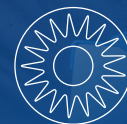


SpaMedica



Quality Account 2023/24



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Introduction

SpaMedica is one of the leading providers of eyecare services in the UK and the largest provider of NHS-funded cataract procedures in England. We believe in giving people the best advice and choices to help improve their vision and pride ourselves on providing excellent patient care.

Specialising in eyecare services means we have a comprehensive offer for patients, from cataract surgery and YAG laser capsulotomy, to a range of medical retina services and vitreo-retinal surgery.

SpaMedica is dedicated to bringing care closer to home for thousands of patients across the country, working in partnership with the NHS to reduce waiting times, achieve excellent outcomes, and improve our patients' vision and quality of life.

SpaMedica has been awarded contracts with 38 of 42 English ICBs, in addition to the Northern Ireland and Welsh Health Boards. We also support NHS trusts directly, by treating some of their long-wait patients (referred to as inter-provider transfers/IPTs). As of 31 March 2024, we were treating patients and delivering ophthalmology services at 53 hospitals across England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Based on median referral to treatment times, non-IPT patients are treated within 4.9 weeks of referral to SpaMedica.

In the year to 31 March 2024, we opened 6 new hospitals, and our team grew to 1,929 employees. Key new senior roles appointed during 2023/24 included the Director of Central Operations, NHS Partnership Director, Head of Policy and Value

Proposition, Data Protection Officer, and Procurement Manager. In the Optometry team, Professor Christine Purslow was appointed to the Executive Board as Clinical Director of Outpatients and we appointed two national clinical leads, for our cataract and medical retina services respectively.

As well as delivering first-class care to our patients, we are committed to training the next generation of healthcare professionals.

Since launching our surgeon training programme, we have welcomed over 60 registrars into our operating theatres to perform cataract surgery under the direct supervision of our experienced consultant surgeons.

We plan to introduce additional registrar theatre lists in more of our hospitals over the next year. Trainees continue to benefit from access to our five specialist "dry lab" training suites to support them in developing their surgical skills.

Our patients and clinical teams are supported by our administrative teams based in our Bolton head office, as well as support teams in Wokingham and Hull.

We look forward to continuing to build positive, collaborative relationships between our hospital teams and local NHS hospitals and commissioners.

CEO Statement

During 2023/24, SpaMedica celebrated two major milestones - our 15-year anniversary and the opening of our 50th hospital in North Tyneside - and both events presented an opportunity to take stock of everything we've achieved since opening in 2008.

We continue to perform more cataract surgeries than any other independent sector provider and, as an organisation, we perform more cataract surgeries than any individual NHS trust. We take the responsibilities of this seriously, recognising that as a leader in ophthalmic surgery, we must deliver strong clinical outcomes, excellent patient care, and support NHS ophthalmology services in the areas in which we operate.

Our model of working in partnership with the NHS has proved increasingly important in helping to meet the growing demand for cataract surgery within an ageing population, and our focus on bringing care closer to home - into the local communities we serve - is more aligned than ever to the NHS priorities of delivering exceptional, specialist care in communities.

Our three main objectives - patient safety, excellent care and patient satisfaction - are centred around ensuring every patient has the best possible experience of our services, and the best possible outcome. These are at the heart of everything we do – from investing in training to develop the skills of the next generation of ophthalmologists, to creating a tailored, company-wide plan to care for patients with dementia.

Our company values – safety, integrity, kindness and transparency – are embedded in our day-to-day care and embraced by our colleagues, ensuring we deliver the best possible service to all our patients.

The latest National Ophthalmology Database Audit highlighted that our surgical outcomes remain among the best in the country, with consistently low complication rates across our hospitals.

I am pleased to report that patient feedback has remained incredibly positive, with 96.3% of patients stating they would recommend SpaMedica to their friends and family. In reviews left on the NHS website, 96.2% of patients also gave SpaMedica the highest possible “five-star” rating during the 2023/24 reporting year, praising our short waiting times for treatment, our friendly and knowledgeable staff, and their much-improved quality of life after treatment.

As of 31st March 2024, 35 of our hospitals had been inspected by the Care Quality Commission (CQC), with 13 achieving an ‘Outstanding’ rating and 22 achieving a ‘Good’ rating.

During 2023/24, the CQC published inspection reports for 8 of our hospitals. All of those hospitals were rated as ‘Good’ or ‘Outstanding,’ with 2 achieving an ‘Outstanding’ rating overall, and 6 achieving a rating of ‘Good’.

We're proud to be supporting the career progression of NHS registrars, with our consultants providing one-to-one training for NHS surgeons in theatre. We're passionate about training future generations of healthcare professionals, so giving registrars the opportunity to observe and actively participate can be an important part of their professional development.

It is wonderful to see our talented and dedicated teams not only meeting, but surpassing clinical standards and their success is grounded in a commitment to continually improve our services and our patients' experiences of them.

Our other objectives to support the NHS included:

- Continuing to develop and refine our training processes for employees, using a combination of face-to-face sessions and online learning modules.
- Supporting more trusts and local hospitals – working in partnership with local commissioners to provide high-quality services for NHS patients, extending our services to meet patients' needs.

We are privileged to be able to care for the many patients who choose SpaMedica for their treatment and we are proud to be a true partner to the NHS.



Declaration: I have seen SpaMedica's Quality Account for 2023/24 and am happy with the accuracy of the data reported. I am proud to report the high quality of 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.

Richard Woodward
CEO, SpaMedica

2023/24 highlights



Opened 6 new hospitals



Achieved our 13th 'Outstanding' CQC rating



Received over 6,000 5-star patient reviews, bringing our overall total to more than 17,400



Organised over 140 training and development events, attended by over 3,800 community optometrists and their staff



Provided free transport to over 22,000 patients

Delivered excellent patient outcomes



99.5% of cataract surgeries were complication-free

How we measure, improve and respond

We seek continual improvement in clinical quality through a comprehensive governance structure that uses monthly and quarterly management information from our risk and patient management systems to identify trends in patient outcomes and clinical quality that may need addressing.

Our assurance framework includes specialist sub-committees that report to the Board/senior management on a regular basis. We now alternate monthly regional and national meetings for key committees, to ensure appropriate attention to detail, two-way flow of information and robust challenge.



We routinely consider risks across SpaMedica and review trends to ensure all appropriate mitigating action is taken. We thoroughly review clinical outcomes and audit results, to validate controls and assessments and to identify any further action or new controls needed.

We carry out peer reviews and mock inspections to ensure all our hospitals are always delivering exceptional quality and safety standards.

ICB engagement visits hosted in 2023/24 included quality visits to our Blackpool, Bexhill, Brighton, Peterborough and Norwich hospitals.

We were happy to showcase the wonderful work our hospitals are doing and how we were supporting the patients within our care, providing support with additional needs and reasonable adjustments to meet the individual requirements of our patients, and feedback from commissioners was overwhelmingly positive.



How we measure, improve and respond

Past innovations/priorities for improvement - actions completed in 2023/24

SpaMedica has continuously reviewed its clinical leadership structure to support growth and development. In 2023/24, we expanded our clinical governance and optometry teams and appointed regional clinical governance leads to link with our operational regional structures.

To support hospital teams at our new sites, our experienced Integration team provides on-site governance and operations support to our new hospital managers, nurses and HCTs. For an extended three-month period, colleagues benefit from training and mentoring delivered by experts in their field.

In 2023/24, we also:



Commenced Multi-Disciplinary Team regulatory reviews to support initial testing of the newly adopted Patient Safety Incident Response Framework (PSIRF). The PSIRF tools and methods support a culture shift in patient safety incident investigations.



Rolled out Human Factors and PSIRF training to all clinical colleagues. Human Factors training aims to facilitate an understanding of different learning styles, behaviours, cultures, and values. It enhances leadership, teamwork and communication skills, encourages people to collaborate to develop efficient and effective processes, and ensures a good fit between employees, the equipment they use, and the environment they work in.



Improved support for patients with protected characteristics and improved our ability to meet the needs of patients with dementia.



Further developed clinical practice, supervision and specialist training for RGNs and ODPs by introducing lead nurses, lead theatre scrubs and theatre quality leads, with appropriate competencies to cascade to teams. We also appointed the first group of six trainee ophthalmic nurse practitioners, who commenced a 12-month training programme to support the national clinical staff shortage.



Reviewed our patient literature and used television screens in our waiting rooms to improve communication with patients.



Trialled a Patient Experience and Engagement Working Group to review our patient journey and promote continuous improvement in our service.



Transitioned to InPhase's risk management system to optimise the way we report, investigate and manage safety events, feedback and risks.

How we measure, improve and respond

Current priorities for improvement - actions in progress or planned for 2024/25

We continue to innovate within our clinical and corporate governance structures, introducing new roles at all levels of the organisation and building on the enthusiasm of our employees to learn more, improve their career progression opportunities and continually refine our processes.



As SpaMedica grows, so do both our internal and external reporting requirements, particularly around our carbon footprint and supply chain assurance. Our expanded Compliance Team is supporting these new requirements.



We plan to enhance our risk assurance framework by ensuring any controls put in place to mitigate risks are working effectively and being applied consistently, and that feedback is shared with the appropriate teams.



While our endophthalmitis infection rates remain significantly lower than the national average (0.001% compared to a national benchmark of 0.1%), we recognise the risk this condition can pose to our patients and take steps to mitigate it by educating patients about the importance of hand hygiene and aftercare following surgery. We include a hand-washing guide in our cataract patient booklet and emphasise the importance of not rubbing the eye after surgery. On the very rare occasion that a confirmed case of endophthalmitis occurs, a thorough investigation is conducted, and any learnings and associated actions are shared with relevant teams.



We have put effective safeguards in place to prevent falls on our premises.



To continue embedding clinical governance improvements, a mid-year peer review with a specific focus on identified learnings has been proposed for 2024/25, following a similar process to our annual peer reviews, but using a multi-disciplinary inspection team.



SpaMedica is now classed as a category 1 healthcare provider, with a corresponding increase in the level of scrutiny over our information governance. Managing patients' information securely, efficiently and effectively remains a key priority for us.



We are also developing our Corporate Social Responsibility strategy, including our approach to internal and external reporting, reviewing the Energy Saving Opportunities Scheme (ESOS) audit recommendations and continuing our progress towards Net Zero.



The Contracting team appointed an NHS Partnership Director and a Head of Policy and Value Proposition. Both national leads will help to improve our communication with NHSE and other national regulators, in addition to supporting commissioners.



A multi-disciplinary project team is continuing our move towards paperless patient records, considering all information collected from patients and given or posted to them, as well as the legal medical record and all forms completed during the patient journey.



How we measure, improve and respond

Clinical quality indicators

SpaMedica continued to grow last year as more patients chose us for their care, more surgeons chose to operate with us, more hospitals opened, and we expanded our medical retina and vitreo-retinal services across more of our hospitals. In the last 12 months, the number of patients we have treated has risen steadily. While these numbers continue to grow, surgery outcomes and patient safety remain our highest priority.



Reporting and benchmarking our clinical outcomes

	% of cataract patients with visual acuity of 6/12 or better after surgery (no comorbidities)	% of cataract patients achieving +/- 1.00D deviation from predicted spherical equivalent refraction (no comorbidities)	% of cataract surgeries completed without PCR (unadjusted for complexity or surgeon grade)	% of patients presenting with a confirmed case of endophthalmitis
National target set by the Royal College of Ophthalmologists	≥ 95%	≥ 85%	≥ 98.5%	0.1%
SpaMedica 22/23	97.38%	92.62%	99.51%	0.002%
SpaMedica 23/24	98.10%	93.12%	99.51%	0.001%

Posterior capsule rupture (PCR) is a complication of cataract surgery that occurs when there is a break or tear in the 'bag' holding the lens in place, the posterior lens capsule. With national (unadjusted) targets for PCR set at 1.5%, our internal data reviews show that we consistently have an unadjusted PCR rate of 0.49%, well within the recommended target, and we are delighted to report that 99.51% of our surgeries are complication-free.

Endophthalmitis is a recognised, rare, but serious complication of ophthalmic surgery that usually occurs as a result of a patient touching their eye after surgery. Our endophthalmitis infection rates are also significantly better than the national target: 0.001% compared to the national benchmark of 0.1%.

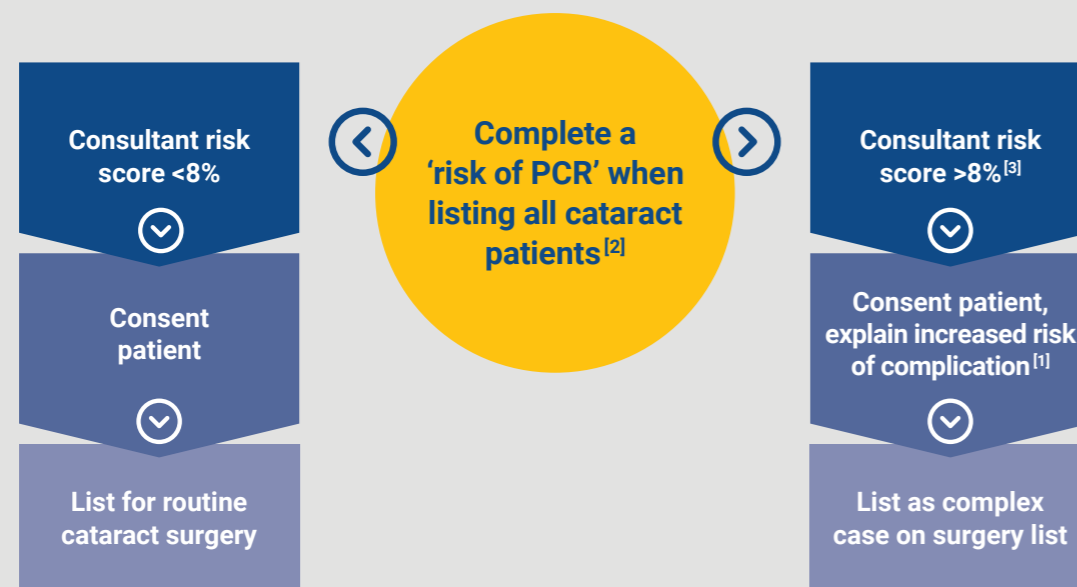
The National Ophthalmic Database (NOD) is a key part of our post operative process. Whether patients are seen back at SpaMedica post-operatively, or in a community setting by one of our accredited community optometrists, a data submission to NOD is made. This submission is a key driver in ensuring SpaMedica's outcomes are of the highest quality, allowing us to benchmark our own internal processes and find areas for improvement, however marginal. The NOD audit also allows for external comparison with other NHS cataract providers, empowering ICB commissioners to make evidence-based decisions. The NOD audit ensures an impartial 'third party' analysis is available in the public domain.

Complex cataracts - risk stratification

We aim to minimise the risk of complications occurring during cataract surgery by identifying patients who need to go on to a complex cataract list at the pre-assessment clinic, and we have developed a process to stratify our patients according to risk.

Ocular co-pathology is present in a large proportion of SpaMedica patients. Research has shown that it is possible to predict the risk of complications, such as PCR.

High-risk patients are treated by a specialist vitreoretinal surgeon. This ensures that if any complications arise during surgery, they can be treated immediately by the specialist surgeon. This prevents distress for patients and reduces the number of visits and operations needed, ultimately improving clinical outcomes for patients. It also reduces the financial burden on the NHS through avoiding multiple visits and surgeries. We have access to specialist vitreoretinal surgeons in all regions.



[1] NICE. Cataracts in adults: management. October 2017. <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/NG77>

[2] Narendran N, Jaycock P, Johnston RL et al. The Cataract National Dataset electronic multicentre audit of 55,567 operations: risk stratification for posterior capsule rupture and vitreous loss

[3] Silvester, A., Pitalia, A., Risk stratifying for posterior capsule rupture: validity and utility for senior surgeons performing high-volume cataract surgery (ESCRS2019)

Medical retina services

Age-related macular degeneration (AMD) causes progressive loss of central vision. There are two types of age-related macular degeneration – wet AMD and dry AMD.

Dry AMD usually progresses slowly, over years, and there is currently no established treatment for the condition. Wet AMD develops rapidly, but it can be slowed down or stopped with treatment, providing patients are seen and treated as quickly as possible. A speedy appointment for the referral is therefore essential. In the year to 31 March 2024, we extended our medical retina service to more of our hospitals and had an increasing number of referrals.

As per NICE guidance, all AMD patients were offered an appointment within two weeks of referral.

In 2023/24, we were part of the second national audit for AMD. This demonstrated that early intervention and timely injections resulted in better visual outcomes and lower rates of vision loss. Our results are comparable to the landmark studies (ANCHOR & MARINA) [4], demonstrating the value of our macular treatment in improving patients' vision and maintaining the improvement over a sustained time period.

In 2023/24, we further expanded both the range of services offered and the number of SpaMedica hospitals that offer AMD and other medical retina treatments, such as hydroxychloroquine monitoring services in three areas, delivered in partnership with NHS Trusts. We continue to train both nurses and optometrists in-house to support this expansion of our services, including training for nurses to develop injecting capabilities.

To quality-assure and standardise our training, we have appointed three experienced nurse practitioners across different regions to take on the role of lead injector trainers, to provide support for new and existing injectors.

A medical retinal support/training meeting is held weekly with input from senior optom leads and retinal consultants. The meeting is used to disseminate information, share learning, and address any feedback from the medical retinal team.

[4] The MARINA (Minimally Classic / Occult Trial of the Anti-VEGF Antibody Ranibizumab in the Treatment of Neovascular AMD) and ANCHOR (Anti-VEGF Antibody for the Treatment of Predominantly Classic Choroidal Neovascularization in AMD) 2010 trials were a combined 2-year analysis of the safety and efficacy of monthly ranibizumab vs PDT in classic wet AMD.

How we measure, improve and respond

Data quality indicators

Clinical coding audit results

Our clinical coding team uses information from our electronic patient records and patient administration system, supported by national references, to code each episode of care. We contribute anonymised data monthly to the national NHS Secondary Uses Database and share appropriate details with commissioners to enable them to check our activity. We have a comprehensive programme of internal checks by coding team supervisors to check the completeness and accuracy of coding and monitor the competence of each coder.

External auditors complete quarterly audits of our clinical coding. Each sample is of 200 'finished consultant episodes'.

All audits during 2023/24 showed that our clinical coders continued to improve, demonstrating excellent knowledge and understanding of ophthalmology and cataract surgery, and comfortably achieving the 'standards exceeded' level in primary diagnosis, secondary diagnosis, and both procedure categories.

The clinical coding team have all completed Clinical Coding Standards courses or refresher courses within 2022/23, or have training dates booked within their first 6 months of employment. Refresher training is next due in 2025/2026.

Economic use of resources audits

When making the decision to treat a patient, our optometrists must always comply with the specific, local contractual requirements of that patient's commissioner. Our Regional Lead Optoms carry out quarterly audits of a sample of patients to check that we have recorded appropriate details to support the decision to treat (or not to treat) each patient.

NHS number and GP information

These are mandatory fields on our patient administration system. We do not have any patient records missing the patient's NHS number or GP details.

Data security and protection

Our Chief Medical Officer is our Caldicott Guardian. As part of this role, he attends the Information Security Group chaired by the Chief Financial Officer. During 2023/24, we recruited a full-time, specialist Data Protection Officer. They support our quarterly Information Security and Governance Committee, own our information governance and IT policies and procedures, and work with our Head of IT to regularly advise all SpaMedica employees on data security and information governance issues.

Our most recent Data Security and Protection Toolkit is being prepared for submission in June 2024. Our Cyber Essentials Plus certification was renewed in 2023.



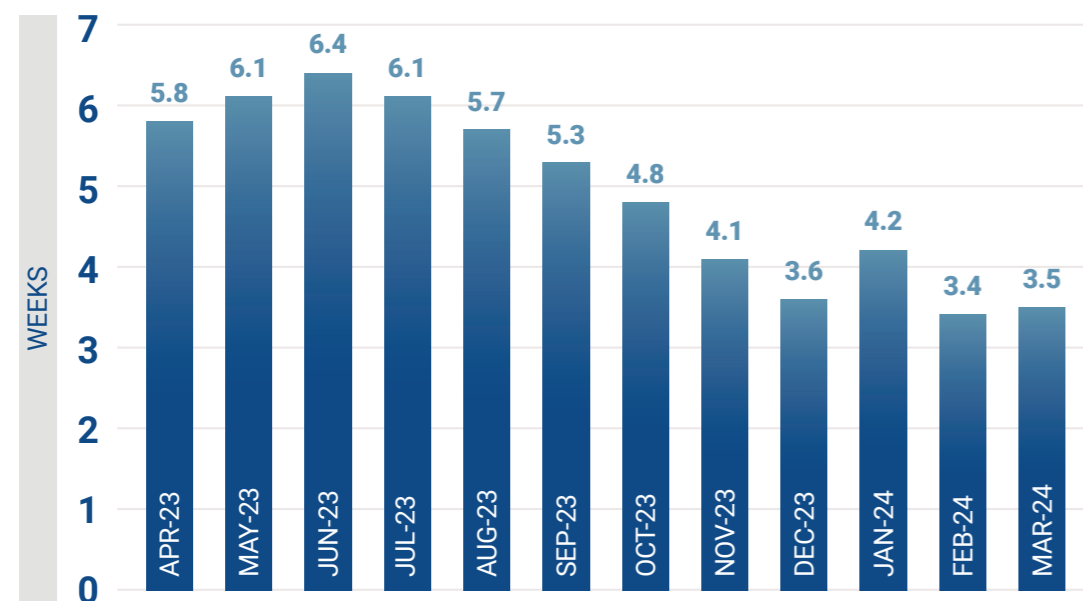


How we measure, improve and respond

Referral to treatment times

SpaMedica aims to treat all patients within the recommended 18-week referral-to-treatment target set out in the NHS Constitution.

From 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024, our median referral to treatment time for non-IPT patients was 4.9 weeks - and had reduced to 3.5 weeks as of 31st March 2024.

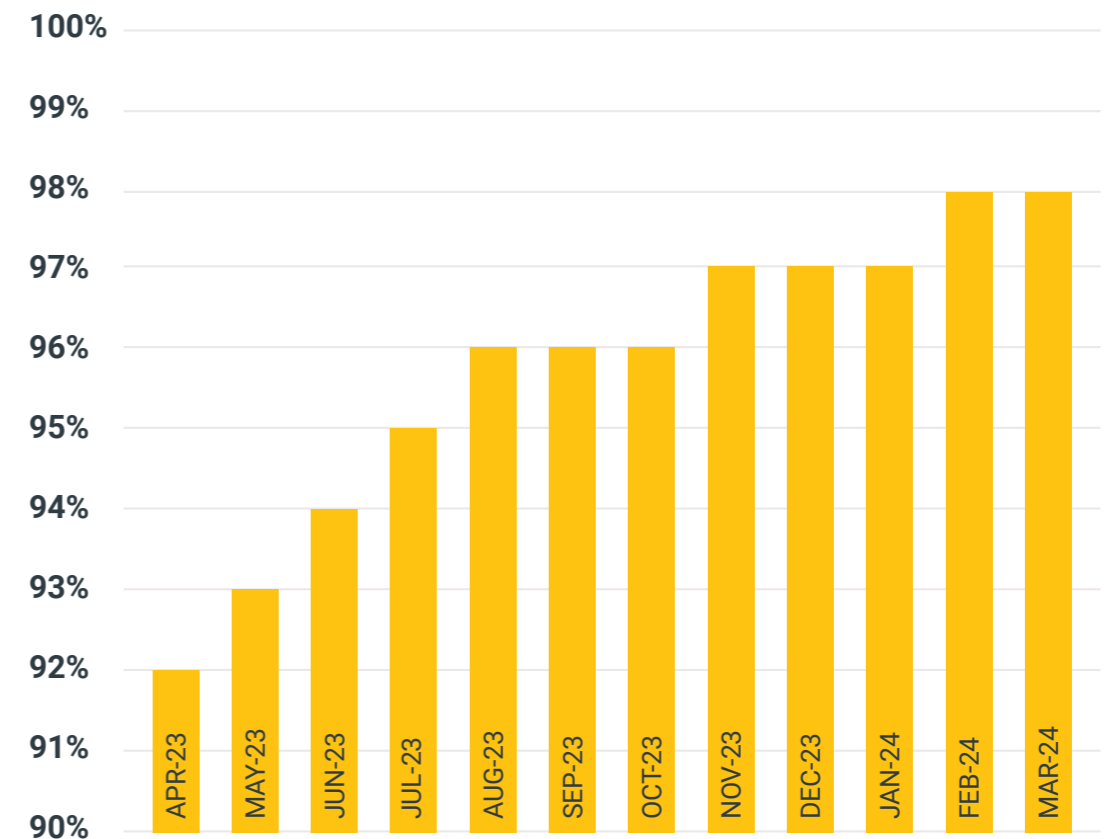


We have worked closely with the NHS to help reduce waiting times and have again accepted a significant number of inter-provider transfers (IPT) from our NHS partners, often inheriting long waiting lists in the process.

Despite these challenges, by the end of March 2024, we were in a position where 98% of our patients (including IPTs) were being treated within 18 weeks of referral, well above the operational standard of 92%.

The figure averaged 95.8% throughout the 2023/24 reporting year.

Average % of patients treated within 18 weeks of referral (IPT and non-IPT)



How we measure, improve and respond

Patient feedback

We listen to our patients and value their feedback on our services. This helps us identify where we are performing well and which areas we need to improve. We collect face-to-face and written feedback from our patients at various intervals throughout their treatment.

From 1st April 2023 – 31st March 2024, 15,933 patients completed our online feedback survey.

- 96.4% of patients said their experience of our service was 'very good' or 'good'
- 96.3% of patients said they would recommend SpaMedica to their friends and family

96.4%

experienced 'very good' or 'good' service

96.3%

would recommend SpaMedica to friends and family



Reviews received via NHS Choices

SpaMedica received 6,245 reviews from patients on the NHS Choices website from 1st April 2023 – 31st March 2024, with 6008 (96.2%) of patients awarding us the highest possible rating (five stars). When taking into account previous years, we have now received over 17,400 five-star patient reviews overall. We have selected a few from this reporting year to quote here:

Amazing practice - From the first phone call to the discharge, the welcome, politeness and expertise couldn't be better. The atmosphere was perfect and made my experience comfortable.

John Waterhouse, SpaMedica Peterborough

Perfect - very professional with lovely friendly people. Would go again in a heartbeat. I was so nervous but thanks to the caring staff I was put at ease.

Jan White, SpaMedica Coventry

Wonderful care - I am a very satisfied and happy patient! From the 'meet and greet' smiles through to the post op surgery, I cannot fault the excellent and skilled care that I received recently at SpaMedica Exeter... At every step of the way I was treated as an individual by the warmly welcoming, reassuring and competent team members. I was also very impressed with all the information I received regarding pre- peri- and post-op cataract surgery. My experience illustrates just how well patient care can work between the NHS and an efficient private company such as SpaMedica.

T. Bee, SpaMedica Exeter

Great practice - from my initial assessment, to my cataract surgery, every member of staff made me feel less anxious. Marvellous patience and very professional. Thank you, all the team.

Adrian Roger Jones, SpaMedica Swansea



How we measure, improve and respond

Complaints

When we receive a card or letter of thanks from our patients, we pass on this feedback to relevant employees.

Any complaint or negative feedback is recorded on our reporting system (InPhase), investigated by the appropriate person, tracked via our clinical governance team, and a response is given to the patient or other person raising the issue. For most concerns, the Hospital Manager investigates and is supported by the Area Manager. We distinguish between informal feedback - always useful for learning and improving our processes - and the formal complaints that require a specific timeframe for response and action.

To further improve how we communicate with our patients, we are continuing a comprehensive review of all our patient literature and ensuring any advice given by our clinical staff is consistent across the organisation. We are also reviewing the standard patient journey at SpaMedica and seeking feedback from patients to promote continuous improvement in our service.

How we measure, improve and respond

Patient safety

We have a dedicated emergency patient helpline which is available 24 hours per day, 365 days per year. It is supported by both an optometrist on-call service and senior management on-call system, where there are senior managers/board members rostered accordingly.

In 2023/24, we introduced a Calls Answering Triage System (CATS) to help us ensure that any patients who call the Contact Centre with clinical questions are contacted by our in-house optoms as soon as possible. CATS is designed to place emergency calls at the top of the list, followed by pre-surgery queries and standard clinical calls.

We have also increased the number of 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 to triage and treat patients when required. Dedicated emergency surgery and consultation appointments are available for patients in every SpaMedica clinic and theatre list so we can be confident that there is capacity for patients that need to be seen quickly.

In March 2024, we were delighted to be declared runners-up in the Collaborative Eye Care Awards for our work with Rayner to reduce patients' dry eye symptoms post-surgery.

Having noticed that a proportion of calls to our patient helpline related to simple dry eye queries post-cataract surgery, we now provide all cataract surgery patients with lubricating eye drops, free of charge. We also added a section on managing dry eye symptoms to our patient information booklet and website, and educated community optometrists on the impact of dry eye symptoms post cataract surgery, helping to ensure positive outcomes for as many patients as possible.

How we measure, improve and respond

Serious incident management and review

Responsibility for management of serious incidents at SpaMedica lies with the Chief Medical Officer and Director of Clinical Services, reporting to the Chief Executive and Chief Operating Officer respectively. The Director of Clinical Services and the Clinical Governance Leads support completion of detailed root cause analysis investigations to establish learnings for employees and the organisation.

This year, we appointed a further Clinical Governance Lead to support our growth and maintain the governance support available to our hospitals. Information about serious incidents or complaints is communicated promptly to the relevant healthcare regulator (CQC, HIW, RQIA) in addition to our NHS commissioners/colleagues, in line with NHS England's Serious Incidents Framework. SpaMedica has developed strong working relationships with the CQC, enabling effective communication and information sharing in addition to the required formal notification processes.

Investigation findings and learnings are shared across the company through the Clinical Governance Committee and through a quarterly Sharing Lessons Learnt email communication. Last year we also implemented the quarterly Clinical Incident Investigation Committee, to review serious incidents. Within this meeting we highlight key investigations and present the lessons learned and actions taken to mitigate the risk of recurrence. Actions which require standardisation and implementation nationally are presented through a Clinical Effectiveness Group.

During 2023/24, NHS England replaced the Serious Incidents Framework with the Patient Safety Incident Response Framework (PSIRF). SpaMedica is following NHS England's PSIRF Implementation Strategy and, as planned, we transitioned to our PSIRF strategy and methodology nationwide before the end of 2023.



How we measure, improve and respond

Key learnings and changes from incidents during 2023/24

The Learning from Patient Safety Events [LFPSE] has been developed and co-produced with engagement from key stakeholders throughout 2023/24 to ensure a robust platform for the organisation to be able launch systems and processes that support learning, improvement, and continued innovation in all aspects of patient safety and experience.

Our new risk management tool, InPhase, is LFPSE compliant, and will evolve and be refined to support our response to patient safety themes and trends. The functionality of the tool enables a focused analysis of the specific risks our patient cohorts could potentially experience, as well as supporting the wider analysis of systems, processes, and human factors - in addition to practice errors.

Endophthalmitis infections are a particular recognised risk for our patient cohort and our intention will be to prevent and minimise them as far as practicably possible. This will involve continuing to educate patients around hand hygiene and post-operative care.

As many of our patients are elderly, falls also present a risk for us. To help prevent them, we have undergone independent Disability Discrimination Act assessments of our hospital sites.



How we measure, improve and respond

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.

The audit programme includes (but is not limited to) WHO safe surgery, consent, resuscitation, health and safety, hand hygiene, environmental infection control, medicines management, and clinical documentation.

There is an established programme of infection control audits in place to ensure our key policies and practices are being implemented appropriately. Along with all our other clinical audit topics, the questions are amended annually depending on any themes that have emerged. We recruited an additional infection control lead to improve our national support to hospital managers.

How we measure, improve and respond

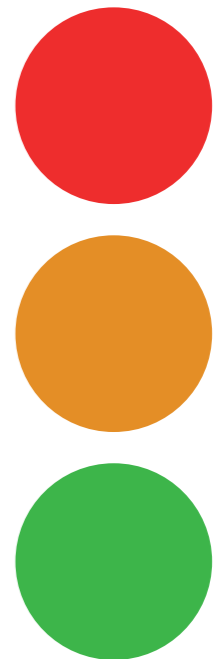
Maintaining high quality and low complication rates

We use a RAG-rated surgeon assessment tool that monitors treatment complication rates, visual outcomes, and patient-reported data pertaining to the surgery experience. These are all scrutinised regularly at Board meetings and Medical Advisory Committee (MAC) meetings.

Our standards are clear, and we have metrics to assure ourselves that they are being met or there are remedial action plans in place. Regional Lead Surgeons work alongside surgeons who are new to SpaMedica for a defined period to assess and confirm that surgical skills and standards are high and appropriate.

The Responsible Officer (RO) at our MAC meetings supports the on-boarding of new surgeons and their practising privileges. The RO also ensures that these surgeons are connected to a designated body other than SpaMedica to receive the same scrutiny through contact with their own ROs.

The feedback we receive on 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. During 2023/24 we further expanded the team of Regional Optometry Leads so 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.



How we measure, improve and respond

Training and development

We provide opportunities for our employees to grow, through learning and development, to achieve their full potential. Individual personal development plans are agreed when employees join the team and are reviewed at least annually.

All new employees receive a tailored induction programme when they join us. This includes our comprehensive mandatory training. We hold monthly induction events, so all employees receive an induction within their first few weeks with SpaMedica.

All SpaMedica's clinical employees are trained to the highest standards, with clinical competencies for each area formally assessed.

In 2023/24, we launched several in-house training programmes for staff, to build on our managers' coaching and leadership skills and provide a forum for sharing best practice. We also offered the opportunity for colleagues to undertake fully-funded apprenticeships in operational, clinical and administrative disciplines.

We launched an Applicant Tracking System to facilitate a smoother candidate and hiring manager experience, ensuring we attract and select the very best people for our roles.

We have achieved Investors in People Gold status, placing us amongst the top 4% of companies achieving world-class performance for employee engagement.



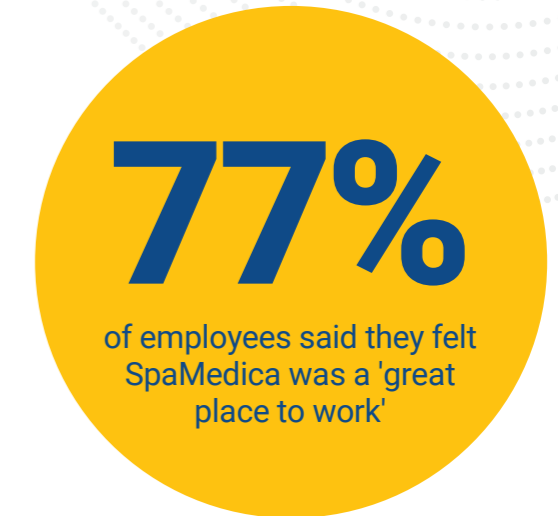
Employee survey

How our SpaMedica team feel, their experience and ideas are important to us. We listen to our team and value their feedback as this helps us to identify where we are performing well and which areas we need to focus on.

In September 2023, we completed our annual employee survey and asked our SpaMedica team to let us know how we were doing, tell us their feedback and suggest new ways of working.

A fantastic 88% of our team participated - this was 20% higher than our 2022 survey.

77% of employees said they felt SpaMedica was a 'great place to work'. This was a 4% improvement on 2022.



We also welcomed employee feedback surrounding new ideas, how we could work differently and what our team would like to see in the future. This feedback has supported the creation of annual survey action plans across divisional functions, departments, and hospitals which celebrate the key strengths of each team and also bring focus to the opportunities for the year ahead.

Surgeon support and training

During 2023/24, we improved the support for our surgeons by recruiting two surgeon relationship managers and a surgical training specialist. They support our Associate Medical Director and Chief Medical Officer in onboarding new surgeons, managing their practising privileges and ensuring they complete the required CPD and revalidation.

Our Medical Advisory Committee ensures there is comprehensive tracking of surgical KPIs and robust challenge if this is needed.

NHS staff training and development

As part of our commitment to the NHS and the future of ophthalmology, we are very proud that in 2023/24 we welcomed Ophthalmology Specialist Trainees (OST) surgeons to some of our hospitals, to increase their surgical numbers under the close supervision of very experienced consultant colleagues. Feedback from the OSTs has been very positive. Both the number of hospitals involved and the number of OSTs attending will increase over the coming years.



Zheng Yang Xu

Yang, aged 31, is currently an ST2 NHS Ophthalmology Registrar at Sandwell and West Birmingham NHS Trust.

He began his cataract surgery training placement at SpaMedica Wolverhampton as an ST1 trainee, with limited case experience. Fast forward 12 months and Yang has completed around 130 full cases as an ST2 trainee and is benefiting from his second placement – this time at SpaMedica Birmingham.

“I really look forward to a day of operating at SpaMedica – it’s probably the highlight of my week. Everyone was very friendly and welcoming right from the start, and so I immediately felt very comfortable.

My supervisor has been excellent too, allowing me to learn and develop under close supervision. He’s provided a good balance of freedom to operate, as well as constructively critiquing and guiding my progression in cataract surgery.

Having undertaken two rotations, I can say the training at SpaMedica is very consistent. Both clinical supervisors were excellent, and that’s from embarking upon the first placement with virtually no full case experience, to now, where I’m completing a majority of a list each time, focusing on efficiency, maintaining safety and developing my surgical techniques.

I hope that the scheme continues, so more and more trainees get the opportunity to have the same experiences I’ve been fortunate to have.”



Dr Jonathan Marler

Jonathan, from Brighton, began his placement at SpaMedica in August 2023, gaining valuable experience of treating all types of cataracts while being supervised by SpaMedica’s highly-skilled consultants and theatre teams.

He has worked for University Hospitals Sussex NHS Foundation Trust since August 2022 and will soon be entering his fifth year of specialty training in ophthalmology.

“It’s been a tremendously positive experience. Within six months of being at SpaMedica, I was operating my own list and I’ve now completed well over 200 surgeries. And my PCR rate is very low, less than 0.01%, which I’m proud of. I’m hoping to extend my placement into a second year.

One of my first complex cases was a brunescient, very dense cataract with a shallow AC and a small pupil. I was pleasantly surprised when my supervisor, Mfazo Hove, said I should start the case, as I thought it would need to be operated on by a consultant. Yet Mr Hove gave me time and space to complete it, offering small pieces of advice as I operated. It gave me the biggest jump in confidence, knowing I was able to tackle more complex cases.

The quality of the support I’ve received from Mr Hove - and the rest of the team - has been ten out of ten. I’ve seen how he will go above and beyond to provide exemplary patient care, and I’ve learnt from his surgical skill - yet he also steps back, letting me make my own decisions and learn from my mistakes. He’s one of the best trainers I’ve ever had and a fantastic consultant to work with.

And the team is amazing: very friendly, supportive and helpful. They are more than happy to adjust certain parts of the operation to help me. In an environment that is focused on highly efficient surgery, it’s impressive that they offer such flexibility to accommodate the needs of a junior surgeon.

I can’t speak highly enough about the opportunities SpaMedica has given me, in terms of building my case numbers and confidence. I would certainly recommend the experience to any trainee who is at a similar stage of their career.”

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. We continue to work with our teams to ensure we maintain positive local relationships with the Care Quality Commission.

In the year from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024, CQC inspection reports were published for 8 of our hospitals, with 2 being rated Outstanding, and the remaining 6 all being Good; 3 of which achieved at least 1 Outstanding feature. We have also registered hospitals in Wales, under Healthcare in Wales regulations, and in Northern Ireland, under the RQIA standards, and have invested a significant amount of time in ensuring that we comply with their requirements.



“Feedback from people who use the service was consistently and overwhelmingly positive about the way staff treated them.”

SpaMedica Newcastle-under-Lyme CQC inspection report, May 2023

“Outcomes for patients were significantly better than expected when compared with other similar services nationally.”

SpaMedica Doncaster CQC inspection report, October 2023

“At the time of the inspection no patients had waited more than 18 weeks from referral to treatment.”

SpaMedica Derby CQC inspection report, June 2023

“The service had formed effective relationships with the local NHS trust in order to provide ophthalmology doctors in training with learning opportunities.”

SpaMedica Gateshead CQC inspection report, June 2023

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Inspected and rated

Outstanding ☆

SpaMedica Wakefield
Report published: February 2022

SpaMedica Skelmersdale
Report published: April 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 Gloucester
Report published: December 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

22

Inspected and rated

Good

SpaMedica Bolton
(Outstanding Effective)
Report published: December 2019

SpaMedica Manchester
(Outstanding Effective)
Report published: December 2019

SpaMedica Wirral
(Outstanding Effective)
Report published: January 2020

SpaMedica Chelmsford
(Outstanding Effective)
Report published: November 2021

SpaMedica Birmingham
Report published: January 2022

SpaMedica Epsom
Report published: May 2022

SpaMedica Brighton
(Outstanding Responsive)
Report published: May 2022

SpaMedica Southampton
Report published: August 2022

SpaMedica Wolverhampton
Report published: August 2022

SpaMedica Hull
Report published: August 2022

SpaMedica Wokingham
Report published: September 2022

SpaMedica Watford
(Outstanding Responsive)
Report published: October 2022

SpaMedica Bedford
(Outstanding Responsive)
Report published: October 2022

SpaMedica Coventry
Report published: November 2022

SpaMedica Norwich
(Outstanding Responsive)
Report published: November 2022

SpaMedica Bristol
Report published: December 2022

SpaMedica Derby
Report published: June 2023

SpaMedica Gateshead
(Outstanding Effective)
Report published: June 2023

SpaMedica Leeds
(Outstanding Effective)
Report published: July 2023

SpaMedica Kendal
(Outstanding Responsive)
Report published: August 2023

SpaMedica Newark
Report published: November 2023

SpaMedica Leicester
Report published: November 2023

Community optometrists and the SpaMedica post-op accreditation scheme

SpaMedica is proud to collaborate with the NHS on post-operative checks for patients. We work with several ICBs around the country to adopt their post-operative programmes and pathways, and where we can, we deliver our own leading post-operative programme, supporting community optometrists with training and systems to ensure our high-quality patient care is continued for patients accessing local services.

We ensure that as many of our cataract surgery patients as possible are given the opportunity to have their post-operative follow-up assessment at their local optician's practice. Most patients are therefore treated back in the community, closer to home. However, complex patients, or those that develop postoperative complications, will always be seen at a SpaMedica hospital for their post-operative follow up.

To enhance our post-operative checks we recently invested in an Anterior Segment Lens for our OCT machines, to enable us to scan the front of the eye and better support onward referrals to oncology.

Over 5,400 qualified, registered optometrists have completed our accreditation process for post-op follow ups. We also have service level agreements in place with key national organisations, for example PES Opera, supplying community optometry services. In the year to 31 March 2024, we accredited a further 421 community optometrists.

In 2023/24, we held 143 training and development events, attended by 3,885 community optometrists and their staff.

The events – which included CPD sessions on a variety of topics - were open to independent optometrists and optometrists who work for national groups.

We also launched a bi-monthly newsletter for community optometrists to help improve our patient comms experience, promote patient choice, and share key considerations to take into account during post-operative consultations.



Corporate social responsibility

SpaMedica takes its responsibilities as the largest provider of NHS-funded ophthalmology services in England seriously, and we recognise the impact we have on wider communities and the environment.

In 2023/24 SpaMedica commenced, continued or planned to deliver several initiatives under the following themes:



Increasing our support for our People, including initiatives to support employee wellbeing, promote diversity and inclusion, and training and development opportunities



Reducing our impact on the environment, including improvements to our monitoring of water use, commencing the transition to a hybrid vehicle fleet and establishing a 'zero-landfill' waste management scheme



Increasing our positive impact on local communities and access, including widening our patient transport offer, improving our ability to support patients with dementia and supporting a range of local and national charity fundraising activities

Supporting patients with accessing our services

Each patient is called by SpaMedica to offer a choice of appointment date and obtain consent to view their NHS medical history. We book appointments, send confirmation letters, and ring or text patients with a reminder two days before the appointment.

We have a dedicated Contact Centre to answer any queries our patients have about their appointments or their treatment in general. The Contact Centre answered a total of 543,841 phone calls in the year to 31 March 2024, an average of 45,320 per month. The team also made an additional 260,978 outbound calls to patients and in support of patients, to hospital sites or other departments. This equates to an average of 21,748 outbound calls per month.

To further improve how we communicate with our patients, we are continuing to review all of our patient literature with a big focus on accessibility. We publish leaflets in a number of different languages and display signs in fonts that are clearly legible for those with poor eyesight. We continue to provide free interpreters where patients require this, now including British Sign Language. Our website has videos to inform patients about cataract surgery and what they are likely to experience with SpaMedica. Clinical content, both in print and online, is being regularly reviewed by our Clinical Governance team to ensure research, statistics and advice is up to date and precise.

This year we will be rolling out an educational campaign on patient choice for both patients and optometrists, raising awareness around the importance of 'choice' for both parties.

We continue to offer qualifying patients who need it a free transport service from home to their hospital appointments and back again. This includes space for a carer to accompany them if needed.

Over 22,000 patients benefited from using our free transport service this year.

Because I don't drive, transport was provided by SpaMedica, which was punctual, friendly and comfortable. The driver was very knowledgeable of the roads, very friendly, and drove very safely.

Vivienne Lutter, SpaMedica Oxford



The transport which took and delivered me back home was first class!

Peter Hellawell, SpaMedica Wakefield

Driving social impact

SpaMedica is proud to support patients from communities which may be under-served by existing services, or patient groups who may struggle to access services. 25% of our hospital sites are located in the most deprived areas of the country (the top 2 deciles of the Indices of Multiple Deprivation).

We have positive engagement at several of our hospitals with key charities which support and influence our clinical environments and practice, including the Macular Society, RNIB, Guide Dogs for the Blind, the Alzheimer's Society and Dementia UK, as well as local charities to support the communities our staff and patients represent.

Each SpaMedica hospital member completes dementia training, and we have dedicated dementia champions at each hospital, who undertake more in-depth training as part of their role.

Various elements of the patient experience have been brought into each hospital, ensuring every single patient feels comfortable and looked after - and that family members and carers feel fully informed at each stage, and confident of the high-quality care we deliver.

For example, hospitals now have dementia clocks, which clearly display the time of day as morning, afternoon, evening or night, as people living with dementia can lose the ability to recognise what the time is. We also provide quiet areas away from our waiting rooms, and "twiddle squares" for anxious patients to fiddle with. Each hospital has a dedicated dementia notice board which includes information such as Herbert's Protocol, advising carers of the importance of recording relevant information about the patient, if they were to go missing.



"I took my dad today for his cataract surgery and cannot thank the staff enough for looking after him. My dad has dementia and they went over and above to help him get through his procedure. This really does make a difference. Excellent facilities too which make the experience so much easier with the wheelchair. Thank you."

Jacqui Hale, SpaMedica Liverpool

"I took my elderly mother who suffers from vascular dementia here after a referral from her optician for cataract removal. From the moment we walked in until we left today after her second eye, we were both treated politely, courteously and with respect. The same nurse looked after mum and remembered us both. The whole clinic was clean and everyone was very welcoming. I thoroughly recommend as a location for eye surgery."

Fiona G, SpaMedica Exeter

In 2023/24, SpaMedica also launched a dedicated Sight Support Service to assist patients who are struggling with sight loss or low vision.

Our RNIB-accredited Sight Support Officers work directly with patients with sight loss to provide information, advice, emotional and practical support, and onward referral to other services.



Corporate social responsibility

Supporting the environment

In 2023/24, SpaMedica established a number of programmes and initiatives to reduce our impact on the environment. We are now able to remotely monitor water use in 28 of our hospital sites (with plans to extend this to more hospitals in the future), which will save 200,000 litres of water and a significant number of business miles for engineers annually.

We have agreed a 'zero-landfill' waste management service, where all of the waste generated by our sites is either recycled or burnt for energy generation purposes.

In the last year, we recycled 30,000kg and sent 72,000kg to power plants for energy generation from waste.

We are also reviewing the use of single-use plastics across our estate to see where further reductions in waste can be realised.

We began introducing hybrids to our company vehicle fleet.

All of our patient transport minibuses, our company cars and our stores delivery vans are being replaced with hybrid vehicles at the end of their cycle.

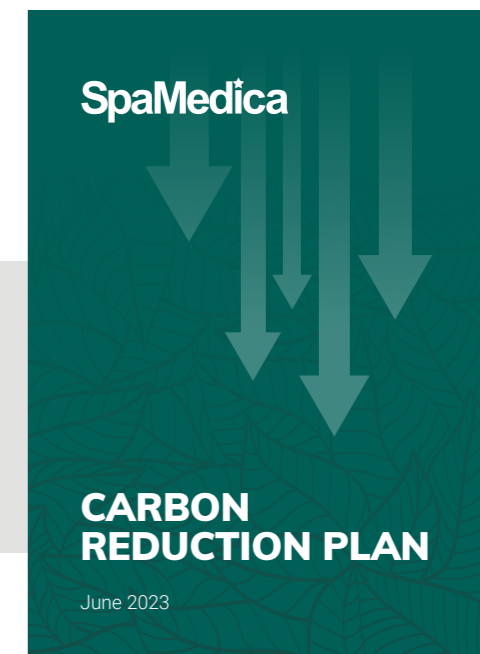
At the end of 2023/24, approximately 20% of our vehicles were hybrid.

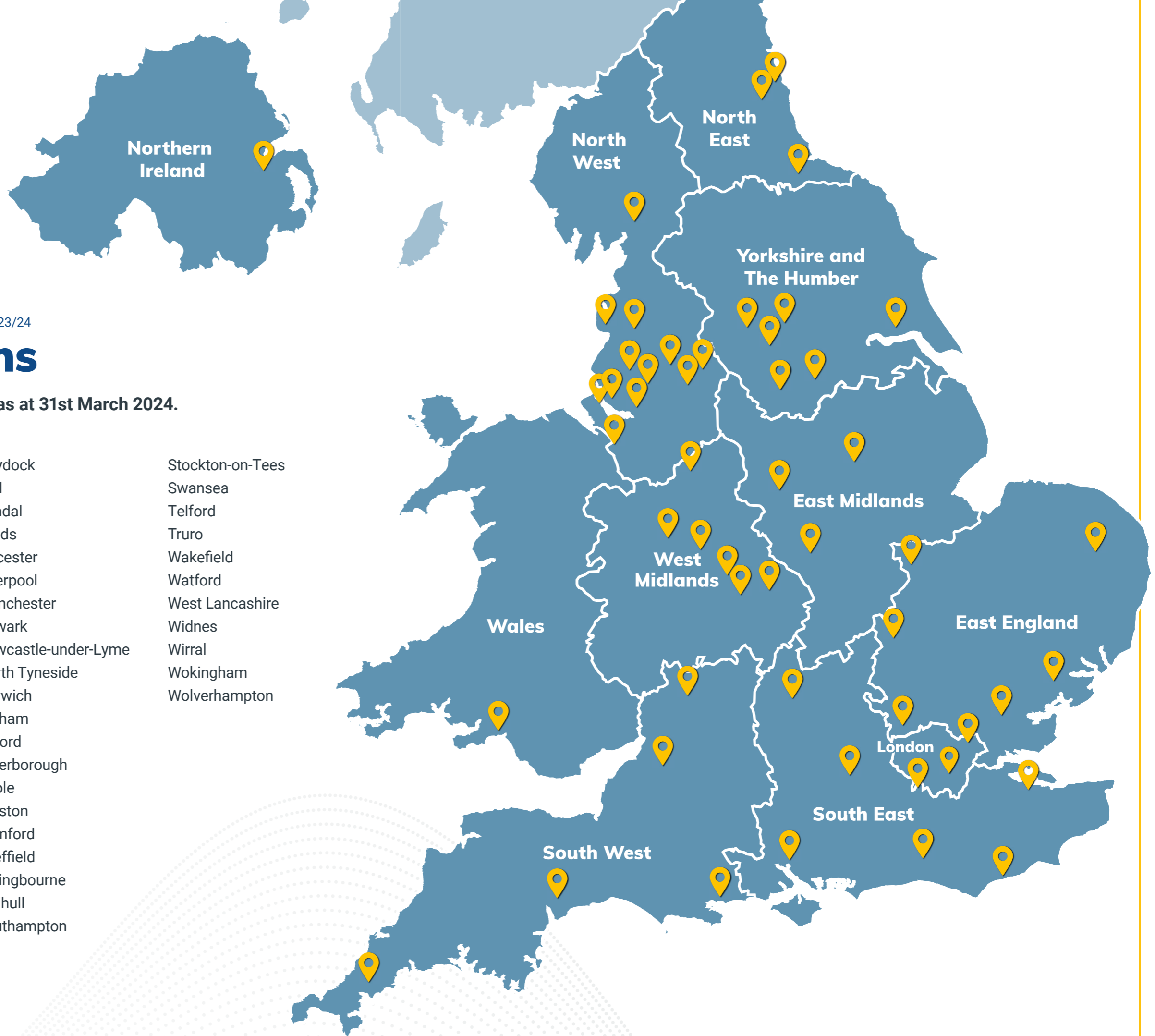
From the start, fifteen years ago, we have always used re-usable instruments for operations, with sterilisation, and re-usable scrubs for staff uniforms. We are now introducing a national laundry contract, to ensure consistent standards across all our hospitals.

Where appropriate, we continued to use online meetings, regionalised training and the opportunity to work from home to reduce business travel. We are also continuing to install LED lighting in all new hospitals and replace old lighting systems with LED lights in older hospitals.

Other initiatives included rolling out the use of microfibre cleaning products to replace single-use mops and significantly decrease the cleaning chemicals needed.

For full details, please refer to our published 'Carbon Reduction Plan':
www.spamedica.co.uk/carbon-reduction/





SpaMedica Quality Account 2023/24

Locations

SpaMedica locations as at 31st March 2024.

- | | | |
|------------|----------------------|------------------|
| Bedford | Haydock | Stockton-on-Tees |
| Belfast | Hull | Swansea |
| Bexhill | Kendal | Telford |
| Birmingham | Leeds | Truro |
| Blackpool | Leicester | Wakefield |
| Bolton | Liverpool | Watford |
| Bradford | Manchester | West Lancashire |
| Brighton | Newark | Widnes |
| Bristol | Newcastle-under-Lyme | Wirral |
| Bromley | North Tyneside | Wokingham |
| Carlisle | Norwich | Wolverhampton |
| Chelmsford | Oldham | |
| Chester | Oxford | |
| Colchester | Peterborough | |
| Coventry | Poole | |
| Derby | Preston | |
| Doncaster | Romford | |
| Epsom | Sheffield | |
| Exeter | Sittingbourne | |
| Gateshead | Solihull | |
| Gloucester | Southampton | |

SpaMedica

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.

Call us on: **0330 058 4280**

Email us at: **contact@spamedica.co.uk**

Or write to us at:

**SpaMedica Head Office, SpaMedica House,
43 Churchgate, Bolton, BL1 1HU**

