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Issue #05
Q1-2026

HOPPY EASTER

Your EMPAN Quarterly – Spring 2026 Edition

Spring greetings from the **EMPAN team** to our dedicated East Midlands paediatric trainees, consultants, and collaborators!
As blossoms emerge, days lengthen, and clinical teams recharge after winter, this vibrant **Q1 2026** edition arrives to **inspire your research**, **leadership**, and **professional growth** amid busy rotations and new challenges.

Packed with practical gems, we kick off **Nurshifa Shaari's QI series with "Phase 1: Defining the Problem"**, empowering you to turn observations into data-driven projects using national databases like NNAP and PICANet. Tim van Hasselt shares his expert guide "**Unlocking Paediatric Research Data**"—your roadmap to sources from BadgerNet to CPRD, with tips on approvals, PPI, and secure TREs.

Event highlights abound: **RCPCH Conference 2026** (11-13 May, Birmingham ICC, celebrating RCPCH's 30th), **TRN National Conference**, **Grand Rounds webinars**, the free "**Leading Across Boundaries**" leadership webinar (featuring Dr Daljit Hothi), and **TREES monthly seminars**—all hybrid, CPD-approved, and perfect for Progress+.

Your contributions—from EMIPS posters to PhD pursuits—make EMPAN thrive. Thank you for a dynamic start to 2026; let's connect, innovate, and elevate child health together!

In this edition you will find:

- QI Phase 1: Defining the Problem by Nurshifa Shaari
- Tim van Hasselt's paediatric data sources guides
- RCPCH Conference 2026 + TRN National Conference previews
- Grand Rounds, Leading Across Boundaries webinar and TREES series

Best wishes,
Hayat Nassar
EMPAN Communication Lead

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Quality Improvement: Phase 1 – Defining the Problem

Last time, we talked about the power of brainstorming —finding that spark, the area you care about, and the thing that makes you think: "**We could do this better.**"

Once you've found that passion point, it's time to move into **Phase 1** of any **QI project**: **Defining the problem.**

Start with the data you already have

Before you dive into months of data collection, pause and ask:
Is there data already out there that can help me understand this problem?

In QI, improvement is influenced by **two big drivers**:

- **External data** – for example national databases such as NNAP, PICANet, ECHILD, or HES. Some of these may require ethics approval. (EMPAN is currently developing guidance on this —watch this space .)
- **Internal data** – often the most overlooked goldmine! This could include previous audits, mortality reviews, adverse incident reports, parent feedback, or trainee feedback.

Top tip: Don't reinvent the wheel. Spend time exploring what's already been collected instead of spending six months gathering data just to prove there's a problem.

Make sense of what you find

As you review the data, think critically:

- Is it accurate and complete?
- Has it changed over time?
- How does your unit compare with others of a similar size or workload?

This step helps you pinpoint where the real opportunities for improvement lie.

From problem to progress

Once you've clearly identified your area for improvement, you're ready to dig deeper using **QI tools** to understand the problem and start shaping solutions.

And that's where we're heading next..

In the next article, we'll explore practical QI tools to help you analyse problems and kick-start your QI journey.

Best wishes,
Nurshifa Shaari
EMPAN Co-Chair

RCPCH Conference 2026

RCPCH Conference 2026: Mark Your Calendars!

Spring brings exciting opportunities for professional growth, and we're thrilled to spotlight the **RCPCH Annual Conference 2026**—RCPCH's flagship event returning to **Birmingham** from **11-13 May 2026** at the **ICC** (*Centenary Square, Birmingham B1 2EA*), with full **hybrid** options for in-person or online attendance.

Celebrating 30 Years of Impact

Our theme is "**Celebrating RCPCH at 30: Reflecting on the past, inspiring the future**".

We host our flagship event at different locations in the UK each year, and this year we're delighted to return to **ICC Birmingham**, with options to join online.

RCPCH Conference in 2026 features a varied educational and social programme, and with up to 11 sessions running at any one time, you can tailor your experience to your professional interests. It is CPD approved, and all livestreamed and recorded content will be available on demand after the event.



Key Details

Dates: **11-13 May 2026** (09:00-17:00 daily)
Registration: Opens autumn 2025—secure early bird discounts for RCPCH members

Programme Highlights

Sessions suit paediatricians, trainees, researchers, educators, and allied health professionals. Preview the full agenda: **View Programme**.

Why Attend?

Network, present, and advance your practice. Ideal for East Midlands delegates to showcase research.

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Unlocking Paediatric Research Data: Your Essential Guide

By: Tim van Hasselt

Embarking on paediatric research? Whether it's a local audit or national cohort study, choosing the right data source is key—but watch for costs, approvals, and secure storage.
Use the **HRA Decision Tool** (Is my study research?) to **distinguish QI/audit from full research needing ethics via universities or HRA**.
Secure a **research sponsor** (NHS trust/university) for **funding, legal, and data handling**.
Involve PPI early—recruit via Bliss or Adapt Prem Babies—even for regional work.
Master tools like **SPSS, Stata, or R**, **craft a data management plan** (see Nottingham guidance), and **use secure TREs or virtual desktops**.

Local Data *(Free, trust approvals):*

- **BadgerNet** (Neonatal): East Midlands units feed NNAP dashboards—ideal for QI/audit spotting improvement gaps. Rich clinical details on admissions, interventions, outcomes.
- **PICANet** (PICU/CICU): Electronic/paper data for rotations—perfect for service evaluations. Tracks severity scores, lengths of stay, mortality.
- **EPRs** (e.g., NerveCentre at UHL, EPIC/Cerner): Growing scope for local projects. Real-time clinical notes, labs, prescriptions for custom audits.

Regional Data *(Free, multi-site/network approval):*

- **BadgerNet Networks**: Engage for wider neonatal audits/QI. Aggregates unit data for benchmarking across East Midlands.

National Data *(Costs/ethics often apply):*

Source	Focus	Access	Link
National Neonatal Research Database (NNRD)	All UK BadgerNet neonatal data	Ethics, funding, HDR-UK, DMP	Imperial NNRD
PICANet	All UK PICUs (Leicester/Leeds)	Payment, internal ethics/DMP	PICANet
Millennium Cohort Study (MCS)	19k children (2000-02 births)	Free via UK Data Service	CLS UCL
ECHILD	England kids: hospital/school/social data	Free TRE, internal process	ECHILD
NHS DARS (HES)	Admissions/ED/outpatients	Funding, long approvals	DARS
CPRD	GP data (20% UK pop., linked)	Internal, costs (free for some PhDs; TRE from 2027)	CPRD
SAIL (Wales)	Primary/secondary/education/social	TRE, costs post-approval	SAIL
ALSPAC	Bristol 90s birth cohort	Internal, costs	ALSPAC

Pro Tip:

Start local *with* ***BadgerNet*** */* ***PICANet*** *for quick wins, scale up with networks like* ***EMPAN*** *for multi-site impact.*

Questions? *Email us to connect with mentors and ongoing projects!*

RCPCH

Trainee Research Network: National Conference - 17 June 2026

Join us for the first Trainee Research Network (TRN) National Conference an event that brings together paediatric residents with an interest in research

Together, we will build research skills, connect with peers, share learning, and showcase high-quality projects from across the country

Building Capacity
Past, Present and Future

We will cover:

The programme features plenary sessions, workshops, short presentations, panel discussions, and abstract showcases—all centred around the theme 'Building Capacity: Past, Present and Future'

What can you except:

You will have the opportunity to:

- **Attend inspiring plenaries** by leading academic paediatricians
- **Develop research skills** at workshops organised
- **Meet regional Trainee Research Networks** across the UK and exchange ideas
- **Network and collaborate** with paediatric resident doctors interested in research
- Listen to **presentations of selected abstracts**

Event details

Wednesday 17 June 2026

Time: 9:00-17:00

Location:
Postgraduate Medical Centre
County Hospital
Weston Road
Stafford
ST16 3SA

Find out more and register to attend

Any questions? Contact us

research@rcpch.ac.uk

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Grand Round webinars 2025-26

RCPCH fortnightly series of free webinars replicates the 'Grand Round' that takes place in many hospitals, bringing high-quality medical education to paediatricians and child health professionals across the UK. Each 60-minute webinar features expert-led presentations on clinical and professional paediatric practice, followed by a live Q&A.

Grand Round webinars take place every other Friday at lunchtime (not during UK school holidays), and started on 12 September 2025. They are hosted on Microsoft Teams, which you can join via the app or a web browser.

Register at any time for the 2025-26 series. Before each webinar, we'll email you a calendar invite with the joining link.
After each webinar, we'll email you a link to each webinar's recording.

RCPCH Webinar: Leading Across Boundaries

Join this free RCPCH webinar (third in the Talent for Care series) on system leadership in integrated care.
Panel discussion with Arran Daly (Talent for Care) and Dr Daljit Hothi (GOSH Nephrologist, FMLM Senior Fellow), followed by live Q&A.

Learning Outcomes: Master leading without authority, collaborative impact, and balancing performance with partnerships.

Target: All RCPCH members/non-members in leadership roles.

Free to attend — **Register Now:**

Catch up with episode 1 - Being Leader

Catch up with episode 2 - Qualities of Leadership Practice

Trainee Research nEtwork Education Seminars (TREES)

TREES is a monthly webinar series from the RCPCH Trainee Research Network, designed especially for paediatricians in training. Streaming on the last Tuesday of every month, each seminar helps trainees get involved in research and develop key capabilities in the Progress+ curriculum's research and scholarship domain.

Read more >

When you register for this webinar via MedAll, you can opt in to get notified of upcoming TREES sessions and watch previous sessions on-demand through that platform.

Register now >

Date: 31 March 2026 - 25 August 2026



Thank you for reading this edition of the EMPAN Newsletter!
Stay connected, explore new opportunities, and make the most of the resources available through EMPAN and EMIP website.
If you have any suggestions or want to get involved, reach out to us at eastmidspan@gmail.com. See you in the next issue!