

Glossary: NLCA State of the Nation Report 2026

Advanced Stage Lung Cancer	This refers to stage 4 and some stage 3 lung cancers that are usually treated with systemic anti-cancer therapy.
Audit Standard	A clinical audit standard describes the level of care that is expected for a specific aspect of healthcare, based on medical evidence or agreed best practice. For example, NLCA set a target that at least 7 out of every 10 patients with SCLC should receive chemotherapy treatment.
Average	An average is a single number that describes a typical value in a list of numbers.
Biomarker Testing	Biomarker testing in lung cancer helps doctors decide which type of systemic anticancer therapy to use by identifying specific genetic or protein changes in the cancer that predict response to targeted therapy or immunotherapy. Sometimes, it may also be called molecular, genetic, or genomic testing.
Biopsy	Removal of a small portion of the cancer or tumour, usually from the lung but may also be from the liver, skin or other areas to look at under the microscope. It is important for making a diagnosis of cancer.
Bronchoscopy	A thin telescope with a camera is used to look inside the airways.
CT scan	A procedure that uses a computer linked to an x-ray machine to make a series of detailed pictures of areas inside the body including the lungs.
Cancer	Cancer is a disease in which some abnormal cells grow uncontrollably and spread to other parts of the body.
Carcinoid tumour of the lungs	Carcinoid tumours are a type of tumour of the neuroendocrine system. This system is made up of special types of nerve and gland cells responsible for making hormones that are released into the bloodstream. Carcinoid tumours can occur anywhere where there are neuroendocrine cells such as the lung and the digestive tract.
Chemotherapy	Chemotherapy is a medical treatment designed to kill fast-growing cells. It is effective against cancer cells because they grow and multiply much more quickly than most cells in the body.
Clinical Reference Group	This is a group of relevant healthcare professionals, patient representatives and stakeholders who meet to provide expert opinions and advice on a range of clinical issues based on current evidence and best practice.
Curative-intent	This is used to describe treatment that aims to remove all the cancer and therefore cure the cancer disease.
Data completeness	Data completeness - This is the extent to which all the expected data items are present and available (i.e. no information missing).

Data quality	This is a description of a dataset's accuracy, consistency and completeness.
Lung cancer	An abnormal growth of abnormal cells in the lungs,
Lung Cancer Nurse Specialist (LCNS)	A nurse who has expert knowledge and experience in lung cancer. They form part of the team of healthcare professionals who provide support, information and advice during lung cancer investigations, diagnosis and treatment.
Lung cancer surgery	A range of operations to remove cancer from patients' lungs.
Lymph node	A small bean-shaped structure that is part of the body's immune system. They act like filters to collect germs and cancer cells. They are usually one of the first places cancer cells spread to from the lung.
Metastasis	The spread of cancer cells from the place where they first formed to another part of the body.
Multidisciplinary team (MDT)	A team of different health professionals who may be involved in the care of patients with cancer.
MRI (Magnetic Resonance Imaging)	A procedure that uses radio waves, magnets, and computers to make a series of detailed pictures of areas inside the body, including the lungs.
NATCAN (The National Cancer Audit Collaborating Centre)	The Centre commissioned to deliver the 10 national cancer audits that are part of the National Clinical Audit and Patient Outcomes Programme (NCAPOP) for England and Wales. The cancer audits to provide regular and timely information to NHS services about patterns of care to support benchmarking and local quality improvement.
National Lung Cancer Audit (NLCA)	The NLCA assess the quality of services and care provided to individuals with lung cancer in England and Wales. This is achieved by analysing clinical information about the treatment of all patients newly diagnosed with lung cancer in England and Wales and information about their outcomes.
National Lung Health Checks	A new screening programme offered in some parts of the UK to patients aged 55-74 who have ever smoked. It is a check up to see how well the lungs are working. Some patients may then be invited for a scan of their lungs. The aim is to detect very early stage lung cancer in patients without any symptoms.
National Disease Registration Service (NDRS)	The NDRS manages the National Cancer Registration and Analysis Service (NCRAS), which is responsible for collecting the national datasets related to the diagnosis and treatment of English patients diagnosed with cancer.
NHS (National Health Service)	The publicly funded healthcare system in the UK.
NHS Trust	An organisational unit within the NHS that delivers healthcare services to people within a particular area.
Non-Small Cell Lung Cancer (NSCLC)	This is the most common type of lung cancer. If it is caught in an early stage, surgery to remove the cancer tumour from the lung can be an option.

Outcomes	These are the results or consequences of lung cancer care. The NLCA reports on various outcomes such as survival after diagnosis with lung cancer.
Percutaneous biopsy	A way of taking a tiny sample of cancer/tumour from someone's body, using a special needle passed through the skin into the lungs and the tumour.
Performance Indicator	This is a measure of outcome or performance that describes an aspect of care over a specified time frame, and which can be compared against audit standards to assess how well they are being achieved.
Performance Status	A measure of how well a patient is able to perform ordinary tasks and carry out daily activities.
PET Scan	A PET scan is an imaging test that helps doctors detect lung cancer and see if it has spread by using a small amount of radioactive sugar to highlight active cancer cells in the body.
Radiotherapy	The use of high-energy radiation from x-rays and other similar sources to kill cancer cells and shrink tumours.
Rapid Cancer Registration Dataset (RCRD)	This is a dataset that provides a provisional version of the standard cancer registration data in England. It is available more rapidly than the full cancer registry dataset (which take time to collate) but contains less information about patients.
Small Cell Lung Cancer (SCLC)	This is a type of lung cancer. Usually it is treated with chemotherapy.
Stage of Cancer	This is a way of describing the size and any spread of cancer. The stages are from 1 to 4 with 1 being early stage and 4 being late stage.
Supportive and Palliative Care	Supportive and palliative care focuses on improving the quality of life for people with serious illnesses like lung cancer by managing symptoms, relieving pain, and providing emotional and practical support for patients and their families.
Systemic Anti-Cancer Therapy (SACT)	A medicine given to treat cancer by destroying or damaging cancer cells. This can involve chemotherapy, immunotherapy and target therapies.
Targeted Therapies	These are medicines designed to target specific structural changes that only occur within with the cancer cells and not in healthy cells. Targeted therapies can include biological therapies that target specific proteins in cancer cells and immunotherapies that help the immune system target cancer cells.
Tumour	A cluster of abnormal cells
Welsh Health Board	This is an organisational unit in Wales that provides and plans delivery of care for a specific geographical area or for a specialised service.