National Audit of Care at the End of Life

Auditing last days of life in hospitals

NACEL 2027 Warm Up Event

Thursday 29 October 2026

13:00 - 14:00, Microsoft Teams

Delivered by NHS Benchmarking Network

Housekeeping



Recording

This session is being recorded. The recording will be uploaded after the session, along with the slides.



Questions

Please put any questions in the chat and a member of the team will pick them up. There will also be time for questions at the end of the session.

Agenda

Time	Item	Lead
13:00	Meeting opens	
13:00 - 13:05	Welcome and introductions	Mary Miller, NACEL Clinical Lead
13:05 - 13:15	NACEL Quality Improvement: improvement goals, outputs and support	Jess Moss, NACEL Quality Improvement Lead
13:15 - 13:35	Introduction to NACEL 2027: key changes and timescales	Kaitlyn Biggs, NACEL Delivery Manager
13:35 - 13:45	Tips and tricks for NACEL Bereavement Survey participation	Jess Moss, NACEL Quality Improvement Lead
13:45 - 13:50	Next steps	Kaitlyn Biggs, NACEL Delivery Manager
13:50 - 14:00	Questions, discussion and AOB	All
14:00	Meeting closes	

Recap of NACEL

NHS Benchmarking Network is commissioned by Healthcare Quality Improvement Partnership on behalf of NHS England, the Welsh Government and the Government of Jersey to deliver NACEL as part of the National Clinical Audit and Patient Outcomes Programme (NCAPOP).

- Participation is a contractual requirement for all NHS providers delivering adult inpatient care in acute and community hospitals.
- NHS Standard Contract mandates participation in national clinical audits, submission of audit data, and engagement in national outlier processes.
- Welsh Health Circular (WHC) for the National Clinical Audit and Outcome Review Plan outlines that health boards and trusts in Wales are required to fully participate in NACEL.

This is the final year of the current contract (2024 – 2027).

Overall aim: To improve the quality of care of adults (18+) at the end of life in NHS-funded hospital inpatient settings in England, Wales and Jersey.

NACEL Quality Improvement

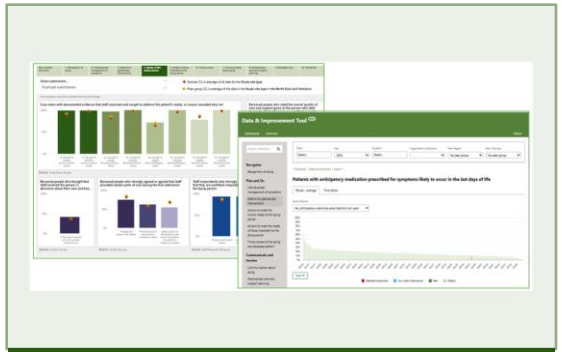
Jess Moss, NACEL Quality Improvement Lead



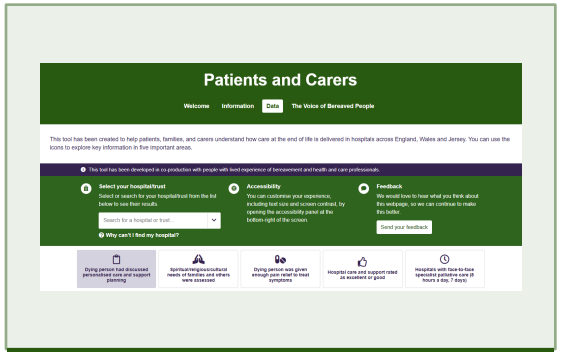
Featured NACEL QI Related Outputs



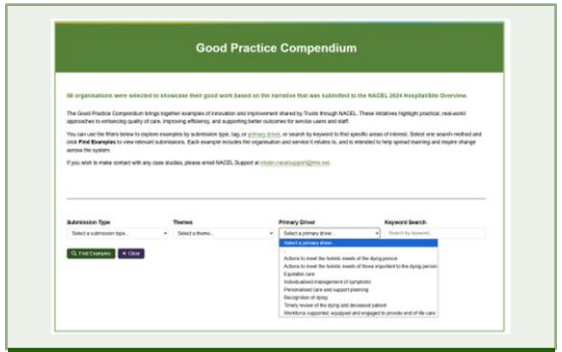
2025 State of the Nations Report



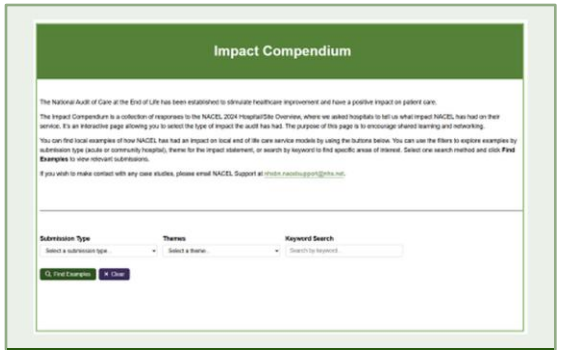
Data and Improvement Tool



Patient and Carer Tool



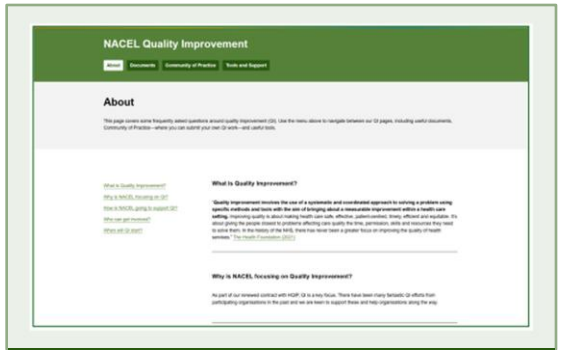
Good Practice Compendium



Impact Compendium



Community of Practice



NACEL Portal QI pages

2025 State of the Nations Report and recommendations

Published August 2026

The national position on care at the end of life in acute and community hospitals in England, Wales and Jersey during 2025, with key findings at a glance, comparisons with previous years and two national recommendations.

Recommendation 1

System-level accountability for care at the end of life quality improvement and equity

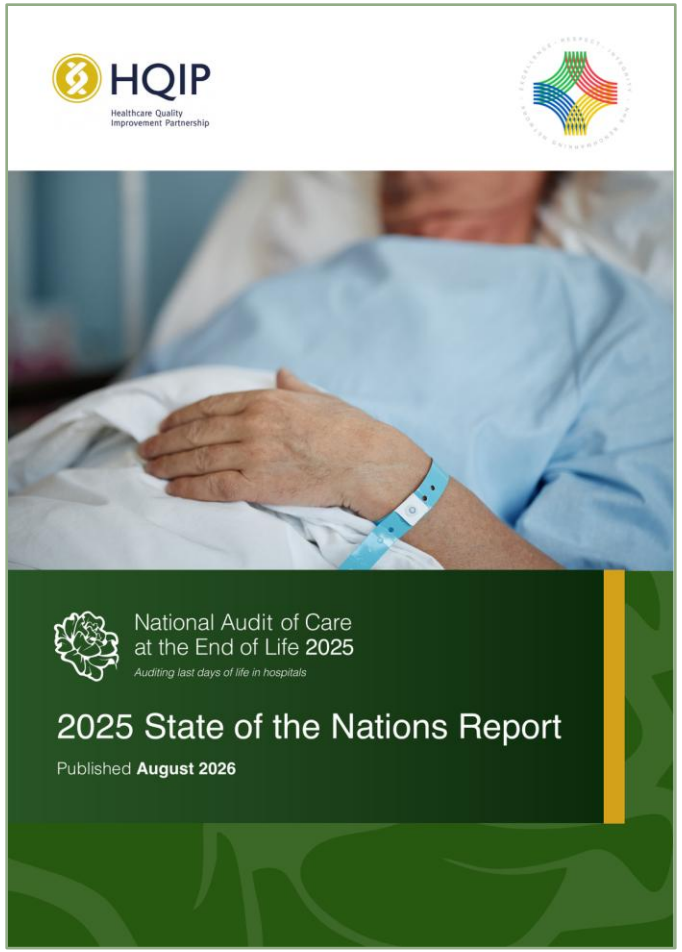
For Integrated Care Boards, Health Boards and commissioners.

Recommendation 2

Strengthening the evidence base and identifying solutions to reduce inequalities in care at the end of life

For the National Institute for Health and Care Research.

A line-of-sight table links each recommendation to the supporting NACEL 2025 data, guidance and national standards.



Link to the 2025 State of the Nations Report

Data and Improvement Tool

Latest audit findings

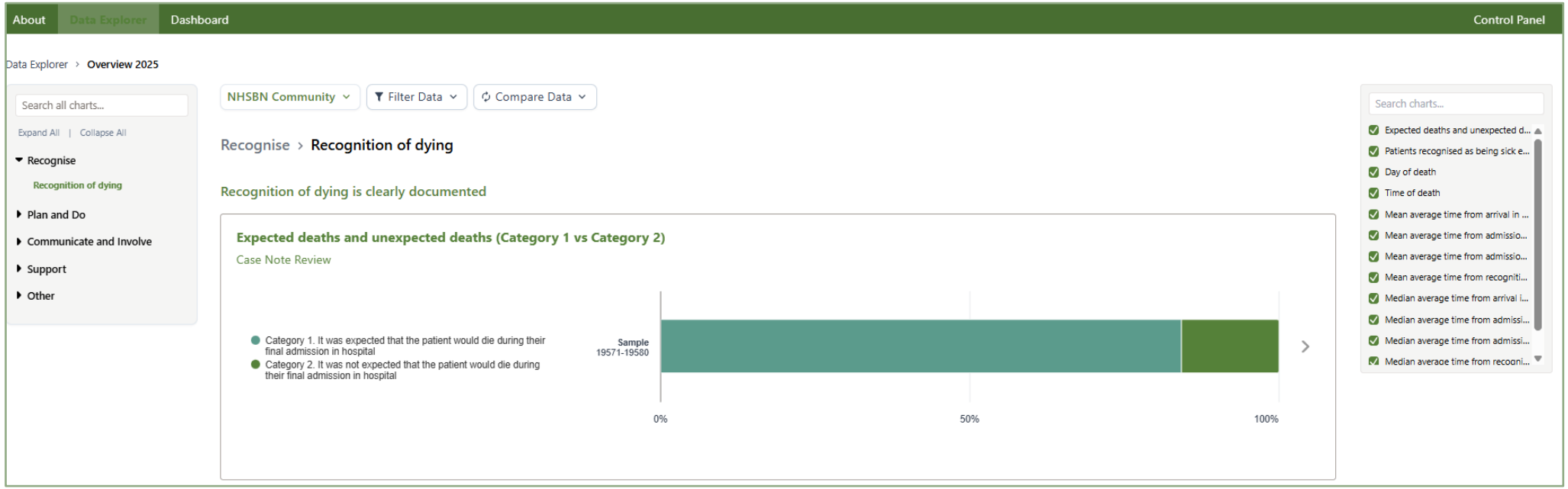
Online interactive tool hosting the latest NACEL audit findings, with data published frequently.

Filter and compare

Use the Filter Data and Compare Data options to explore your organisation's results.

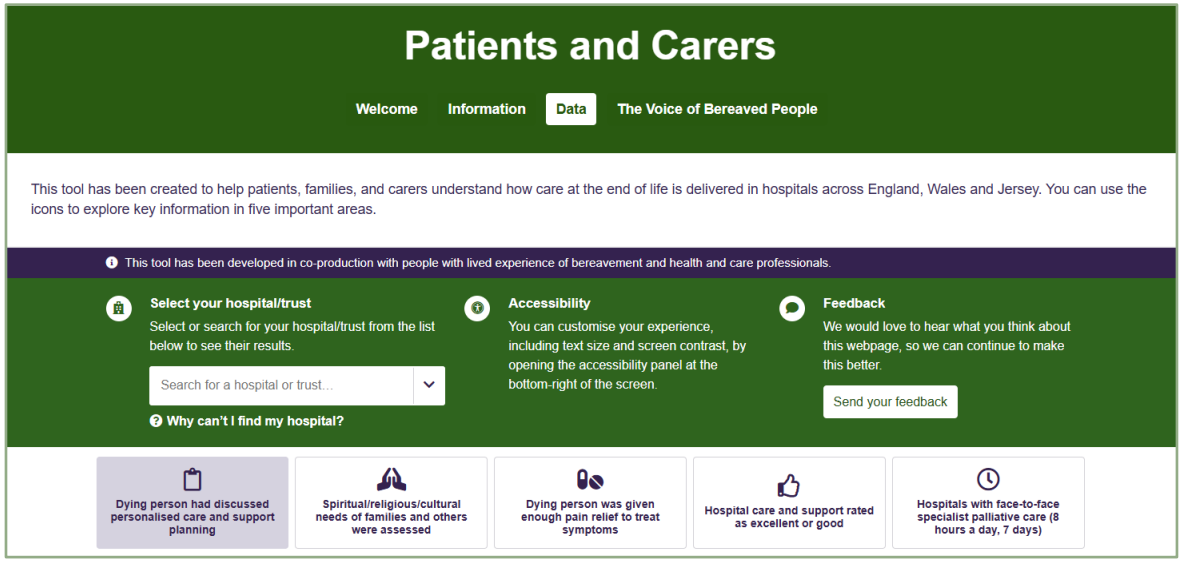
Grouped by theme

Charts are grouped into themes, including Recognise, Plan and Do, Communicate and Involve, and Support.



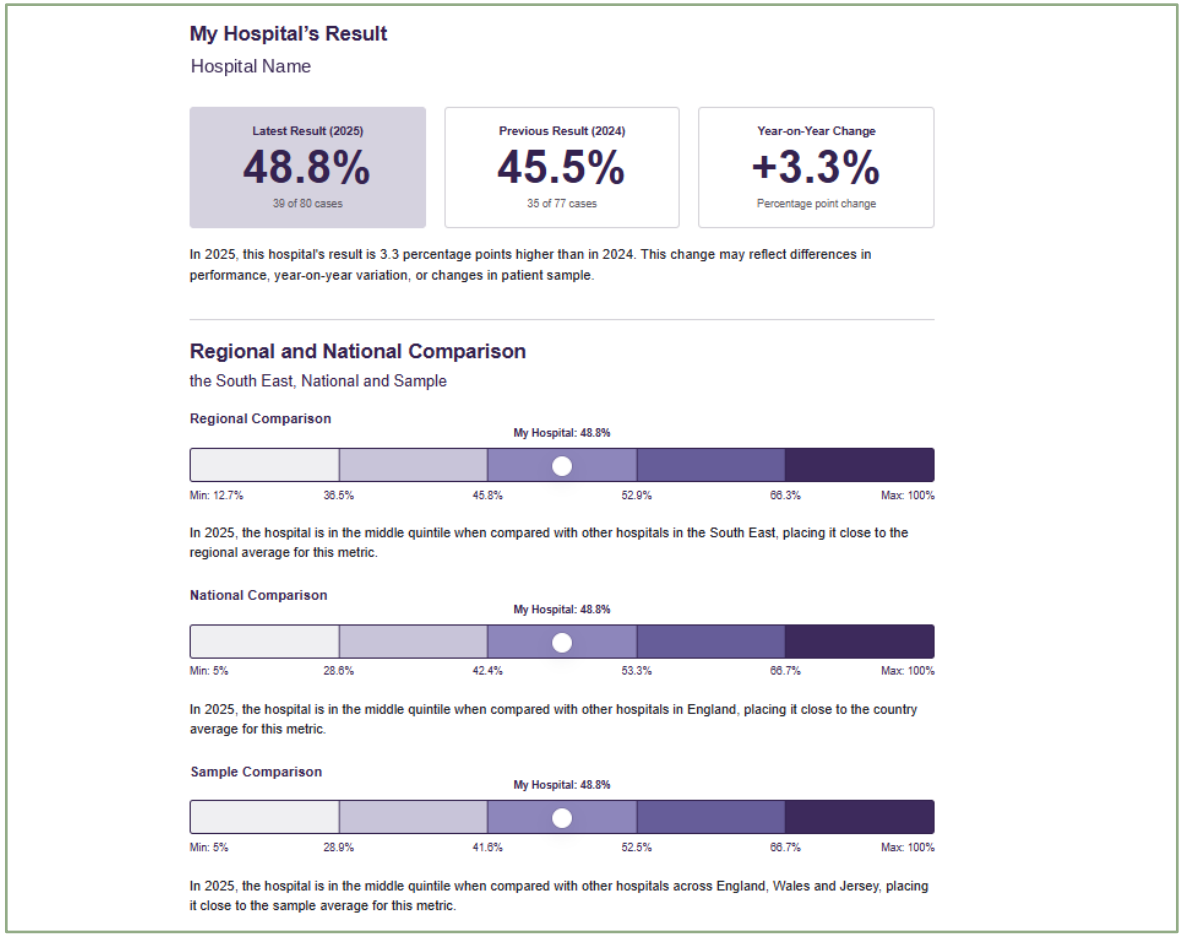
Data and Improvement Tool

Patient and Carer Tool



For patients, families and carers

Select a hospital or trust to see its results in five areas of care, alongside regional and national comparisons.



Patient and Carer Tool

Good Practice Compendium

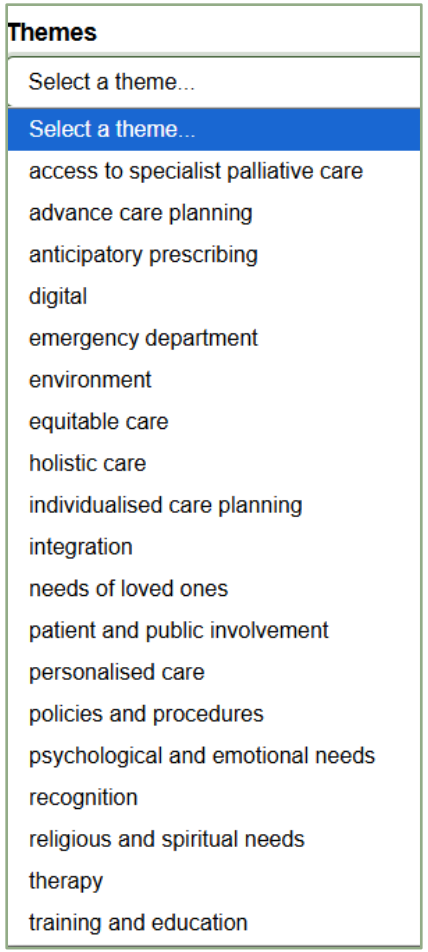
What it is

The Good Practice Compendium brings together examples of selected organisations demonstrating innovation and improvement through NACEL.

69 case studies were selected to be added to the compendium in 2025.

Why it matters

These initiatives highlight practical, real-world approaches to enhancing quality of care, improving efficiency, and supporting better outcomes for service users and staff.



Good Practice Compendium

Good Practice Compendium

Norfolk and Norwich University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

*"NACEL's focus on coordination and communication within multidisciplinary teams has prompted us to enhance how we **share information** across care settings. Our work on shared care records and the new EPR system stems directly from these findings…"*

Bradford Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

*"…following 2022 NACEL results a **CNS in palliative care with a special interest in South Asian populations and religious needs has been appointed**…identifying and meeting the needs of this group, which make up a significant proportion of the demographic the team see."*

Manchester University NHS Foundation Trust

*"NACEL has given us the opportunity to capture the experience of families and carers more clearly leading to us to expand and **develop workstreams to improve their experience."***

Essex Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust

*"…Staff confidence increased, **more accessible training opportunities."***

Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust

*"Development of action plans in response to NACEL results has led to board level support of **changes in service delivery and processes**."*

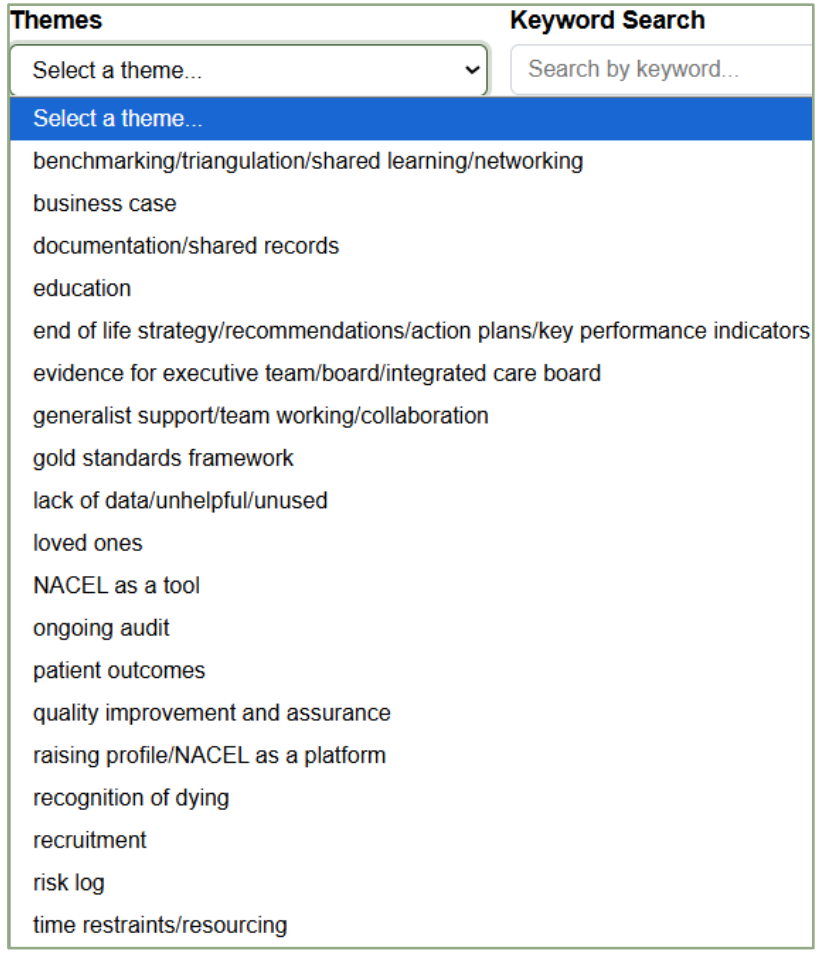
Impact Compendium

What it is

The Impact Compendium is a collection of responses to the NACEL 2025 Hospital/Site Overview, where we asked hospitals to tell us what impact NACEL has had on their service.

How to use it

It's an interactive page allowing you to select the type of impact the audit has had. The purpose of this page is to encourage shared learning and networking.



Impact Compendium

Impact Compendium

Barnsley Hospital NHS Foundation Trust

"The work around the NACEL findings will always influence and impact the changes we make for end of life care in the Trust. The findings are used as a guide for ongoing ***improvement around education, communication and improving the outcomes of care*** *experienced by our patients and their families."*

Doncaster and Bassetlaw Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

"It has made us focus on the ***communication that we have with patients and loved ones, along with the quality of the documentation*** *of care. It certainly makes you more mindful of the care that you provide when you participate in NACEL and you are aware of all of the aspects that may be audited e.g. daily checking of someone's social needs and documenting this…"*

Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust

"20 years of participating in national audits has led to the development of a ***robust end of life care programme*** *across all relevant clinical areas supported by a clear assurance and governance mechanism to report to the Trust board. Development of action plans in response to NACEL results has led to board level support of changes in service delivery and processes."*

Bradford Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

"Development of a ***business case*** *and lack of face to face specialist palliative care advice placed on risk register."*

How to join the Community of Practice

1

Go to the Community of Practice page

Visit **www.nacel.nhs.uk/qi-community-of-practice**

2

Select “Join our Community of Practice”

Under “How to access our Community of Practice Page”

3

Register and join the group

Follow the sign-up steps to create your account and join

4

Get involved

Join discussions, and share resources and your own QI work

Scan to join the Community of Practice

Resources

NACEL Portal QI pages

Visit the QI pages to access:

- NACEL driver diagram
- Healthcare Improvement Plan
- “Mapping document”
- QI tools
- Reporting templates

www.nacel.nhs.uk/qi-tools



Stage 1: Identification of a quality issue

Tools:

Stakeholder mapping & analysis (Source: ELFT)

NHS Sustainability model, PDF guide and Excel file (Source: Kent CT)

Alternative sustainability model - MUSIQ Excel file (Source: ELFT)

Stage 2: Understanding the current situation/problem

Tools:

Stakeholder mapping & analysis (Source: ELFT)

Fishbone diagram (Source: ELFT)

Driver Diagrams (Source: ELFT)

Process mapping (Source: ELFT)

Stage 3: Understanding the current situation/problem

Tools:

Run Charts (Source: ELFT)

SPC Charts (Source: ELFT)

Pareto Charts (Source: ELFT)

What difference does NACEL make?

Data and improvement over time

% of patients, bereaved people or hospitals, first audit year and 2025

Individualised care plan in place for last days of life*	67.0% (2018)	85.5% (2025)
Bereaved people say staff communicated sensitively	79.0% (2018)	83.8% (2025)
Hospitals with 8-hour, 7-day face-to-face specialist care	36.0% (2019)	64.1% (2025)

Shaping national standards

Findings inform NICE quality standards, CQC inspections and the Modern Service Framework for End-of-Life Care.

Helping local health systems

Over two-thirds of ICBs use NACEL's data tool. NACEL alerts regulators when a hospital falls well below others.

Helping hospitals improve

Hospitals have shared 400+ examples of using findings to build business cases, train staff and plan their workforce.

Giving the public a voice

Bereaved people co-designed the Patient and Carer Tool, which has had 1,000+ views and is being shared by Compassion in Dying and National Voices.

Introduction to NACEL 2027

Kaitlyn Biggs, NACEL Delivery Manager



What's new in NACEL 2027?

Hospital/Site Overview returns

With a new section on care after death (Fuller Inquiry) and more detailed questions on staff training.

Staff Reported Measure paused

The Staff Reported Measure will not be collected in 2027.

Shorter Case Note Review

Reduced from 40 to 36 questions, with new questions on best interests advance care planning and home postcode sector.

Clearer definitions

Including what counts as evidence of advance care planning.

Simpler death count

In the Annual Death Data Collection.

Bereavement Survey unchanged

Same questions, and the option to include NACEL questions in a local survey continues.

Data entry in the Data and Improvement Tool

Data collection and results all in one place. Further guidance will be shared in the coming months.

Key Dates Webpage

Audit Guidance Webpage

Data collection elements

1. **Case Note Review:** a review of documented care during the final admission for deaths in 2027. 18 January 2027 - 14 January 2028.

2. **Bereavement Survey:** bereaved people are invited to give feedback on the care received during 2027. Continuous, following on from NACEL 2026 with no break in data collection.

3. **Hospital/Site Overview:** organisation-level information on beds, specialist palliative care, staff training, care after death and quality improvement. 1 July - 30 September 2027.

4. **Annual Death Data Collection:** the number of adult deaths in your hospital/site in 2027, and whether you took part in the Bereavement Survey in full or through a local survey.

Not collected in 2027: Staff Reported Measure

Taking part in NACEL is mandatory

PARTICIPATION IN ALL ELEMENTS

All participating organisations must take part in these NACEL 2027 data collection element: the Case Note Review, Hospital/Site Overview and Annual Death Data Collection.

If an element is not completed

Non-participation is escalated through the NACEL Management of Outliers process.

Bereavement Survey

Non-participation in the Bereavement Survey is not escalated via the outlier policy, however, it is strongly encouraged, as bereavement feedback is vital to measuring outcomes of care

Key dates

Audit element	Data collection	Period audited	Reporting in the DIT
Case Note Review	18 Jan - 11 Jul 2027 1 Jul 2027 - 14 Jan 2028	Deaths 1 Jan - 30 Jun 2027 Deaths 1 Jul - 31 Dec 2027	Updated daily from 1 April 2027
Bereavement Survey	Continuous, following on from NACEL 2026	Deaths 1 Jan - 31 Dec 2026 Deaths 1 Jan - 31 Dec 2027	Updated daily from 1 April 2027
Hospital/Site Overview	1 Jul - 30 Sep 2027	Workforce at 31 Mar 2027; training 1 Apr 2026 - 31 Mar 2027	October 2027
Annual Death Data Collection	1 Jan - 28 Feb 2028	Deaths 1 Jan - 31 Dec 2027	March 2028

Full dates are on the Key Dates section of the NACEL Portal.

Case Note Review

A review of documented care during the final admission



Case Note Review: sample and schedule

Data collection	Deaths audited (date of death)	Sample size	Reporting
18 Jan - 11 Jul 2027	Q4: 1 Jan - 31 Mar 2027	20-70 consecutive deaths	Updated daily from 1 April 2027
	Q1: 1 Apr - 30 Jun 2027	20-70 consecutive deaths	
1 Jul 2027 - 14 Jan 2028	Q2: 1 Jul - 30 Sep 2027	20-70 consecutive deaths	
	Q3: 1 Oct - 31 Dec 2027	20-70 consecutive deaths	

Consecutive deaths

Audit 20 consecutive deaths each quarter, up to 70. If a death cannot be reviewed, select the next eligible death.

Fewer than 20 deaths?

Review as many as possible. Every record contributes to the national picture.

Larger sample, smaller margin of error

Sites with more deaths should consider submitting more reviews to make results more robust.

Case Note Review: eligibility

Adult (18+) inpatient deaths in either category:

Category 1: death expected

It was expected that the patient would die during their final admission. Life sustaining treatments may still be offered in parallel to end of life care.

Category 2: death not expected

Imminent death was not recognised or expected by hospital staff, but staff were 'not surprised' that the patient died, for example because of a life limiting condition or frailty.

Excluded

Deaths in the Emergency Department; within 4 hours of admission; due to a sudden catastrophic event with full escalation of treatment; suicides; maternal deaths; deaths in hospices.

Please note

The category reflects whether death was anticipated at any point during the last stay, not at admission.

Case Note Review: changes since NACEL 2026

36

questions, reduced from 40

2

new question areas: best interests advance care planning and home postcode sector

Clearer definitions

Including what counts as evidence of advance care planning.

SNOMED codes

Listed throughout the data specification, including codes for deaths to include and exclude.

Home postcode sector only: the part before the space plus the first character after it (for example SK7 1 from SK7 1AB). Never enter the full postcode.

Case Note Review: coordinating your submission

National data opt-out

Do not review the case notes of patients who opted out of their data being used for research and planning. The opt-out does not apply to the Bereavement Survey.

Case codes

Keep an internal log linking case codes to patients. Do not share it outside your organisation, including with the NACEL team.

Work with your BI team

SNOMED code lists are not exhaustive, and your organisation may code differently. Business Intelligence teams can help identify eligible patients.

Keep case notes accessible

Case notes reviewed for NACEL 2027 must be accessible until January 2028 for the Management of Outliers process.

Bereavement Survey

Feedback from bereaved people on the care received



Bereavement Survey: summary

An online or paper, anonymous survey of the bereaved person's experience of care during the final admission for deaths between 1 January and 31 December 2027 *(and 2026 due to its continuation)*.

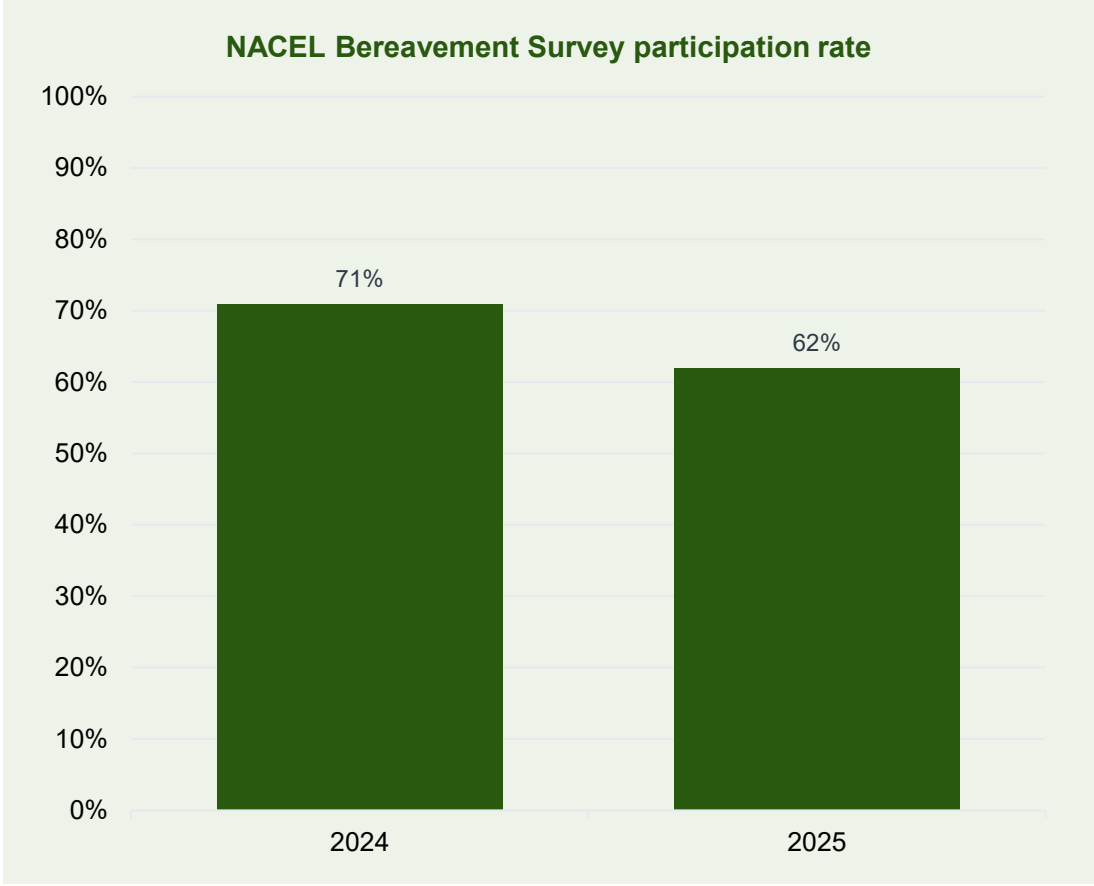
18 questions, unchanged from 2026. Respondents are asked which quarter the death occurred in.

Data collection is continuous, following on from NACEL 2026 with no break.

Links and QR codes from NACEL 2024, 2025 and 2026 redirect to the 2027 survey, so existing promotional materials can be reused.

33 average responses per submission in 2026

5,148 responses across 239 submissions (collection ongoing)



Bereavement Survey: how to take part

Online survey

Invite bereaved people using the submission-specific URL or QR code.

Check the correct link is used if you have more than one submission.

Monitor responses via the data collection pages.

Paper survey

Supports people with limited digital access.

Print the hospital/site name at the top so feedback links to the correct submission.

Enter responses online or on the NACEL Bereavement Survey spreadsheet.

Who is excluded?

Bereaved people of patients under 18, deaths in A&E, deaths within 4 hours of admission, suicides and maternal deaths. Avoid advertising the survey in emergency or paediatric areas, although we understand you will not have full control.

Bereavement Survey: full or partial participation

Full participation

Take part in the full NACEL Bereavement Survey (18 questions).

This is the encouraged option.

Partial participation (local survey)

Include at least the 9 core NACEL questions in your local survey.

Questions and answer options must match NACEL.

Answer 'No' to full and 'Yes' to partial participation in the Annual Death Data Collection.

UPLOAD FUNCTION

Collate paper and local survey responses in the NACEL Excel template (one per submission) and send it to the NACEL Support Team. Responses are uploaded into the NACEL database quarterly.

Hospital/Site Overview

Returns for NACEL 2027



Hospital/Site Overview: what it covers

Beds

Total beds at 31 March 2027, excluding paediatric, maternity, amenity and mental health beds.

Specialist palliative care

Access to a service, face to face 8 hours a day 7 days a week, and telephone 24/7.

Specialist palliative care workforce

Medical (PAs) and nursing, AHP and other staff (WTE) at 31 March 2027.

Staff training

End of life care training 1 April 2026 - 31 March 2027, staff groups covered and refresher frequency.

Care after death (new)

Board assurance on the Fuller Inquiry recommendations, executive responsibility, safeguarding and incident reporting.

Quality improvement

End of life care QI plans, sharing with your ICB/Health Board, and a short description of the work.

Completed once per submission. Non-participation results in alarm-level outlier status.

Hospital/Site Overview: plan ahead

Some questions are best answered with input from colleagues outside the end of life care team.

Download the data specification and gather the information before entering data.

Data collection: 1 July - 30 September 2027

Board member or lead for care at end of life

Chief Nurse

Safeguarding lead

Head of Risk

Colleagues you may want to involve

Annual Death Data Collection

3

questions

1 Jan - 28 Feb 2028

data collection period

Number of adult (18+) deaths in your hospital/site in 2027, excluding, Emergency Department deaths and maternal deaths.

Whether you took part in the full NACEL Bereavement Survey, or partially through a local survey.

Used to calculate case ascertainment. Mandatory under the Management of Outliers policy.

Tips and tricks for Bereavement Survey participation

Jess Moss, NACEL Quality Improvement Lead



Ways to share the Bereavement Survey

Bereavement services

Email, letter or leaflet in bereavement packs, with the support of the bereavement office.

Medical Examiners and chaplains

Remind carers how their feedback improves care for future families.

On the wards

Posters, leaflets and letters, with ward end of life care champions encouraging completion.

Organisation channels

Electronic messaging, internal communications and trust social media.

Community groups

Work with LGBTQ+ centres, faith organisations and ethnic community associations so feedback reflects diverse populations.

Paper copies

Paper surveys with pre-paid return envelopes for people with limited digital access.

Example poster, leaflet and letter templates are available on the NACEL Portal and can be edited to add your organisation's logo.

What has worked well

North West Anglia NHS Foundation Trust

Sending paper copies with the link and QR code and Freepost return envelopes. Time consuming, but the response rate has improved.

Calderdale and Huddersfield NHS Foundation Trust

Individual letters to relatives of eligible patients two weeks after the details are received, in line with their previous trust survey.

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough NHS Foundation Trust

Posters on every ward, with a palliative and end of life care champion on each ward encouraging completion.

Has something worked well for you? Please share it in the chat or email nhsbn.nacelsupport@nhs.net so we can add it to the examples.

Over to you: Bereavement Survey responses

1

Using the upload function

Are you using the Bereavement Survey upload function to submit the essential questions? If so, what benefits have you seen?

2

Barriers to collecting responses

Is anything making it harder for your organisation to collect responses?

3

What has worked well

What has helped your organisation increase the number of responses it receives?

Share what has worked well

Please complete our short survey to tell us what has worked well for your organisation in obtaining Bereavement Survey responses.

Survey link: NACEL Bereavement Survey — Share What Works for Your Organisation – Fill in form

Next steps

Kaitlyn Biggs, NACEL Delivery Manager



Check your registration details by 13 November 2026

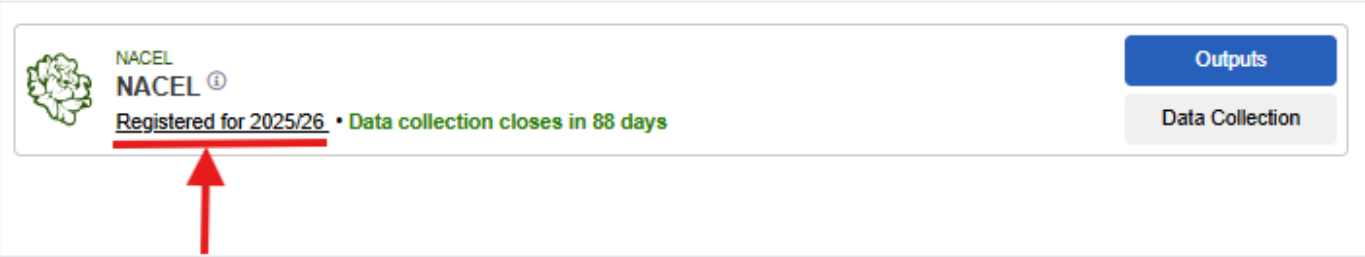
NACEL 2026 registration details carry forward to 2027 automatically.

Log in to the NHSBN Members' Area and select 'Registered for 2026/27' next to NACEL.

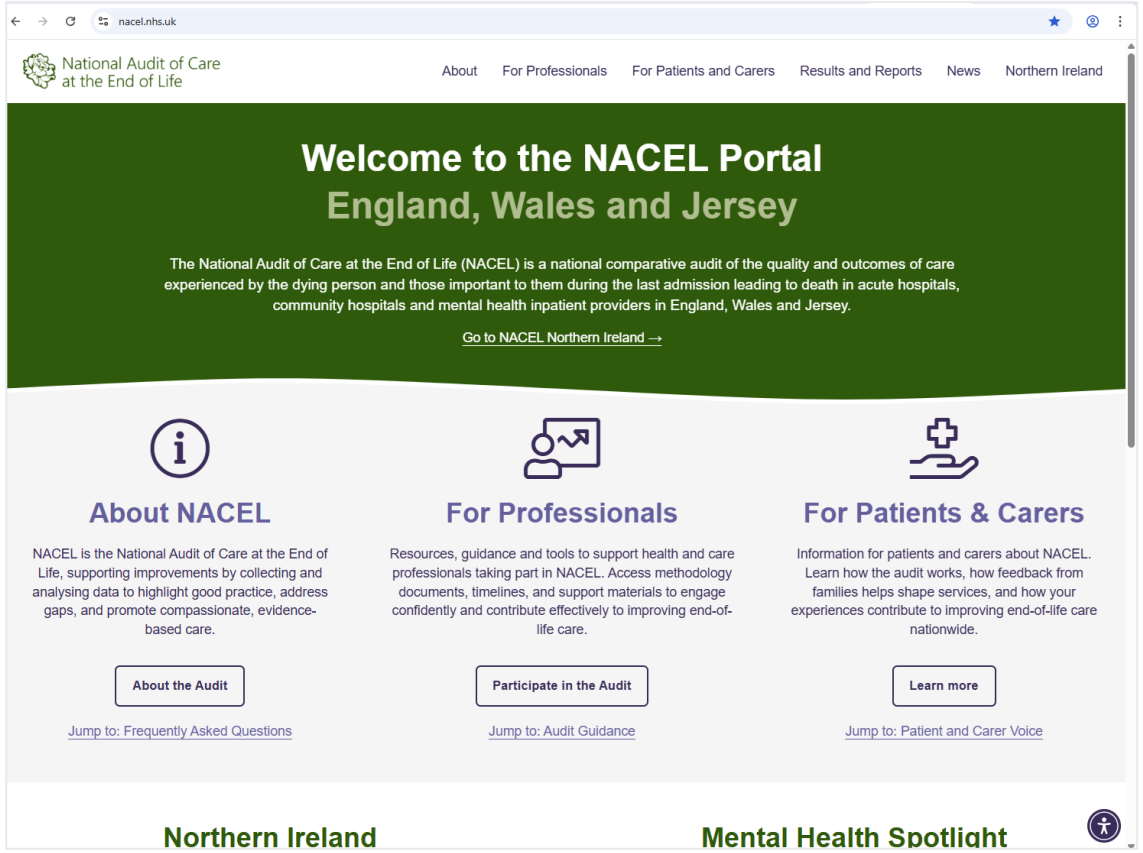
Contact the NACEL Support Team if anything needs updating.

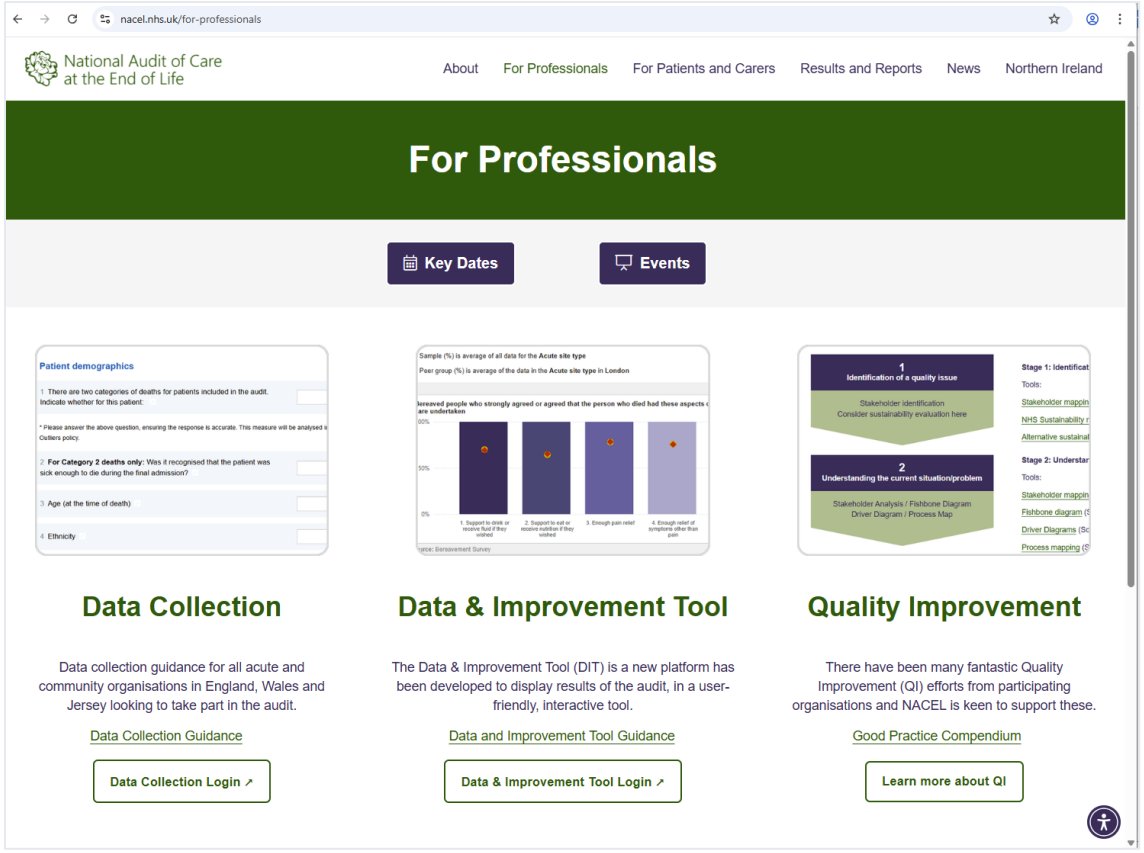
Role	Responsibility
Project Lead	Main contact; oversees participation and quality assurance
Deputy Project Lead	Supports coordination; same data access as the Lead
Submission Lead	Manages data entry for a hospital/site
Data Entry Users	Add and edit Case Note and survey data

Tip: include your Clinical Audit and Quality Improvement leads in the registered team.



Finding the NACEL Portal: www.nacel.nhs.uk





Select 'For Professionals', then 'Data Collection Login' to reach the Members' Area.

Getting ready for January 2027

1. **Review the guidance:** the NACEL 2027 audit guidance and data specifications will be on the NACEL Portal guidance page.

2. **Check your access to data collection:** make sure the right people can access the data collection area of the Data and Improvement Tool before Case Note Review data collection opens on 18 January 2027.

3. **Case Note Review data collection opens on 18 January 2027:** the Bereavement Survey continues from NACEL 2026 with no break.

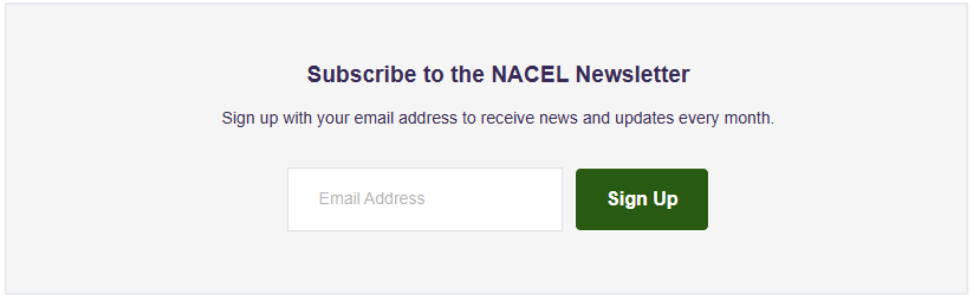
4. **Plan with your teams:** work with your Business Intelligence team to identify eligible deaths, and your bereavement office to promote the survey.

5. **Plan for the Hospital/Site Overview:** it returns in July 2027; identify the colleagues you will need input from.

Stay connected

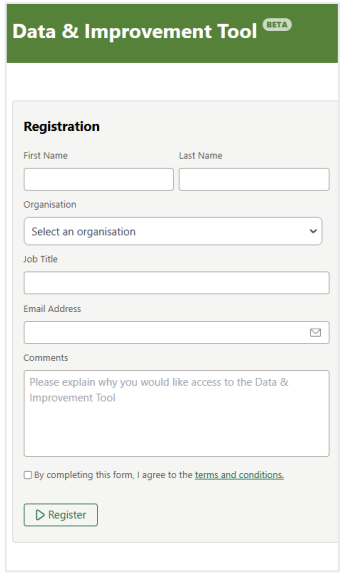
Subscribe to the NACEL newsletter

www.nacel.nhs.uk/news, then scroll to the bottom of the page.



Register for the Data and Improvement Tool

data.nacel.nhs.uk/registration. This is separate from the Members' Area registration; your Project Lead approves access.



Questions, discussion and AOB



Thank you for attending

For further information please get in touch:

NACEL Support Team

National Audit of Care at the End of Life (NACEL)

nhsbn.nacelsupport@nhs.net | 0161 521 0866



www.nacel.nhs.uk