



SCTS
Society for Cardiothoracic Surgery
in Great Britain and Ireland

Executive Committee Report

Standing Report from National Cardiothoracic Trainee Representatives (NTCCTS)

June 2026

Officer/Chair Name: Mr. Ali Ansaripour & Mr. Mohamed Sherif

MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION BY THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

A. Phase 1 (ST1-3) Training Reform

Following the SAC meeting in June 2026, Phase 1 reform remains the highest priority training workstream for the NTCCTS. We are encouraged by the progress made over the past year and by the strong support received from SAC members for improving the structure of early cardiothoracic training.

The proposal to bring Phase 1 trainees under greater oversight of cardiothoracic Training Programme Directors from the start of specialty training has now been submitted to COPS. The proposed model would see cardiothoracic TPDs working closely alongside Core Surgical Training TPDs to ensure trainees receive appropriate specialty-specific support from ST1 onwards.

Alongside governance changes, discussions are now increasingly focused on the quality of Phase 1 placements. The emphasis is shifting from simply increasing the amount of time trainees spend within cardiothoracic surgery to defining what high-quality cardiothoracic training should look like. This includes greater operative exposure, protected theatre time, regular clinic and MDT attendance, curriculum-based clinical responsibility and progression of autonomy. The NTCCTS continues to advocate for trainees to be embedded within registrar-level cardiothoracic teams from an early stage, with appropriate supervision, rather than primarily undertaking service provision on SHO rotas or rotating through specialties with limited relevance to future cardiothoracic practice.

We look forward to continuing to work closely with SAC as this important workstream progresses.

B. FRCS Examination Access

The NTCCTS remains extremely encouraged by the progress made regarding FRCS examination access.

At the recent SAC meeting, the JCIE Cardiothoracic Chair presented the latest audit of examination access and outlined several changes aimed at reducing delays for NTN trainees. Particular attention has been given to the mismatch between Section 1 application windows and ARCP timing, which has historically disadvantaged some trainees despite satisfactory progression through training.

The proposed changes have been very positively received by trainees and represent an important step towards ensuring that progression through training is not unnecessarily delayed by examination logistics. Current waiting lists have reduced substantially and now stand at four trainees. We welcome the continued commitment from the JCIE to eliminate avoidable delays and will continue to work collaboratively whilst monitoring the impact of these changes over the coming months.

C. Minimally Invasive Cardiac Surgery (MICS)

The NTCCTS welcomes the continued national rollout of minimally invasive cardiac surgery and was pleased to discuss future training opportunities with the SCTS President-Elect during the recent SAC meeting.

As practice evolves, it is important that training evolves alongside it. Trainees are enthusiastic about the opportunities MICS presents and are keen to become actively involved in developing the future workforce.

Alongside curriculum development and educational courses, we believe there is a valuable opportunity to establish a structured national minimally invasive mitral fellowship pathway for peri-CCT and post-CCT trainees. Developing fellowships alongside the emerging network of nationally recognised MICS centres would provide a clear route for senior trainees wishing to develop advanced skills whilst supporting the long-term sustainability of the national programme.

The NTCCTS looks forward to working collaboratively with SCTS Education, SAC and the MICS rollout group as these initiatives develop.

MATTERS OF INFORMATION FOR THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

A. SCTS Annual Meeting Belfast 2026

The SCTS Annual Meeting in Belfast was a successful meeting with excellent trainee engagement throughout the scientific programme. Trainees presented high-quality research, contributed to workshops and wet laboratories, and co-chaired several scientific and plenary sessions.

The annual National Trainee Meeting also provided an important opportunity to discuss current training priorities, gather feedback from trainees across the UK and Ireland, and update colleagues on national workstreams.

The SCTS-NTCCTS Training Excellence Awards were presented during the meeting following a record **51 trainee nominations**.

The 2026 winners were:

- **Golden Heart Award** – Mr Benjamin Adams (St Bartholomew's Hospital)
- **Golden Lung Award** – Mr Sasha Stamenkovic (St Bartholomew's Hospital)
- **Golden Sternum Award** – Miss Francesca Gatta (North West Deanery)

The continued growth of these awards reflects the importance trainees place on excellent trainers and positive training environments.

B. ASiT Core Skills in Cardiothoracic Surgery Course 2026

The NTCCTS collaborated with the London School of Cardiothoracic Surgery (LSOC) to deliver the annual **Introduction to Cardiothoracic Surgery Course** at the ASiT Conference.

The course provided an opportunity to introduce medical students and junior surgical trainees to the specialty, whilst showcasing current training pathways and career opportunities. Cardiothoracic surgery was also well represented within the scientific programme, with multiple trainee presentations and three national prizes awarded to cardiothoracic trainees.

C. Workforce Planning and Post-CCT Outcomes

Work continues on the NTCCTS national consultant recruitment and post-CCT database.

Analysis of SCTS Bulletin consultant appointments between 2020 and 2025 identified **124 consultant appointments**, comprising **69 substantive** and **55 locum** posts. Of these, **56 appointments (45%)** were filled by NTN trainees, including **35 substantive** consultant appointments.

This equates to approximately **11-12 substantive consultant appointments per year**, around half of which are currently appointed to NTN graduates.

Alongside this work, we are developing a live national post-CCT database through the NTCCTS regional representative network. Since 2021, approximately **105 NTN trainees** have reached CCT. The database aims to better understand first consultant appointments, fellowship pathways, post-CCT career progression and workforce trends. Data collection is

progressing well, and we hope to present the first live national dataset at the next Executive and SAC meetings.

Meetings Attended

MEETING	DATE	MINUTES