

## Glossary for the NOGCA State of the Nation Report, January 2025

**Adenocarcinoma** – Type of cancer that tends to occur in the lower third of the oesophagus or in the stomach, in glandular cells that make and release fluids.

**Adjuvant treatment** – An additional therapy (e.g. chemotherapy or radiotherapy) provided to improve the effectiveness of the primary treatment (e.g. surgery) and reduce the chance of local recurrence of the cancer.

**AUGIS** – Association of Upper Gastrointestinal Surgery of Great Britain and Ireland

**BSG** – British Society of Gastroenterology

**Chemotherapy** – Drug therapy used to treat cancer. It may be used alone, or in conjunction with other types of treatment (e.g. surgery or radiotherapy).

**Clinical nurse specialist** – A registered nurse with an advanced nursing role who provides specialist care and advice to patients in a certain medical speciality.

**CEU** – The Clinical Effectiveness Unit of the Royal College of Surgeons is an academic collaboration between The Royal College of Surgeons of England and the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and undertakes national clinical audit and research.

**Curative care** – Treatment with the aim to cure a person of the disease. Curative treatment is not possible in many people with oesophageal or gastric cancer and is dependent on how far the disease has spread, and a person's general health and physical condition.

**Disease-targeted treatment** – Treatments that are given with the aim of killing or removing the cancerous tissue (such as surgery, chemotherapy, radiotherapy).

**Endoscopic mucosal resection (EMR)** – A procedure to remove abnormal tissue from the digestive tract, using a telescopic camera to guide instruments. This procedure can be used to treat high-grade dysplasia or early cancers of the oesophagus, stomach or duodenum.

**Endoscopic submucosal resection (ESD)** – A procedure to remove abnormal tissue from the digestive tract, using a telescopic camera to guide instruments. This procedure can be used to treat high-grade dysplasia or early cancers of the oesophagus, stomach or duodenum.

**Endoscopic ultrasound (EUS)** – An investigation that uses an ultrasound probe on the end of a telescopic camera. It is used to determine how deep into the surrounding tissues a cancer has invaded and to what extent it has spread to local lymph nodes.

**Epithelial cancer** – Cancers that form in epithelial tissue, which lines organs, internal passageways and skin.

**Gastric** – An adjective used to describe something that is related to or involves the stomach, e.g. gastric cancer is another way of saying stomach cancer.



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**Gastrectomy** – A surgical procedure to remove either a section (a partial gastrectomy) or all (a total gastrectomy) of the stomach. In a total gastrectomy, the oesophagus is connected to the small intestine after the removal of the stomach.

**Gastro-oesophageal junction** – The part of the digestive tract where the oesophagus joins the stomach.

**Gy/F or Grays/Fractions** – External beam radiotherapy treatment is usually delivered over several treatment sessions. A course of radiotherapy is described as the full planned dose of radiation in Grays (Gy), and the number of treatment sessions (fractions, F) over which the dose is delivered.

**HES** – Hospital Episode Statistics is a database which contains data on all in-patients treated within NHS trusts in England. This includes details of admissions, diagnoses and treatments.

**High-grade dysplasia of the oesophagus** – abnormal changes in the cells of the oesophagus, which are often associated with Barrett's oesophagus.

**ICD-10** – International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems 10th Revision. A list of medical codes used to identify and categorise medical diagnoses.

**IMD (Index of Multiple Deprivation)** – a measure of relative deprivation in a particular small area (of ~1,500 residents or 650 households), used as a measure of deprivation in England and Wales.

**Lymph nodes** – Lymph nodes are small oval bits of tissue that form part of the immune system. They are distributed throughout the body and are usually the first place to which cancers spread.

**Margins** – Margins are the edges of the tissue removed in resection procedures (endoscopic or surgical resections). When cancer cells are found at the edge of the removed tissue, the margin is described as positive or involved. Positive or involved margins suggest that not all of the cancer has been removed. Margins are described as negative or clear when no cancer cells are found at the edge of the tissue.

**Metastases** – Metastases are deposits of cancer that occur when the cancer has spread from the place in which it started to other parts of the body. These are commonly called secondary cancers and is known as metastatic disease.

**MDT** – The multi-disciplinary team is a group of professionals from diverse specialties that works to optimise diagnosis and treatment throughout the patient pathway.

**NATCAN** – The National Cancer Audit Collaborating Centre (NATCAN) is a national centre of excellence that has been commissioned to deliver ten national cancer audits by the Healthcare Quality Improvement Partnership (HQIP), on behalf of NHS England and the Welsh Government. NATCAN is part of the Clinical Effectiveness Unit (CEU) – a collaboration between the Royal College of Surgeons of England (RCSEng) and the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine (LSHTM).

**National Disease Registration Service (NDRS)** – A service that collects and analyses data on cancer and rare diseases in the UK, part of NHS England.

**Neoadjuvant therapy** – Disease-targeted treatment (such as chemotherapy or radiotherapy) given before another treatment, usually surgery. This is usually given to reduce the size, grade or stage of the cancer and therefore improve the effectiveness of the main treatment.

**Neuroendocrine tumours** – Tumours that start from cells which produce hormones in the body.

**NICE** – The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence is an independent organisation responsible for providing national guidance on the promotion of good health and the prevention and treatment of ill health.

**Oesophagectomy** – The surgical removal of all or part of the oesophagus. The procedure can be performed by opening the thorax (a trans-thoracic oesophagectomy) or through openings in the neck and abdomen (a trans-hiatal oesophagectomy)

**Oesophagus** – The portion of the digestive tract that carries food from the bottom of the throat to the top of the stomach. It is also known as the gullet or the foodpipe.

**Oncology** – The branch of medicine which deals with the non-surgical treatment of cancer, such as chemotherapy and radiotherapy.

**Palliative care** – Palliative care (also called non-curative care) is the care given to patients whose disease cannot be cured. It aims to improve quality of life and extend survival.

**Pathology** – The branch of medicine that deals with tissue specimens under a microscope to determine the type of disease and how far a cancer has spread within the specimen (i.e. whether a tumour has spread to the edges of the specimen or lymph nodes).

**PEDW** – Patient Episode Database for Wales (PEDW) is an administrative database that contains data on all inpatients treated within NHS hospitals in Wales.

**Performance status** – a classification system to describe a person's functional status in carrying out routine activities of daily living. Scores range from 0 (fully active with no restrictions) to 5 (dead). Note: only scores of 0-4 are included in the audit.

**Radiotherapy** – A treatment that uses radiation to kill tumour cells and shrink the tumour. In most cases, it is a palliative treatment but it can be used together with surgery or chemotherapy in some patients as part of curative treatment.

**Rapid Cancer Registration Data, RCRD** – Dataset that contains information about proxy tumour registrations and some associated events on the cancer patient pathway (e.g. surgery, radiotherapy and chemotherapy) from January 2018. This data set provides a quicker source of cancer data compared to the National Cancer Registration Data (NCRD). The RCRD is curated by the National Disease Registration Service (NDRS), as part of NHS England.

**RCS** – The Royal College of Surgeons of England is an independent professional body committed to enabling surgeons to achieve and maintain the highest standards of surgical practice and patient care. As part of this it supports audit and the evaluation of clinical effectiveness for surgery.



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**Squamous cell carcinoma** – A tumour that is located in the cells lining the oesophagus and tends to occur in the upper or middle of the oesophagus.

**Stage / TNM (Tumour / Nodal / Metastatic) stage** – The extent to which the primary tumour has spread; the higher the stage, the more extensive the disease. TNM is an international classification system to describe the extent of a cancer using information on the tumour size, lymph node status, and the presence or absence of metastatic disease. Overall cancer stages range from 1 (localised disease) to 4 (advanced disease).

**Staging** – The process by which the stage (or extent of spread) of the tumour is determined, through the use of various investigations.

**Surgical resection** – A medical treatment that involves surgically removing all, or part, of a tissue, structure or organ.

**Systemic anti-cancer therapy / SACT** – Medication given to treat cancer, such as chemotherapy or immunotherapy.