

National Lung Cancer Audit (NLCA) Outlier Response 2026

NLCA Performance Indicator	One year survival								
NHS Provider	Provider Response to NLCA Outlier Notification								
County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust	<p>1. Does the trust consider the National Lung Cancer Audit (NLCA) data to be accurate in comparison to your hospital records?</p> <p>No, the non-adjusted survival rates differ by 3 percentage points (see Table 1), and there are 17 records that are not included in the analysis by the NLCA. Based on these figures, the Trust would still be below the average survival rate, but we are not certain that we would remain a significant outlier. Our figures, however, still require review.</p> <p>Table 1: Summary of NLCA and Trust Data</p> <table><tr><th>Number of patients reported in the NLCA data set</th><th>Number of patients known to the Trust</th><th>Non-adjusted 1 year survival rate based on NLCA data set</th><th>Non-adjusted 1 year survival rate based local data set</th></tr><tr><td>228</td><td>245</td><td>44.3%</td><td>47.4%</td></tr></table>	Number of patients reported in the NLCA data set	Number of patients known to the Trust	Non-adjusted 1 year survival rate based on NLCA data set	Non-adjusted 1 year survival rate based local data set	228	245	44.3%	47.4%
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	228	245	44.3%	47.4%					
		<p>2. Subject to the data being accurate, are there justifiable reasons for the variation that mean the trust should not be considered an outlier for this performance indicator?</p> <p>We are unable to confirm the validity of the data used to adjust for various factors as this data is not available to us and we are unable to share data back to check on missing patients. We are aware there may be issues with clinical coding and the recording of comorbidities that could be affecting adjusted survival rates as the aggregated values for the Charlson Scores do not seem to reflect our population, in that they indicate a less complex case mix.</p>							

3. Have quality improvement measures been put in place in order to correct potential problems in the future?

The following actions have been implemented or are planned to be implemented.

- Since December 2024 we have had a Lung Cancer Screening Service operating in our County Durham patch and more recently (August 2025) patients from the Darlington area have been invited to take part in the programme. If effective, these programmes should reduce the stage at which patients are diagnosed and, thereby, increase the survival rate.
- A pilot for self-referral to chest X-ray, running in conjunction with a local drug and alcohol service, is currently underway with the aim of testing different models across our cancer alliance, and with the aim of rolling out a more comprehensive pathway for at risk groups.
- Planned re-education of Trust Lung Cancer Teams on consistent use of Lung Cancer Diagnostic Standards of Care bundles

The following actions are being evaluated. We will confirm these into an action plan to be monitored within the service and in the Trust's Quality Committee.

- Exploring diagnostic order sets in EPR for Lung Cancer Diagnostic Standards of Care bundles to improve adherence
- Communication/Awareness campaign with local GPs
- Review of data feeding into National Lung Cancer Audit to confirm correctness and completeness of coding and comorbidities
- Exploring the possibility of participating in the MEDLEY and Cancer Vaccine Launchpad trials
- Case note review of all or a large sample of patients to assess compliance with the national optimal lung cancer pathway

Other points to note

An area the Trust has struggled with historically is the proportion of lung cancer patients diagnosed via emergency presentation, however this has improved since the data period represented in the outlier report (Q1-Q2 2024), which should start to have a positive impact on one year survival rates, see Figure 1.

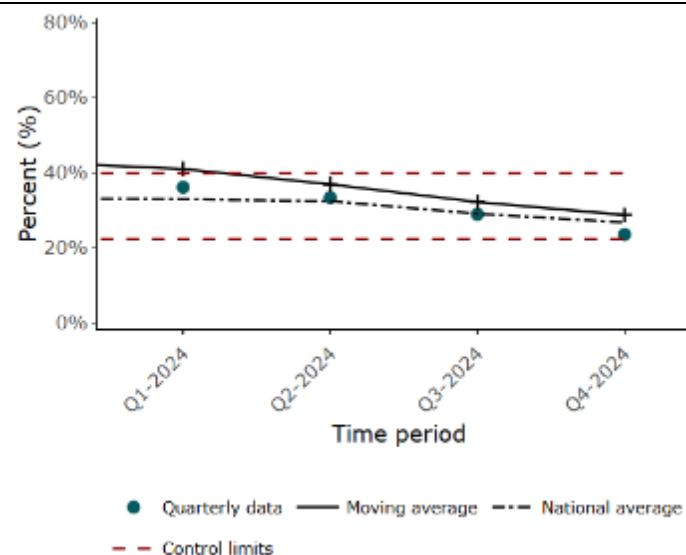


Figure 1: Proportion of lung cancer patients diagnosed via emergency presentation at County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust

NLCA Project Team comment:

The NLCA Project Team acknowledges there may be inaccuracies in our data, and so have taken the following steps:

- The funnel plot of indicator values in the State of the Nation report has been retained but with a comment under the funnel plot to explain the discrepancy highlighted by the Trust.
- We have not contacted the CQC or taken any more of the routine formal steps in our outlier process, as we do not consider the Trust to be a confirmed alarm outlier.