

ANNUAL CORONER/PROCURATOR FISCAL REPORT

POTENTIAL DONOR AUDIT SUMMARY FOR THE 12 MONTH PERIOD

1 APRIL 2024 – 31 MARCH 2025

PUBLISHED NOVEMBER 2025



Executive summary

- During 2024/25, Coroner/Fiscal lack of objection or restricted (partial) objection rates in the UK have returned to levels similar to previous years following a dip in 2022/23. The number of referrals where Coroner/Fiscal review was required and requested have decreased over the last five years.
- During 2024/25, lack of objection or restricted (partial) objection rates varied amongst the teams from 82% in the South East to 99% in the Eastern and Northern teams. The main reason cited for Coroner/Fiscal objection was 'uncertain or suspicious cause of death' (62%).
- During 2024/25, paediatric Coroner/Fiscal lack of objection or restricted (partial) objection rates have fallen to their lowest rates in five years. Paediatric rates are variable due to the small numbers but there is a long-term declining trend. The lack of objection rate has decreased from 61% to 51% and the full or partial permission rate has decreased from 81% to 69% over the past 5 years.
- During 2024/25, 79 families were not approached for organ donation where a Coroner/Fiscal had provided a full objection, this represents 23% of all families not approached. The number of families not approached due to coroner full objection has been increasing over the five-year period. A similar trend is seen for paediatric families where 18 families this year were not approached due to coroner full objection, 56.3% of families not approached.

Background

1. This report presents trends in Coroner and Procurator Fiscal lack of objection rates, with regards to organ donation, along with the common objection reasons.
2. Data on Coroner and Procurator Fiscal lack of objection rates, with regards to tissue only donation is not included in detail in this report. However, in 2024/25 there were a total of 14,452 referrals for tissue donation, of these 6,929 (48%) were identified as potential tissue donors (5,653 ocular and 1,276 tissue) and 2,763 (40%) proceeded to tissue donation (2,511 ocular and 564 tissue).

Data

3. Data on all referrals where Coroner or Procurator Fiscal review was required and requested, have been obtained from the national Potential Donor Audit (PDA) as at 5 June 2025. The Coroner/Fiscal lack of full objection rate has been defined as the proportion of reviews where there was a lack of full objection to organ donation and the Coroner/Fiscal lack of objection or restricted (partial) objection rate has been defined as the proportion of reviews where there was a lack of full objection or a restricted (partial) objection to organ donation.
4. Coroner/Fiscal jurisdiction has been defined as the jurisdiction of the donating hospital as determined by the Organ Donor Services Teams in 2025. Occasions where the Coroner/Fiscal defers a case to the jurisdiction where the incident occurred, are not accounted for in this report.

Definitions

Full Lack of Objection - No organ and/or tissue requested has been restricted by the Coroner/Procurator Fiscal.

Partial (restricted) Objection - Only some and not all requested organs and tissues, have been restricted by the Coroner/ Procurator Fiscal.

Full Objection - The process of organ and tissue retrieval cannot proceed.

Trends in Coroner/Fiscal lack of objection rates

5. **Figure 1** presents Coroner/Fiscal lack of objection rates in the UK, for the last five financial years. The Coroner/Fiscal lack of full objection or restricted (partial) objection rate has decreased slightly to 91% in the last year, a rate similar to previous years, following a dip to 90% in 2022/23. The full lack of objection rate has improved, 76% compared with 74% in 2023/24.
6. During the five-year period, the proportion of Coroner/Fiscal full objections has remained similar at around 9% and Coroner/Fiscal restricted (partial) objections have decreased from 17% to 15%. In 2024/25 there were 140 (2% of referred patients) patients referred from Emergency Departments (ED), Coroner/Fiscal review was requested for 20 of these patients. The Coroner/Fiscal full lack of objection rate for these patients was 95%.

Figure 1: UK Coroner/Fiscal lack of objection rates between 1 April 2020 and 31 March 2025

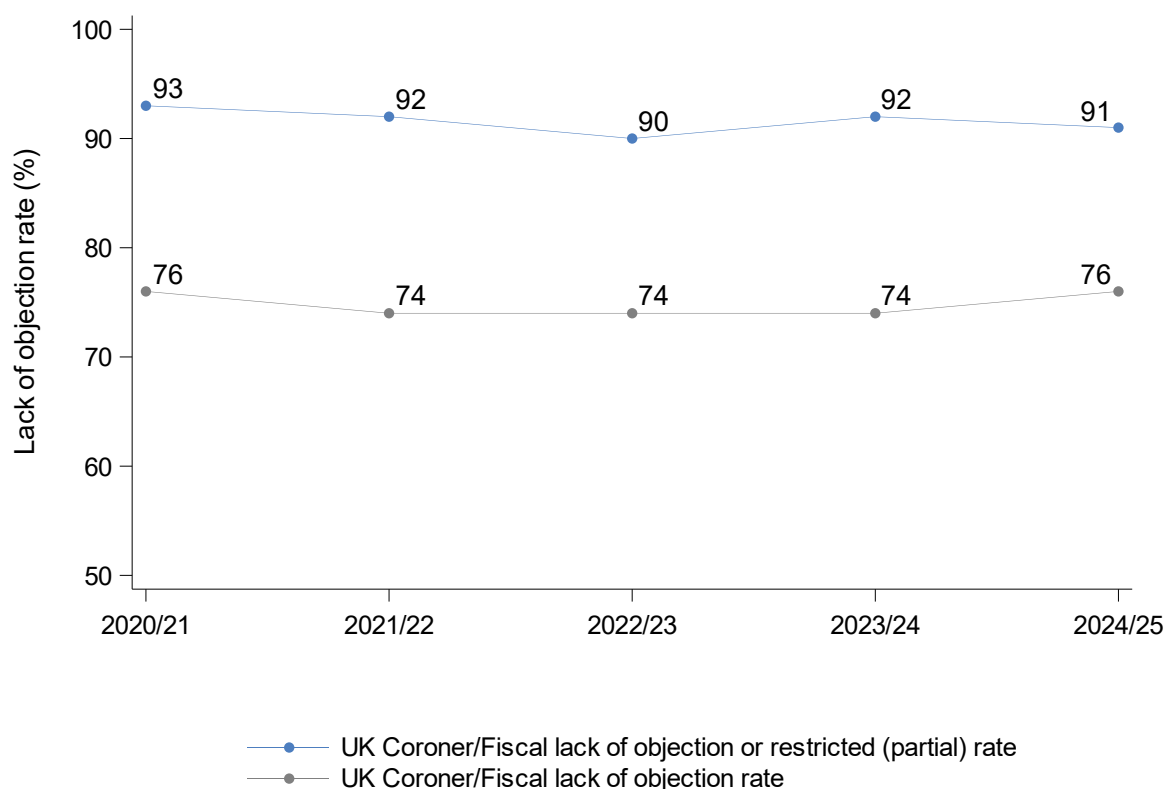
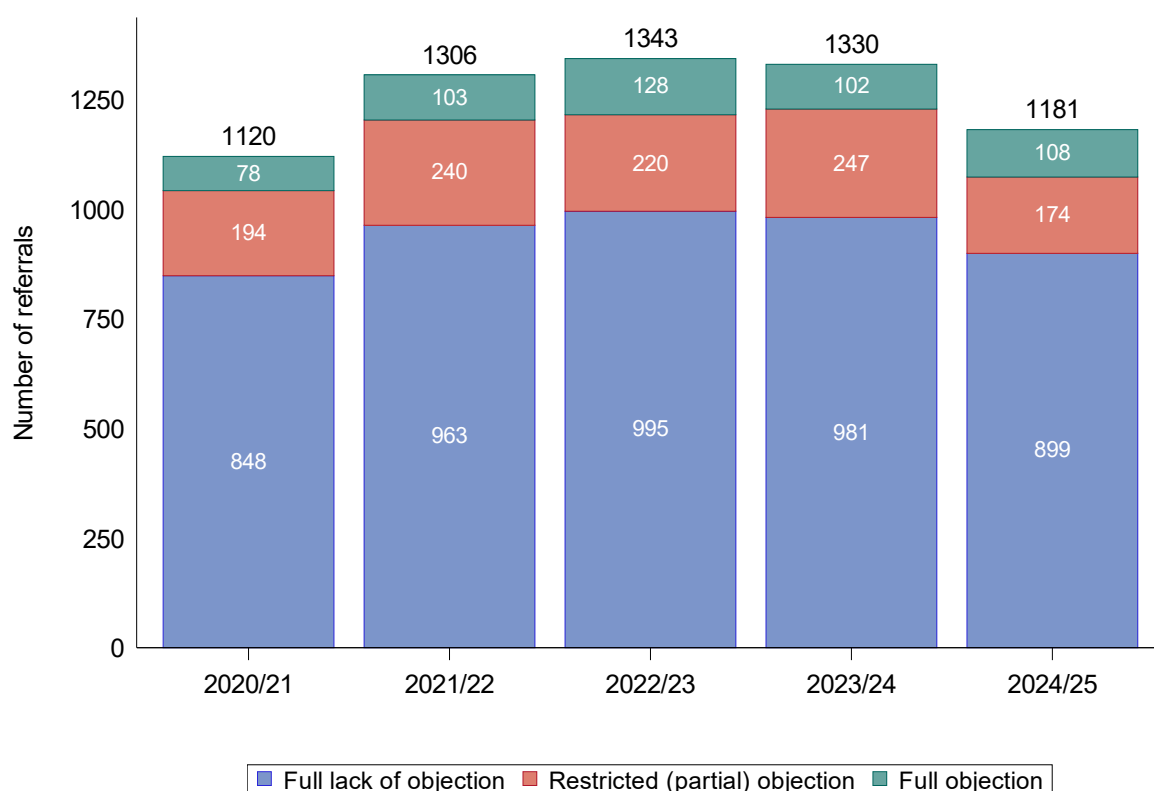


Figure 2: Number of referrals requiring Coroner/Fiscal review and level of objection, 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2025



7. The total number of referrals requiring Coroner/Fiscal review has fallen by 11% this year, from 1330 in 2023/24 to 1181 in 2024/25, as illustrated in **Figure 2**. More generally, there were fewer potential donors in 2024/25 than in previous years. In particular, the number of medically suitable eligible donors (the pool of patients considered for Coroner/Fiscal review) was 6% lower than 2023/24 which explains some of the observed decrease in the number of referrals for Coroner/Fiscal review. In addition, the expansion of the Medical Examiner Services, in September 2024, may have reduced the number of cases requiring Coroner/Fiscal review.
8. From the 899 cases reviewed, in 2024/25, where there was full lack of objection, 647 proceeded to organ donation resulting in 2,181 organs donated. On average, there were 2.4 organs donated for every full lack of objection.
9. From the 174 cases reviewed, in 2024/25, where there was partial lack of objection, 115 proceeded to organ donation resulting in 381 organs donated. On average, there were 2.2 organs donated for every partial lack of objection.

Coroner/Fiscal lack of objection 2024/25

10. Coroner/Fiscal lack of objection and restricted (partial) objection rates in 2024/25 are presented in **Figure 3** by team. There is some variation in lack of objection and restricted (partial) objection rates between the 12 teams ranging from 82.0% (24/133 objections) in the South East, to 98.5% in the Eastern (3/195 objections) and Northern (1/67 objections) teams.
11. A funnel plot comparing jurisdiction lack of objection and restricted (partial) objections rates, in 2024/25 is presented in **Figure 4**. This plot can be used to identify significant deviation from the national rate. The funnel plot illustrates that a number of jurisdictions rates are significantly higher than the national rate (plotted points in the gold shaded area) and there is one jurisdiction in both the amber and red shaded areas which indicated jurisdiction rates which are significantly lower than the national average. A more detailed description of the funnel interpretation and the number for referrals and jurisdiction rates presented in this funnel plot are summarised in **Appendix A4**.
12. Five-year team trends in lack of objection rates are presented in **Appendix A1**. Lack of objection rates have increased on last year in six of the twelve teams and decreased in the remaining six. The Northern Coroner/Fiscal lack of objection rate increased on the previous year from 90.2% to 98.5%.

Figure 3: Coroner/Fiscal lack of objection and restricted (partial) objection rate by team, 2024/25

Numbers at the top are total number of referrals requiring coroner/Fiscal review

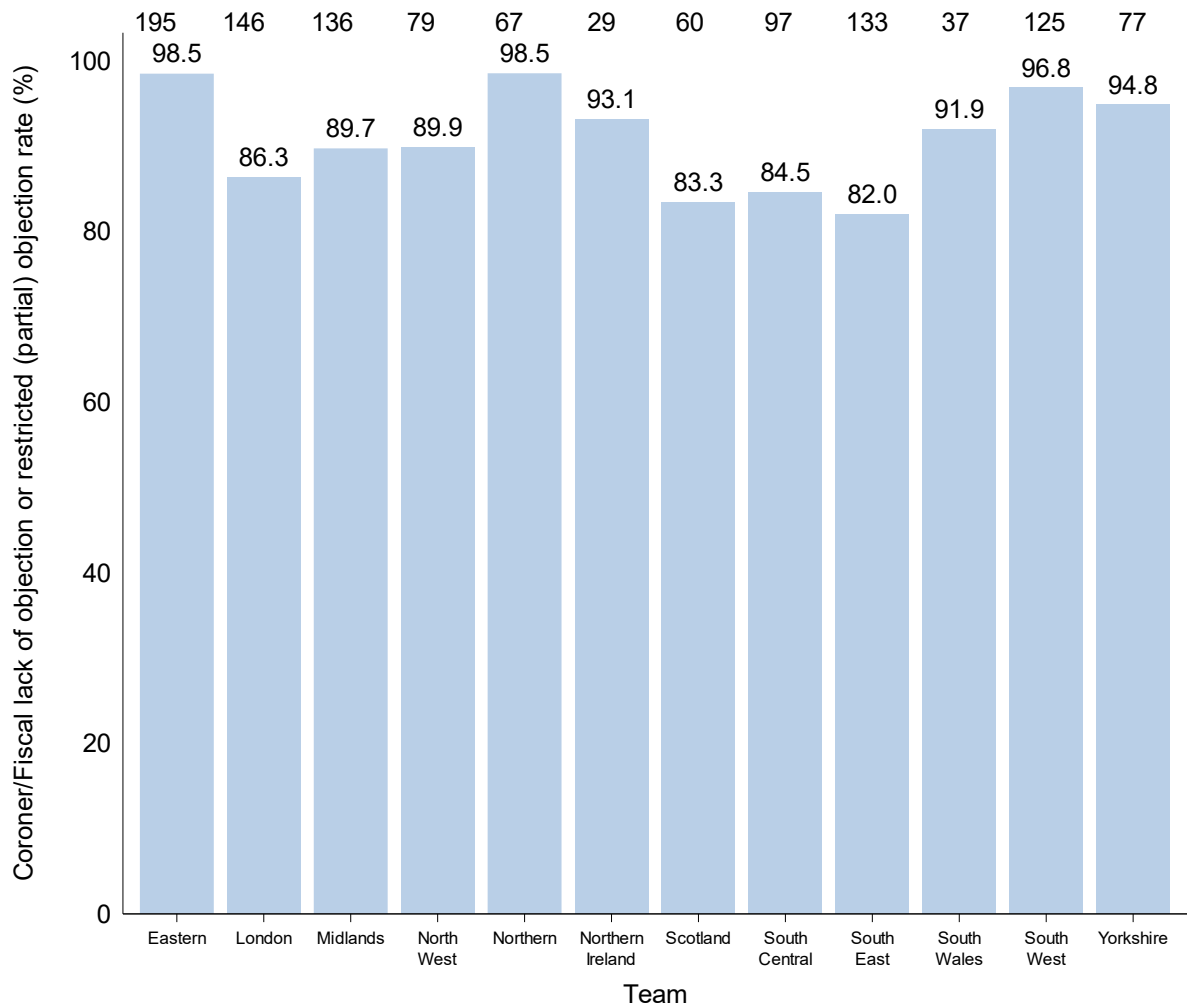
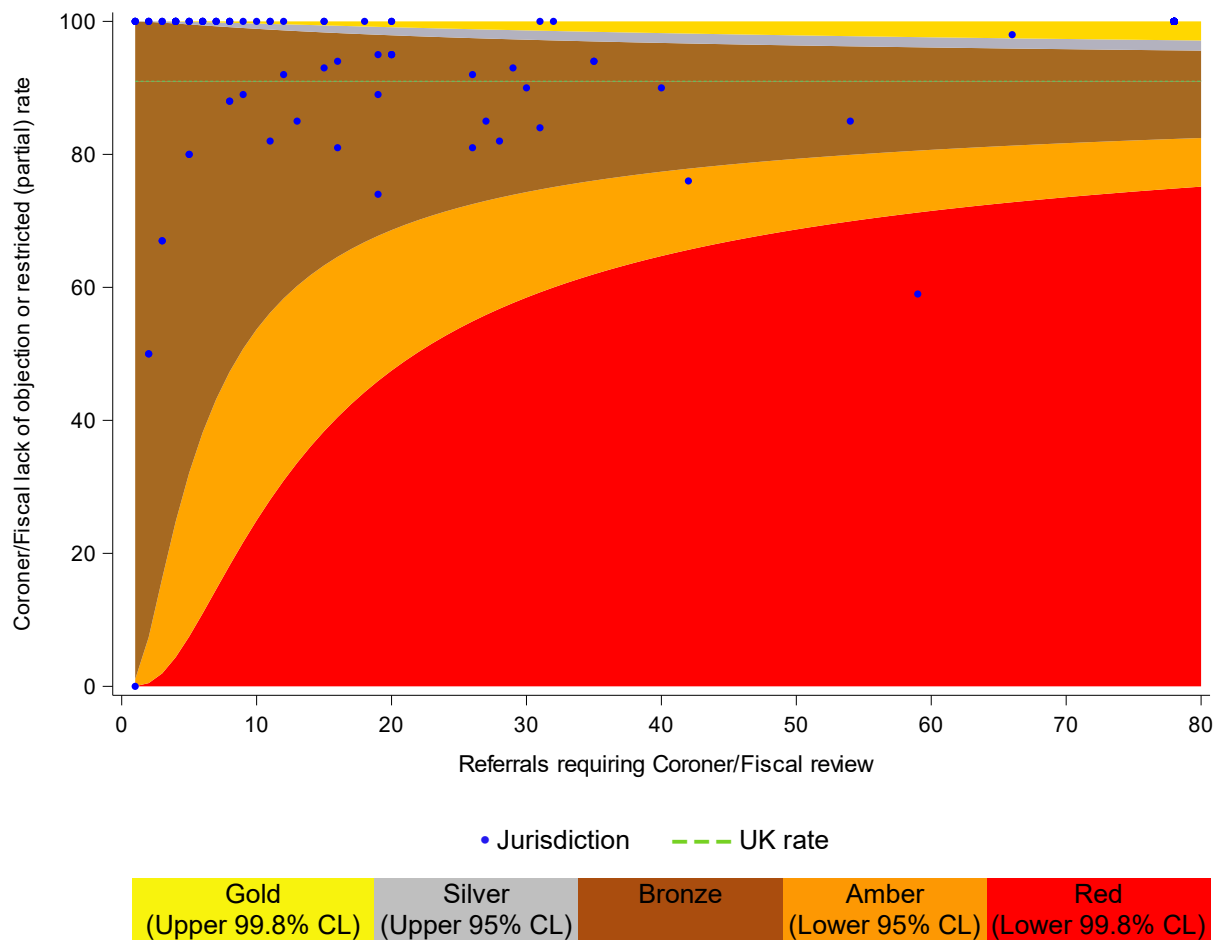


Figure 4: Funnel plot comparing jurisdiction lack of objection and restricted (partial) objections rates, in 2024/25



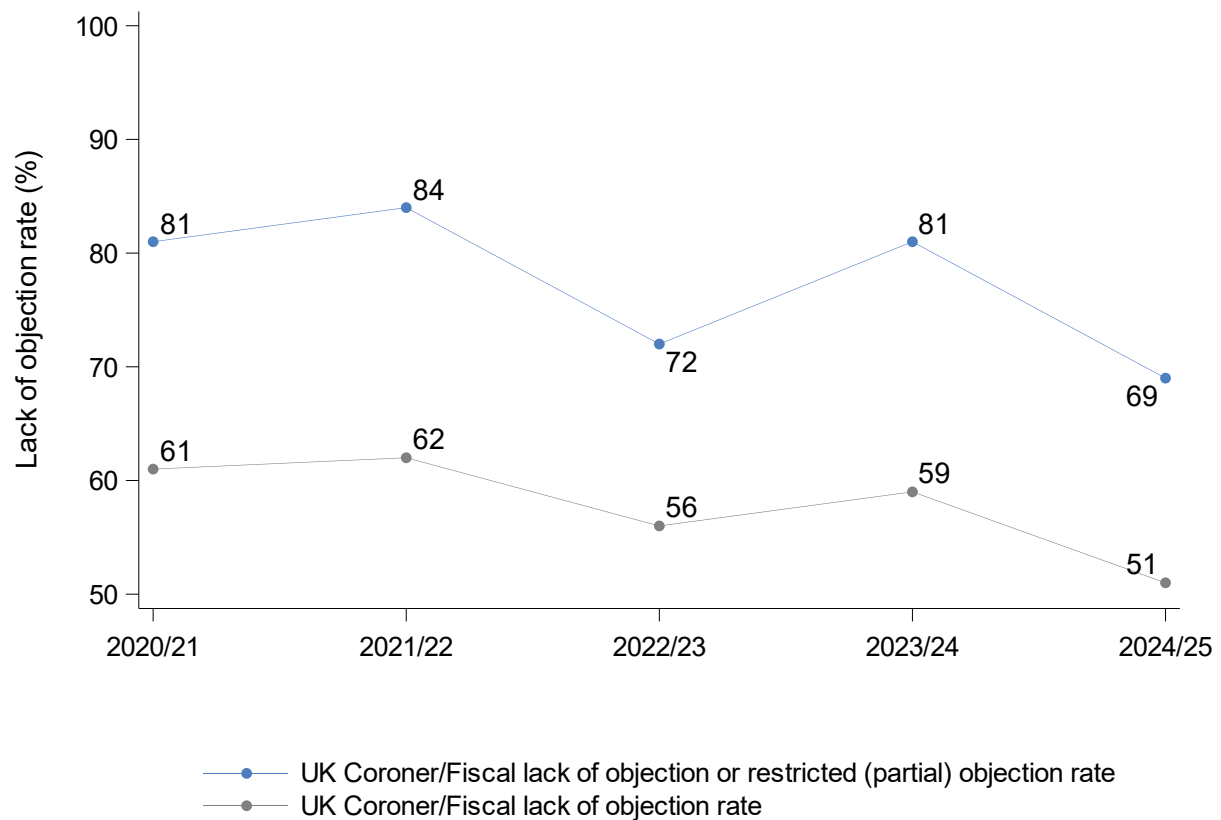
13. **Table 1** lists the reasons for Coroner/Fiscal full objections for donation in 2024/25 for adult and paediatric patients. The main reason for Coroner/Fiscal full objection was 'uncertain or suspicious cause of death' (62%, 67/108), followed by 'murder/manslaughter investigation' (20%, 22/108).

Table 1 Reasons of Coroner/Fiscal full objection by age, 2024/25 (2023/24)

Reason	Adult	Paediatric	Total
Uncertain or suspicious cause of death	51 (44)	16 (11)	67 (55)
Murder/Manslaughter investigation	19 (24)	3 (3)	22 (27)
Other	10 (15)	1 (1)	11 (16)
Police refusal	4 (4)	1 (0)	5 (4)
Sustained injury in custody/prison	3 (0)	0 (0)	3 (0)
Total	87 (87)	21 (15)	108 (102)

Coroner/Fiscal lack of objection rates for paediatric patients

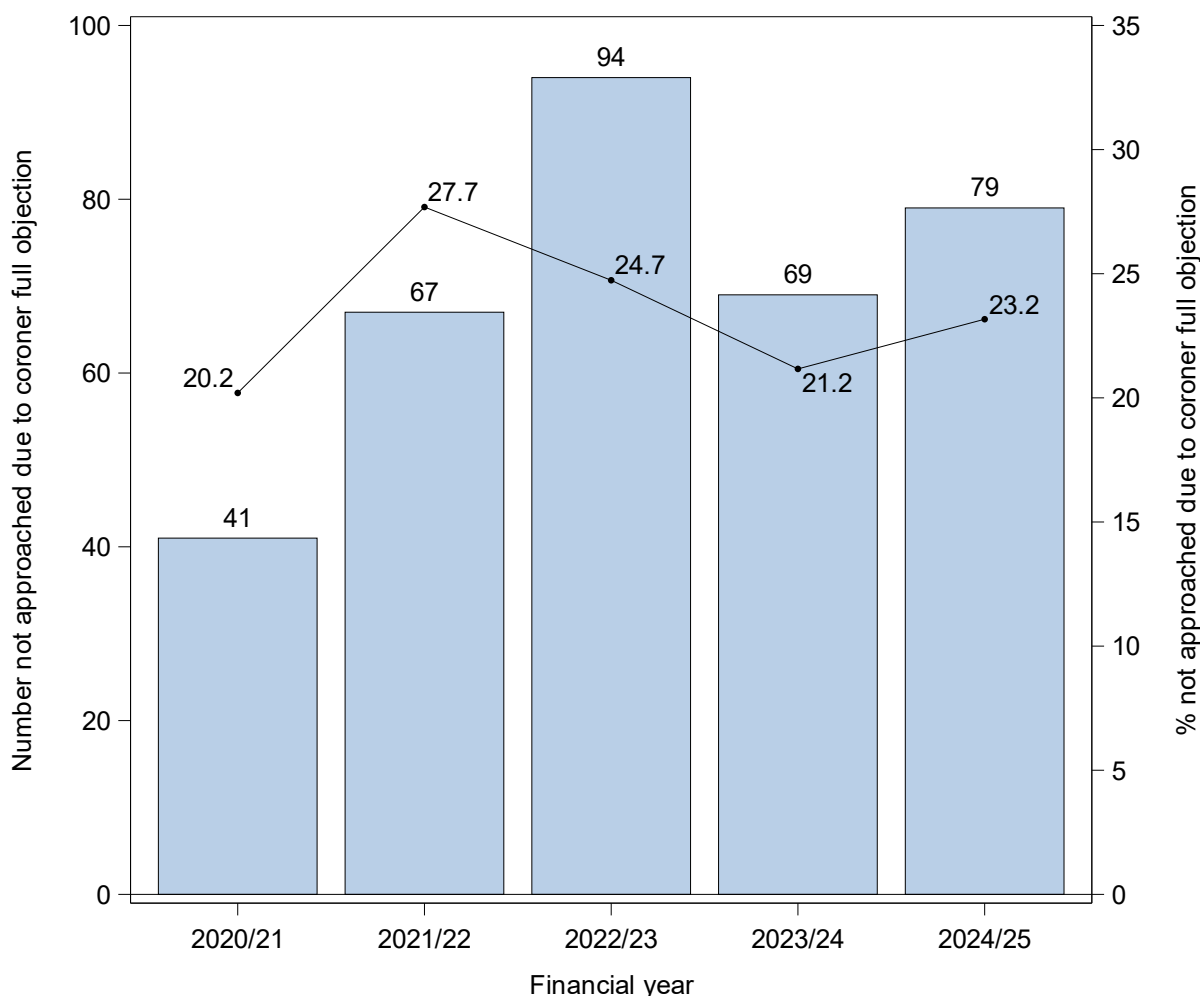
Figure 5: UK Coroner/Fiscal paediatric lack of objection rates between 1 April 2020 and 31 March 2025



14. **Figure 5** shows Coroner/Fiscal lack of objection rates for paediatric patients (under 18 years) in the UK for the last five financial years. Overall, the rate of lack of objection and lack of objection or restricted (partial) objection has been falling over the last five years to 51% and 69% respectively, the lowest rates in five years.

Families not approached due to coroner/fiscal full objection

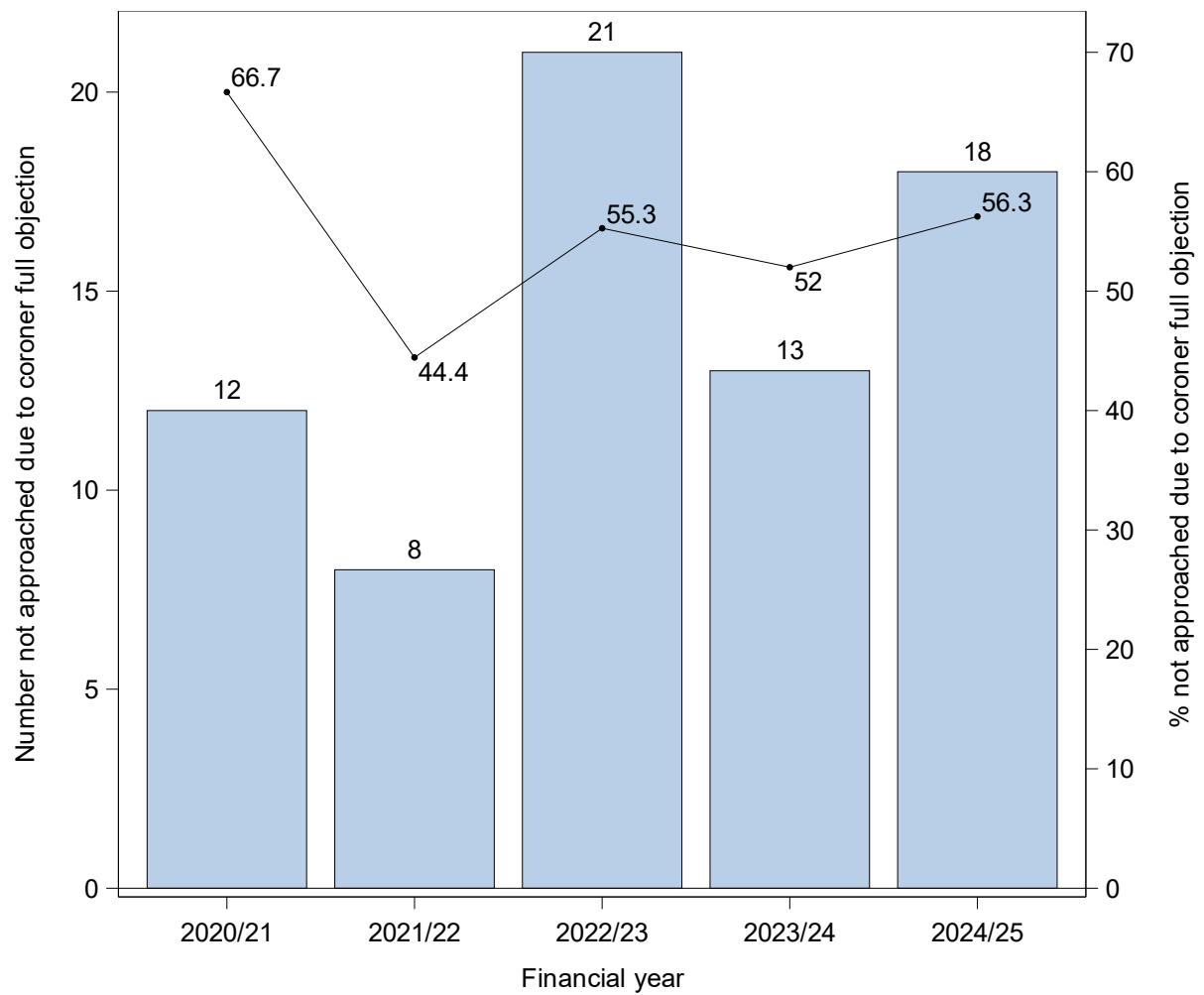
Figure 6: Families not approached due to Coroner/Fiscal full objection



15. **Figure 6** shows the number and proportion of families not approached due to Coroner/Fiscal full objection in the UK in the last five financial years. Over this period there is an increasing number of families not approached to discuss organ donation because of Coroner/Fiscal full objection, from 41 in 2020/21 to 79 in 2024/25. The proportion of families not approached due to Coroner/Fiscal full objection increased slightly in the last financial year from 21% to 23%.

16. **Figure 7** shows the number and proportion of families of paediatric patients (under 18 years) not approached due to Coroner/Fiscal full objection in the UK in the last five financial years. The number of families not approached to discuss organ donation due to Coroner/Fiscal full objection increased last year from 13 in 2023/24 to 18 in 2024/25. A similar increase is seen in the proportion of families not approached where there was Coroner/Fiscal full objection from 52% in 2023/24 to 56% in 2024/25.

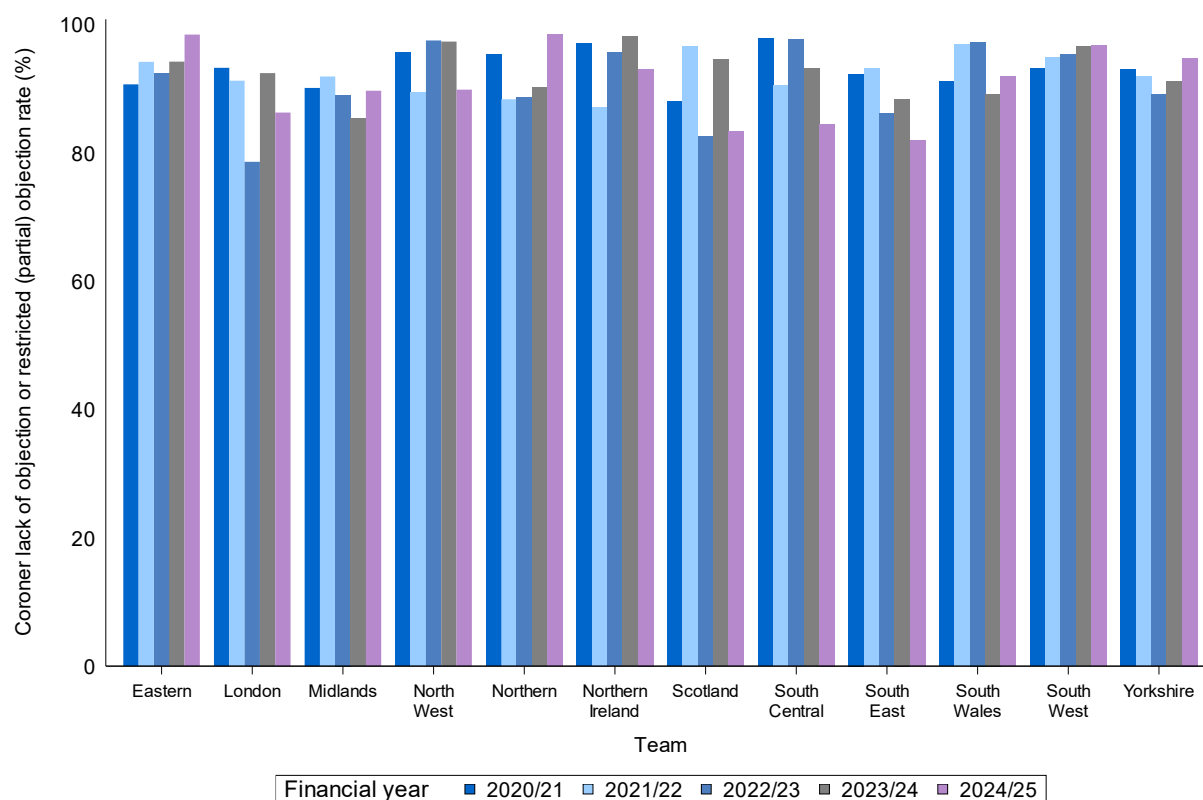
Figure 7: Paediatric families not approached due to Coroner/Fiscal full objection



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Appendix

Figure A1: Coroner/Fiscal lack of objection or restricted (partial) objection rate by team and financial year



Funnel plots

17. A funnel plot is a useful graphical tool to compare Coroner/Fiscal lack of objection and restricted (partial) objections rates, by jurisdiction, and identify possible significant variation from the national rate. Each jurisdiction is represented on the plot as a blue dot, although some dots may overlap where the number of referrals and objection rates are the same. The UK national rate is shown on the plot as a green horizontal dashed line, together with 95% and 99.8% confidence limits for this rate. These limits form a 'funnel', which is shaded using the gold, silver, bronze, amber, and red (GoSBAR) colour scheme to aid interpretation. If a jurisdiction lies within the 95% limits, shaded bronze, then that jurisdiction has a rate that is statistically consistent with the UK rate (average performance). If a jurisdiction lies outside the 95% confidence limits, shaded silver (good performance) or amber (below average performance), this serves as an alert that the jurisdiction may have a rate that is significantly different from the UK rate. When a jurisdiction lies above the upper 99.8% limit, shaded gold, this indicates a rate that is significantly higher than the UK rate (exceptional performance), while a jurisdiction that lies below the lower limit, shaded red, has a rate that is significantly lower than the UK rate (poor performance). Note that caution should be applied when interpreting percentages calculated with numbers less than 10.