

## Glossary: NOCA State of the Nation Report 2026

**Borderline tumours** - Borderline malignant (“borderline”) ovarian tumours have historically been recorded as ovarian cancers, though their malignant potential is now understood to be lower than the rest of the group.

**BRCA status** - The presence of specific variants in BRCA genes increases a woman’s chance of developing ovarian cancer.

**Chemotherapy** - This is a drug treatment that can be administered as a tablet, bolus or infusion with the aim of killing cancer cells.

**Clinical Reference Group** - This is a consortium of key stakeholders and clinical experts who meet to provide expert clinical and professional opinions on a range of clinical issues based on current evidence and best practice.

**COSD (Cancer Outcomes and Services Dataset)** - This is a dataset that includes all patients diagnosed with or receiving cancer treatment by the NHS. Data is collated via the NDRS. This allows for a robust data collection to support national cancer registration and analysis at a local, regional and international level.

**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 measure of a dataset’s accuracy, completeness, reliability and validity.

**Fallopian tubes** - The fallopian tubes are part of the female reproductive system. They link the ovaries to the womb and play an important role in egg fertilisation.

**Grade** - Tumour grade describes a tumour in terms of how abnormal the tumour cells are. This is compared to normal cells. It also describes how abnormal the tissues look under a microscope.

**Gynaecological Cancer System** - The main organisational unit for NOCA reporting is the integrated gynaecological cancer system (i.e., ‘hub and spoke’ configuration). This was recommended as a level for reporting performance indicators in the British Gynaecological Cancer Society’s recommendations for evidence-based, population data derived quality performance indicators for ovarian cancer. This choice of unit acknowledges that decisions about ovarian cancer care are not always attributable to an individual NHS Trust such as the

trust or hospital where a woman is diagnosed. It also avoids the problem of reporting indicators for individual trusts or hospitals that may diagnose a small number of patients each year.

**HES** - Hospital Episode Statistics is a database which contains data on all in-patients treated within NHS trusts in England. This includes details of admissions, diagnoses and treatments.

**ICD-10** - The 10<sup>th</sup> revision of the **International Classification of Diseases** (a medical classification list). The list of medical codes in this comprehensive list is used to identify and categorise medical diagnoses.

**IMD (Index of Multiple Deprivation)** - A measure of relative deprivation in a particular small area (of ~1,500 residents or 650 households).

**Maximal cytoreductive surgery** - This is a cancer treatment which involves removing all or almost all visible cancerous tissue. More tissue is removed than in standard surgery. The aim is to improve outcomes for people with advanced ovarian cancer.

**Morphology** - There are many different types of ovarian cancer. The type of cancer depends on the type of cell and tissue the cancer starts in.

**NATCAN** - The National Cancer Audit Collaborating Centre (NATCAN) is a national centre of excellence which shines a spotlight on the care and treatment of patients who are diagnosed with cancer in England and Wales. It has been commissioned to deliver new cancer audits by the Healthcare Quality Improvement Partnership (HQIP), on behalf of NHS England and the Welsh Government. NATCAN is part of the Clinical Effectiveness Unit (CEU) in London – a collaboration between the Royal College of Surgeons of England (RCSEng) and the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine (LSHTM).

**NCRD (National Cancer Registration Data)** - The “gold standard” cancer registration data for England. It contains information on all aspects of the cancer registration for everyone diagnosed with cancer in England. Undergoes extensive quality control by NDRS before release.

**National Disease Registration Service (NDRS)** - A service that collects and analyses data on cancer and rare diseases in the UK as part of NHS England.

**Neoadjuvant therapy** - A term used to describe anti-cancer treatment (such as chemotherapy, hormones or radiation) given before the main treatment (such as surgery). The intent of this treatment is to reduce the size of the tumour, to improve the success of the main treatment or reduce the need for a more extensive procedure.

**NHS (National Health Service)** - The publicly funded healthcare system in the UK.

**NHS Trust** - This is an organisational unit within the NHS which provides care to a specific geographical area or a for a specialised service (main terminology used in England).

**NICE** - The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence is an independent organisation responsible for providing national guidance on the promotion of good health and the prevention and treatment of ill health.

**Ovarian cancer** - When using this term, we refer to women with ovarian cancer (ICD-10: C56), fallopian tube cancer (C57), primary peritoneal carcinoma (C48) or neoplasms of the ovary of uncertain or unknown behaviour (D39.1), excluding women with a borderline tumour derived from morphology data.

**Ovaries** - The ovaries are part of the female reproductive system. There are two ovaries, one on each side of the body. The ovaries produce an egg each month in women of childbearing age.

**PARP (poly-ADP ribose polymerase) inhibitors** - They are a type of targeted cancer drug and are used as part of the treatment for some women with ovarian cancer.

**Performance Indicator** - This is a measure of outcome or performance that can be quantified over a specified time frame against a set of targets or objectives.

**Performance status** - A classification system to describe a patient's functional status whilst performing routine activities of daily living. Scores range from 0 (fully active with no restrictions) to 5 (dead). Note: only scores of 0-4 will be included in the audit.

**Peritoneum** - The peritoneum is a thin layer of tissue lining the inside of the abdomen.

**Platinum-based chemotherapy** - This is a type of cancer treatment that involves drugs containing platinum ion compounds. It is used to treat a variety of cancers including ovarian.

**Primary care** - This encompasses healthcare provided in the community (for example General Practitioners) and is often the first point or initial contact for advice or treatment.

**Quarterly Reporting** - This is a summary report of findings from the audit that is published every three months.

**'Rapid' cancer registration dataset** - A dataset which provides a quicker source of cancer data compared to the gold standard registration process.

**RCS** - The Royal College of Surgeons of England is an independent professional body committed to enabling surgeons to achieve and maintain the highest standards of surgical practice and patient care. As part of this it supports audit and the evaluation of clinical effectiveness for surgery.

**SACT dataset** - Systemic Anti-Cancer Therapy is a dataset which contains information on the use of systemic anti-cancer therapies across all NHS England trusts.

**Stage / FIGO (International Federation of Gynaecology and Obstetrics) stage** - An international classification system to classify the extent of a cancer using information on where it has spread. Overall cancer stages range from 1 (localised disease) to 4 (advanced disease).

**Systemic anti-cancer therapy** - This is the treatment of cancer with drugs including chemotherapy and immunotherapy; the aim of this treatment is to destroy or damage cancer cells.

**Variation** - This encompasses the difference in healthcare process or outcomes compared to evidence-based guidelines.

**Wales Cancer Network** - This is part of the NHS Executive for Wales working to improve outcome and care for people with cancer in Wales.

**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.