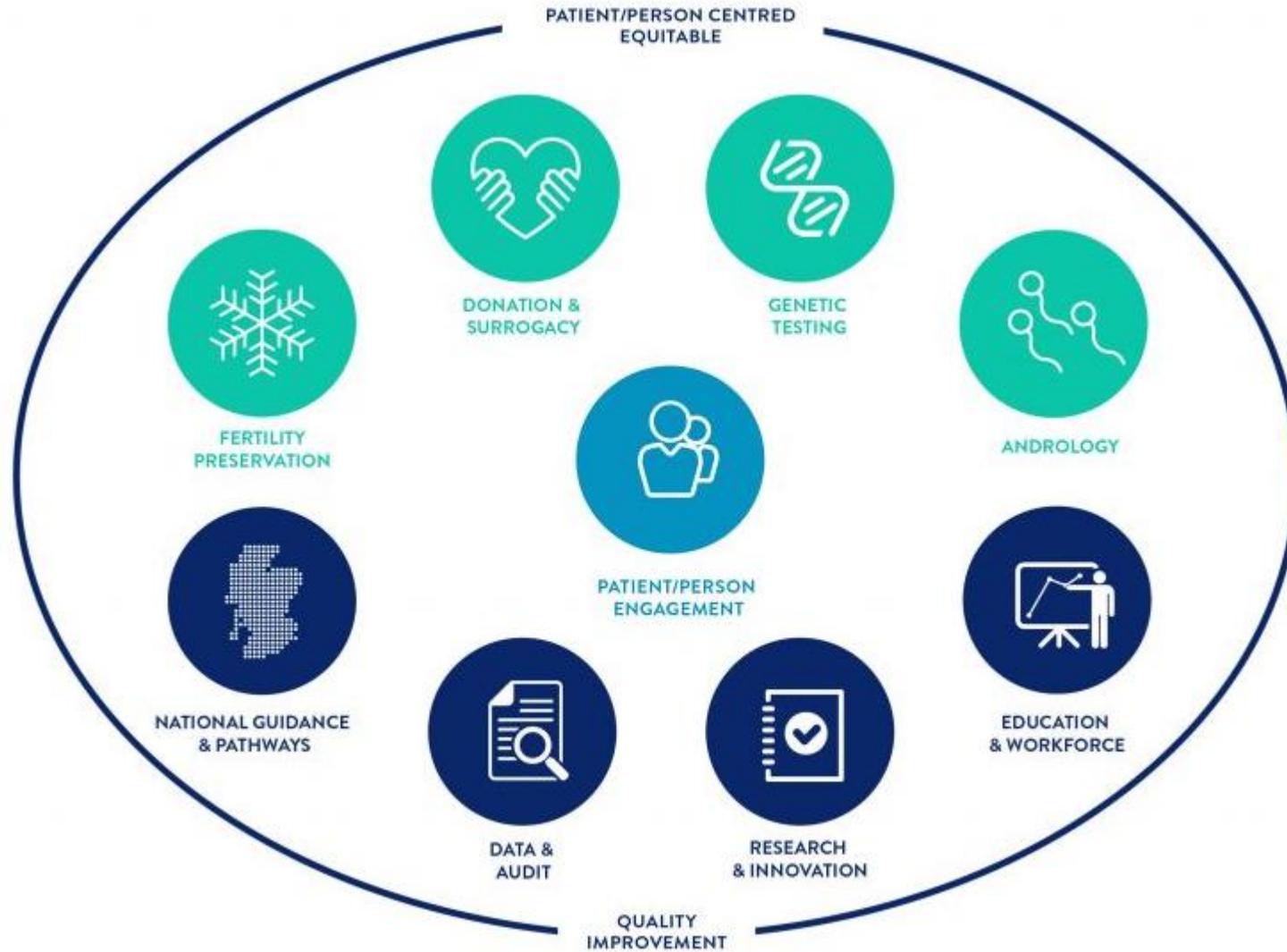


The Impact of Covid-19

Implementing a new strategic network during a global pandemic has been challenging and required adaptation to work around limitations in service capacity and competing priorities. The Network was responsive to the needs of its stakeholders, and to published Covid-19 guidance, and adapted its work plan to focus on key priority areas for NHSScotland fertility services. This included supporting Scottish Government with reviewing Covid-19 guidance. However, limitations in overarching NHS capacity during the pandemic has resulted in some areas of the network developing more slowly than had previously been anticipated, including the establishment of governance arrangements and the full suite of work streams.

Despite the challenges of Covid-19 the Network has achieved a great deal in 2021, including development of a draft Network Strategy, establishing a work plan for 2022/2023, implementing five work streams and supporting Scottish Government in their donor recruitment programme, which was deemed a priority area by stakeholders. In addition to these work programmes further Project Initiation Documents were also prepared during this period for additional work streams that are due to commence in 2022/23, and a seminar series was established to allow for a streamlined approach to staff education and CPD.

The Network also took advantage of the already established Assisted Clinical Unit Leads group (ACU Leads) – initially set up by Scottish Government in response to the Covid-19 pandemic – to become the Core Steering Group for the Network.



Progress in 2021/22

Deliverable



Covid-19 Response

National Covid-19 response planning for fertility services comes under Scottish Government (SG) governance. The Network has provided support to these planning processes as required.

Complex case is a multidisciplinary group established by SG in 2020 to:

- Provide a forum to discuss challenging cases.
- Highlight issues that may feed into policy recommendations.
- Serve as a teaching forum.

Ovulation Induction

- Agree a standardised protocol for ovulation induction across Scotland.
- Provide patient information sheet(s) for ovulation induction.
- Provide a means of monitoring outcome of treatments.

Progress/Next Steps



Progress: To date the Network has provided expertise and support in providing guidance in line with the requirements of SG and the stakeholders.

Next Steps: The Network will continue to support Scottish Government as required, to determine best practice.

Progress: Since May 2021 the governance resides within FSN and the group is co-chaired by the network lead clinician. 34 cases have been reviewed across 10 meetings.

Next Steps: The group will review the Terms of Reference of the group and membership, to include a wider professional membership and include specialist areas e.g. PGT.

Progress: A working group has been established, the group has reviewed current protocols used across Scotland as well as professional guidance and the published literature.

Next Steps: The group will generate recommended protocols, patient information and quality Indicators.

Benefits



i) A “Once for Scotland” approach to managing Covid-19 in the fertility sector.

- i) Review cases using an MDT approach including patient representatives.
- ii) Provides an opportunity for professional learning.
- iii) Formalised route for informing policy recommendations

- i) Evidence based recommendations for treatment.
- ii) Standardized patient information sheets.
- iii) On-going monitoring of treatment outcomes to inform future recommendations.



NATIONAL GUIDANCE
& PATHWAYS

Progress in 2021/22

Deliverable



Data Group: Establish mechanisms for gathering data to inform decision making and the strategic direction of the Network. The data group will also be responsible for ensuring data is captured to determine the impact of changes implemented by the Network.

Audit Group: Establish consistent audit proformas across all tertiary fertility care centres and provide a forum to share outcome data.

Seminar Series (Professionals)

- Provide a monthly seminar series to professionals that are associated with NHS Fertility Services.

Progress/Next Steps



Progress: The data working group has been established and a draft Terms of Reference is under review.

Next Steps: Approve the Terms of Reference and implement the “Tertiary care data work package”.

Progress: The Audit Working Group has been established and a list of priority areas has been established.

Next Steps: Complete proformas for the key priority areas to be audited

Progress: A seminar series has now been established, four seminars have been completed.

Next steps: The seminar series will continue, attendees will be audited over the next year to establish areas of improvement.

Benefits



- Provide data for the “Core Steering Group” and “Oversight Board” to advise on the strategic direction of the network.
- Determine if changes implemented by the Network improve delivery of fertility services.

- Streamlined process for compiling audit proformas that are HFEA and ISO15189 compliant.
- Improved inspection outcomes and delivery of patient care by sharing audit outcome data.
- Shared learning between centres.

- Reduce the requirements for each department to arrange their own CPD events.
- Provide a forum to communicate best practice, including protocols generated by the Network.



DATA & AUDIT



EDUCATION & WORKFORCE



GENETIC TESTING



ANDROLOGY



DONATION & SURROGACY

Deliverable



Pre-implantation Genetic Testing (PGT)

- Together with a parallel work stream on genetic testing undertaken by NSD commissioners (NGS-PGT-SLWG), provide clear recommendations for the future provision of a PGT service in Scotland.

Semen Analysis

- Provide standardised protocols and reporting templates for diagnostic and treatment semen analysis.
- Agree a decision making process for clinical treatment based on the standardised protocols.

Donor Recruitment

- Support Scottish Government in their donor recruitment campaign.

Progress/Next Steps



Progress: A group has been established, which has reviewed patient pathways, future patient numbers and waiting times.

Next steps: With the NGS-PGT-SLWG make recommendations about future provision of PGT

Progress: A group has been established, protocols have been reviewed and a gap analysis performed against current guidance.

Next steps: The group will compile standard protocols that will be available to andrology laboratories across Scotland as well as recommend quality Indicators.

Progress: The network hosts the donor recruitment web page and has provided professional support to SG. To date >10, 400 visits to the donor web page.

Next steps: The network will continue to support SG as required.

Benefits



- i) Improve overall patient care, through a more consistent patient pathway.
- ii) Potentially improve pregnancy outcomes by using more current cytogenetic analysis technologies

- i) Support laboratories to establish UKAS Accreditation.
- ii) Provide evidence based standard protocols for treatment decision making.
- iii) Improve the quality of data collected to inform on improving the delivery of service and patient outcomes in the future.

- i) Streamline the recruitment process, obtaining professional and legal advice as required.
- ii) Increase the number of donors within Scotland.



PATIENT/PERSON
ENGAGEMENT



FERTILITY
PRESERVATION



RESEARCH
& INNOVATION

Deliverable



Stakeholder Engagement

Ensure the Network takes into account the need of the stakeholders.

Fertility Preservation - Storage

Establish common "Once for Scotland" paperwork for Fertility Preservation Storage

Research and Innovation

Improve the management of fertility research across Scotland and build capacity

Progress/Next Steps



Progress: A stakeholder meeting was held with secondary care colleagues to determine requirements from FSN. Secondary care colleagues are now members of several groups.

Next steps: Visit providers of fertility services across Scotland.

Progress: This work will commence in 2022.

Progress: This work will commence in 2022.

Benefits



- i) To determine requirements from stakeholders.
- ii) To improve engagement with stakeholders.

- i) Streamlined and consistent practice minimising duplication of effort across fertility centres
- ii)

Increased participation of Scottish fertility services in research to improve patient outcomes.

Work Priorities 2022/23



DATA &
AUDIT

Data Group

Establish mechanisms for evidence/data to inform the decision making processes of the Network.

Audit Group

Establish consistent audit proformas across all tertiary fertility care centres and provide a forum to share outcome data.



ANDROLOGY

Diagnostic Semen Analysis

- Provide standardised protocols (to new WHO guidance) and reporting templates for diagnostic and treatment semen analysis.
- Agree a decision making process for clinical treatment based on the standardised protocols.



GENETIC
TESTING

Expanded carrier screening (ECS)

Review best practise and explore options for introducing expanded carrier screening for gamete donors.

Pre-implantation Genetic Testing (PGT)

Review the whole patient pathway for Pre-implantation Genetic Testing (PGT) to inform commissioning decisions for the provision of PGT services in Scotland.



NATIONAL GUIDANCE
& PATHWAYS

Ovulation Induction

Agree a standardised protocol and patient information for ovulation induction

Primary and Secondary Care Referrals

Establish a patient pathway for primary and secondary care referrals for fertility treatment.

Intrauterine Insemination (IUI)

Agree a standardised protocol and patient information for IUI across Scotland.

BBV guidance

Agree Scotland wide guidance



FERTILITY
PRESERVATION

Fertility Preservation - Storage

Standardise national paperwork to comply with new UK storage regulation



RESEARCH
& INNOVATION

Research

Improve the management of fertility research across Scotland and build capacity

Work Priorities 2022/23



DONATION &
SURROGACY

Sperm and Egg donor recruitment

Provide logistical support to the Scottish Government's national donor recruitment campaign

Surrogacy

- Standardise the work up for intended parents and surrogates
- Establish a forum to discuss cases across Scotland



PATIENT/PERSON
ENGAGEMENT

Equality and Diversity

Review the current provision of treatment to and make recommendations to reduce inequalities in access to and outcome of treatment

Data Protection for Patients and Partners

Agree a process to ensure consistency of data protection for patients and partners across Scotland.



EDUCATION
& WORKFORCE

Seminar series for professionals

Seminar series for patients and public



Finance

The Network is funded by an allocation from Scottish Government.

The Network operated within its budget for the financial year 2021/22.

Network Programme Team

The Network Programme Team comprises of:



Abha Maheshwari
Clinical Lead



Joanne Leitch
Scientific Lead



Carsten Mandt
Senior Programme Manager



N Prathalingam
Programme Manager

If you would like to find out more about the Network, please contact the team on:
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