

## Frequently asked questions (FAQs) for the orthopaedic variable life-adjusted display (VLAD) report

The following FAQs supplement the information provided on this page and the 'Overview' and 'Technical notes' sections of the Methodology page in the VLAD report.

### 1. What are the features of the VLAD

The figure below illustrates the different features of the VLAD report that you may see for your district. A 'downward' trend indicates a higher risk of SSI and an 'upward' trend indicates a 'lower' risk of SSI. This differs from other types of infection rate charts where an upward trend usually shows an increasing rate of infection. Figure 1, shows both a downward trend in 2018 and an upward trend in 2019.

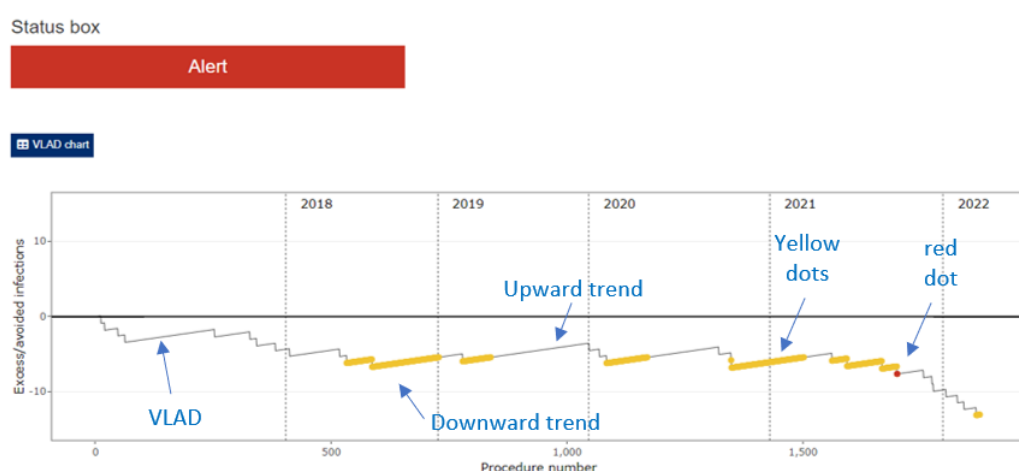


Figure 1: VLAD chart showing different features

### 2. How do I interpret changes in the alert status?

**Note:** The status is calculated based only on procedures occurring in the 12 months before the most recent procedure in each DHB.

#### a. What does it mean if my district status goes from green to an amber warning?

This indicates there **may have been an increase in SSI risk** over the last 12 months, but it is not yet statistically significant. Data should be monitored closely. Consider investigating SSI cases using the SSI investigation tool.

#### b. What does it mean if my district status goes from an amber warning to a red alert?

This indicates that there is **now evidence of an increase in SSI risk**. For those undertaking light surveillance, use the SSI investigation tool for all organ space and deep infections and any superficial SSI leading to readmission.

#### c. What does it mean if my district status goes from a red alert to green?

This indicates that over the last 12 months there has been no further increase in SSI risk. The green is indicating that there is a new 'normal' level of risk. The risk has not necessarily returned

to the level it was before the red alert happened. In the example below we can see that the risk has stayed about the same as at the time of the red alert. (Figure 2)

Status box

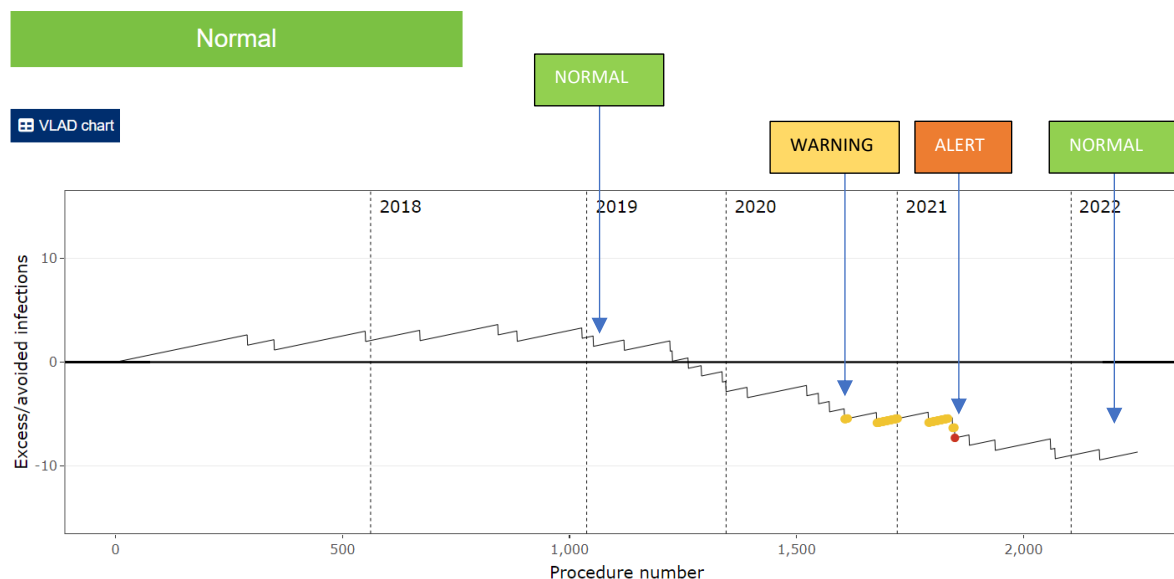


Figure 2: VLAD chart showing different status of SSI risk

**d. What does it mean if my district goes from a red alert to an amber warning?**

This indicates that over the preceding 12 months there is evidence that the SSI risk may be continuing to increase. When the red alert occurred, the alert threshold is reset again to green but at a new increased risk level. This green level is now the new 'normal' level. A further downward trend from this new level of risk indicates that the risk may still be increasing, and it has triggered an amber warning. If this amber warning occurs within 12 months of the red alert reset you will not see a green status box when the chart is updated at 12 months.

Status box

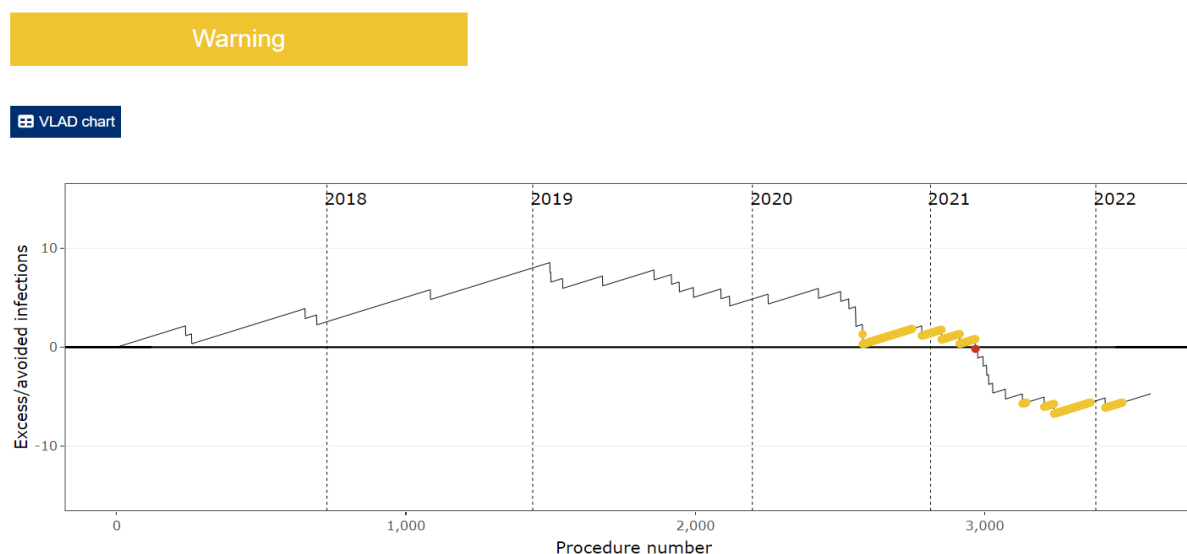


Figure 3: VLAD chart showing amber warning within 12 months after red alert.

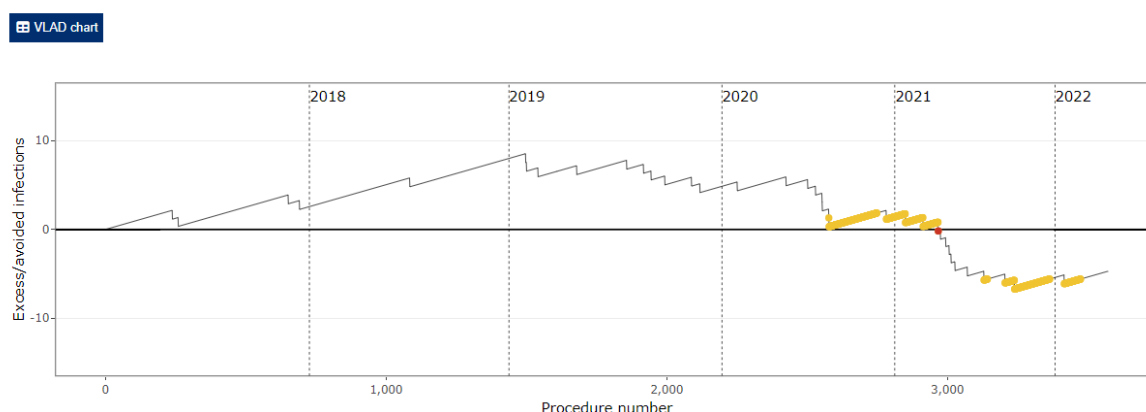
### 3. How long will the status remain as red?

Once the status changes to red, the district status will remain red for a period of 12 months. This will alert the districts that there is a requirement for constant monitoring and signal prompt use of the SSI investigation tool.

### 4. Will we have red dots trigger continuously like yellow dots?

No, there can only ever be one red dot. There can be multiple yellow dots (which may appear as a yellow line) to warn us there is a potential increase in the SSI risk but once we get a red dot, this means that there is statistical evidence that the SSI risk has increased by 50%. At this point the data resets to this threshold as the new normal level of risk. For this reason, it is not possible to have continuous red dots.

### 5. Why is the chart still showing yellow dots and not red when it goes downward and downward?



When the red alert occurred, the alert threshold is reset and the increased risk level is now the new normal level. When we see a downward trend from that new level of risk we will see yellow warning dots before any red. This indicates that there may be a further increase in the level of risk but there is insufficient statistical evidence of an increase. The status box will remain showing an alert for 12 months from the alert even if there are further yellow points.

### 6. Alert threshold - does this mean that the red alert will re-trigger again if there is a 50% increase in the SSI risk from the starting point of when the last red dot was triggered?

Yes, the threshold will get reset whenever it is surpassed (at a red dot), so that becomes the new normal level of risk. A new red dot is another 50% increase on top of that. This can occur any time after a red alert is triggered, even within a 12 month period from the original alert.