

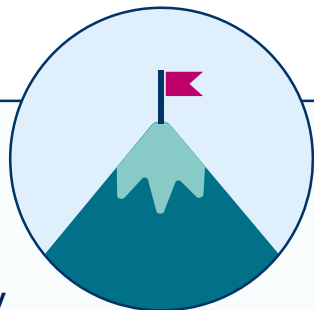
Building a Sustainable Training Model with a Focus on Efficiency and Patient Centred Care

Claire Lindsay, Senior Specialist Lead Sonographer and Morag J Stout, Clinical Lead / Principal Educator
National Ultrasound Training Programme, NHS Scotland Academy



Aim

To provide high quality training to create a more sustainable workforce to address demand, to manage training and recruitment constraints and to reduce the need for outsourcing moving forward.



Methods

Working collaboratively with NHS Scotland Boards, Centre for Sustainable Delivery (CfSD), Higher Education Institutes (HEIs) and Medical Deaneries, the National Ultrasound Training Programme (NUTP) provides excellent ultrasound training to multiple disciplines including sonographers, radiology registrars, gynaecology registrars, nurses, physiotherapists and podiatrists.

There is a focus on efficiency and patient centred practice, building a sustainable ultrasound workforce whilst reducing national waits. This positively impacts service capacity, facilitates waiting list optimisation and addresses concerns raised in the Diagnostic Imaging Workforce Plan for NHS Scotland, Scottish Radiology Transformation Plan (SRTTP, 2023).

The NUTP provides an extremely supportive training environment which is conducive to the needs of learners, patients and boards. The positive impact on national capacity via the NUTP and thereafter in the home boards, alleviates training pressure on boards allowing for faster inpatient / unscheduled care and reduces the need for outsourcing.

Results

NUTP has had an exceptionally successful 18 months and has exceeded the training outcomes and patient numbers stated in its original business case.

The NUTP is an exemplar of innovation and collaboration with high-quality training and service delivery outcomes. The NUTP provides a much needed dedicated training environment which is adaptable to the needs of learners, patients and boards.

Discussion

Clinical pressures nationally show no signs of abating with a heavy reliance on outsourcing to address capacity gaps.

With a projected year-on-year increase in demand for medical ultrasound scans estimated to be 4% to 6%, an increase in sufficient sonographer numbers is crucial to meet future service requirements.

The Diagnostic Imaging Workforce Plan suggests 'exploring opportunities to expand upon the National Ultrasound Academy model from the NHS Scotland Academy to further increase training capacity within the diagnostic imaging workforce, and address parity of training for remote and rural communities.'

Furthermore, NUTP has made efficiency savings following quality improvement projects centring around vetting, actionable reporting and patient focused booking. The latter initiative has seen 'did not attend' rates fall below 4% which is far below the national average.

NUTP continues to offer an efficient and patient centred resource nationally, improving diagnostic access and subsequent outcomes for patients, by providing an enhanced, accelerated training model whilst relieving the training burden on boards.

The NUTP has delivered masterclasses in Gynaecology, lower limb and upper limb DVT. This expansion of portfolio has made the programme accessible to a diverse range of learners and addressed a national need for accelerated learning in key areas.

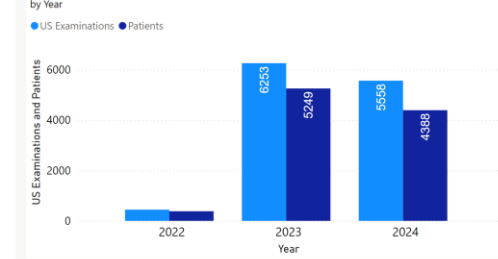
The financial investment already made to develop and implement the service could be built on to further expand the service for the benefit of NHS Boards and the population of Scotland.

US Examinations

Examination data comes from Radiology Information System (RIS). Patients sometimes have multiple examinations performed in one attendance. New data now captures time weighted examinations (or number of hours performing scans) and did not attend (DNA) rates per exam and board.

RIS recorded 12255 examinations completed, 570 (4.44%) examinations were recorded as DNA. 10019 patients attended, 465 (4.43%) of all patients booked in were recorded as DNA.

US Examination and Patients by Year



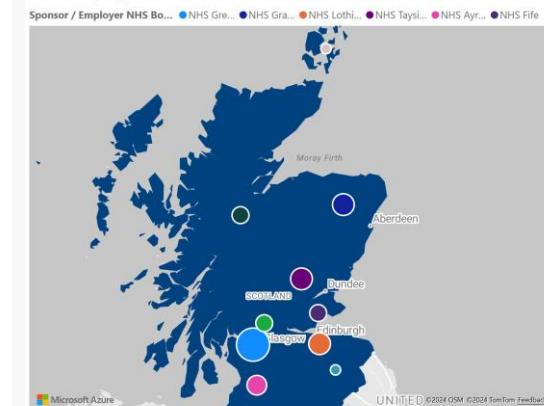
Date control: 30/09/2022 to 11/10/2024

US Examinations	Patients
12255	10019
Exam. time (hr): 4,315.5	DNA Patients: 465 4.43%
Exam. DNA: 570 4.44%	
Exam. DNA (hr): 197.3	

Health board	US Examinations	Exam. DNA %	Patients
NHS Ayrshire and Arran	609	3.64%	526
NHS Borders	3	2.81%	3
NHS Forth Valley	898	2.96%	719
NHS Grampian	197	4.48%	137
NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde	4944	4.48%	4097
NHS Highland	33	4.89%	27
NHS Lothian	5041	4.48%	4105
NHS Lothian	426	3.70%	327
The Golden Jubilee	104		78
University National Hospital			
Total	12255	4.44%	10019

Learner location

Learners by Regional Board



Region/Scottish Board	Count
West	48
NHS Ayrshire and Arran	3
NHS Forth Valley	2
NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde	13
Scotland Deans West	30
South East	7
NHS Borders	1
NHS Forth Valley	2
NHS Lothian	4
North	7
NHS Grampian	4
NHS Highland	2
NHS Orkney	1
East	13
NHS Tayside	4
Scotland Deans East	9
Total	75

Next Steps

Additional resources (staff, accommodation, and equipment), has enabled us to expand our portfolio to deliver a wider range of Ultrasound Specialisms – ENT, MSK and Gynaecology.

For more information, please contact: nhsscotlandacademy@nhs.scot
• [Workforce Planning – Scottish Radiology Transformation Programme \(2016-2023\)](#)