Sickle Cell Disease (SCD) and Thalassaemia Review

About GIRFT

GIRFT is a national NHS England improvement programme led by frontline clinicians. It aims to reduce unwarranted variation, improve patient outcomes, and support services to deliver high-quality, sustainable care.

Using national and local data, GIRFT works directly with clinical teams to:

- ✓ Identify variation and understand its causes.
- ✓ Share good practice and evidence-based solutions.
- ✓ Support development of targeted improvement plans.
- ✓ Promote consistency, equity, and value across the NHS.

GIRFT review of sickle cell disease (SCD) and thalassaemia services

The review aims to strengthen care for people living with SCD and thalassaemia by understanding how services are configured and delivered across England, identifying variation, and supporting improvement. For the first time, rare inherited anaemia patients will be included in an improvement programme.

Review objectives:

- Analyse data to identify variation in clinical outcomes and access (Data sources: GIRFT Questionnaire, NHR, SSQD, NHSBT, Secondary Uses Services (SUS)).
- To build on previous national reports and reviews.
- Highlight and share best practice and promote equitable, patient-centred care.
- Produce a national report.
- Support SHTs and LHTs to develop improvement plans.

Review approach:

1. First phase of reviews will include all SHTs and a small number of pre-selected LHTs.
2. Online adult and paediatric questionnaires – captures service configuration, activity and improvement plans.
3. Data pack – provides key metrics on demand, therapies and service delivery.
4. Virtual Review Meeting (2.5hr) – brings teams together with GIRFT clinical leads to review data and identify good practice and development opportunities.

Frequently asked questions

How will the GIRFT review work?	• Teams will complete a questionnaire simultaneously. • GIRFT analysts collate data. • Virtual review meeting with clinical teams.
What happens at the virtual review?	• Clinical leads review the findings from the data analysis with the teams reviewing variations, service provision discussion and challenges the teams face. • There is an opportunity to share best practice and any examples to improve service provision and patient outcomes.
What happens next?	• Provider report and action plan is developed. • National report is compiled based on findings and recommendations identified during the programme.
What support is available for implementation?	• GIRFT supports trusts, commissioners, and integrated care systems to deliver the improvements recommended. .
How is best practice disseminated?	• All teams will receive a copy of the review report, case studies may be developed and included in the GIRFT Academy resources folder. • Presentations at national Haemoglobinopathy and Haematology meetings. • Linking services with similar service development plans.

Sickle Cell Disease (SCD) and Thalassaemia Review

The core difference between the **UK Haemoglobinopathy peer review programme** and a **GIRFT review** for sickle cell disease and thalassaemia lies primarily in the focus, approach, structure and goal as below. Both aim to improve the quality of care and are complimentary, but they approach it from different angles.

Below are the key distinctions, particularly within the context of the NHS in England:

	UK Haemoglobinopathy peer review programme	GIRFT programme
Focus	Assessing **compliance with Quality Standards** and providing expert peer-to-peer feedback.	Reducing **unwarranted variation** in service delivery and identifying opportunities quality improvement using data.
Approach	**Collaborative, expert-led site visits** where peers from other centres review a service against defined quality standards/metrics.	**Data-driven analysis** comparing a service's performance (data outcomes) against national benchmarks and similar centres, followed by clinically led reviews.
Methodology	**Cyclical programme.**	**National programme** with resources to support recommendations.
Structure	**Volunteer multidisciplinary teams** on behalf of UKFHD relying on the **willing participation of peers**.	**NHS England improvement programme** which leverages a staffing structure, national data and insights.
Output	A **review report** highlighting areas of strength, weaknesses, and recommendations for improvement based on quality standards.	**Practical, data-driven recommendations** for local and national action to address variations and improve outcomes, leading to a national report of findings.
Goal	To drive **sustained adherence to best practice standards** through a supportive, collegial review process.	To ensure **high-quality, efficient and equitable** care by eliminating unwarranted variation across the country.

Contact us: england.girft.central@nhs.net

GIRFT website: www.gettingitrightfirsttime.co.uk

For more information on GIRFT sickle cell disease and thalassaemia workstream – scan the QR code or visit: www.gettingitrightfirsttime.co.uk/medical_specialties/sickle-cell-thalassaemia