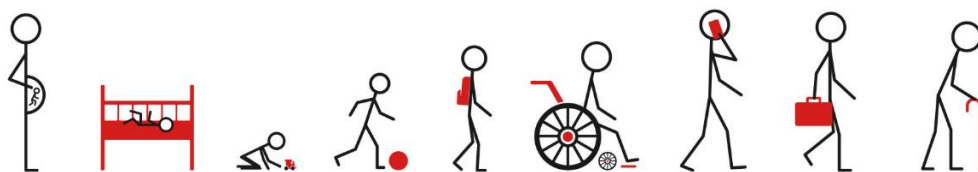


# North West Congenital Heart Disease Operational Delivery Network Strategy

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# 1. Introduction

## Purpose

The Congenital Heart Disease (CHD) Operational Delivery Network (ODN) exists to improve the quality, safety, and equity of congenital heart disease services across the region. Its purpose is to create the conditions for better outcomes, reduced unwarranted variation, strengthened pathways, and a consistently positive experience for children, young people, adults, and families. The network brings together providers, professionals, patients and families to ensure care is delivered by staff who are educated, supported, and equipped to provide the best possible service.

**Vision** - “Equitable, high-quality CHD care for every child, young person and adult, wherever they live.”

**Mission** - “We provide system-wide leadership, data insight, governance and improvement support across the CHD pathway that no single organisation can deliver alone.”

## 2. Strategic Context

The CHD system is operating in a complex and evolving environment shaped by national policy, workforce pressures, and rising expectations for equity and consistency. Several contextual factors influence the network’s strategic direction:

- National priorities emphasise reducing variation, improving outcomes, and strengthening pathways across organisational boundaries.
- Workforce constraints continue to affect providers’ ability to deliver consistent, high-quality care, particularly in specialist roles.
- Geographical inequity means families experience different levels of access and support depending on where they live.
- Fragmented data access limits the system’s ability to evaluate services, plan capacity, and identify risks early.
- Financial uncertainty around network funding creates challenges for long-term planning and sustainability.
- Growing emphasis on lived experience requires stronger integration of patient voice into governance, service design, and improvement activity.

These pressures are system-wide and interdependent. No single organisation can resolve them in isolation; they require coordinated leadership, shared insight, and collective action across the CHD pathway.

### 3. Value Proposition

The ODN's unique contribution is its role as the neutral, system-wide convenor and improvement partner. No single trust or organisation can replicate the network's ability to:

- bring together multi-professional expertise across the region
- provide trusted governance and assurance
- translate complex, cross provider, data into actionable insight
- support quality improvement across organisational boundaries
- align local practice with national standards and policy
- embed patient voice into service design and evaluation

Together, these activities create system value that would be lost if the ODN did not exist. The network enables collaboration, consistency, and collective problem-solving that individual organisations cannot achieve alone.

### 4. Long-Term Direction (3–5 Years)

Over the next five years, the network aims to create a more integrated, equitable, and data-driven CHD system. The long-term direction focuses on building the conditions for consistent, high-quality care across the whole pathway, supported by strong partnerships, shared insight, and sustainable infrastructure.

The ODN will work towards:

- **Integrated data collection and analysis** across all providers, enabling robust service evaluation, planning, and improvement.
- **A single, coordinated paediatric CHD service model**, aligned with the adult model, to improve safety, efficiency, and equity.
- **Consistent pathways and standards** across the region, reducing unwarranted variation.
- **Strengthened workforce capability**, ensuring staff have the education, tools, and support needed to deliver high-quality care.
- **A stronger patient voice**, embedded in governance, pathway design, and service evaluation.
- **A sustainable network**, with secure funding and demonstrable system value.

This direction provides a stable foundation for the network's annual priorities and ensures progress is aligned with national expectations and local need.

## 5. How We Deliver Value

The ODN delivers value through a set of reinforcing activities that together create a coherent system capability. These functions enable collaboration, consistency, and improvement across the CHD pathway:

- **Convening and collaboration** — creating safe, neutral spaces for clinicians, managers, and families to address system challenges collectively.
- **Data and intelligence** — identifying variation, risks, and opportunities for improvement.
- **Governance and assurance** — providing a trusted structure for decision-making and alignment.
- **Quality improvement** — supporting providers to adopt evidence-based practice and reduce variation.
- **Pathway development** — strengthening transition, paediatric–adult alignment, and cross-provider consistency.
- **Workforce development** — supporting education, training, and shared learning.
- **Patient voice** — ensuring lived experience shapes priorities and improvement.
- **Research and innovation** — supporting evidence generation and adoption of best practice.

Together, these functions form the network’s core contribution to a safer, more equitable, and more integrated CHD system.

## 6. Strategic Priorities

The network’s strategic priorities translate the long-term direction into clear areas of focus for the coming years. They respond directly to the system challenges identified and reflect where the ODN can add the greatest value as a system-wide convenor, improvement partner, and source of trusted insight. The ODN’s strategic priorities are:

1. **Equity and access** — ensuring all patients receive consistent, high-quality care regardless of geography, provider or age.
2. **Data and intelligence** — building integrated data systems that support planning, evaluation, and proactive improvement across the pathway.
3. **Pathway consistency** — reducing unwarranted variation through shared standards, aligned pathways, and strengthened paediatric–adult continuity.
4. **Workforce capability** — supporting education, training, and shared learning to build a confident, sustainable CHD workforce.
5. **Patient experience and voice** — embedding lived experience in governance, priority-setting, and service improvement.
6. **System sustainability** — securing the long-term future of the network through stable funding, strong partnerships, and demonstrable system value.

## 7. Conditions for Success

Delivering this strategy requires a set of enabling conditions that support consistent, collaborative, and data-driven improvement across the CHD system. These foundations ensure the network can operate effectively and add value across organisational boundaries:

- **System relationships** — strong, trusting relationships with clinicians, managers, patients, families, and regional and national bodies.
- **Data and digital capability** — access to timely, accurate data and the analytical capacity to interpret it.
- **Governance** — clear, transparent structures that provide legitimacy and neutrality.
- **Workforce capability** — education, training, and shared learning across providers.
- **Patient and public voice** — lived experience embedded in governance and improvement.
- **Funding and sustainability** — stable, long-term funding for core network functions.
- **Improvement methodology** — access to Quality Improvement (QI) expertise to support evidence-based practice.

Together, these conditions create the environment in which the network can deliver its strategic priorities and drive meaningful, system-wide change.

## 8. Measures of Success

The network will track progress through a set of high-level indicators aligned to its strategic priorities. These measures focus on the outcomes that matter most for patients, staff, and the wider system, and will help demonstrate the value and impact of the ODN over time.

- **Outcomes and equity** — reduced unwarranted variation; improved equity of access; consistent delivery of agreed pathways and standards.
- **Experience** — improved patient and family experience; stronger integration of lived experience in governance and improvement activity.
- **Workforce** — increased access to education and training; improved staff confidence, capability, and cross-provider collaboration.
- **System functioning** — greater adoption of shared standards; improved cross-provider coordination; demonstrable use of data for planning, assurance, and improvement.
- **Sustainability** — secured long-term funding; evidence of system-level efficiencies, avoided duplication, and clear return on investment.

These measures will be reviewed annually to assess progress, inform priority-setting, and ensure the network continues to deliver meaningful system value.

## 9. Strategic Boundaries

To protect neutrality, legitimacy, and trust across the system, the ODN operates within clear boundaries. The network will not:

- performance manage provider staff or organisations
- deliver operational services
- act as a commissioner
- duplicate trust-level quality improvement or governance functions

These boundaries ensure the ODN remains a trusted system partner, focused on convening, insight, and improvement, rather than a performance or regulatory body.

## 10. Strategic Risks and Mitigations

Delivering this strategy requires awareness of the risks that could limit progress or undermine the network's ability to add value. The ODN will proactively monitor and mitigate the following strategic risks:

- **Funding instability** — mitigated through demonstrating system value, strengthening relationships with regional and national partners, and aligning network priorities with national policy.
- **Data access and quality** — mitigated through shared data agreements, alignment with national datasets, and investment in analytical capability and digital infrastructure.
- **Workforce pressures** — mitigated through education, shared learning, and support for workforce planning and capability development across providers.
- **Provider variation** — mitigated through strong governance, transparent data insight, and targeted quality improvement support.
- **System fragmentation** — mitigated through neutral convening, psychologically safe spaces for collaboration, and alignment of priorities across organisations.

## 11. Our Commitment

This strategy sets out the shared purpose, priorities, and distinctive contribution of the CHD Operational Delivery Network. It provides a clear direction for how we will work together to improve outcomes, reduce unwarranted variation, strengthen pathways, and ensure equitable, high-quality care for all children, young people, adults, and families affected by congenital heart disease.

It reflects our commitment to collaboration, evidence, lived experience, and system-wide improvement. It will guide our decisions, shape our partnerships, and support the development of detailed delivery plans across our workstreams.

As the system evolves, this strategy will be reviewed and refined to ensure the network continues to provide the leadership, insight, and coordination that the region needs.

By working as one system, we will deliver the CHD care no single organisation can achieve alone.