

# Annual Report Health Sciences Academy 2020-2022





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# Foreword



Prof Paul Burke  
Chief Academic Officer &  
Vice Dean (Health Sciences)

The UL Hospital Group (ULHG) Health Sciences Academy represents a coming together of its hospital group and university to enhance their shared ambition to deliver health sciences education and training, research and innovation that leads to clinical excellence and enhanced patient care. The intention

of the University and the Hospital Group is that the ULHG Health Sciences Academy will work in close collaboration with its Community Health Organisation partner (Midwest Community Healthcare) to be a leader in health sciences education, training, research and innovation in Ireland, through a hub and spoke model in Limerick and the Mid-West.

An academic health science system in its broadest sense looks at every aspect of our lives from basic health education and wellbeing in the community to the highest levels of interventional treatment and innovative technology in tertiary referral university teaching hospitals. The ULHG Health Science Academy aims to support all healthcare practitioners working in the different parts of our health service in the Midwest. It is doing this through a focus on three pillars: Firstly recognising the value of all healthcare workers through the principles of **Equality and Inclusion**; secondly the importance of **Clinical Practice Integration** between hospital and community, reinforced further by the objectives of Sláintecare. Both these objectives are underpinned by the support of university academics through the third pillar of **Research and Innovation**.

This first three-year annual report reflects how the Academy has pursued these three pillars, under the leadership and direction of Ms Miriam McCarthy, Health Sciences Academy Manager. It aims to illustrate the journey of the Health Sciences Academy from launch to successful implementation of impactful projects, harnessing the expertise, enthusiasm and

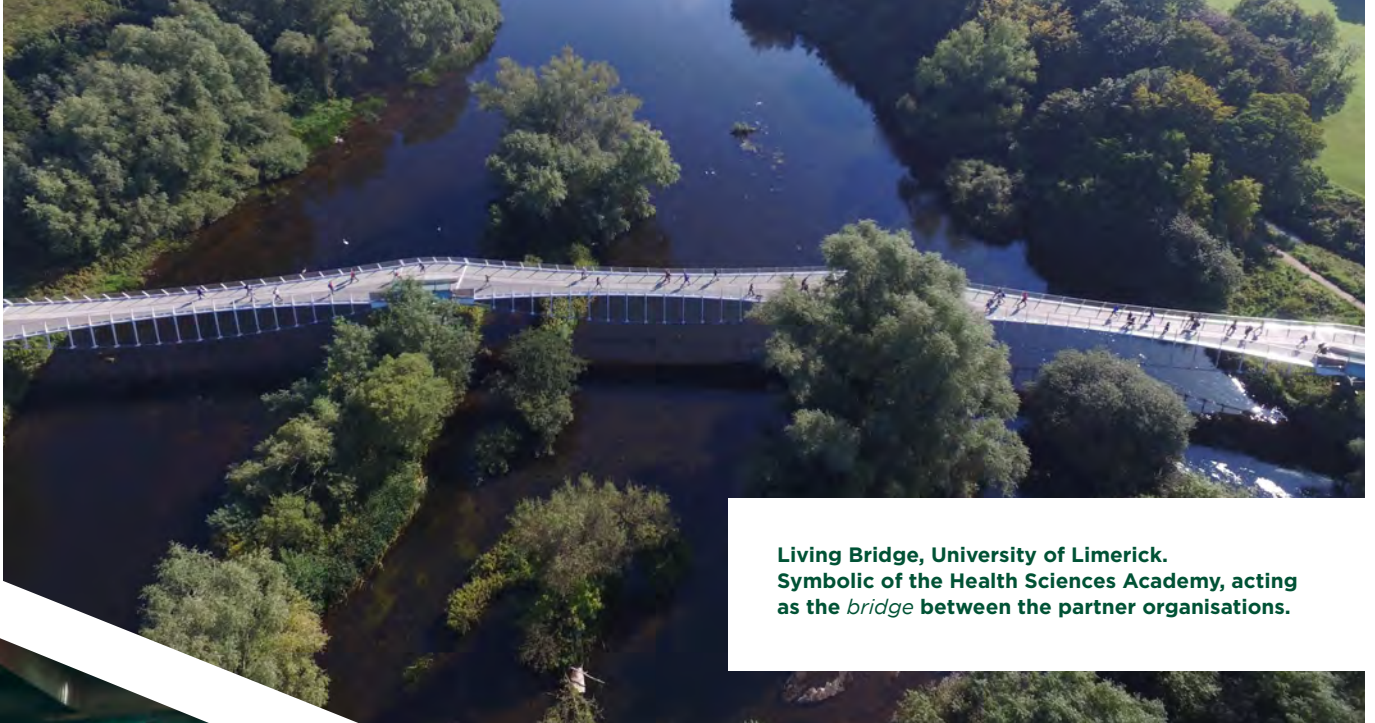
collaboration from across partner organisations and others. The Academy has recognised that we must continually foster interest in healthcare as a career and encourage more of our talented young people to study locally and hopefully practice in the region. Similarly, the Academy has led and enabled developments in the areas of equality and inclusion that make our healthcare workers from abroad feel more fully valued and enabled to improve their career development.

This report looks back at the first three years of the Health Science Academy that included the two very challenging years of the pandemic. Education, training, research and innovation are the bedrock of the University's role in supporting the healthcare system and during these three years, the different health science disciplines at our university have given the Academy the opportunity to promote interdisciplinary learning and collaboration which is now an accepted part of healthcare delivery, and will become even more important as the community healthcare workforce rapidly expands under Sláintecare.

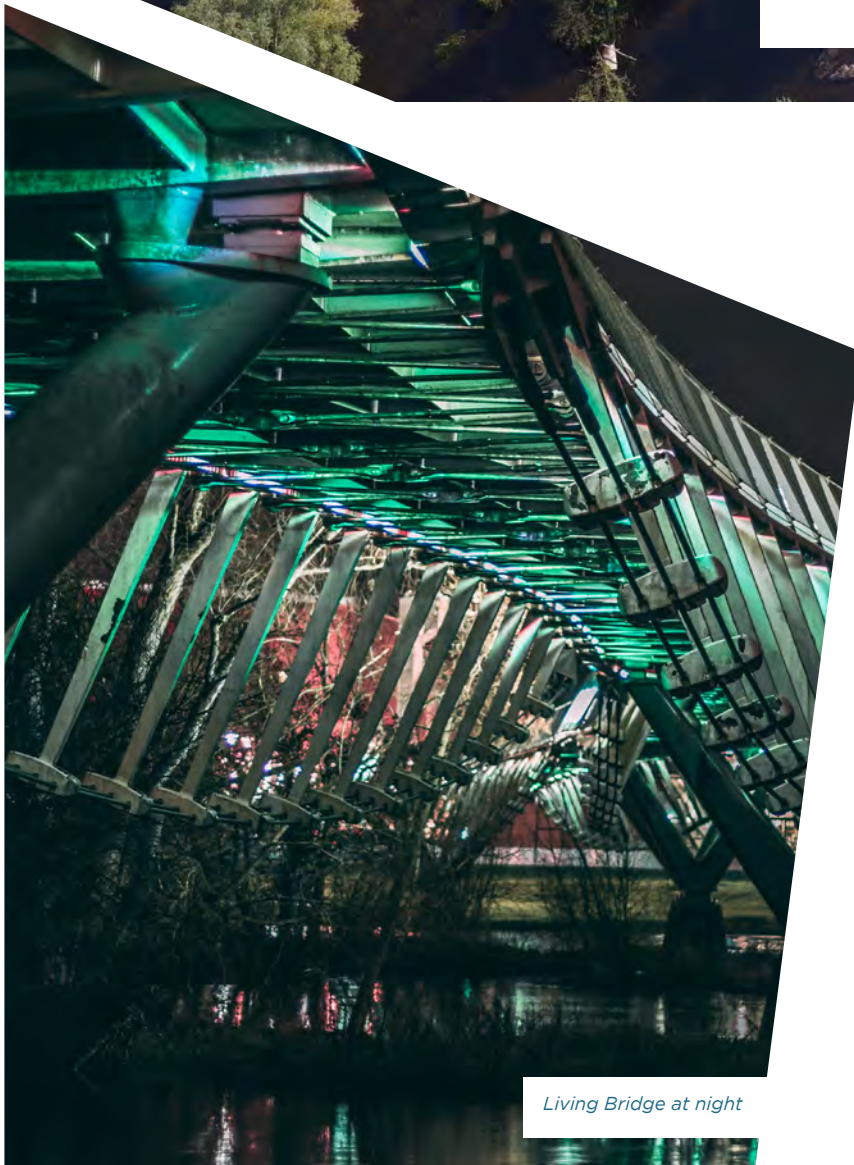
The academic objectives of the Health Sciences Academy and the Hospital Groups Chief Academic Officer are similar. One of the benefits of this alliance has been the strengthening of the postgraduate medical training office led by National Doctor Training programme (NDTP) clinical training lead, Dr John McManus and his administrative team who also work with the Health Science Academy. The report documents the outstanding achievements of the NDTP office during the three years.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the huge support given to the ULHG Health Science Academy and the Chief Academic Officer by the CEO of the UL Hospitals Group - Prof Colette Cowan and University of Limerick's Deans of Education and Health Science Prof Rachel Msefti and her successor, Prof Deirdre McGrath. The additional support of Ms Maria Bridgeman, Chief Officer of Midwest Community Healthcare has also been crucial in advancing the principles of an academic health science system across the Midwest.

# About the Health Sciences Academy



**Living Bridge, University of Limerick.**  
**Symbolic of the Health Sciences Academy, acting as the *bridge* between the partner organisations.**



*Living Bridge at night*

## **The Health Sciences Academy is a partnership between the UL Hospitals Group, University of Limerick and Midwest Community Healthcare.**

It aims to bring research, education, teaching, training and innovation closer to clinical practice through collaboration. Using projects that build on the synergies and strengths of the partner organisations, we strive to create a clinical learning environment that benefits staff, patients and the people of the Midwest.

It was officially launched in December 2019 by Minister of State, Jim Daly.





*Pictured L to R: Dr Eoin Noctor, Consultant Endocrinologist; Miriam McCarthy, Health Sciences Academy Manager; Prof Rachel Msetfi, Executive Dean of Education & Health Sciences UL; Prof Colette Cowan, CEO UL Hospitals Group; Minister of State, Jim Daly; Prof Paul Burke, Chief Academic Officer and Vice Dean Health Sciences; Maria Bridgeman, Chief Officer MWCH; Prof Rose Galvin, School of Allied Health, UL.*



*Pictured L to R: Miriam McCarthy, Health Sciences Academy Manager; Prof Paul Burke, Chief Academic Officer and Vice Dean Health Sciences*

The Health Sciences Academy aligns with, and is the foundation for, the vision of the academic health science system (AHSS).

An AHSS is a fully coordinated partnership between a university and a healthcare system, designed to deliver quality care hand-in-hand with teaching, training, research and innovation incorporating the full spectrum of the healthcare workforce. Academic Health Science Systems aim to ensure that a rich research and innovative environment leads to direct clinical benefits for patients. The integration of education, research and training improves staff education and knowledge, staff retention and patient care and outcomes, contributing to the innovation and the knowledge economy. Internationally, AHSSs such as Johns Hopkins in the USA, provide high quality healthcare across the world achieving high standards of clinical care, educating health professionals and leading health care research and innovation.

## Our Management and Accountability

**The Chief Academic Officer and Vice-Dean (Health Sciences) is the senior executive lead for healthcare teaching, training, education and research across the Midwest. This is one of seven CAO roles across Ireland which are affiliated with Universities and teaching hospitals.**

Supporting this work is the Health Sciences Academy Manager who works with the three partner organisations to drive and lead collaborative projects in the areas of equality & inclusion, clinical practice integration and research & innovation.

A range of steering committees and project teams are in place to deliver on these areas. The MWCH HSA Development Committee was established in 2022 to build connections and develop governance processes with our community partners.

The National Doctor Training & Planning (NDTP) lead is a medical consultant and is responsible for the medical education of doctors working in the UL Hospitals group.

Supporting and enabling this work is the team in Clinical Education and Research Centre (CERC) with close working relationships with colleagues in University of Limerick, the HSE, and other organisations.



Prof Paul Burke  
*Chief Academic Office & Vice  
Dean (Health Sciences)*



Miriam McCarthy  
*Health Sciences Academy  
Manager*



Dr John McManus  
*NDTP Training Lead*



Dr Eimear Keane  
*Research Governance Manager*



Dr Sarah Carroll  
*Simulation Technician*



Mary O'Kelly  
*CERC Building Manager*



Dovile Lee  
*RCPI Coordinator*



Verity Hayes  
*NDTP Coordinator and HSA  
Project Coordinator*



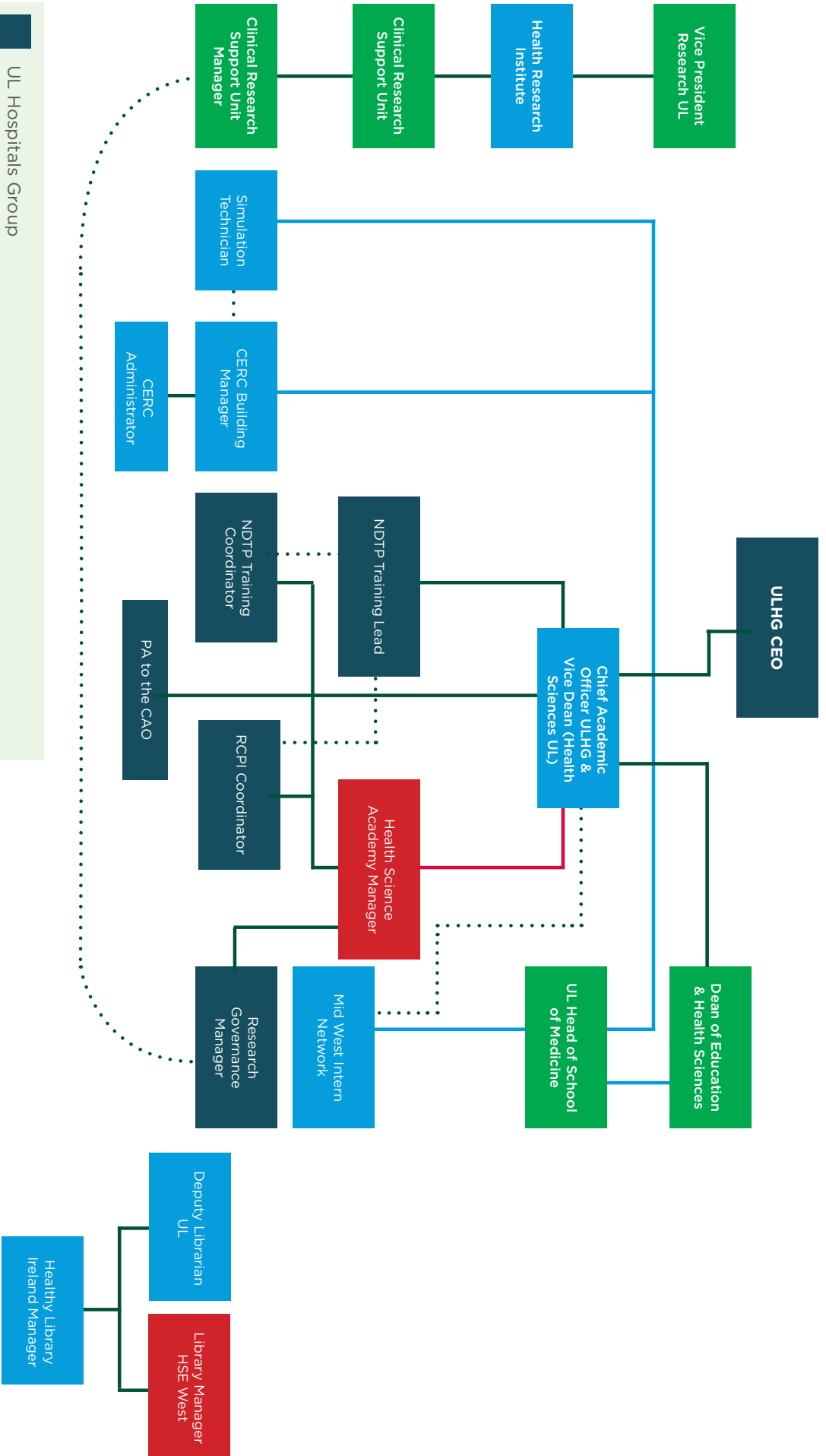
Mairead de Brún  
*NDTP Coordinator and HSA  
Project Coordinator*



Laura Ginty  
*PA to the CAO Office*



Noelle Araujo  
*CERC Administrator*



UL Hospitals Group  
 University of Limerick  
 UL Hospitals Group & University of Limerick  
 UL Hospitals Group, University of Limerick & Midwest Community Healthcare

*This is a dynamic organogram which continues to develop over time.*

# Strategic Context and Direction

**The work of the Health Sciences Academy has been underpinned by the strategies of its partners: UL Hospitals Group Strategy 2018-2022 'Working Together, Caring for the Mid-West' and University of Limerick UL@50 Strategic Plan 2019-2024.**

The four strategic priorities of the UL Hospitals Group Strategy are:

- Clinical Transformation
- Digital Health
- Research, Education and Innovation
- Collaboration and Alliances

The Health Sciences Academy supports all four priorities with specific alignment with strategic priorities three and four:

### Strategic Priority 3:

#### Education, Research & Innovation

Improve the quality of life of our patients and populations through our commitment to skill and capability development, while also optimising our focus on research and innovation to continue service delivery advances across the prevention, diagnosis and treatment spectrum.

### Strategic Priority 4:

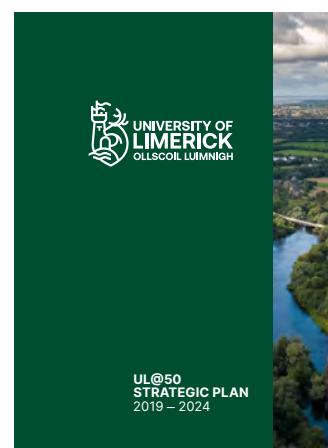
#### Collaboration & Alliances

Adopt a proactive and strategic approach to collaboration. Together with our strategic partners, we'll achieve more.

[UL@50 Strategy 2019-2024](#) was launched on 1st December 2019, setting out UL's ambitions and plans for the university over the coming five-year planning period and beyond. UL@50 sets out an exciting vision for the university which will build on the extraordinary progress that has been made by everyone involved in UL since the NIHE opened its doors almost 50 years ago. The Health Sciences Academy is aligned with the UL strategic goals of 'transforming education', 'research excellence' and 'city and region'.



*UL Hospitals Strategy 2018-2022*



*UL Strategic Plan 2019-2024*



*Slaintecare/UL@50/ULHG*

Working towards universal healthcare for all, [Sláintecare](#): "Right Care, Right Place, Right Time" reform is creating a health and social care service where people can access the right services, closer to home, and based on need and not ability to pay.

With a focus on developing primary and community care, Sláintecare reform is making it possible for people to stay healthy in their homes and communities for as long as possible.

The vision and operations of the Health Sciences Academy are strongly guided by the UL Hospitals Group and Midwest Community Healthcare service plans which, in conjunction with the Department of Health, are driving the Sláintecare reform programme to transform health and social care services - ensuring that the right care is delivered in the right place and at the right time <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/4c7594-delivering-slaintecare>

# Partnerships and Achievements



**HSE** Aonad Pleanála & Forbartha Altranaís & Cnáimhseachais, FnaSS An tIarthar An Mheán Iarthair | Nursing & Midwifery Planning & Development Unit, HSE West Mid West



[www.healthsciencesacademy.ie](http://www.healthsciencesacademy.ie)

[@HealthSciAcadLK](https://twitter.com/HealthSciAcadLK)



The Health Sciences Academy website acts as a focal point for all the projects, educational offerings and upcoming events relevant to healthcare professionals.

The Health Sciences Academy twitter account, @HealthSciAcadLK, aims to regularly share updates from HSA projects and tweets from relevant partners.

## Work Streams

**The work of the Health Sciences Academy is aligned under three work streams with a range of collaborative projects. All the projects undertaken by the Health Science Academy include experts from the partner organisations and other collaborations, which leverages the expertise of all those involved to develop and drive the range of projects showcased in this report.**

### 1. Clinical Practice Integration

### 3. Research and Innovation

### 2. Equality and Inclusion

# 1. Clinical Practice Integration

**The Clinical Practice Integration theme is focussed on identifying and understanding the main clinical challenges for the people of the Midwest, from the perspective of patients, clinicians, researchers and students. Then, we concentrate on creating and putting into practice evidence-based solutions to address these issues.**

Diabetes has been identified as a clinical condition with real-world impact in the Midwest.

## **TYPE 2 DIABETES**

The population of the Midwest is in the region of 405,000 and up to 15,000 people have Type 2 diabetes. Management of diabetes is multifaceted, and involves lifestyle, medication, exercise and self-management education and support.

In establishing the Clinical Practice Integration steering committee and identifying relevant projects, meetings were held with key stakeholders from across University of Limerick, UL Hospitals Group, Midwest Community Healthcare, Public Health and diabetes advocacy groups such as Diabetes Ireland and Thriveabetes. Stakeholders involved in these meetings included general practitioners, UL academics, clinicians in UL Hospitals Group (endocrinology,

biochemistry, human nutrition and dietetics, nursing) clinicians in general practice and Midwest Community Healthcare (medicine, human nutrition and dietetics, traveller health, health promotion officers, practice nurses, allied health professionals, nursing) and people with diabetes. We also engaged with Leicester Diabetes Centre.

Two areas of collaborative interest identified were:

- **Structured Education Programmes for Type 2 Diabetes**
- **Gestational Diabetes Mellitus**

A steering committee and project teams have worked with UL students, researchers, clinical staff, members of the public, advocacy groups and people with diabetes to identify and develop projects in these areas.



*Blood sugar testing*



## STRUCTURED EDUCATION PROGRAMMES FOR TYPE 2 DIABETES

We held a World Café in Nov 2020 with over 30 people in attendance from across the Midwest, representing the breadth of stakeholders involved in type 2 diabetes.

The results from the World Café led to four Masters students studying Human Nutrition and Dietetics in UL to undertake their final year projects titled: *'Comparison between online and traditional face-to-face delivery of structured diabetes education programmes for newly diagnosed individuals with type 2 diabetes'* and *'Exploring healthcare providers attitudes, knowledge and values of self-management programmes for Type 2 Diabetes: Survey'*.

Two Masters in Public Health students in 2022 also completed their practicum in Midwest Community Healthcare exploring this topic.

## GESTATIONAL DIABETES MELLITUS

Gestational Diabetes Mellitus (GDM) is defined as 'with onset or first recognition during pregnancy, that is not clearly pre-existing diabetes'. It affects 1 in 8 pregnancies in the West of Ireland and those who develop gestational diabetes are seven times more likely to develop diabetes in later life. In the Midwest, there are approximately 4,500 births annually in University Maternity Hospital Limerick with approximately 400 women per year in Midwest developing GDM.

The project team working on this area comprises experts from endocrinology, biochemistry, dietetics and nursing in UL Hospitals Group and Schools of Medicine and Allied Health in UL. A research project entitled: *'Determining uptake of postpartum glucose testing after gestational diabetes mellitus and identify barriers and facilitators to the uptake of diabetes screening in UL Hospitals Group'* received ethical approval and is currently underway.

The aims of the research are:

1. To retrospectively determine the proportion of women with GDM delivering in the UL Hospitals Group between 2012 and 2020 who underwent testing for glucose status within 12 weeks post-partum, in accordance with national and international guidelines.
2. To qualitatively determine facilitators and barriers associated with uptake of screening
3. To prospectively determine the proportion of women with GDM delivering in the hospital group between 2021 and 2024 who will undergo testing for glucose status from 12 weeks to up to 3 years post-partum.

Two students from the Masters in Public Health programme undertook the qualitative component with projects entitled:

*'Facilitators of and barriers to attending postpartum screening in women with a recent pregnancy complicated by gestational diabetes mellitus (GDM): a qualitative study'*

and

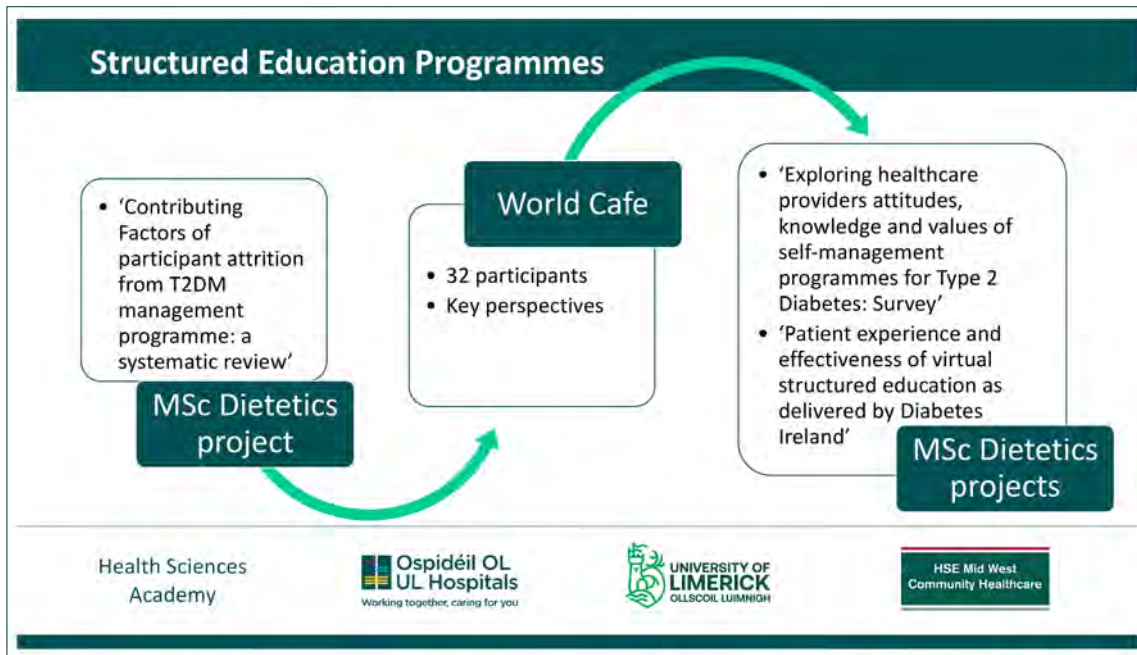
*'The efficacy of reminder systems to increase uptake of screening for type 2 diabetes mellitus (T2DM) among mothers with a history of gestational diabetes mellitus (GDM); A Systematic Review Update'*

Third year medical students undertook data analysis with Mr Antonio Reche-Martinez, Biochemist University Hospital Limerick and Dr Eoin Noctor, Consultant Endocrinologist, University Hospital Limerick.

# Sharing the Learning

In January 2022, the Health Sciences Academy presented at the UL School of Medicine “Social Accountability in Health Professions Education” seminar on the work undertaken to date in diabetes.

In September 2022, the Health Sciences Academy hosted a ‘Share the Learning’ event in the Clinical Education and Research Centre (CERC) in University Hospital Limerick with all those who have been involved in projects to date. By sharing the work and research findings carried out to date, this helps inform future areas for development and processes to support this.



**Health Sciences Academy**

The Academy aims to improve patient care by bringing together research, education, innovation and clinical practice

[www.HealthSciencesAcademy.ie](http://www.HealthSciencesAcademy.ie)

Ospidéal OL UL Hospitals | UNIVERSITY OF LIMERICK | HSE Mid West Community Healthcare

# Intermediate Care Facility

The Intermediate Care Facility (ICF) at the University of Limerick (UL) was developed as a contingency facility and a solution to patient flow and crowding challenges experienced in the UL Hospitals Group during the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020.




It opened in early June 2020 and closed in late October 2020 with capacity for up to 84 beds. During the period of its operation it treated a total of 188 patients. The ICF provided medical and nursing care and rehabilitation for patients without COVID-19 or those who were post-COVID-19 and no longer infectious, and whose needs did not require care in an acute hospital. In addition to medical, nursing and healthcare assistant staff, there was an onsite Allied Health Professional team comprising Clinical Nutrition & Dietetics, Occupational Therapy, Physiotherapy, Speech and Language Therapy, Medical Social Work, Pharmacy and a Patient Advocacy Liaison Service (PALS). The ICF facilitated numerous placements for students from UL's School of Allied Health and Department of Nursing and Midwifery with a strong focus on inter-professional education. It also provided students with an opportunity to be involved in student-led wards.

A collaborative qualitative research project, facilitated by the Health Sciences Academy, was developed between academics from UL's School of Allied Health and Department of Nursing and Midwifery and UL Hospitals Group staff members in the Summer of 2020. The project aims to capture the experiences of a wide range of stakeholders involved in the ICF from those who conceived it through to those who physically set it up, and to those who operated it or received care. It also aims to add to the growing body of research on international field hospitals during the COVID-19 pandemic as well as researching inter-professional education and collaboration within a field hospital.

Semi structured interviews and/or focus groups were completed with 80 participants generating 49 data sets between September 2020 and February 2021. Transcription and subsequent data analysis was then undertaken, by a PhD student supported by an Education and Health Sciences Faculty PhD fee waiver. This project has also provided opportunities for Masters in Occupational Therapy students from the School of Allied Health, who undertook their final year project on the ICF.

Integral to the project is building clinicians' research capacity and practitioners are involved in every stage of the research. Future plans include opportunities to co-author project publications and conference presentations in collaboration with the academic team members.

This project has been supported by UL Hospitals Group, through the Health Sciences Academy. The Principal Investigator is Prof Judith Pettigrew, with involvement from Dr Audrey Tierney (both from the School of Allied Health), Dr Liz Kingston and Dr Maria Noonan (from the Department of Nursing and Midwifery), Prof Paul Burke (from UL/UL Hospitals Group), Fiona Steed (from UL Hospitals Group), Hilary Curley (EHS Faculty) and Joanne Mannion (former UL Hospitals Group).

 <b>Occupational therapy and inter-professional education and collaboration during the COVID-19 pandemic.</b> 		
<small>Jordan Barry, MScOT, PhD<sup>1,2</sup>, Aoife McCarthy, BScOT<sup>1,2</sup>, Liz Kingston, PhD<sup>3</sup>, Maria Noonan, PhD<sup>1,2</sup>, Audrey Tierney, PhD<sup>1,2</sup>, Judi Pettigrew, PhD<sup>1,2</sup>  <sup>1</sup>School of Allied Health, University of Limerick, <sup>2</sup>Department of Nursing and Midwifery, University of Limerick, <sup>3</sup>Health Research Institute, University of Limerick, <sup>4</sup>Health Service Executive.         </small>		
<b>Clinical Driver for Initiative</b> As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, additional services were required in the Mid-West region to provide surge capacity to its pre-existing resource of 64 rehabilitation beds. The Intermediate Care Facility (ICF) was established as a fully staffed field hospital to provide post-acute rehabilitative care to patients. Located in the sports arena on the grounds of the University of Limerick (UL), it was operational for four months in 2020.	<b>Outcome</b> The ICF was considered novel not only for its unusual physical location and role in pandemic management, but also for its increased focus on inter-professional education and collaboration within its service delivery model. The occupational therapy service was seen as key to supporting the development and execution of this inter-professional approach, and included initiatives such as inter-professional therapeutic groups and inter-professional outcome measures.	<b>Reflection</b> Occupational therapists can assist in fostering and implementing inter-professional initiatives across various healthcare settings, including pandemic management sites. Such approaches may lead to enhanced outcomes for stakeholders such as patients, students and staff.
<b>Aim</b> The ICF provided post-acute rehabilitative care to both non-COVID-19 and post-COVID-19 patients. Emphasis was placed on inter-professional education and collaboration to maximise student learning and patient outcomes. Many inter-professional initiatives were led by occupational therapy staff.	<b>Due to decreased demand for surge capacity beds at the time, the facility was stood down in October 2020. Research into stakeholder experience of the ICF is ongoing. Preliminary findings suggest that many stakeholders (staff, students, patients, educators and managers) had a positive experience in relation to their involvement with the facility.</b>	<b>Implications for Future Practice</b> The importance of inter-professional work practices during pandemic management has been emphasised <sup>1</sup> . It is recommended Occupational Therapy be considered as a key discipline in future inter-professional pandemic management initiatives.
<small><b>Acknowledgements:</b> This poster was possible with thanks to the ICF Stakeholders, UL and UL Hospitals Group.  <b>Reference:</b> J. M. O'Leary, N. Maguire, S. B. Aisling, A. O'Connell, V. and Lynch, A. (2020) Doing inter-professional research in the COVID-19 era: a discussion paper. <i>Journal of Interprofessional Care</i>, 34(2), 600-604, available: <a href="https://doi.org/10.1080/13561820.2020.1793896">https://doi.org/10.1080/13561820.2020.1793896</a> </small>		

## ULMedX

The vision of ULMedX is that individuals living with non-communicable diseases will have the opportunity, the motivation and the capacity to self-manage their optimum level of health. These individuals will be enabled through a multidisciplinary exercise-based programme underpinned by teaching and research.

In Ireland, an estimated one quarter of the population (1.2 million) suffer from cardiovascular, respiratory and metabolic disease, half the population are overweight or obese, cancer affects one in three and 10% of adults report having experienced a mental health problem. These conditions account for 75% of all deaths, and the all-cause mortality rate associated with physical inactivity is estimated at 14.2%<sup>1</sup>.

Working with Midwest Community Healthcare and the Physical Education and Exercise Science Department in University of Limerick, the Health Sciences Academy has been instrumental in successfully securing funding to implement the ULMedX project in a community setting. This is the first step in this project, a significant opportunity for the people of the Midwest with chronic illness, the staff in Midwest Community Healthcare and the research teams in University of Limerick to collaborate and have an impact. Two PhD studentships were secured and candidates commenced in Autumn 2022. The project will be guided by the steering committee, an oversight committee and patient and public involvement (PPI) panel. The collaborative nature of this project, with University and healthcare working closely together and improved outcomes for patients, is the essence of an academic health sciences systems.

[1] Jennings S. *Preventing Chronic Disease: Defining the Problem. Report from the Prevention of Chronic Disease Programme. Health Service Executive. 2014 December. ISBN: 978-1-908972-05-7*

*Pictured L to R: Prof Ruth Clifford, Consultant Haematologist UL Hospitals Group and Prof Aedin Culhane, Professor of Cancer Genomics, UL School of Medicine.*



## The Limerick Digital Cancer Research Centre

**On September 23, 2021, the Limerick Digital Cancer Research Centre (LDCRC) was officially launched by Minister Simon Harris, Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science.**

The LDCRC is a collaboration between UL and UL Hospitals Group that has an entirely different approach to cancer treatment at its heart. The LDCRC at University of Limerick is using personalised digital medicine to transform cancer care and improve outcomes for patients.

It brings together the University's excellence in technology, software, engineering, maths and health along with University Hospital Limerick's clinical expertise in haematology and oncology and patient involvement. The plan is to combine it with the industry knowledge of several multinationals, including Dell Technologies and Becton Dickenson. The Centre will use and develop technologies that are revolutionising health care and have vast potential to improve our ability to prevent, diagnose and treat cancer.

Patient and Public Involvement (PPI) in research is defined as "research carried out 'with' or 'by' members of the public rather than 'to', 'about' or 'for' them"

[\(https://www.nihr.ac.uk/patients-carers-and-the-public/i-want-to-help-with-research/\).](https://www.nihr.ac.uk/patients-carers-and-the-public/i-want-to-help-with-research/)



A PPI Cancer Collaborative Panel has been established to be team partners in cancer research projects in UL Hospitals Group and UL. With expertise from patients, the public, researchers, clinicians and PALS (patient advocacy and liaison services), facilitated by the Health Sciences Academy, this Panel is working to develop processes to enable patient and public involvement in cancer research projects. The Panel is involved in the Cancer Collaborative Steering Committee and other national forums in supporting the developing of the Panel and building networking opportunities.

# Machine Learning and Multiple Myeloma

This collaboration aims to apply machine learning to the detection of myeloma in CT scans provided by UHL. A recurring issue in medical datasets is that the latter are relatively small due to the large amount of specialist effort associated with the labelling of these datasets to make them suitable for so-called supervised learning. In supervised learning, machine learning models are presented with labelled examples of the phenomenon to be detected (in this case bone lesions) and learn to distinguish these from other anatomical features.

Subsequent to early explorations that resulted in insufficiently sensitive machine learning models, the investigations moved towards new methods to allow machine learning models to train on smaller datasets than traditionally used. To this end, the two PhD researchers involved in this project started investigating:

1. **Methods to pre-train networks on unlabelled data.** The researcher devised a new method for automatically creating labels in unlabelled data that assist the machine learning model to learn features of importance before being trained on labelled data. Rather than learning to detect lesions during this pretraining state, the machine learning model is trained to find the correct location of a number of snippets extracted from the image. Hence, the location of these snippets acts as a label.  
Pre-training a network in this way results in a partially trained machine learning model that requires fewer labelled examples, in this case CT scans with lesions, to learn to detect these accurately.
2. **The use of Graph Neural networks to learn higher level information.** Graph neural networks are a relatively new methodology that allows the extraction of higher level relationships from images. Hence, these networks are able to leverage global image features more effectively, and as a result may require fewer examples to learn to faithfully detect bone lesions in CT scans.

Both projects are currently in the technical development phase.



*The Health Sciences Academy facilitated networking opportunities between clinicians and researchers. In January 2020, a very productive morning meeting was held in CERC, where clinicians and researchers shared their areas of expertise and research areas of interest. Having this opportunity to network and identify opportunities for collaborative research and learning was invaluable, especially in the context of the global pandemic just eight weeks later.*

## 2. Equality and Inclusion

**The Equality and Inclusion work stream is focussed on developing opportunities to support fair and equal access for professional development for all staff working in clinical areas. As well as staff, this area has a suite of projects that are designed for students at primary school, secondary school and pre-registration University level.**

To lead this work, the Equality & Inclusion steering committee was established with representatives from across the partner organisations. Our aim is to advance the sustainability of the health science disciplines and quality patient-centred care through the advancement of equality and inclusion communities of practices. This aim is underpinned by the following values at all times:

- Equality
- Diversity of our workforce
- Inclusivity
- Integrity
- Shared team leadership
- Interprofessionalism
- Sustainability
- High quality and driven by positive patient impact
- Evidence-based practice



# Junior Health Sciences Academy



## Junior Health Sciences Academy



147 Schools across  
7 counties



1698 students  
over 2 days

**59%** of students reported that their perception and understanding of study and career in healthcare changed



Increase of 14% in students interested in a career in health after the event

**99%** of students would **recommend** this event to their friends



@HealthSciAcadLK

[www.HealthSciencesAcademy.ie](http://www.HealthSciencesAcademy.ie)

The Junior Health Sciences Academy has three objectives: provide information and inspiration for health as a career, health promotion education and leadership in health. The Junior Health Sciences Academy project team comprises members from University of Limerick, UL Hospitals Group, Midwest Community Healthcare, Limerick and Clare Education & Training Board and Limerick Education Support Centre.

There are three projects underway as part of the Junior Health Sciences Academy to address these objectives.



*The flagship 'Early Careers' event which was held on 2nd and 3rd March 2021*

The flagship 'Early Careers' event which was held on 2nd and 3rd March 2021 for the first time as a partnership between the key stakeholders in health and education in the Midwest.

Over 1,600 Transition Year and 5th Year students from across the Midwest region virtually attended the Junior Health Sciences Academy 'Early Careers' Event. Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board's Schools Division worked with the Health Sciences Academy in organising the extraordinarily successful event. Limerick Education Centre promoted the event throughout the Limerick, Tipperary, and Clare network of schools. Due to the ongoing restrictions caused by COVID-19, the event took place online via Zoom.



The virtual event provided information on 19 healthcare professions with clinical, academic and student perspectives shared. A combination of videos, interactive online discussions, questions and answers and panellist discussions ensured that the event was enjoyable, informative and met the students' needs. The concept for the event was developed by the Health Sciences Academy with the Education and Training Board's Schools Division as a collaborative response to reach out to schools and students, particularly those students in Transition Year, who cannot visit hospitals or other clinical settings for work experience. It was designed to be as informative and interactive as possible, highlighting healthcare as a career path for Transition Year students. The event was informed through desktop research, focus groups of students and teachers in Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board schools and the wider involvement of Limerick Education Centre.

Has grown from a Midwest event to a national event, reaching approx. 10,000 students across the country. Event can be watched here: <https://www.ul.ie/hsa/student-health-sciences-academy/early-careers%E2%80%99-health-sciences-academy-ty-students>



## Q Exchange



Led by



Supported by



The Junior Health Sciences Academy committee was successful in securing a funding award from Q Exchange, part of the Health Foundation, one of only two projects to be awarded funding in Ireland. Q Exchange aims to activate the knowledge of improvement experts across the UK and Ireland; to create links between those leading work and those who can help champion, support, adopt these ideas; and to boost ideas that have the best potential to generate value for the health and care system. Further information is available here: [Q Exchange | Q Community \(health.org.uk\)](https://www.health.org.uk/q-exchange)

A total amount of £29,780 was awarded to the Health Sciences Academy to fund the development of the following three projects:

# £29,780

## STEMI Patient Journey

The objective of this project was to bring the clinical environment to secondary school students who are interested in learning more about a career in healthcare, and also showcase the role of the variety of health professionals involved in patient care in this area.

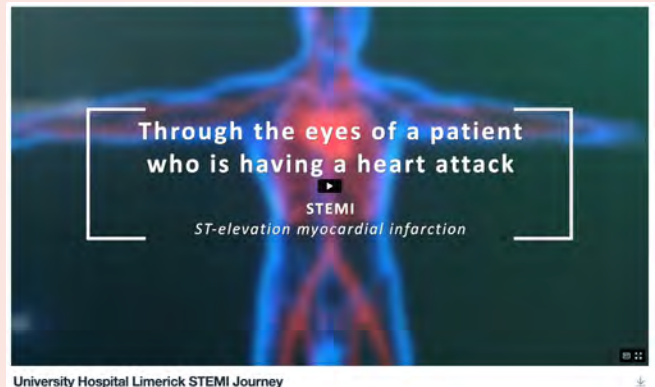
It was agreed to follow the journey of a patient who has had a cardiac event, more specifically a STEMI (ST elevation myocardial infarction). This journey showcases seven different healthcare professions involved at different points of the patients' journey:

- Emergency Medical Controller
- Advanced Paramedic
- Cardiology Registrar
- Consultant Cardiologist
- Radiographer
- Clinical Nurse Manager
- Cardiac Nurse
- Cardiac Rehab Clinical Nurse Specialist
- Cardiac Rehab Physiotherapist



The result is an interactive video that shares the perspective of a patient having a heart attack. We see them make the 999 call, and then the National Ambulance Centre where his call is triaged. Following assessment by paramedic team, the patient is transferred via ambulance to the Cath Lab in University Hospitals Limerick, and viewers can experience the ambulance journey with the patient. Once in the Cath Lab, the patient has a stent inserted and the precision with which the highly skilled team works to reinflate the blocked artery offers a unique insight into clinical roles. Following through to the patient's time in the Coronary Care Unit, we meet the nursing and cardiac physiology staff who are looking after him. The patient then attends cardiac rehab in the Physiotherapy Department in UHL.

The Health Sciences Academy is grateful to the staff at University Hospital Limerick who gave their time so generously to this innovative project.



Click to play <https://vimeo.com/771126008/24247ae757>

The video presents a **unique and interactive method** of sharing key health promotion messages, highlighting the services available in UHL for patients having a heart attack and share vital information on career choices for secondary school students. The video also features links to courses to all the health professionals featured and short clips with the healthcare professionals themselves discussing their roles.

This video was made possible by successful award funding from Q Exchange.



Led by



Supported by



# The Care Aware Crew

This project aims to support third and fourth class pupils to be health promotion champions and leaders in their own schools, and learn about different health professions. A project team was established with members from across University of Limerick, Midwest Community Healthcare, UL Hospitals Group and Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board. Six primary schools in Limerick were invited to participate in the pilot and help contribute to the content and evaluation. These schools were:

- Doon CBS
- St Patrick's Girls School, Limerick
- An Mhodhscoil, Limerick
- Patrickswell NS
- Ballybrown NS
- Glenroe NS

To support the development of the project, focus groups with teachers and subsequent input from their pupils guided the project content, design and learning objectives. They refined possible topics and ideas for content to the most popular choice, First Aid. Five lessons were then identified:

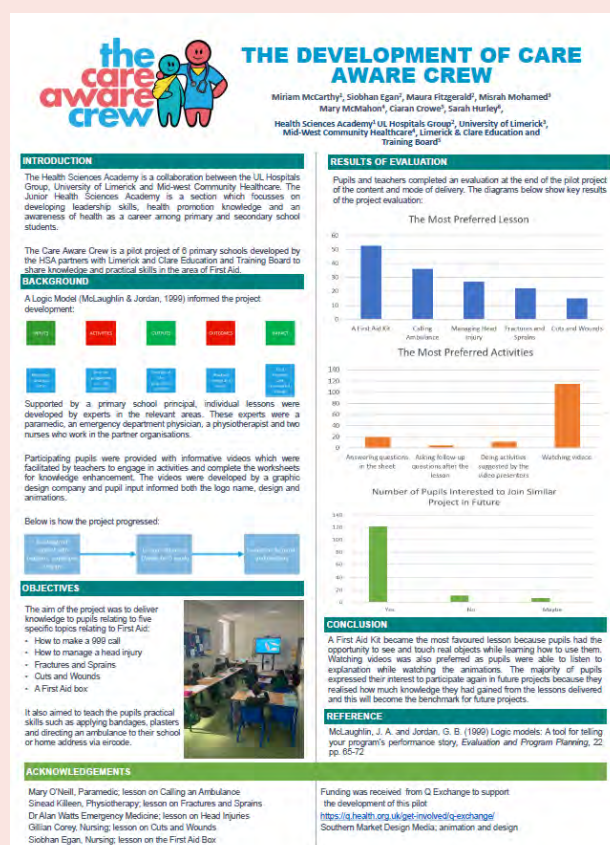
- How to make a 999 call
- Head injuries
- Cuts and wounds
- Fractures and sprains
- First aid box

The Care Aware Crew project roll-out:

Pupils watch one video each week. They then complete learning activities based on the video content.

On completion, they undertake a health promotion element to share their learning. Each class that participates receives a fully stocked first aid kit for their classroom, and each pupil receives promotional merchandise.

We really want to acknowledge the staff who gave so generously of their expertise and time to make the videos with us: Mary O'Neill (Paramedic Studies, UL), Sinead Killeen (Physiotherapy/Health Promotion MWCH), Dr Alan Watts (Emergency Medicine, ULHG), Gillian Corey (Nursing, ULHG), Siobhan Egan (Nursing, ULHG). A poster was submitted and accepted for the Innovation Summit in Dublin in June 2022.



This video was made possible by successful award funding from Q Exchange.



Led by



Supported by



**Teacher: "We really enjoyed it, the children loved the variety of the lessons and I would love to see this programme rolled out to every school"**

**Pupil: "It was really fun and I know what to do in a emergency or if I get a cut"**

## MY:Psy

Research indicates that youth mental health is the leading health issue amongst young people worldwide, and that mental health has worsened because of the COVID-19 pandemic. As such, there is an urgent need to develop supports and resources that can inform youth as to how best to protect their mental health and wellbeing. MY-Psychology or MY-Psy is a ground-breaking, psychology education programme with a focus on positive mental health and well-being promotion. Funded by Science Foundation Ireland, MY-Psy is led by Dr Jennifer McMahon, Senior Lecturer in Psychology at University of Limerick, and Director of SCY-Lab (School, Child & Youth Mental Health and Well-Being Lab). It is a collaboration/partnership between the SCY-Lab, the Junior Health Sciences Academy (UL Hospitals Group, Midwest Community Healthcare & University of Limerick) and the Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board, bringing together research, education, and healthcare specialities. Other key stakeholders include Jigsaw Limerick, the Limerick Youth Service, and teaching staff in the Limerick/Clare area.

MY-Psy has been created with youth stakeholders, who have informed the design of the 12-session programme for Transition Year students. The programme focuses on the science of managing social media, understanding emotions, and building relationships. It also includes sessions on changing health behaviours, and how to engage in research. Students will consolidate their programme engagement by completing a peer-led well-being promotion project in their school, with the award of a Certificate in Leadership in Mental Health and Wellbeing Promotion from the Junior Health Sciences Academy, UL.

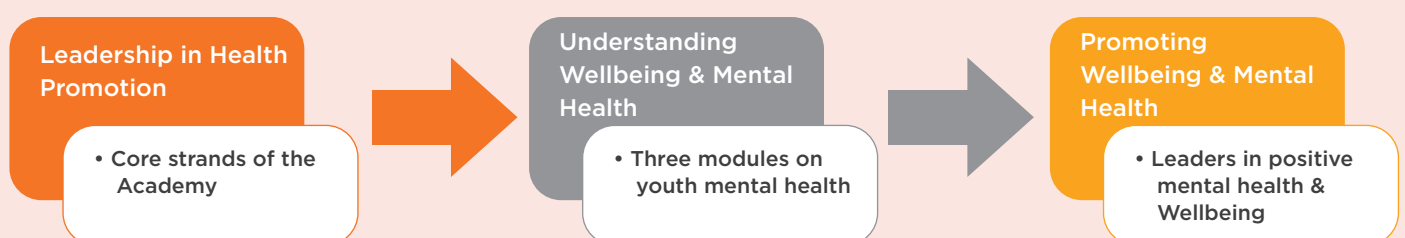


The schools involved in the pilot are Gaelcholaiste Luimnigh, Croom Community College, Mungret Community College, Thomond Community College and Castletroy College.

The findings of this pilot programme will be available in Spring 2023 when students will be presented with their completion certificates in Mental Health & Wellbeing Leadership at a large in person event in UL.

MY-Psy is funded by Science Foundation Ireland. For more information on the science of mental health and MY-Psy check out <https://www.thejournal.ie/the-science-behind-mental-health-5917021-Nov2022/>

### PROGRAMME FRAMEWORK



# Interprofessional Education for Students

The Health Sciences Academy is involved in supporting and facilitating initiatives that support interprofessional education opportunities for health sciences students. An important component of interprofessionalism is interprofessional education (IPE) – a model in which individuals from two or more professions in healthcare learn together during all or part of their professional and postgraduate training with the goal of cultivating collaborative practice. Events to support this are detailed below:

## THE HEALTH FUSION TEAM CHALLENGE

The Health Fusion Team Challenge is an extracurricular competition for students studying health sciences programmes. It provides students with an opportunity to demonstrate their expertise in teamwork and collaboration as they develop a management plan for a client with complex health needs. The best health outcomes for the many and increasing number of people with complex or chronic healthcare needs often depends on effective teamwork and collaboration between various healthcare professionals with different skills and knowledge. The Health Fusion Team Challenge (HFTC) aims to develop this important capability prior to graduation in a way that is transformative, authentic, and fun.

The University of Limerick (UL) hosted the first Irish HFTC in 2017. This has expanded to a National competition with teams from Trinity College Dublin (TCD), National University of Ireland, Galway (NUIG) and University College Cork (UCC) competing. The Health Sciences Academy was very proud to host the HFTC event in 2021, held virtually for the first time. The case study explored the clinical care of a pregnant lady with gestational diabetes, with associated social, ethical and intercultural challenges. It was a very successful event, with NUIG crowned the winning team.

In 2022, University College Cork hosted the event with Queen's University Belfast the winning team.

The competition was renamed to the All-Ireland Interprofessional Healthcare Challenge for Students (AIPEC) and is a truly all-Ireland event with seven Universities competing. University of Limerick was the only

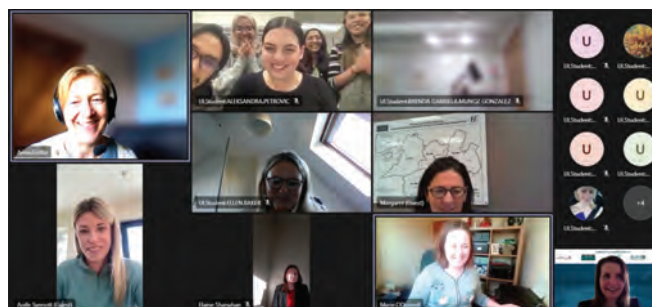


University which held internal heats, and teams competed to secure their spot in the national final. The students across health sciences programmes in UL worked really hard to create their response to a challenging and interesting patient case study. The project team in UL comprises Anne Griffin (dietetics), Marie O'Donnell (physiotherapy), Sylvia Murphy-Tighe (nursing), Jennifer McMahon (psychology) and Miriam McCarthy (Health Sciences Academy).

## INTERPROFESSIONAL EDUCATION PILOT UHL

A project was undertaken in 2021/2022 to explore the feasibility of undertaking a pilot interprofessional education initiative among health sciences students on placement in University Hospital Limerick. The objective was to create and deliver a pilot project in UHL in 2022. This required significant collaboration and coordination between colleagues involved in health sciences student education in University of Limerick and University Hospital Limerick, including nursing, medicine, dietetics, physiotherapy and occupation therapy.

Over two mornings, students from nursing, physiotherapy, dietetics, occupational therapy and medicine participated in the programme. The programme included taught elements about teamwork and interprofessional communication delivered by Kemmy Business School colleagues, and then interprofessional management of a case study. The feedback from the students was hugely positive, with all reporting enhanced clinical learning and teamwork skills. We are planning for our 2023 interprofessional education programme including simulation.



## Allied Health Forum UL and MWCH

**Clinical placements for allied health students forms a key element of the pre-registration education. Recognising the challenges posed for clinical placements by the COVID-19 pandemic and the impact on healthcare services, an Allied Health Forum between University of Limerick tutors, Midwest Community Healthcare and Children's Disability Network Team allied health managers was established.**

Chaired by the Health Sciences Academy Manager, the purpose of the Allied Health Forum is to:

- Be a solution-driven partnership to provide the best possible placements for allied health students
- Support and facilitate allied health student clinical placements in Midwest Community Healthcare Organisation
- Provide strategic direction for such placements across multiple sites in the Midwest Community Healthcare Organisation

- Agree a governance framework for planning of practice placements to enable sustainability within the region
- Create a framework and implement opportunities and processes for greater involvement of CHO3 clinicians/therapists in education delivery and research

Greater collaboration for facilitation of student placements and a framework for facilitating same have been some of the positive outcomes from these meetings. An interdisciplinary induction pack for students due to undertake clinical placement in the Children's Disability Network Teams is under development. This project successfully secured funding from the HSE National Health & Social Care Professions Office to support its initiation.



positive outcomes from these meetings

## Talent Management of Nursing in ULHG

**Research Title: 'A stakeholder informed evidenced based approach to understanding and informing talent management practices for international nurses and midwives in healthcare organisations.'**

A collaborative, co-designed research initiative has been developed in conjunction with individuals from UL Hospitals Group, the Department of Nursing and Midwifery and the Kemmy Business School at University of Limerick. Healthcare systems globally are facing substantial challenges in the recruitment and retention of nursing staff. In response to this challenge healthcare organisations are designing and implementing talent management frameworks which are more commonly seen in the business world, to get ahead of the vacancy curve. Talent management as an integrated strategy acknowledges human capital as an organisation's greatest asset.

The aim of this work is to develop and complete a research study designed to understand and inform talent management practices for international nurses and midwives in the healthcare sector, as they are a strategically important group.



## 3. Research and Innovation

**Change by innovation is designed to meet needs that have been previously unmet or approached ineffectively. It allows for the introduction of a new product, practice or restructuring of an organization. The purpose is to provide convenience, efficiency and effective change while maintaining the best standards of safety with risk reduction.**

In December 2021, the Innovation in Healthcare Steering Committee was launched. Comprising members from across UL Hospitals Group, Midwest Community Healthcare, University of Limerick, Public Health Midwest and HSE Spark Innovation Programme, It aims to foster and embed a culture of innovation across the above-named Midwest organisations through the pillars of education, design, support and communication, in order to achieve the most efficient and high quality healthcare for our population.

One of the first events the committee arranged was the 'Story of Innovation in Limerick'. This was a really successful event where staff involved in healthcare innovation showcased their knowledge, innovation journeys and designs.

### Innovation in Healthcare Midwest Roadshow

**In May 2022, colleagues from the Health Sciences Academy, HSE Spark Innovation Programme, and University of Limerick Rapid Innovation Unit, School of Design, and Kemmy Business School held the "Innovation in Healthcare Midwest Roadshow" in Barrack View Primary Care Health Centre.**

The projects showcased by the Rapid Innovation Unit were a bespoke eye cover, PEG (percutaneous endoscopic gastronomy) tube repair, cutlery attachment for an arthritis patient and a mallet splint. The UL team involved in delivering the "MSc in Design for Health and wellbeing" programme shared information on the educational and academic programmes available in University of Limerick, and HSE Spark showcased the supports available to promote and enable innovation in healthcare. Kemmy Business School also shared information relating to its innovation education programmes. It was a great success, with staff from across the Midwest attending.





## MSc in Design for Health and Well-being Student Immersion

A thriving academic health sciences system encourages and enables student involvement. The MSc for Design in Health and Well-being curriculum allows students to collaborate with professionals and service users on real-world healthcare concerns.

The Health Sciences Academy facilitated and supported the immersion placement of students studying the MSc in Design for Health and Well-being. The Health Sciences Academy has developed a process to facilitate the immersion experience for these students. In 2021, the students spent time in University Hospital Limerick in the Emergency Department, observing patient flow, speaking with staff and patients. They then compiled a process book of all their observations, going on to further refine an innovative project to support an element of service improvement. In 2022, the focus of the immersion placements was on identifying opportunities for improved patient communication. Mindful that communication is an integral element of patient care the students spent time observing the patient's journey through the hospital, and speaking with patients and staff.

We look forward to hearing their ideas in 2023.

## Winter Education Series

The Innovation in Healthcare Steering Committee planned and hosted a winter education series, focussing on different elements of the innovation journey. The variety of topics discussed over the series led to interesting and fruitful discussions, supporting staff who are curious about innovation and interested to learn more. We hope this is the first of many series to come.

Public Health Health Sciences Academy

Bringing together research, innovation, education and clinical practice

**MID-WEST INNOVATION IN HEALTHCARE WINTER SERIES**

"Demystifying Innovation and showing how we can all be Innovative in the Workplace"

These workshops are relevant to all in the acute and community health settings. Everybody has the potential to be innovative to improve service delivery. This series of practical workshops are designed to demystify innovation and provide you with tools and techniques to be innovative in your role.

This November, December, and January at Mid-West Health Services

Venues Across Hospital Group and Community

Closing the gaps in healthcare quality - Improving through Innovation  
Tuesday, November 23rd, 13-14:00, Anna Marie Keenan, Innovation Champion - Pain 202

Approaching problems at the bedside differently - thinking laterally  
Tuesday, November 29th, 13-14:00, Dr Kevin J. O'Sullivan, Una Drown, Siobhán Meany

Intro to Lean Transformation  
Tuesday, December 13th, 13-14:00, TBC

Pitching and Business Case Development  
Tuesday, January 23rd, 13-14:00, TBC, Dr Rachel McNameera and Martin Ryan

Designing for Health and Well-being  
Tuesday, January 17th, 13-14:00, TBC, Dr Louise Kiernan, Niall Deloughry

Refreshments provided!

innovationinhealthcare@hse.ie

#MWInnovWS

## 4. Research Governance, Management and Support (RGMS)

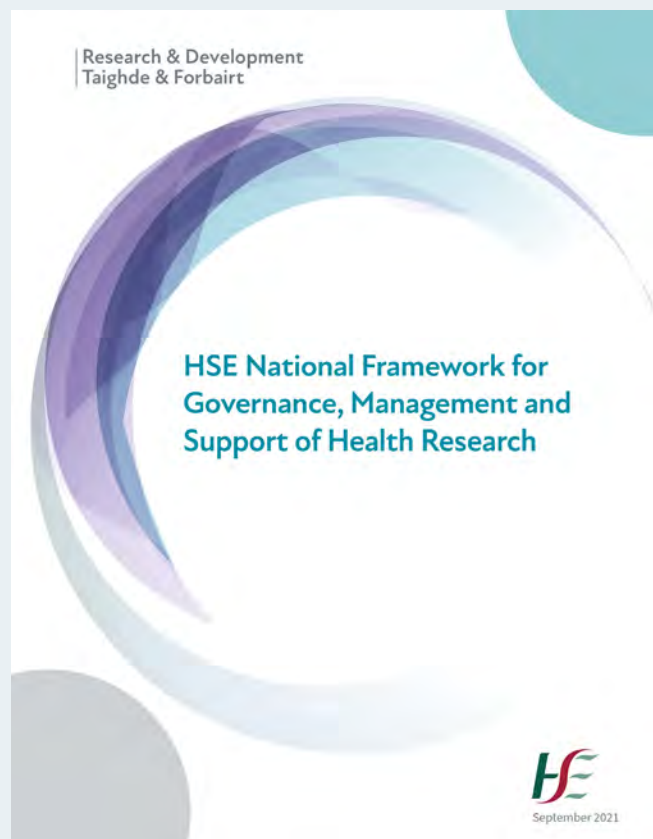
The [HSE National Framework for Governance, Management and Support \(RGMS\) of Health Research](#) was published in 2021. Key members of the CERC team are actively involved in the National RGMS Implementation Working Group to support ongoing planning for the implementation of the Framework. Furthermore, UL Hospitals Group received seed funding from the National HSE Research and Development Office to fund one post (ULHG R&D Office Manager) to support initial work to establish the Research Office and to commence local implementation of the RGMS Framework. The ULHG R&D Office Manager took up the post in May 2022. The National R&D Office envisage that in time this office will become the RHA Area E Research Office.

### What is the scope and principles of the RGMS Framework?

The [National HSE Research & Development website](#) outlines that “the RGMS Framework applies to all health research hosted by HSE or HSE-funded services involving staff, service users or their families and carers, their data, or their samples.” Other activities including clinical audit and service evaluation are outside the scope of the Framework.

The [website](#) also outlines the RGMS Framework Principles as:

- Research activity needs to be registered to enable coordination of local functions engaged in research governance.
- Projects should be risk assessed before they commence and the level of oversight should be proportionate to the risk.
- The organisations responsible for legal, data protection, insurance and regulatory compliance should be identified up front.
- Both the host institution and the research ethics committee have a role in research governance, and their roles is distinct and complementary.
- Proportionate oversight should take place through the life cycle of the project, not just before project start.
- Research participants and patients are key partners in the research process and their opinions and needs should be considered throughout.



*The Clinical Education and Research Centre (CERC)*



## 5. Education and Training

### CLINICAL EDUCATION AND RESEARCH CENTRE

The Clinical Education and Research Centre (CERC) was officially opened on Monday December 9th, 2019 by the Minister of State for Mental Health and Older People, Mr Jim Daly TD. Minister Daly cut the ribbon on the Clinical Education & Research Centre (CERC), and officially launched one of the most significant initiatives based in the facility, the Health Sciences Academy (HSA).

Ahead of the opening, Minister Daly stated: "It is vital that we look to encourage and support innovation, collaboration and integration in healthcare. The development of the Clinical Education & Research Centre alongside the Health Sciences Academy, are significant initiatives in this regard, that will greatly benefit the Midwest region and help improve patient care."



*Mary O'Kelly, CERC Building Manager, Fiona Leahy, Clinical Research Nurse, Elaine Conway, Clinical Research Nurse, Miranda Kiernan, Research Laboratory Technician*



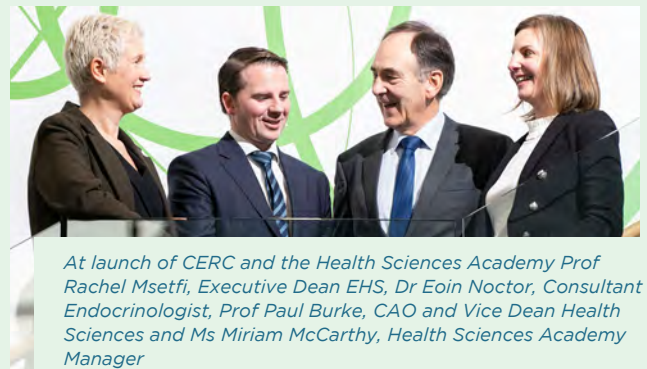
*CERC Opening*

## 5. Education and Training continued



*Official opening of CERC by Jim Daly TD with Prof Colette Cowan, CEO ULHG; Prof Rachel Msetfi, Executive Dean EHS UL and CAO & Vice-Dean Health Sciences Prof Paul Burke*

The CERC, a €12.75m facility developed in partnership between UL Hospitals Group and UL, and co-funded by the HSE and UL, is a 3,442m<sup>2</sup> four-storey building that accommodates and supports the educational, training and research needs of the UL Hospitals Group medical community, and the School of Medicine. With a 150-seat lecture theatre and tutorial rooms, the CERC also has a library, offices for academic, administrative and technical support staff, research facilities, and a dedicated research area for the UL Health Research Institute.



*At launch of CERC and the Health Sciences Academy Prof Rachel Msetfi, Executive Dean EHS, Dr Eoin Noctor, Consultant Endocrinologist, Prof Paul Burke, CAO and Vice Dean Health Sciences and Ms Miriam McCarthy, Health Sciences Academy Manager*

CERC was initially designed and built with the intention of expansion. The demand for the teaching, training and research facilities has grown year on year and in 2021, a proposal was developed and submitted to both University of Limerick and National HSE Estates for support for funding to expand. A vision to support education and training of all health sciences students and providing greater access to facilities for healthcare staff is a key driver to this proposal.

Auditorium  
booked 92%

No capacity  
for full day  
conference or  
training

No availability  
for additional  
lunchtime or pre  
9am teaching

Tutorials  
booked at  
89% capacity

Significant  
increase in  
staffing &  
students since  
CERC conception  
in 2017

## Simulation

The Covid-19 pandemic brought to light the necessity for a dedicated Simulation Lab for

hybrid and virtual teaching approaches among UL School of Medicine students and UL Hospitals Staff from all disciplines. The current Clinical Skills Lab was completely renovated to include a control room and a state-of-the-art Simulation Management System. In order to enable realistic clinical scenarios, two rooms on the second level are outfitted to hospital standards. Complex manikins with physiological properties are used to substitute patients.

The rooms have seen a lot of teaching since the project's completion in June 2022. These comprise clinical training for undergraduate doctors and nurses in a range of subjects, such as IV insertion, airway management, childbirth, and paediatric assessment. Events including advanced cardiac life support (ACLS), clinical induction training for interns, MRCPI exams, student education and organ donation education have all taken place.



## Interprofessional Journal Club

The Health Sciences Academy supported the Interprofessional Journal Club 'Working Together'. The aim is working together to bring colleagues from the Faculty of Education and Health Sciences, healthcare disciplines, HSE Midwest Community Healthcare and ULHG together in order to develop a community of practice in interprofessional education and social accountability.



*Pictured L to R: Dr Anne Griffin, School of Allied Health; Miriam McCarthy, Health Sciences Academy; Dr Patrick O'Donnell, School of Medicine; Dr Dervla Kelly, School of Medicine, Dr M. Elhassan Abdalla, School of Medicine and Ms Pauline Boland, School of Allied Health.*

## Induction Pack for Students

**Recognising the importance of students receiving appropriate induction to essential training and processes in the HSE, the Health Sciences Academy created an induction pack. This addresses all the required training such as data protection, dignity at work, infection prevention & control, Garda vetting process, email application forms and confidentiality clause. This ensure that students, especially those who are not studying health sciences, are properly prepared for their experience in the clinical setting. Full details can be found here: [www.healthsciencesacademy.ie](http://www.healthsciencesacademy.ie)**

## NCHD Training and Support

Training for doctors in UL Hospitals Group is supported by the Royal College of Physicians in Ireland and the HSE's National Doctors Training Programme (NDTP).

Working with the NDTP Training Lead, Dr John McManus, the RCPI Coordinator and NDTP Coordinator have developed and implemented numerous initiatives to support and enhance doctors training and education experience. Some of the key initiatives are as follows:

### NCHD STAFF APP LAUNCHED AT UL HOSPITALS GROUP

In January 2021 a new NCHD staff app was launched in UL Hospitals Group. It contains a huge amount of information including sections dedicated to each speciality as well as a digital edition of the Intern Handbook. In addition, the app provides NCHDs with information on health and wellbeing, human resources, training and education. It was led by NCHD Leads along with Medical Manpower and NDTP Training Lead office.

Chief Clinical Director of UL Hospitals Group, Prof Brian Lenehan, said, "The NCHD app will become an invaluable source of information and support for NCHDs in UL Hospitals Group. It is a product of a huge amount of hard work and dedication by the project team and I want to thank this team and all who contributed their time and efforts to this project".

## RCPI International Residency Programme

We were delighted that ULHG was approved for the RCPI International Residency Programme. As part of this programme, trainees at SHO level from Saudi Arabia are assigned to ULHG for 18 months placements. These posts are fully funded by the Saudi government. We welcomed trainees to both Medicine and Paediatrics departments in April 2021 and 2022.

“

a product of a huge amount of hard work and dedication

### LUNCHTIME BLEEP FREE POLICY

This policy was introduced to support and enhance medical training of NCHDs at UHL from 1pm to 2pm, Monday to Friday while at the same time ensuring that patient care is not in any way compromised during this time. The aims of the policy are to:

- Eliminate as far as possible the inappropriate use of bleeps and unnecessary calls to doctors from 1pm to 2pm, Monday to Friday
- Ensure protected time for the mandatory breaks and training requirements of NCHDs at UHL
- Ensure all relevant staff are informed of correct procedure for bleeping medical staff
- Direct staff in the practices/procedures that are required to support the policy



### RCPI POINT OF CARE ULTRASOUND (POCUS)

On the 27th March 2021 The RCPI and Training Lead Office in ULHG in partnership with Prof. Mike Watts, Dr Catherine Nix and colleagues organised the first Regional RCPI PoCUS one day workshop for General Internal Medicine Specialist Registrar Trainees. This technology has potential to reduce the time to diagnosis for patients and improves patient flow. It is best delivered to learners in small groups in a structured program with an emphasis on scope of practice and quality assurance.



### NCHD CONFERENCE

The inaugural NCHD Conference took place in May 2021. We received over 150 abstracts from our NCHDs from the following departments at UHLG:

- Anaesthetics
- Emergency Medicine
- Medicine
- Surgery
- Paediatrics
- Psychiatry
- Obstetrics and Gynaecology
- Radiology
- The Intern Network

The winning abstract from each department was presented on the day by the author.

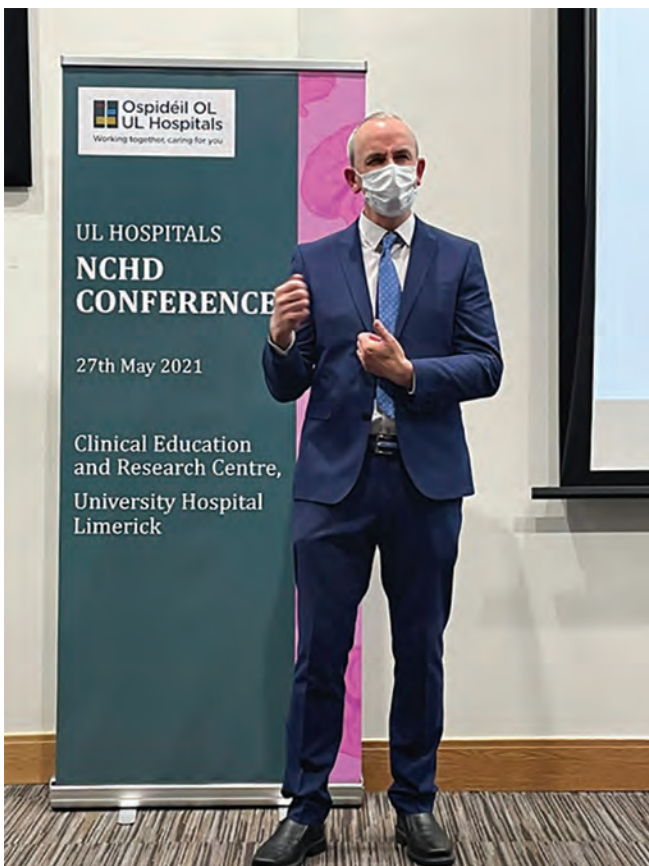
The overall winner received an engraved gold medal and a €1000 prize. There were engraved silver medals for the best abstract in each department and a €300 prize each. In addition to the above, 3 prizes of €300, €200, €100 vouchers were awarded to the best poster submissions.

The second NCHD Conference took place on 24th February 2022. We received over 150 abstracts from our NCHDs from across ULHG.

On the day, E-Posters were showcased in the CERC Auditorium as part of an E-Poster Viewing Session. Following this, an opening address was delivered by Professor Colette Cowan, CEO UL Hospitals Group and Dr John McManus, Consultant & Training Lead, UHL. Over 160 research posters which explored innovation and improving care were submitted by NCHDs.



*Pictured L to R: Dr Emma Porter, Overall Poster Winner and Dr Niall Dalton, Gold Medal Winner.*



*Pictured: Dr John McManus, Consultant Physician and NDTP Training Lead UL Hospitals Group*

### NATIONAL NCHD PROJECT COMPETITION

ULHG Lead NCHDs who won two of the top three prizes in the 2022 National NCHD Projects Competition. 1st Prize: "Creation and Launch of NCHD Staff Application for NCHDs working in UL Hospitals Group" submitted by Dr Therese Martin, and 2nd Prize: "Establishment of the Inaugural NCHD Conference for the UL Hospitals Group" was submitted by Dr Berbie Byrne, one of the NCHD leads.

### NCHD LEADS

The Training Lead Office, along with the Medical Manpower Office, was delighted to introduce the new lead NCHDs over the past three years representing the Medical, Surgical, Anaesthetics, Theatre and Intensive Care, Diagnostics and Child & Maternal Health directorates.

The lead NCHD group are representatives at the hospital management level, and therefore are points of contact for issues within each directorate. The NCHD Lead role is centred on improving the NCHD working experience, the day to day running of the hospital and patient care.



## CAREERS EVENING AT UHL AND UMHL

Really successful NCHD Careers evenings were held in UHL in 2021 and 2022, organised by Training Lead Office and NCHD Leads. Doctors had an opportunity to hear from and engage with Consultants across a variety of specialities, with a view to gaining a greater insight into the professional career options and inform their own career choices.

The RCPI sponsored a careers evening at the University Maternity Hospital Limerick on the 26th October 2021. Consultants and trainees from Paediatric, Neonatal, Obstetrics and Gynaecology gave presentations to NCHDs on career progression and opportunities in this field.



*Pictured L to R: Dr Sean Kelleher SpR in Paediatrics and Dr Jill Mitchell SpR in Obs & Gynae*

## MRCPI CLINICAL EXAMS IN MEDICINE

UHL was delighted to host the MRCPI Clinical Exams in Medicine for the first time in the CERC on 21st October 2021. The day ran seamlessly, despite the challenges of COVID-19, thanks to a fantastic multi-disciplinary team effort from Royal College of Physicians in Ireland, CERC, local and national consultant examiners, NCHDs, medical students, nursing staff, volunteer patients and local actors. Building on this success, they ran again in 2022.



*Examiners and organisers of the MRCPI exams in CERC, UHL*

## MEDICAL COUNCIL VISIT

Following on from the initial Irish Medical Council inspection of ULHG on the 30th November 2020, the Irish Medical Council held a follow up inspection and review of recommendations on the 24th November 2021. Representatives from all six Hospital Group sites attended and were available to update the Medical Council on the implementation of their recommendations. Meeting was very productive and Dr John McManus, NDTP Training Lead and colleagues updated the Medical Council on all the changes and improvements implemented, despite the challenges of Covid-19.

## SURFACE PRO DEVICES

UL Hospitals Group CEO Professor Colette Cowan funded an initiative to provide surface pro tablets to NCHD's in each team within the hospital. The provision of tablets to NCHD's has enabled the following efficiencies:

- Enhanced efficiency of NCHD's in the completion of core tasks/duties.
- Increased access to timely Clinical Information.
- Help with training and teaching.
- Efficiency and more timely discharges.
- Social Distancing.

The roll out of this programme was completed in December 2021. Seventy-two Surface Pros were distributed to clinical teams on the UHL site.

## INTERVIEW SKILLS AND CV PREPARATION WORKSHOPS

Jo Irwin Director of I4Training presented workshops to the NCHDs at UL Hospitals Group on interview skills and CV presentation. The interview skills workshops were open to all NCHDs applying for training schemes and standalone positions. These interactive workshops were highly successful and the feedback was very positive. 2021 was the first year hosting the CV preparation workshop and it was also delivered in 2022. A virtual 'High Impact Medical CVs workshop' was also delivered to NCHDs at UL Hospitals Group in January 2022. The workshop was open to all NCHDs applying for training schemes and standalone positions. The theme of the workshop was: "Improve Yourself, Improve Your Team & Improve Your Organisation". This interactive virtual workshop was highly successful, and the feedback from participants was very positive.





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