

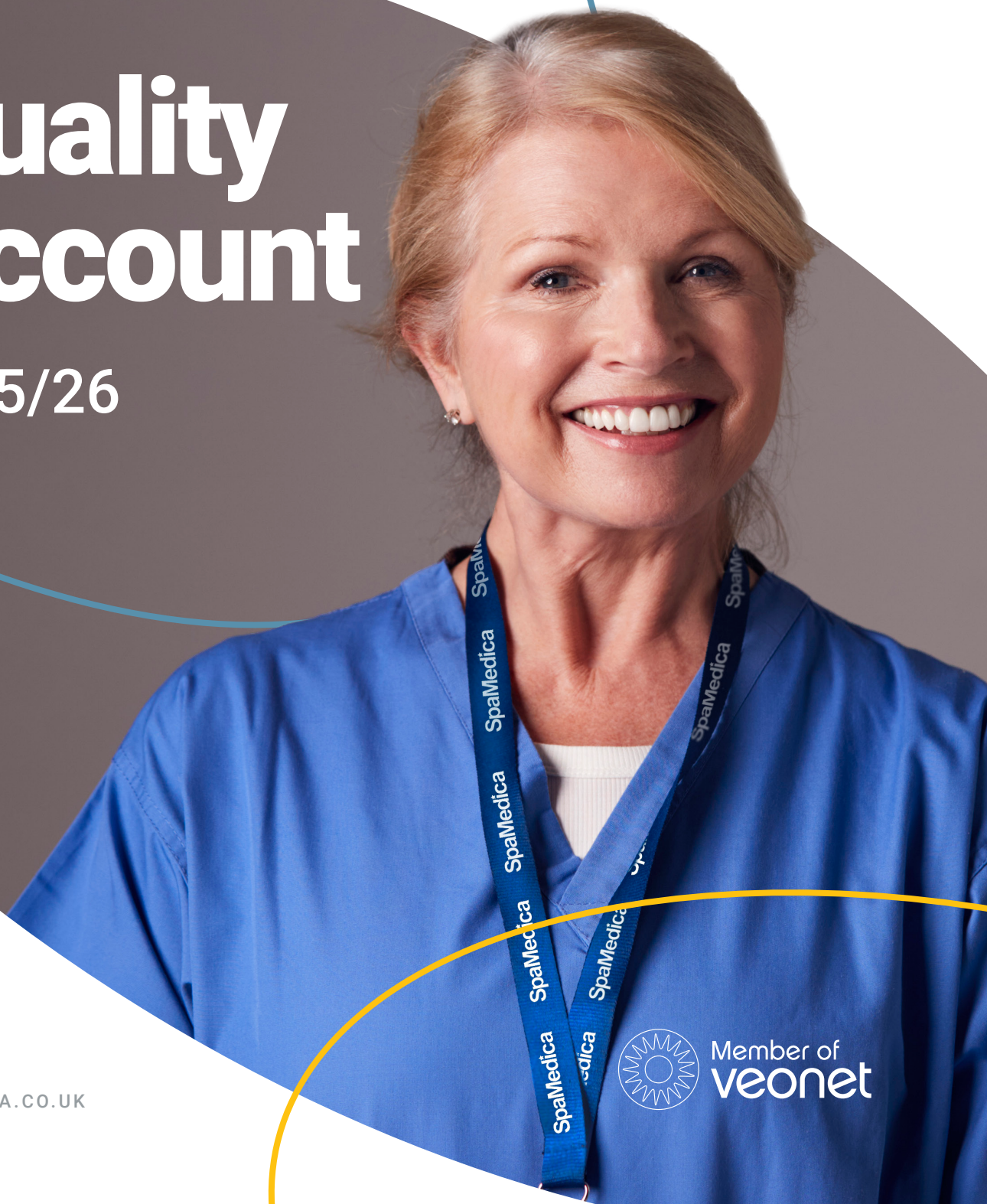
SpaMedica



Providing NHS services

Quality Account

2025/26



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Introduction

SpaMedica remains one of the UK's leading providers of NHS ophthalmology services, dedicated to bringing care closer to home for thousands of patients across the country. Working in partnership with the NHS, we continue to achieve excellent clinical outcomes, and improve patients' vision and quality of life.

As of 31st March 2026, SpaMedica was delivering ophthalmology services from 73 locations including 64 hospitals, 6 Community Diagnostic & Treatment Centres and 3 Diagnostic & Treatment Centres, supported by 1,664 colleagues across all sites. Our continued growth is guided by our core values of kindness, safety, transparency and integrity, which underpin how we care for patients, support each other and work collaboratively with our partners.

We are proud to support the ambitions of the NHS 10 Year Plan, aligning our approach to three key areas of transformation.

Hospital to community:

We have a long-standing track record of being able to treat patients in our local hospitals, improving access and convenience for patients closer to where they live. Our mobile diagnostic and treatment centres (DTCs) extend this even further, bringing care directly into local communities and helping more patients access timely treatment closer to home.

Sickness to prevention:

We continue to support a shift from sickness to prevention, recognising the vital role that timely eye care and screening can play in preventing long-term impact on patients' health and independence.

Analogue to digital:

Alongside this, we are increasing our focus on moving from analogue to digital, with planned investment to enhance systems, improve pathways and strengthen patient experience and clinical outcomes.

To support this transformation and our ongoing growth, we welcomed a Chief Transformation and Technology Officer to the board this year, strengthening our leadership capability as we continue to evolve our services in line with NHS priorities.

During 2025/26, the organisation maintained strong performance across all quality measures, achieved consistently high levels of patient satisfaction, introduced additional sub-specialty services and demonstrated resilience through a year of operational and clinical change. Everything we do remains focused on supporting safe, high-quality care, improving access for patients, and delivering positive outcomes that make a lasting difference.

SpaMedica has been awarded contracts with 40 of 42 English Integrated Care Boards, in addition to the Northern Ireland and Welsh Health Boards. We also support NHS trusts directly by treating long-wait patients through inter-provider transfers. This Quality Account has been shared with our ICB partners and incorporates feedback from patients and commissioners, ensuring it reflects shared priorities and a collective commitment to continuous improvement.

Chief Executive Officer's Statement

At SpaMedica, our purpose remains clear: to provide safe, high-quality ophthalmology care that improves lives while supporting the long-term sustainability of NHS services.

As I reflect on 2025/26, I am particularly proud of how our colleagues maintained consistently high standards of quality and safety throughout a year of significant commissioning controls, pathway changes and operational pressure across the healthcare system. NHS commissioners continued to balance national waiting time ambitions with wider financial and operational priorities, and in many areas introduced activity plans and refined referral pathways. Throughout this period, our focus remained steady: delivering safe, high-quality care, maintaining timely access for patients wherever possible, and supporting our NHS partners to meet local needs.

Despite this complex environment, SpaMedica continued to deliver strong and stable performance. Our median referral-to-treatment time remained broadly consistent at 4.7 weeks, compared with 4.4 weeks in the previous year, while patient satisfaction remained exceptionally high, with an average Net Promoter Score of 92. Clinical outcomes also continued to exceed national benchmarks across key quality indicators, including post-operative visual acuity, posterior capsule rupture rates and endophthalmitis rates, reflecting the consistency of care maintained throughout the year.

One of the most important lessons reinforced this year is that timely access to eye care matters. Independent research commissioned by SpaMedica highlighted the wider impact that delays to cataract treatment can have on patients' independence, wellbeing, mobility and use of wider health and care services. These findings underline the importance of ensuring patient outcomes remain at the heart of service planning and decision-making across the healthcare system.

We continued to support the NHS 10 year plan and its ambition to provide more care closer to home. Working alongside more than 6,000 community optometrists, over 120,000 post-operative checks were delivered in community settings during the year, helping patients access care more conveniently while supporting capacity within hospital services. Our Diagnostic and Treatment Centre model continued to demonstrate how specialist services can be delivered efficiently within local communities while maintaining excellent outcomes and patient experience.

Alongside improving access, we remained focused on quality, workforce development and innovation. We continued to invest in training and development across SpaMedica. We maintained mandatory training compliance above target and supported the next generation of ophthalmology professionals through placements, structured training programmes and education partnerships. These commitments are reflected in our broader approach to colleague development, inclusion and leadership.

During the year, we also launched our three-year Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy, strengthening our commitment to creating a more inclusive and representative organisation for both colleagues and patients. The strategy focuses on leadership accountability, colleague experience and inclusive behaviours. It helps to ensure that everyone feels respected, valued and able to access opportunities, while also supporting equitable access to high-quality care for the communities we serve.

I am equally proud of the culture we continue to build. Our annual Great Place to Work survey saw a 90% participation rate, with 71% of colleagues describing SpaMedica as a great place to work. We also made further progress in wellbeing, inclusion and colleague engagement, recognising that outstanding patient care is only possible when colleagues feel supported, valued and able to thrive.

Together, our colleagues lead with kindness, putting safety first, acting with integrity and working transparently to deliver outstanding eye care to our patients.

We also recognise our wider responsibilities as an organisation. During the year, we strengthened our sustainability commitments through practical actions that reduced energy consumption, improved environmental reporting and reduced unnecessary clinical waste without compromising patient safety or outcomes.

None of these achievements would have been possible without the professionalism, compassion and dedication of our colleagues. I would like to thank every colleague, patient, commissioner, community optometrist and partner for their continued trust and collaboration throughout the year.

While the healthcare landscape continues to evolve, our commitment remains unchanged: to deliver outstanding ophthalmology care, maintain consistently high quality, improve the lives of our patients and support the long-term sustainability of NHS services.

I have seen SpaMedica's Quality Account for 2025/26, which has been prepared in line with the requirements set out in the NHS Quality Accounts Regulations 2010 and subsequent amendments. This document reflects our commitment to transparency, accountability and continued partnership with NHS commissioners across the UK. I am satisfied this Quality Account is an accurate reflection of SpaMedica's performance and am proud of the high-quality service that we provide. We have also highlighted the areas where we wish to further improve the service we deliver to the NHS and our patients.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Richard Woodward', with a stylized flourish underneath.

Richard Woodward

Chief Executive Officer, SpaMedica

Chief Medical Officer's Statement

I am pleased to present this summary of SpaMedica's clinical quality and achievements for 2025/26.

Over the past year, we have continued to deliver high quality ophthalmic care for NHS patients, with safety, clinical outcomes and patient experience remaining consistently strong across all our services. Our performance continues to exceed national benchmarks, reflecting the expertise of our clinical teams and the strength of our governance processes.

Our surgical outcomes remain a key indicator of this. During the year (April 2025 - March 2026), 99.5% of procedures were completed without complication, with a posterior capsule rupture rate of 0.48% and an endophthalmitis rate of 0.001%. These results are significantly better than national thresholds and demonstrate our continued focus on delivering safe, effective care.

Alongside this, we have strengthened our clinical governance approach, making greater use of data, audit and structured learning. Our adoption of patient safety learning systems supports a culture of openness and continuous improvement, ensuring that learning is shared and acted upon consistently across all sites. We have also adopted and incorporated the recommendations of the The Royal College of Ophthalmologists sustainability guidance for cataract surgery, including the removal of routine post-operative plastic eye shields where clinically appropriate, supporting high-quality patient care while reducing unnecessary environmental impact.

This year also saw further development of our clinical services. We introduced new technologies and expanded sub-specialty pathways across glaucoma, vitreoretinal and macular care, improving the breadth and accessibility of treatment available to patients.

Education and training continue to be a defining strength of SpaMedica. More than 11 per cent of our clinical activity is delivered by trainees, supported within a robust and well-governed training environment. Trainee outcomes are excellent and exceed national benchmarks, with our work recognised through acceptance at the Royal College of Ophthalmologists Congress 2026.

We are proud to have received the LaingBuisson Awards for Excellence in Training this year, reflecting the high standards of education we provide. Our model has set a national benchmark for ophthalmology training within the independent sector. We have also continued to support the development of Specialty and Associate Specialist doctors, strengthening the wider workforce.

Our contribution to medical education has expanded further through a national contract to support undergraduate training, ensuring we play an active role in developing the future clinical workforce. I was also pleased to share our approach at the Developing Excellence in Medical Education Conference 2025, highlighting the importance of high quality training environments in delivering safe patient care.

In research and audit, we have continued to strengthen our contribution to national datasets, including submission to the National Ophthalmology Database Age-related Macular Degeneration audit. This supports transparency, benchmarking and ongoing improvement across the sector.

I am proud of the professionalism, skill and commitment shown by our clinical teams and our consultant and trainee surgeon partners throughout the year. Their focus on safety, quality and continuous improvement ensures that SpaMedica remains a trusted provider of NHS care.

As we look ahead, we will continue to build on these strong foundations, advancing innovation, strengthening training and maintaining the highest standards of clinical care for every patient we serve.



Dr Alex Silvester

*Chief Medical Officer,
SpaMedica*

Our Values

Our Mission:

To deliver timely, safe and high-quality eye care that protects and restores sight, improving lives through compassionate, patient-centred care.

Our Vision:

A UK where safe, outstanding eye care reaches everyone, so they can enjoy better vision for life.



Our Values:

Together, our colleagues lead with **kindness**, putting **safety** first, acting with **integrity** and working **transparently** to deliver outstanding eye care to our patients.

Every patient, every time; no exceptions, no excuses.



We listen with care



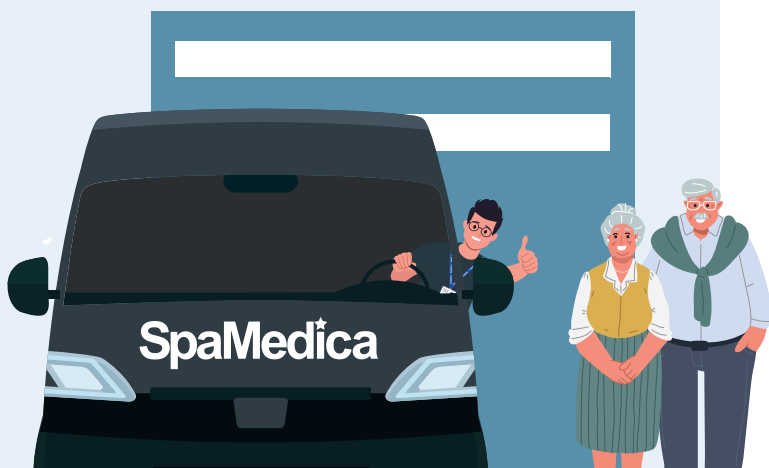
We act responsibly



We do the right thing, even when it's difficult



We share openly and use trusted routes



Highlights

SpaMedica Patient Safety and Quality Improvement Strategy 2025-2028 launched.



Quality Governance and Assurance tools launched.

96% of patients achieved post-operative visual acuity of 6/12 or better.

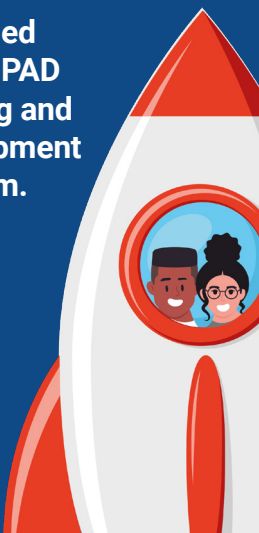
Achieved excellent surgical outcomes exceeding national benchmarks in the National Ophthalmology Database (NOD) audit.

92% of patients said they would recommend SpaMedica to friends and family.



Continued to provide a 24/7 patient support and emergency triage service.

Launched LaunchPAD learning and development platform.



Worked in partnership with over **6,000** community optometrists.

Recognised by Great Place to Work as a Best Workplace for Development, Wellbeing and Women.

Recognised by the LaingBuisson Award for Excellence in Training.

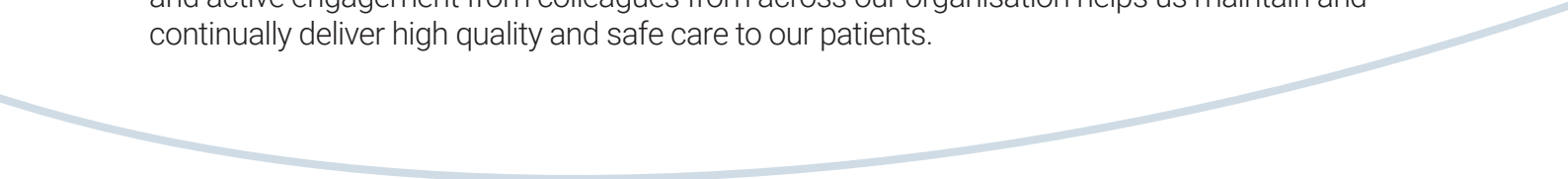
Launched SpaMedica Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Strategy 2025-2028



Quality Priorities

All Quality Priorities that were set to be delivered during the 2025/2026 Quality Year have been fully achieved. Some of the highlights includes the creation of an overarching Digital Quality Dashboard and a re-fresh of our Clinical Governance arrangements.

All our changes and improvements reflects SpaMedica's consistent and disciplined approach to Quality Governance, Improvement and demonstrates strong governance, clear accountability and active engagement from colleagues from across our organisation helps us maintain and continually deliver high quality and safe care to our patients.

**01**

Insights and Quality Data

Strengthening how we use data to drive improvement and assurance.

02

Targeted Organisational Learning for Improvement

Embedding structured learning to continuously improve care.

03

Quality Improvement Capacity and Capability

Building the skills and infrastructure needed to deliver improvement.

04

Embedding Sustained Change and Improvement

Ensuring improvements are maintained and embedded into everyday practice.

01

Insights and Quality Data

Strengthening how we use data to drive improvement and assurance.

How we measured, improved and responded in 2025/2026

We have significantly enhanced our approach to quality data, ensuring that insight is timely, accessible and actionable.



Key actions delivered:

- Development of clearly defined improvement plans with input from multidisciplinary teams
- Implementation of an electronic Quality Dashboard to improve visibility of performance
- Introduction of consistent monthly, quarterly and annual reporting cycles to support assurance and Board oversight

These improvements have strengthened data-driven decision making across all levels of the organisation. Teams now have greater visibility of performance, enabling earlier identification of risks and more proactive improvement.

SpaMedica Quality Priorities 2026/27

Why this matters:

High quality data and meaningful insight are essential to understanding performance, identifying risk and driving improvement. This priority focuses on strengthening our digital and reporting capabilities to ensure we have clear, reliable and accessible information across the organisation.

How this will improve care:

- Providing timely and robust quality reporting to identify trends, themes and emerging risks
- Enabling data-driven decision making aligned to safety, performance and assurance
- Supporting a more balanced and comprehensive view of patient safety and quality

How will we report and monitor our progress?

- Updated Quality Assurance Framework to reflect enhanced oversight and reporting
- Fully operational electronic Quality Dashboard with clear engagement across teams
- Development of bespoke Quality Improvement dashboards for each core workstream

02

Targeted Organisational Learning for Improvement

Embedding structured learning to continuously improve care.

How we measured, improved and responded in 2025/2026

We have strengthened how we capture, share and act on learning across the organisation.

Key actions delivered:

- Development of annual Quality Assurance and Improvement Plans across key quality areas, aligned to our Quality Strategy
- Implementation of structured reporting cycles to ensure learning is regularly reviewed and acted upon

This has supported a more consistent and transparent approach to organisational learning. Learning from incidents, audits and feedback is now more effectively translated into practical improvements in care.

Achieved



SpaMedica Quality Priorities 2026/27

Using insight and evidence to shape and deliver meaningful improvement.

Why this matters:

Organisational learning is central to improving quality. By bringing together insight from patient safety data, feedback and governance processes, we can better understand where change is needed and ensure improvement activity is targeted and effective.

How this will improve care:

- Strengthening how we review and interpret quality data and delivery models
- Applying a range of methodologies to assess systems and processes
- Using insight to apply and drive key Quality Improvement priorities

How will we report and monitor our progress?

- Development of a proposal to utilise national patient safety tools to review patient and colleague interactions within our clinical and operational model
- Local and regional Quality Improvement Plans in place, informed by triangulated data and evidential learning
- Recruitment of Patient Safety and Quality Improvement Partner roles to strengthen leadership and delivery



Quality Improvement Capacity and Capability

Building the skills and infrastructure needed to deliver improvement.

How we measured, improved and responded in 2025/2026

We have invested in developing our organisational capability to lead and sustain quality improvement.

Key actions delivered:

- Development of a draft Quality Improvement Delivery Plan for organisational adoption
- Establishment of a National Quality Improvement Training Plan, including the development of a Quality Improvement Academy
- Strengthened oversight through regular reporting to the Patient Safety and Quality Improvement Working Group

These actions have increased capability and confidence in quality improvement across our teams, supporting a more structured and sustainable approach to delivering change



SpaMedica Quality Priorities 2026/27

Why this matters:

Sustainable improvement depends on the capability of our colleagues. This priority focuses on equipping teams with the tools, training and support needed to lead and deliver quality improvement effectively.

How this will improve care:

- Supporting teams and stakeholders to actively engage in improvement
- Promoting open sharing of learning and best practice
- Embedding Quality Improvement knowledge through structured development

How will we report and monitor our progress?

- Confirmed operational delivery plan for a national Quality Improvement programme and QI Academy, preparing for launch in 2027/28
- Development of dedicated Patient Safety Coaching for approval and rollout
- Creation of a centralised Quality Improvement Plan and matrix, aligning local, regional and national activity leadership and delivery

04

Embedding Sustained Change and Improvement

Ensuring improvements are maintained and embedded into everyday practice.

How we measured, improved and responded in 2025/2026

We have focused on moving from improvement activity to sustained, long-term change.

Key actions delivered:

- Development of a draft Sustained Change and Improvement Plan
- Ongoing monitoring and assurance through monthly, quarterly and annual reporting cycles via the Patient Safety and Quality Improvement Working Group

This has strengthened our ability to embed and maintain improvements over time, ensuring that changes translate into lasting benefits for patients and services.



SpaMedica Quality Priorities 2026/27

Why this matters:

Delivering improvement is only part of the journey. Sustaining change ensures that learning leads to long-term benefits for patients. This priority focuses on embedding improvement into routine practice and organisational culture.

How this will improve care:

- Ensuring improvement activity is consistently applied and maintained across teams
- Creating a clear link between learning, behaviour and day-to-day practice
- Strengthening a culture of continuous improvement across the organisation

How will we report and monitor our progress?

- Delivery of a communications and engagement approach to support the sharing of patient safety, experience and improvement learning across the organisation
- Launch our Sustained Change and Improvement Framework

Summary

These priorities reflect a continued commitment to strengthening how we use data, learn, improve and sustain change. By building on strong foundations, we will ensure that quality improvement remains embedded in everyday practice and continues to enhance patient outcomes, safety and experience across SpaMedica.



Clinical Quality Indicators

SpaMedica continues to deliver consistently strong clinical outcomes that are in line with, and in many areas exceed, national benchmarks. These results are underpinned by robust pre-operative assessment, accurate biometry, standardised surgical pathways and structured post-operative review processes, all of which support safe, high-quality and consistent care for patients.

We monitor a defined set of clinical quality indicators to provide clear assurance on outcomes, safety and the overall quality of care across all services. These indicators are aligned to national standards where available and are reviewed through regular clinical governance cycles. Performance is routinely scrutinised through audit, with findings discussed openly across clinical teams to identify variation, understand root causes and drive continuous improvement. This approach ensures that learning is embedded in practice and that high standards are maintained consistently across all sites.



Cataract Surgery Clinical Outcomes

Cataract surgery outcomes are a key measure of surgical quality and patient benefit. We monitor both functional vision improvement and refractive accuracy following surgery.

Post-operative visual acuity (VA)

Benchmark: 95%

SpaMedica:
96%

Indicator: Percentage of patients achieving 6/12 vision or better following cataract surgery.

Benchmark: Nationally recognised target is 95% achieving 6/12 or better (depending on case mix and pre-existing ocular comorbidity)

Refractive Outcome Accuracy

Benchmark: $\geq 85\%$

SpaMedica:
93%

Indicator: Percentage of patients within ± 1.00 dioptre of predicted refractive outcome.

Benchmark: National benchmark is typically $\geq 85\%$ within target range

Post-Operative Infection: Endophthalmitis

Benchmark: 0.1%

SpaMedica:
0.001%

Endophthalmitis is a rare but serious complication of intraocular surgery.

Benchmark: Approximately 0.1% or lower

Posterior capsular rupture (PCR)

Benchmark: 0.5-1.5%

SpaMedica:
0.48%

Indicator: Unadjusted PCR rate across all cataract surgery activity.

Benchmark: National rates typically range between 0.5%–1.5%, depending on case complexity and setting

Commentary

SpaMedica maintains strong clinical outcomes across key cataract surgery quality indicators, supported by robust risk stratification, senior surgical oversight, and standardised high-volume pathways.

Patients are assessed pre-operatively and stratified according to clinical risk, with clear escalation processes for more complex cataract cases to ensure patient safety and appropriate surgical planning.

These outcomes reflect consistent clinical quality, supported by structured governance processes and continuous monitoring through internal review and external benchmarking.

SpaMedica submits post-operative cataract surgery data to the National Ophthalmic Database (NOD) audit for all eligible patients, whether follow-up care takes place within SpaMedica or through accredited community optometrists.

Participation in the NOD audit enables SpaMedica to benchmark outcomes against other NHS cataract providers, supports continuous quality improvement, and provides independent external assurance of clinical performance through publicly available reporting.

Medical Retina Services and Sight Support

Medical retina conditions, including wet age-related macular degeneration (AMD), diabetic macular oedema (DMO) and retinal vein occlusion (RVO), are a leading cause of sight impairment in the UK. Early referral, diagnosis and treatment are critical to preserving vision and quality of life.

SpaMedica continued participation in the National Ophthalmology Database (NOD) AMD Audit, supporting benchmarking against national clinical standards. The most recent audit highlighted ongoing access challenges across the wider NHS pathway, with fewer than half of patients starting treatment within the recommended 14-day timeframe (National Ophthalmology Database AMD Audit, Year 4, Patients Starting Treatment for Neovascular AMD in the 2023 NHS Year (1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024), published May 2026). These findings reflect wider capacity pressures across the healthcare system rather than the performance of any individual provider. In response, during 2025/26 SpaMedica engaged with commissioners to discuss how its established pathways and national network of hospitals could help support improved access to treatment within recommended timeframes. SpaMedica will continue these discussions during 2026/27.

Quality and safety continue to be supported through robust governance processes, including incident reporting, audit and multidisciplinary review, with learning embedded into training and service improvement. Care is delivered by a multidisciplinary team including consultant ophthalmologists, optometrists and nurse injectors. During the year, nurse injectors were upskilled to deliver intravitreal dexamethasone (Ozurdex) implants, and hydroxychloroquine monitoring services continued across five hospitals.

In line with NHS England commissioning guidance, aflibercept 2mg biosimilar was introduced as a first-line treatment where clinically appropriate. SpaMedica has rolled this out across all hospitals providing medical retina services during 2025/26. By 31 March 2026, 49% of patients receiving anti-VEGF therapy were treated with biosimilars, with no impact on patient outcomes or safety. Based on published drug costs and SpaMedica activity data, switching suitable patients from branded treatments to biosimilar equivalents can reduce drug acquisition costs by approximately 66% on a like-for-like basis.

During 2025/26, SpaMedica delivered medical retina services across:

26**Hospitals****993****Patients helped
by Sight Support****2
weeks****All referred patients were
contacted and offered a first
assessment within two weeks****5,773****Active Patients**

Sight Support Service

Care at SpaMedica is supported by our Sight Support service, with Eye Care Liaison Officers (ECLOs) providing timely, holistic support to patients and families to help them understand and manage the impact of sight loss.

Our ECLO service ensures patients receive joined-up clinical and practical support, linking hospital care with community services to improve continuity of care and patient experience. Through our Sight Support service, ECLOs provide early, proactive support to patients and families, helping them navigate diagnosis, treatment pathways and onward referrals. ECLOs at SpaMedica provide integrated support alongside clinical teams, ensuring patients receive coordinated care that addresses both clinical and non-clinical needs.

During 2025/26, the Sight Support team provided support to approximately 1,000 patients, including:

- Certification of Vision Impairment guidance
- Low vision and rehabilitation referrals
- Welfare and benefits advice
- Emotional and psychosocial support
- Signposting to national and local charities, including the Macular Society

Evidence shows that proactive ECLO involvement can help patients follow treatment plans, reduce missed appointments and improve overall experience and outcomes, particularly for those facing complex or sudden sight loss ^[5].



Thanks for not only communicating by email and telephone but actually taking time to travel across country to offer her personal support at times when problems have arisen connected with my AMD treatments or any other procedural patient issues at SpaMedica, my feelings of confidence and general wellbeing and security with my condition and treatment have been assured.

Sight Support Patient



Clinical Coding Audit Results



Quarterly independent audits of 200 Finished Consultant Episodes consistently exceeded national standards



100% accuracy achieved for procedure coding across all audits



No significant errors or concerning trends identified



Strong assurance of data accuracy, governance and reporting reliability

SpaMedica's clinical coding team uses electronic patient records and the patient administration system, supported by national clinical coding standards, to accurately code each episode of care. Anonymised data is submitted monthly to the NHS Secondary Uses Service and shared with commissioners for activity validation and assurance.

Independent audits confirm consistently high coding accuracy and full compliance with national standards, demonstrating robust governance and reliable data to support reporting and decision-making.

Efficient Use of NHS Resources (EUR) Audit Results

To support appropriate use of NHS-funded cataract surgery, clinicians are required to comply with local contractual commissioning criteria.

The Principal Optometrist undertakes quarterly audits across all hospitals, reviewing a sample of optometrist assessments to confirm that clinical findings appropriately support the decision to proceed with surgery and that documentation meets required standards.

These audits provide assurance that patient selection is appropriate, commissioning criteria are consistently applied, and decision-making is well documented across the organisation.

Data Security and Protection Toolkit (DSPT) and Information Governance

SpaMedica maintains a strong approach to data security and information governance, supported by clear roles, oversight and specialist expertise.

Our Chief Medical Officer acts as Caldicott Guardian and contributes to oversight of information governance through the Information Security Group, chaired by the Chief Finance Officer. A dedicated Data Protection Officer provides specialist leadership and support across the organisation.

The Data Protection Officer supports the quarterly Information Security and Governance Committee, leads on information governance policies and works closely with the Head of IT to ensure staff receive regular updates and guidance on data protection and cyber security.

Our most recent Data Security and Protection Toolkit submission is in preparation for June 2026.

Our Cyber Essentials Plus certification was successfully renewed in 2026, providing further external assurance of our cyber security standards.

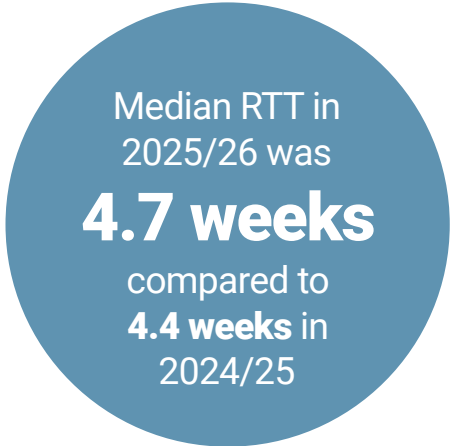


Referral to Treatment Times

During 2025/26, many Integrated Care Boards (ICBs) across England applied stronger financial controls to commissioner-set activity plans, resulting in new pathway controls which SpaMedica implemented in line with local commissioner requirements.

As a result of these changes, some patients waited longer for their treatment than they would otherwise have done. Throughout this period, SpaMedica continued to work closely with NHS commissioners, recognising the wider pressures on the system and the need to manage capacity and resources effectively. Our focus remained on maintaining safe, high quality care while supporting system requirements and continuing to prioritise patients and colleagues through a period of operational change.

SpaMedica’s overall waiting times remained relatively stable during 2025/26. The median waiting time was 4.7 weeks, compared with 4.4 weeks in the previous year. This reflects the introduction of commissioner-set activity plans and pathway controls across parts of the organisation during the year. Despite these changes, SpaMedica continued to provide timely access to care while maintaining high standards of patient safety and quality.



Month	Non-IPT	IPT	All
April 2025	4.0	6.0	4.0
May 2025	4.0	7.0	4.0
June 2025	4.0	8.0	4.0
July 2025	4.0	4.0	4.0
August 2025	4.0	6.0	4.0
September 2025	4.0	2.0	4.0
October 2025	5.0	0.0	5.0
November 2025	5.0	8.0	5.0
December 2025	6.0	0.0	6.0
January 2026	8.0	21.0	8.0
February 2026	7.0	22.0	7.0
March 2026	7.0	2.0	7.0
Total	4.5	6.0	4.7

IPT
Inter-Provider Transfers

Non-IPT
Non Inter-Provider Transfers

Inter-provider transfer (IPT) activity reflects patients who have transferred to SpaMedica from another provider to support timely access to care. As the referral to treatment waiting time clock begins before transfer, reported waiting times for IPT patients are typically longer than for patients referred directly into SpaMedica services.

Patient Impact and System Insight

During 2025/26, SpaMedica commissioned research to better understand the wider impact on patients of extended waiting times for cataract surgery, including in areas where commissioner-set activity plans and pathway controls affected the timing of treatment.

The research was conducted by ZPB Associates, an independent health economics consultancy, on behalf of SpaMedica. It drew on structured surveys completed by 520 patients awaiting or recently treated for cataract surgery and 300 carers, with fieldwork carried out in late 2025. Respondents were drawn from a nationally representative sample and were not limited to SpaMedica patients. A number of patient charities, including Age UK, RNIB and Fight for Sight, alongside leading ophthalmology clinicians, supported the dissemination of this work, reflecting the wider relevance of the findings across health and care services. The full findings were shared with key policy makers in spring 2026 and will be published in summer 2026.

The research identified significant wider impacts of delayed treatment on patients and the health and care system. These include:

**85%**

report further deterioration in vision while waiting

**92%**

change their driving habits, with 29% stopping driving altogether

**31%**

of working age people with cataracts have to reduce their working hours

**69%**

report worsening mental health

**19%**

of people waiting for cataract surgery report attending A&E or receiving treatment following a trip or fall while waiting

**33%**

require additional GP appointments

**28%**

report increased reliance on social care or home support

These findings highlight the broader consequences of delayed access to cataract surgery for individual patients, for NHS primary and emergency services, and for social care. SpaMedica has shared this evidence with commissioners and policy makers to support informed decision-making on activity planning, pathway design, and resource allocation.

Patient Experience & Feedback

We actively seek and value feedback from patients to help us understand what we are doing well and where we need to improve. We collect feedback throughout the patient journey using a range of methods, including face-to-face comments, written feedback, surveys, 5-star reviews, and formal complaints and compliments.

This continuous feedback helps us identify themes in patient experience and supports ongoing service improvement across all hospitals.

Between January and December 2025, 17,670 patients responded to the Net Promoter Score (NPS) question within our monthly satisfaction survey: "How likely are you to recommend SpaMedica to friends and family?"

Across 2025, SpaMedica achieved an average NPS score of 92. For context, an NPS score above 80 is considered exceptional within healthcare, reflecting the high levels of patient satisfaction, trust, and confidence in the care we provide.

Rated 'Excellent'



★ Trustpilot



First class experience

My experience of the care from first visit to leaving after surgery exceeded every expectation. All the staff were efficient and reassuring at every step of the journey exuding a high level of competence delivered with a friendly and very human touch. As a nervous patient I was reassured and felt safe. First class service from a brilliant team.

Neil



Quality of care, professional service

Quality of care, professional service, the staff are very empathetic and caring. I had a fantastic job done on both my eyes. Recently after a visit to my optician I have been told I no longer need glasses for driving. Wonderful result, hip hip hooray!

Christopher Bagley





Positive experience

On behalf of both my parents who have attended a week ago for cataract surgery they both cannot fault the service received. From pre-op to then operation day! All staff very attentive, friendly and informative and felt looked after and relaxed throughout the whole procedure. Thank you!

Sharon Cooper



A first class service from start to finish

Having been an NHS provider prior to retirement, I was absolutely delighted with the care and attention provided by SpaMedica. Excellent appointment booking service and initial assessment. State of the art equipment in a modern clean secure building with parking. Staff very patient centred and I noted they met all the patients needs as they booked in. They inspired confidence in the surgery ahead. Day of procedure was seamless, again well received and informed at every step. Each step is explained perfectly by staff. Cannot praise Consultant surgeon Mr P Singh and his expert team enough. I loved the fact Mr Singh sees you personally to explain things with a very professional bedside manner. Similarly discharge and post op care carefully explained. Vision is an emotive thing and I got a clear picture that they understood the patients concerns and feelings. So, congratulations Blackpool SpaMedica, management, investigation and surgical teams on providing a fabulous service and thank you so much.

Dayhu Mistry



Excellent service

From the first consultation to my cataract surgery on the 29th October I have found the whole experience excellent. All the staff have been very pleasant and the surgeon certainly put me at ease. What a difference it makes to my vision and I now look forward to having the other eye done.

Carole Priestman



92%

of patients would
recommend
SpaMedica to friends
and family



Complaints Overview

During the 2025/26 quality year, SpaMedica received 332 formal complaints, compared with 226 in 2024/25. Formal complaints accounted for 0.056% of overall activity in 2025/26, compared with 0.043% in the previous year. This represents a small year-on-year increase in the proportion of activity resulting in a formal complaint.

This change reflects a combination of factors, including a modest increase in activity and a deliberate programme of work to strengthen complaints handling. This has included improved training and clearer guidance for colleagues to ensure concerns are correctly identified, categorised and recorded in line with statutory definitions.

As a result, there is greater consistency and accuracy in reporting. Fewer issues are now being misclassified as informal feedback, with more appropriately recorded as formal complaints. The increase therefore reflects improved reporting quality, transparency and organisational oversight rather than a decline in care quality.

Overall, this provides greater assurance that concerns raised by patients and families are being appropriately captured, monitored and responded to.



2025/26

0.056%

of overall activity
resulting in a formal
complaint



2024/25

0.043%

of overall activity
resulting in a formal
complaint

Complaints and Learning from Feedback

Over the last 12 months, focused action has been taken to address the complaint theme of attitude and behaviour, which had been the consistently highest reported complaint theme across previous years and was therefore identified as a priority area for improvement.

Clinical and operational leads worked alongside People & Culture Business Partners to undertake a detailed review of complaint data. This analysis provided a deeper understanding of recurring issues across colleague groups and identified a specific and consistent concern relating to surgeon communication and patient interaction during consultations.

In response, a coordinated programme of improvement was introduced. This included structured professional conversations, targeted coaching and mentorship, delivered through the Associate Medical Director and the Surgeon Relationship Manager. These interventions focused on professional conduct, communication and reinforcing patient-centred values within clinical practice.

The impact of this work is reflected in Quarter 4 data, where attitude and behaviour reduced from the most frequently reported complaint theme to the second most common theme. This demonstrates the effectiveness of targeted leadership oversight and behavioural support in addressing longstanding issues and improving patient experience.

Overall, this programme provides assurance that learning from complaints is being actively used to drive improvement, with measurable impact and continued oversight in place to support sustained progress.



Patient support and safety

SpaMedica takes full responsibility for patients throughout their care journey, including the rare occasions when a patient has concerns following their procedure. To help reduce pressure on NHS Hospital Eye Care services, we provide a dedicated patient support service, available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. This service is supported by a rota of on-call ophthalmologists, optometrists and senior managers to ensure patients receive timely and appropriate care whenever they need it.

Our Calls Answering Triage System (CATS) helps us to ensure that any patients who call the Contact Centre with clinical questions are contacted by our in-house optometrists as soon as possible. CATS is designed to place high priority calls at the top of the list, followed by pre-surgery queries and standard clinical calls.

We have also increased the number of ophthalmologists and optometrists supporting our on-call service to reflect the growth of the organisation and to ensure that patients get the specialist support they need, 24 hours a day. The number of times we need to use the emergency call out team is low, but we move quickly to minimise risk, opening our hospitals out of hours to triage and treat patients when required.

Urgent surgery and consultation appointments are also available for patients so we can be confident that there is capacity for patients who need to be seen quickly.

**24/7
emergency
service**



Patient support, safety and learning

SpaMedica reported 3,793 Learning from Patient Safety Events (LFPSE) in 2025/26, equating to 0.61% of total activity. This remained consistently below 1% throughout the reporting period.

This represents a reduction from 0.66% in 2024/25. The change reflects improved data validation following post-review learning, where a small number of previously recorded events were found not to meet national LFPSE reporting definitions. A reduction in overall clinical activity during 2025/26, partly influenced by Indicative Activity Plans (IAPs), also contributed to the change.

Analysis of reported events showed that the majority resulted in no harm or low harm to patients, with moderate harm and above incidents remaining uncommon. All moderate harm and above incidents are reviewed monthly, quarterly and annually through SpaMedica's quality and assurance processes to ensure learning is identified, actions are implemented and improvements are shared across the organisation.

Harm is categorised in line with NHS England guidance. All LFPSE data is reported via the national system and is accessible to Integrated Care Boards through the LFPSE portal.

Overall harm levels remained low throughout 2025/26, with no new or significant learning themes identified across sites or Integrated Care Boards. Learning from patient safety events continues to support service improvements, strengthen governance arrangements and enhance the safety and quality of care provided to patients.

LFPSE reporting
consistently

below 1%

of activity
throughout
the year.

Overall levels of harm remain consistently low, and no material or significant learning themes have been identified by site or ICB that fall outside of our current known learning profile across 2025/2026 Quality Year.



Clinical Audits

Clinical audits are conducted regularly to measure the effectiveness of care delivery. All SpaMedica hospitals undertake monthly observational audits, the outcomes of which are shared regionally and nationally through either Clinical Governance, regional and/or Board meetings.

Overall
combined hospital
audit scores for
2025/2026 remain
consistently high and
above 95%

Local Clinical Audit	Quality Improvement Aim	Objectives All audits must achieve a 95% score rate or will require repeating and actions added to the Hospital Action Plan
Infection Prevention	Ensures compliance with health regulations, NICE guidance, and NHS guidelines to enhance patient safety and improve infection prevention measures	- Quarterly IPC Audits - Monitor and review Infection Rates - Supports patient safety improvement, feedback and education
Hand Hygiene	Ensures healthcare workers always perform safe and effective hand hygiene therefore minimising the potential for healthcare related cross infection and contamination	- Monthly Hand Hygiene Audits (review of 10 staff) - Monitor and review Infection Rates - Supports patient safety improvement, feedback, and education
Safeguarding	Ensures the protection of vulnerable individuals from harm and neglect, ensuring their safety through a collaborative decision-making process where possible and allowing individuals to live independently with dignity and security	- Quarterly Safeguarding Audits Monitor and review Incidents - Supports patient safety improvement, feedback, and education - Stop abuse
Surgical Safety	Ensures the Standardisation of operating theatre care, enhancing communication and reducing complications and mortality rates	- Quarterly surgical safety Audits - Monitor and review WHO Safety Checklist compliance - Supports patient safety improvement, feedback, and education
Consent	Ensures patients are fully informed of risks and benefits	- Quarterly Audits - Supports patient safety improvement, feedback, and education
Urgent Care	Ensure consistent monitoring and review of the provision of high quality urgent medical care to assure staff, visitors and patient wellbeing and safety including onward referral	- Quarterly Urgent Care Audits - Monitors and reviews practice and rescue readiness equipment - Supports patient safety improvement, feedback, and education

Meds Management Department	Ensures compliance with health regulations to reduce medicine errors, enhance patient safety and promote the safe handling of medicines and best practice	- Quarterly Meds Management Audits Monitors and reviews prescribing practice, documentation & compliance to formulary and legislation - Supports patient safety improvement, feedback, and education
IVOM	Ensures consistent monitoring and review of the provision of high-quality medical retina services and care delivered within agreed timescales within agreed outcomes	- Quarterly Audits - Supports monitoring of patient outcomes, incidents and themes and learning - Supports patient safety improvement, feedback and education
Sedation	Ensure consistent monitoring and review of the provision of high-quality sedation services and care delivered within agreed timescales within agreed outcomes	- Real Time Audits For Every patient at the point of delivery - Ensures whole team approach to patient safety improvement, feedback and education
Daily Safety Huddle	Ensures any current safety issues risks or additional patient support needed have been discussed, highlighted, and communicated to the teams	- Quarterly Audits - Ensures whole team approach to patient safety Supports patient safety improvement, feedback and education
Theatre Brief/ Debrief	Ensures any current safety issues risks or additional patient support needed have been discussed, highlighted, and communicated to the teams	- Quarterly Audits - Ensures whole team approach to patient safety Supports patient safety improvement, feedback and education
Laser Safety	Ensure compliance to regulatory legislation and safety	- Quarterly Audits - Supports patient safety improvement, feedback and education
Clinical Documentation	Ensures compliance to legislation, professional body codes, best practice, and patient safety	- Quarterly Audits - Ensures whole team approach to patient safety Supports patient safety improvement, feedback and education
Biometry & Diagnostics	Ensures compliance to legislation, best practice, and patient safety	- Quarterly Audits - Supports patient safety improvement, feedback and education

Maintaining high quality and low complication rates

Quality assurance for surgeons

We regularly review surgeons against a defined set of criteria, including complication rates, visual outcomes, and patient feedback, to maintain high standards of surgical performance and patient care. These metrics are reviewed regularly at Board and Medical Advisory Committee (MAC) meetings, alongside clearly defined standards that ensure expectations are consistently met, with remedial action plans implemented where improvement is required.

Regional Lead Surgeons work alongside surgeons who are new to SpaMedica for a defined period, providing oversight and assurance that surgical skills and standards meet organisational expectations. The Responsible Officer (RO), working through MAC governance processes, supports the onboarding of new surgeons and granting of practising privileges, and ensures appropriate external clinical governance is maintained through alignment with each surgeon's designated body and their own Responsible Officer.

Quality assurance for optometrists

The feedback we receive about our optometrists is consistently good. We monitor average time in clinic, completion of electronic patient records and percentage of patients listed for complex and standard lists from cataract clinics.

Evidence of the decision to treat is audited as part of our contractual compliance, by site and by clinician. Our Regional Optometry Leads ensure all our optometrists have the appropriate level of support and development. We support non-medical prescriber training and have monthly evening education sessions for our optom team, with weekly tutorials for each optom with their line manager. This rigorous approach ensures we uphold high standards, but it also reflects our belief in leading with integrity, acting with transparency, and creating a safe learning environment where clinicians feel supported to improve and grow.



CQC Inspection Results

We aim to ensure that standards, systems and processes are consistent across all of our hospitals and strive for excellence in everything we do. Examples of best practice are shared across the organisation, and all our hospitals benefit from regular audits and robust governance processes. We continue to work closely with our teams to maintain positive local relationships with the Care Quality Commission and to support inspections across our growing network of hospitals.

As of 31st March 2026, 36 SpaMedica locations had received a published CQC rating. Of these, 12 were rated Outstanding and 24 were rated Good. The remaining locations were either awaiting inspection or had not yet received a published CQC rating. Across all locations inspected and rated by the CQC, 100% were rated Good or Outstanding, reflecting our continued focus on delivering safe, effective, high-quality care for NHS patients.

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SpaMedica Wakefield

Report published: February 2022

SpaMedica Widnes

Report published: July 2022

SpaMedica Preston

Report published: August 2022

SpaMedica Romford

Report published: October 2022

SpaMedica Stockton-on-Tees

Report published: October 2022

SpaMedica Bromley

Report published: October 2022

SpaMedica Poole

Report published: January 2023

SpaMedica Liverpool

Report published: January 2023

SpaMedica Peterborough

Report published: March 2023

SpaMedica Newcastle-under-Lyme

Report published: May 2023

SpaMedica Doncaster

Report published: October 2023

SpaMedica Gloucester

Report published: November 2024

24



SpaMedica Bolton

Report published: December 2019

SpaMedica Manchester

Report published: December 2019

SpaMedica Wirral

Report published: January 2020

SpaMedica Birmingham

Report published: January 2022

SpaMedica Epsom

Report published: May 2022

SpaMedica Brighton

Report published: May 2022

SpaMedica Wolverhampton

Report published: August 2022

SpaMedica Hull

Report published: August 2022

SpaMedica Wokingham

Report published: September 2022

SpaMedica Watford

Report published: October 2022

SpaMedica Bedford

Report published: October 2022

SpaMedica Coventry

Report published: November 2022

SpaMedica Norwich

Report published: November 2022

SpaMedica Bristol

Report published: December 2022

SpaMedica Derby

Report published: June 2023

SpaMedica Gateshead

Report published: June 2023

SpaMedica Leeds

Report published: July 2023

SpaMedica Kendal

Report published: August 2023

SpaMedica Newark

Report published: November 2023

SpaMedica Leicester

Report published: November 2023

SpaMedica Solihull

Report published: July 2025

SpaMedica Portsmouth

Report published: October 2025

SpaMedica Southampton

Report published: March 2026

SpaMedica Truro

Report published: April 2026

Workforce and Talent Development

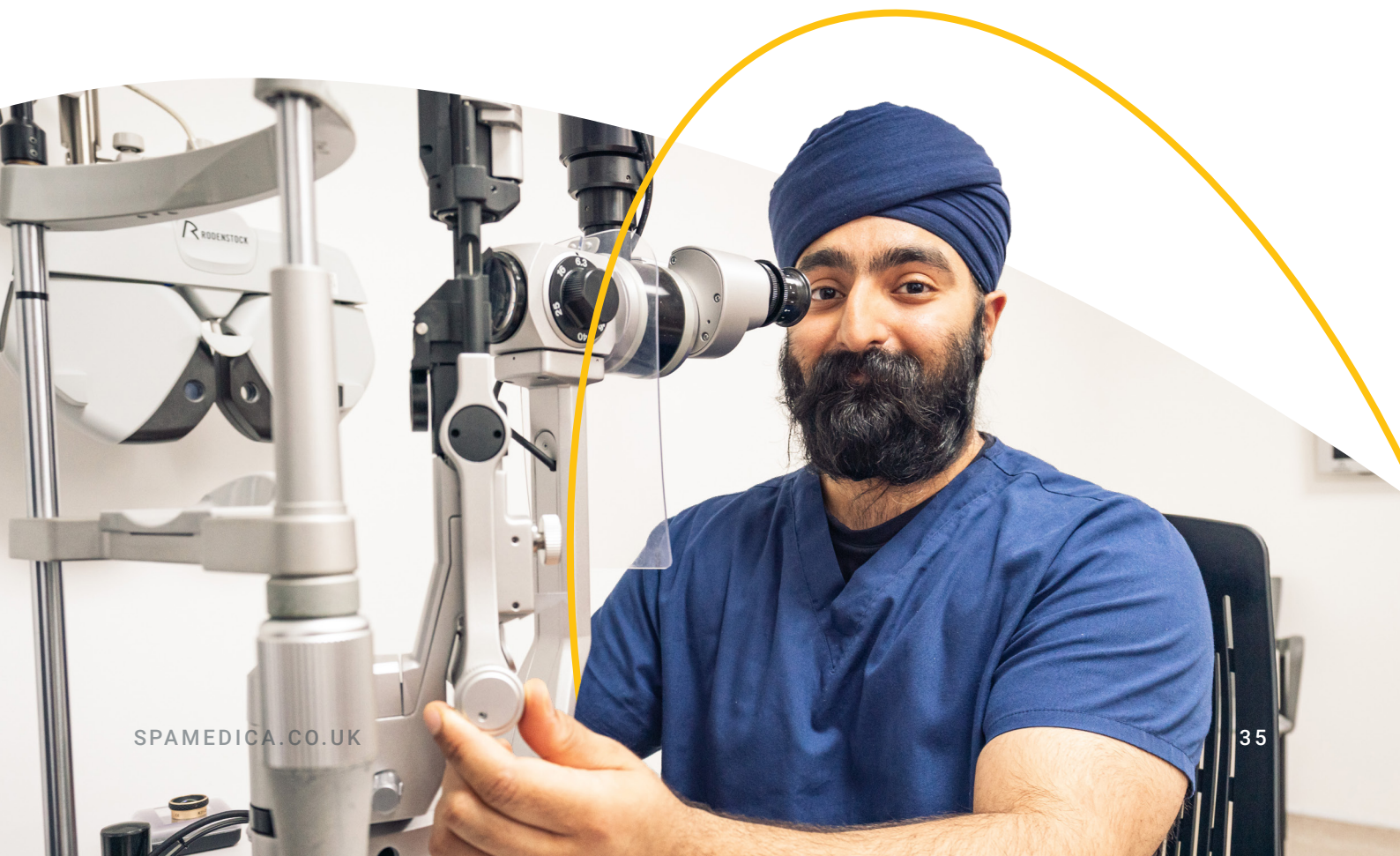
SpaMedica recognises that the quality of care we deliver is directly linked to the engagement, capability and wellbeing of our colleagues. Creating an environment where colleagues feel listened to, supported and able to grow is essential to delivering safe, high-quality care. Listening to feedback and acting on what we hear remains central to our approach, helping us continuously improve both colleague experience and patient outcomes.

Supporting the future clinical workforce is a responsibility we take seriously. Alongside investing in our current colleagues, we are committed to developing the next generation of ophthalmic professionals through a range of initiatives.

These include:

- Our internal learning and development programmes
- Training placements for ophthalmology specialist trainees
- Structured programmes for pre-registration optometrists
- Continuous professional development opportunities for community optometrists

Together, these efforts strengthen capability across the sector and support sustainable, high-quality care for patients now and in the future.



Annual Employee Survey (Great Place to Work)

Our annual Great Place to Work survey provides an opportunity for colleagues to share their experiences, highlight what is working well and identify areas for further improvement.

In September 2025, 90% of colleagues participated in the survey, demonstrating strong engagement across the organisation. 71% of respondents stated that SpaMedica is a Great Place to Work, reflecting a consistently positive colleague experience.

Survey results indicate that colleagues feel supported by their teams, enjoy coming to work and experience a strong sense of pride, teamwork and belonging. Inclusion remains a key strength, with colleagues reporting confidence in fair treatment and the consistent application of organisational policies. The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) focus score increased by 7% to 87%, reflecting continued progress in this area including the launch of our EDI Strategy in September 2025. The strategy focuses on fairness and opportunity for everyone, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

Feedback also highlighted positive perceptions of recognition and development opportunities, which continue to contribute to a supportive and engaged workplace culture. External recognition from Great Place to Work across wellbeing, development, women and healthcare further reflects SpaMedica's continued focus on creating an inclusive and supportive environment.



Where colleagues identified opportunities for improvement, these have informed targeted action plans across departments and hospital sites. Actions include strengthening internal communications, enhancing leadership capability and improving recognition frameworks to ensure colleagues feel informed, supported and valued.

**Great
Place
To
Work®**

90%
of colleagues
completed our
Annual Survey.

71%
of colleagues said
SpaMedica was a
Great Place to
Work.

**Our survey is about
taking the great work
we already do and
identifying the next steps
to make a lasting, positive
difference for everyone
who works with us or is
cared for by us.**

Internal Learning & Talent Development

Learning and development is a cornerstone of how we ensure safe, effective and high-quality care, equipping colleagues with the skills, confidence and support they need to deliver consistently excellent services and continue to grow in their roles.

In the last 12 months we have:

- Introduced LaunchPAD, our central learning and development hub providing access to training, apprenticeships, and career pathways.
- Mandatory training compliance remained above our 95% target throughout 2025, with all new colleagues completing training within four weeks of joining.
- Achieved 90.5% compliance for Tier 1 clinical competencies against our 90% target.
- Reviewed and updated our training provision to improve content, delivery, and role relevance, with a focus on Infection Prevention and Control, Health and Safety, and Safeguarding.
- Aligned development with service growth, including new ophthalmic sub-specialty clinics such as Glaucoma, AMD, and Oculoplastics.
- Strengthened career development opportunities through eyeManage, supporting 66 managers.
- Introduced Aspire, a self-led leadership development programme designed to support future leaders, alongside Mentor Marketplace and targeted development workshops.
- Recognised by Great Place to Work as a Best Workplace for Development within the super large organisations category.
- Continued to offer apprenticeships to colleagues through a refreshed programme that supports continuous learning, including new pathways such as sustainability and AI, reflecting evolving workplace needs and future skills.

Tier 1 training compliance:

90.5%

Target: 90%

Mandatory training compliance:

97.5%

Target: 95%



Upon completion of the apprenticeship, I hope to play an active role in helping SpaMedica achieve its Net Zero targets, while also contributing creatively to the development of regular social value initiatives that support and benefit the wider community.

Kerry Matthews, Corporate Responsibility & Sustainability (CR&S) Level 4 Apprenticeship

Training for External Clinicians

As the largest independent provider of ophthalmology services in the UK, we remain committed to supporting the long-term sustainability of eye care services through high-quality education, surgical training, and workforce development.

Our training environment continues to grow in scale and impact, with a significant proportion of clinical activity now delivered by clinicians in training under structured supervision. This model enables trainees to gain meaningful, progressive surgical experience within a high-volume, highly governed setting, while maintaining consistently strong patient outcomes and safety standards.

During 2025/26, resident doctors played an increasingly important role in service delivery, completing a substantial volume of cataract procedures and contributing directly to patient care across our network. The programme continues to attract a broad range of clinicians, including Specialty and Associate Specialist doctors, all of whom benefit from structured development pathways, close supervision, and access to experienced trainers.

Our approach balances hands-on surgical learning with rigorous governance and oversight, ensuring that training enhances rather than compromises quality of care. Outcomes within the programme remain strong and continue to compare favourably against national benchmarks, reinforcing the effectiveness of our training model in a real-world clinical environment.

We are proud that this commitment has been recognised externally through the LaingBuisson Award for Excellence in Training, reflecting the quality, consistency, and impact of our education programmes. This recognition also underlines the role SpaMedica is playing in helping to set a national benchmark for ophthalmology training within the independent sector.

Alongside resident doctors, we have continued to invest in the development of Specialty and Associate Specialist doctors, strengthening the wider ophthalmology workforce and supporting long-term system resilience.





Trainee feedback:

My cataract surgery training period at SpaMedica has been the most valuable experience since starting my ophthalmology training. The support and guidance I received from my supervising consultant, Mr Graham Auger, not only improved my surgical skills but completely changed my approach to surgery, including theatre setup, ergonomics, and surgical efficiency. The training has had a significant positive impact on both my confidence and wellbeing. The theatre staff were consistently supportive, dedicated, and encouraging throughout, and I am extremely grateful to the entire team for their contribution to my learning experience.

Ahmed Zewar, Doncaster

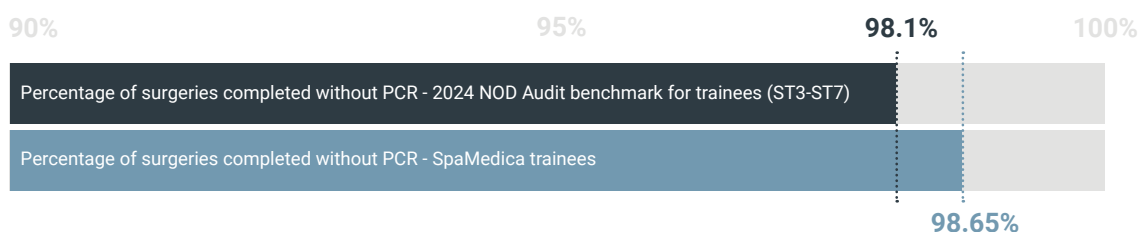


Trainee Outcomes Data

SpaMedica consistently delivers excellent surgical outcomes that exceed national benchmarks according to the most recent National Ophthalmology Database (NOD) report for 2025.

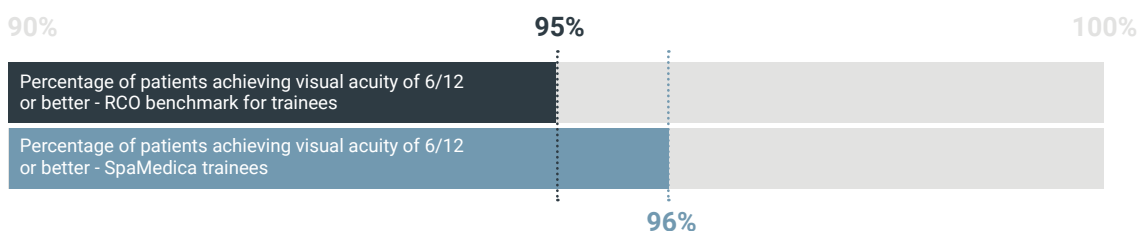
Percentage of surgeries completed without posterior capsule rupture (PCR)

PCR is a complication that can occur during cataract surgery. The percentage of surgeries completed without PCR is a key indicator of cataract surgery quality and reflects the precision and safety of the surgeries performed by SpaMedica trainees.



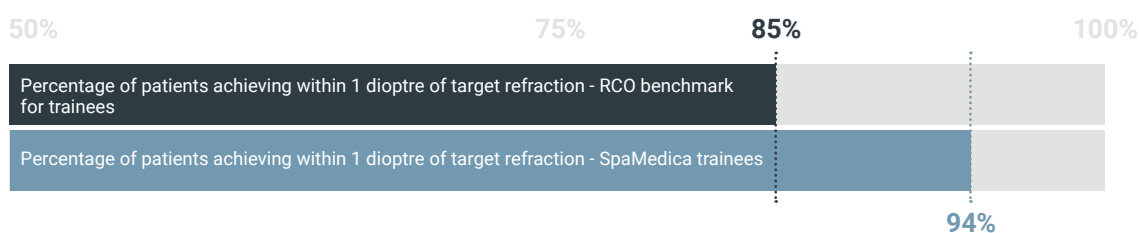
Percentage of patients achieving visual acuity of 6/12 or better post-operatively

Post-operative visual acuity of 6/12 or better represents a meaningful improvement in patients' functional vision, enabling greater independence in everyday tasks.



Percentage of patients achieving within 1 dioptre of target refraction

This metric reflects how accurately a patient's post-operative vision aligns with the intended surgical target. Achieving within 1 dioptre reduces the need for corrective lenses and signifies high-quality surgical planning and execution.



Our Medical Advisory Committee ensures there is comprehensive tracking of surgical KPIs for every surgeon that operates for SpaMedica, with robust challenge and/or extra support for individuals if this is needed.

Community optometrists and the SpaMedica post-op accreditation programme

We work in close partnership with over 6,000 community optometrists who play a vital role in supporting patient care beyond the hospital setting. In the past year alone, they completed over 120,000 post-operative checks, helping to extend safe, effective follow-up care into local communities.

This model supports the NHS ambition to move care from hospital to community, enabling patients to be managed closer to home in a way that is more convenient, particularly for those who may struggle to travel to hospital sites. Community follow-up supports a shared care approach for post-operative review, helping to relieve pressure on hospital clinics and ensure capacity is used where it is needed most.

In addition, community optometrists provide valuable outcome data in line with the National Ophthalmology Database requirements, as recommended by the Royal College of Ophthalmologists. This strengthens quality assurance, supports continuous improvement, and ensures we are delivering consistently high standards of care across the pathway.

We work in close
partnership with over

6,000

community
optometrists

Community
Optometrists
completed over

120,000

post-operative checks, helping
to extend safe, effective
follow-up care into local
communities



Supporting the Future Healthcare Workforce

During 2025/26, SpaMedica worked in partnership with the University of Sunderland to provide clinical placement opportunities for undergraduate medical students with an interest in ophthalmology and independent sector healthcare.

As part of the Student Selected Component (SSC), 13 medical students completed a four-week placement across SpaMedica hospitals. Students were embedded within multidisciplinary teams and gained experience of the full cataract pathway, helping them understand both clinical care and patient experience within a high-volume ophthalmology service.

During their placements, students were able to observe and take part in a range of activities, including:

- Cataract assessment and pre-operative clinics
- Diagnostic testing and biometry
- Theatre sessions and observation of cataract surgery
- Post-operative follow-up clinics
- Multidisciplinary team working across clinical and operational services
- Patient counselling and informed consent discussions
- Clinical governance, audit, and quality improvement activities
- Exposure to surgical outcomes, safety measures, and performance monitoring

Students also gained insight into how ophthalmology services are delivered, including patient pathways, service flow, and how efficiency and innovation are achieved within the independent sector.

Feedback from students was very positive, with placements valued for the level of surgical exposure, supportive learning environment, and insight into ophthalmology as a career.

SpaMedica
supported

13
medical
students

through its structured placement programme during the year, strengthening clinical learning and future workforce development.

Supporting the next generation of optometrists

We are currently supporting 21 optometry students from the University of Lancashire through structured clinical observation placements and on-campus case-based learning. This partnership gives students valuable exposure to real-world patient care, helping them build clinical knowledge, strengthen decision-making skills, and grow in confidence as they experience specialist optometric practice first-hand.

SpaMedica optometrist internal training

During 2025/26, SpaMedica welcomed 94 pre-registration optometrists from Vision Express, Boots and Asda to undertake clinical placements across our hospitals as part of their formal training and professional qualifications.

Each trainee completed five structured clinical sessions across our cataract, medical retina, glaucoma and vitreoretinal services, providing valuable exposure to a range of ophthalmic pathways and patient care settings. The placements were supported by theoretical teaching and lectures delivered by SpaMedica's dedicated optometry team, helping to strengthen clinical knowledge alongside practical experience.

Developing the future optometry workforce remains an important part of our commitment to supporting sustainable ophthalmology services, and we look forward to continuing to expand these opportunities in the future.



We know hospital placements for pre-reg optometrists can be difficult to secure due to limited availability, so we're delighted to be working with our community colleagues and The College of Optometrists to facilitate wider access to professional development and training opportunities. During their placements, our pre-reg trainees gain a variety of practical skills, underpinned by theoretical modules that will help them throughout their careers.

Tom Critchley, Principal Optometrist at SpaMedica



Sustainability and Social Value

Following SpaMedica's launch of our three sustainability pillars in 2024/25, this year marks the second year of our focus on those pillars - People, Places and Partnerships. All of our activity to support these important matters are incorporated within these three pillars.

People



At SpaMedica, sustainability and social value are embedded within how we support our colleagues, patients, communities, and the wider healthcare system. Guided by our values of kindness, safety, integrity, and transparency, we continue to create an inclusive and supportive environment where people feel respected, valued, and able to thrive.

Supporting colleague wellbeing

Supporting colleague wellbeing remains a key priority. We continued to promote our network of trained Mental Health First Aiders, providing confidential support and signposting for colleagues across the organisation. This is complemented by our Employee Assistance Programme and our partnership with MYNDUP, which offers additional access to confidential one-to-one support including therapy, counselling, coaching and mindfulness.

We also continued to promote a culture of psychological safety through our Freedom to Speak Up Guardians, providing a trusted and confidential route for colleagues to raise concerns or share ideas for improvement, supporting openness, transparency and continuous improvement across the organisation.

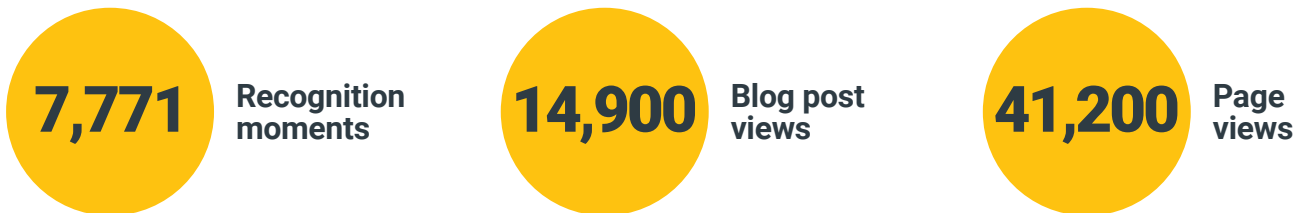
This commitment to wellbeing has been recognised externally, with Great Place to Work naming us a Best Workplace for Wellbeing and a Best Workplace for Women within the super large organisations category.



Recognition and engagement

Recognition and colleague engagement remained a strong focus throughout the year through our colleague engagement app, SpaMedica&Me. We expanded our recognition eCards and introduced Star of the Month to further embed appreciation, celebrate success, and strengthen connection across teams.

Colleague engagement through SpaMedica&Me continued to grow, recording:



Colleague voice, networks and communication

Colleague-led networks continued to expand, including

LGBTQ+

During the year, the LGBTQ+ Network attended Manchester Pride for the first time.

Neurodiversity @ SpaMedica

The Neurodiversity Network continued to support awareness and guidance across the organisation, helping to improve understanding and inclusive practice.

Menopause Matters

Menopause Cafés and Menopause Friends also continued to provide regular informal support and safe spaces for open discussion. The café reflects our commitment to creating an open, understanding environment around health and wellbeing at every stage of life.

EnABLE, our Disability Inclusion Network.

In October 2025, SpaMedica formally joined the Disability Confident scheme, reinforcing our commitment to inclusive recruitment and workplace practice. The EnABLE Network supported this work, providing lived experience and guidance to help shape improvements. We continue to strengthen reasonable adjustments, inclusive recruitment processes and colleague awareness. Disability disclosure increased from 10.25% to 10.49%, reflecting improved confidence in sharing disability status.

We continued to support colleague wellbeing through dedicated colleague networks, including our Wellbeing and Parents & Carers groups. These networks provide safe spaces for colleagues to connect, share experiences, access support, and build a sense of belonging across the organisation.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy

In November 2025, we launched our three-year Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy. This sets out our ambition to build a more inclusive and representative organisation, focusing on colleague experience, leadership accountability and inclusive behaviours. The strategy is informed by colleague feedback and external best practice.



Communications

Internal communications were further strengthened through monthly team cascades, senior leadership video updates, and weekly business updates. Feedback from colleagues highlighted improved clarity, stronger connection to organisational priorities, and greater opportunity to influence change.

Colleague voice remains central through our Employee Forum, with expanded national membership in 2025/26 to improve representation and engagement.

Places



Environmental performance and compliance

SpaMedica has completed all statutory reporting requirements under UK Government and NHS Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) frameworks and achieved Level 1 compliance in the NHS Evergreen Sustainable Supplier Assessment, providing assurance across carbon emissions, materials and labour within our operations and supply chain.

We continue to meet requirements under the Energy Savings Opportunities Scheme (ESOS), publishing an updated Action Plan in 2025 and planning a further update in December 2026. Actions identified through ESOS Phase 3 audits are being delivered, with a reduction in energy intensity, and further audits under Phase 4 are expected in early 2027 covering buildings and vehicles.

Our Carbon Reduction Plan is published on our website and updated annually, alongside Streamlined Energy and Carbon Reporting within our Directors' Report. We have undertaken annual carbon footprinting since 2020 to support decarbonisation aligned to NHS and IHPN targets.

The 2026 Carbon Reduction Plan, due 30 June, will set out progress towards Net Zero, including scope 1 and 2 emissions by 2035 and scope 3 emissions by 2045.

Energy, carbon and operational improvements

We continue to strengthen our internal ESG reporting. We now track energy, water and waste usage by site across most locations, as well as fuel usage across our vehicle fleet. This is supporting the development of quarterly performance indicators, helping us monitor progress and encourage improvement across sites, including friendly competition around recycling rates and energy efficiency.

A key operational improvement has been the successful overnight switch-off of air handling units at 8 sites, resulting in significant energy savings. This initiative is now being rolled out across the wider estate.

We have also introduced driver tracking software, which has delivered measurable energy savings and supports incentives to improve driving efficiency.

We have begun a four-year programme to transition our vehicle fleet from petrol and diesel to hybrid vehicles, supported by a longer-term plan to move to fully electric vehicles. This phased approach will help reduce our environmental impact and support our ambition to remove combustion emissions from company vehicles over time.

Our new business travel and expenses systems, ClarityGO, now allow us to calculate carbon emissions associated with travel at both organisational and individual level, improving transparency and accountability.

We have also set out our Net Zero Roadmap, identifying the steps required to meet our published targets of Net Zero Scope 1 and 2 emissions by 2035 and Scope 3 emissions by 2045.

Overnight
switch-off of air handling
units across 8 hospitals:

12%
reduction

in energy usage
year on year.



Case Study:

Reducing Plastic Waste in Cataract Surgery Through Removal of Routine Eye Shields

In alignment with the Royal College of Ophthalmologists' sustainability guidance on cataract surgery, SpaMedica undertook a large-scale evaluation of the routine use of disposable plastic eye shields following uncomplicated cataract surgery between October 2025 and January 2026. The aim was to assess whether eye shields are clinically necessary and to understand the potential environmental benefit of removing them from standard practice.

Clinical evaluation and outcomes

Analysis found no clinically significant differences between patients who used plastic eye shields and those who did not.

- Endophthalmitis rates remained comparable at 0.009% versus 0.008%
- Post-operative ocular trauma rates were similarly low at 0.00% versus 0.002%
- No cases of hypotony were reported in either group
- Visual outcomes were equivalent, with both groups achieving better than 6/12 Snellen vision
- Refractive accuracy: 92% of patients in both groups were within 1 dioptre of target refraction

Conclusion

The findings demonstrate that routine plastic eye shields are not required following uncomplicated cataract surgery, with no differences identified in clinical outcomes, safety, or complication rates between groups.

Sustainability impact

Removing unnecessary single-use plastic eye shields reduces avoidable waste and supports NHS net zero ambitions, demonstrating how evidence-based practice can improve sustainability without compromising patient safety or outcomes.



Collaboration, access and sustainability in care delivery

We continue to collaborate and share learning across SpaMedica, our European partners, and the Independent Healthcare Providers Network (IHPN). Our Sustainability and Social Value Manager actively contributes to the IHPN Net Zero forum and internal group sustainability discussions and our Head of Policy and Commercial Diversification is chair of the IHPN Net Zero Ophthalmology Forum, ensuring learning and innovation from both within and outside of the speciality is developed and shared across the ophthalmology sector.

We are increasingly focusing on how sustainability aligns with patient access and experience. This includes continued development of digital and accessible communication channels:



Contact
Centre



Patient
Portal



Videos



Booklets



Language
Support
Services



Patient
Transport
Provision

We are also addressing health inequalities through service adaptations, including sedation-enabled centres, hoists and accessibility adjustments, support for patients experiencing homelessness, dedicated Community Diagnostic Treatment Centres (CDTCs), and mobile units that help bring care closer to communities.



Diagnostic and Treatment Centres (DTC)

Diagnostic and Treatment Centres, play an important role in supporting the NHS 10 Year Plan by moving care from hospital to community settings. This model brings diagnostic, surgical and follow-up care closer to patients' homes, improving access, reducing waiting times and relieving pressure on acute services.

In 2025, we launched the UK's first relocatable DTC in Hereford. This innovative, community-based facility brings together assessment, cataract surgery, YAG laser treatment and post-operative care in one location. Its design allows for rapid deployment in areas of need, supporting timely access to care and greater flexibility across the system. In a population with a high proportion of older residents, the centre has improved access for over 21,000 people, with patients receiving treatment in as little as four weeks.

The model supports high-quality, patient-centred care through:

- Collaborative pathways with local optometrists, strengthening continuity across services
- Modern clinical infrastructure delivering safe and effective care in community settings
- Flexible pathways tailored to patient need, supporting timely intervention

Patient feedback has been consistently positive, with 100% of the first cohort of surgical patients saying they would recommend the service.

This approach supports earlier intervention, helps prevent deterioration and ensures care is delivered in the most appropriate setting. It also demonstrates how independent sector capacity can support sustainable NHS services at scale.

In recognition of this work, SpaMedica's DTC model was shortlisted for the Independent Healthcare Providers Award as part of the HSJ Partnership Awards, highlighting its impact on improving access, outcomes and system-wide collaboration.

Patient Transport

32,279 patients benefited from using our free transport service this reporting year, and our patient drivers travelled an incredible 1.5 million miles driving patients to and from their appointments



Great treatment I was very happy with the service I received for my cataract operation. Mine was a complex cataract, but the surgeon said that it was nothing they hadn't dealt with before. The staff were very friendly and helpful and the surgeon was reassuring throughout. I was also impressed that there was free transport to and from the venue.

SpaMedica Manchester Patient

Partnerships

Charitable and community partnerships

We continued to develop our partnership with the Macular Society, sharing training resources and supporting colleagues to take part in fundraising activity.

We remain committed to continuing this partnership, with a fundraising target of £20,000 for 2026, alongside continued match funding to support colleague-led fundraising activity.



In 2025/26,
SpaMedica colleagues
raised

£20,000

in total for the Macular
Society, supported by
match funding from the
Executive Board.

Clinical and sector collaboration

We continued to work in collaboration with key partners across ophthalmology to support innovation and service improvement. This includes contributing our experience and expertise to developments that directly impact patient care.

In partnership with the Macular Society, we are supporting the development of an Accelerated Clinical Trial Delivery Network, designed to improve and speed up access to new treatments for patients across the UK.

Macular Society

We also contributed to a Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB) event focused on the development of Patient Reported Outcome Measures (PROMs) and Patient Reported Experience Measures (PREMs) for cataract patients.

R N I B

See differently

Local partnerships and social impact

At a local level, we are proud of the work undertaken with Birmingham City Council and our Solihull colleagues to develop a tailored care pathway for a patient experiencing homelessness.

This partnership demonstrated a strong, person-centred approach, considering the specific challenges for the patient, particularly in relation to post-operative care. Detailed planning and coordination ensured appropriate support was in place to minimise clinical risk and support safe recovery following surgery.

This work reflects our commitment to ensuring that every patient receives safe, high-quality care, regardless of personal circumstances, in line with our principle of...



**every patient, every time,
no exceptions, no excuses.**

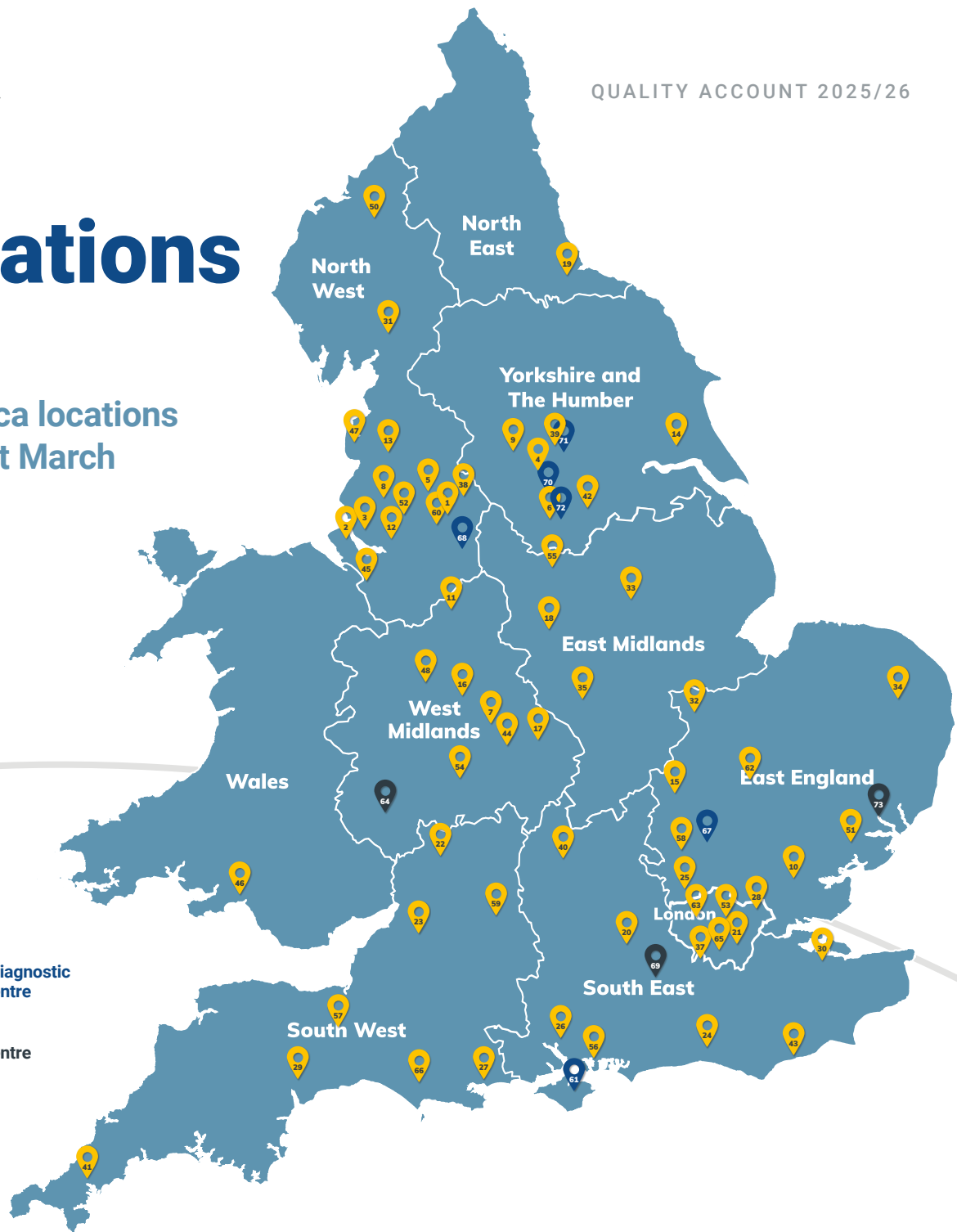
Locations

SpaMedica locations
as of 31st March
2026:

 Hospital

 Community Diagnostic
Treatment Centre

 Diagnostic
Treatment Centre



1 Manchester	21 Bromley	41 Truro	61 Isle of Wight (DTC)
2 Wirral	22 Gloucester	42 Doncaster	62 Cambridge
3 Liverpool	23 Bristol	43 Bexhill	63 Wembley
4 Wakefield	24 Brighton	44 Solihull	64 Hereford (DTC)
5 Bolton	25 Watford	45 Chester	65 Croydon
6 Sheffield	26 Southampton	46 Swansea	66 Dorchester
7 Birmingham	27 Poole	47 Blackpool	67 Stevenage (CDTC)
8 Skelmersdale	28 Romford	48 Telford	68 Macclesfield (CDTC)
9 Bradford	29 Exeter	49 North Tyneside	69 Guildford (DTC)
10 Chelmsford	30 Sittingbourne	50 Carlisle	70 Barnsley (CDTC)
11 Newcastle-Under-Lyme	31 Kendal	51 Colchester	71 Leeds (CDTC)
12 Widnes	32 Peterborough	52 Haydock	72 Sheffield (CDTC)
13 Preston	33 Newark	53 Dalston	73 Ipswich (DTC)
14 Hull	34 Norwich	54 Worcester	
15 Bedford	35 Leicester	55 Chesterfield	
16 Wolverhampton	36 Gateshead	56 Portsmouth	
17 Coventry	37 Epsom	57 Taunton	
18 Derby	38 Oldham	58 Luton	
19 Stockton-On-Tees	39 Leeds	59 Swindon	
20 Wokingham	40 Oxford	60 Sale	

This information is up to date as of June 2026

Statement of support

The following statement has been supplied by Essex ICB, on 23rd June, and is included here in full, unedited and unchanged from the version originally provided.



23rd June 2026

Subject: NHS Essex Integrated Care Board response to SpaMedica 2025/26 Draft Quality Account

Dear Colleagues

As a commissioner of SpaMedica services locally, NHS Essex Integrated Care Board (EICB) welcomes the opportunity to comment on this Quality Account.

EICB is commenting on a draft version of this Quality Account, however, to the best of its knowledge, the information contained within this report is accurate and is representative of the quality of services delivered. Any queries will have been fed back to the team at SpaMedica prior to publication for consideration of inclusion, along with any missing data in the final report.

EICB is pleased to note the sustained progress that SpaMedica has made against the priorities for improvement that it set out last year. EICB can see that excellent progress has been made in achieving all the quality priorities set for 2025/26.

The Patient Safety Incident Response Framework (PSIRF) is well embedded along with Learning from Patient Safety Events (LFPSE). The organisation supports a culture of continuous learning and improvement.

The 24/7 patient support service further supports patient safety and helps to ensure patients are in receipt of timely and appropriate care whenever they need it.

There is continued evidence of clinical audit where findings are discussed and learning shared.

Compliments and complaints are logged and shared for learning purposes. Improved reporting processes have seen a slight increase in complaint numbers nationally as reported in the draft quality account but this in turn is providing assurance that patient feedback is captured and used to enhance the patient experience.

Other areas noted within this quality account are SpaMedica's support of the NHS 10-year plan in providing services closer to home. Improving access and a focus on workforce development and innovation along with the introduction of the Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy (EDI) strategy in November 2025.

EICB also acknowledges the receipt of the LaingBuisson Awards for Excellence in Training.





EICB further acknowledges SpaMedica future priorities for 2026/27 in building on the priorities already achieved in 2025/26:

- Strengthening how data is used to drive improvement and assurance.
- Using insight and evidence to shape and deliver meaningful improvement.
- Building the skills and infrastructure needed to deliver improvement.
- Ensuring improvements are maintained and embedded into everyday practice – ensuring that change is sustained through launching the new sustained change and improvement framework.

In January 2026, members of the ICB Quality team had the pleasure of visiting the patients and staff team at SpaMedica (Chelmsford) and were able to see the new site with modern facilities and the development of the recovery room for light sedation.

Sincere thanks go to the whole staff team at SpaMedica for their hard work and dedication that has been evident over the last year. EICB would once again like to congratulate SpaMedica for all that it has achieved given increasing pressures and uncertainty which continues to impact on all healthcare services.

In conclusion, EICB considers the SpaMedica draft Quality Account for 2025/26 as providing an accurate and balanced picture of the reporting period. EICB will continue to seek assurance on performance and delivery of care by ongoing monitoring through the agreed contract processes.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Giles Thorpe RN, DProf, MSc, Bsc (Hons), MIHM
Executive Chief Nurse / Caldicott Guardian

NHS Essex Integrated Care Board

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www.essex.icb.nhs.uk

Chair: Professor Michael Thorne CBE | CEO: Tom Abell



References

- [1]** Brown K, Bunce C, Onabanjo O, et al. Is preventable sight loss truly preventable? An exploration of a public health indicator for sight loss due to age-related macular degeneration in England. Eye (Lond). 2023.
- [2]** British Ophthalmological Surveillance Unit. Surveillance of sight loss due to delay in ophthalmic treatment or review: frequency, cause and outcome. Eye (Lond). 2017.
- [3]** Royal College of Ophthalmologists. AMD Commissioning Guidance – Evidence Base. 2024.
- [4]** Royal College of Ophthalmologists. National Ophthalmology Database (NOD) Audit: Age-related Macular Degeneration – Full Annual Report. 2024.
- [5]** RNIB / UK-OA. ECLO Quality Framework and Practice Guidelines. London: RNIB; 2018

Thank you for taking the time to read our Quality Account

Your comments and feedback are very welcome and we are happy to answer any questions you may have.

Please contact us by using the details below.

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SPAMEDICA.CO.UK



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