

Conference Programme

08.30 Registration and Networking

Session **One**

Building an Academic Health Science System in the Midwest Region

***Chairs:** Ms Suzanne Dunne, Chief of Strategy and Transformation, UL Hospitals Group,
Prof Alan Donnelly, Director of the Health Research Institute (HRI), University of Limerick*

09.10 Opening Address

Prof Paul Burke

*Chief Academic Officer, UL Hospitals Group /
Vice Dean (Health Sciences) University of Limerick*

Ms Miriam McCarthy

Health Sciences Academy Manager

09.35 Executive Panel Discussion

Panellists:

Prof Colette Cowan

Chief Executive Officer, UL Hospitals Group

Prof Kerstin Mey

President, University of Limerick

Dr Mai Mannix

Area Director, Public Health Midwest

Ms Maria Bridgeman

Chief Officer, Midwest Community Healthcare

Prof Vincent Cunnane

President, Technological University of the Shannon

Prof Paul Burke

*Chief Academic Officer, UL Hospitals Group /
Vice Dean (Health Sciences), University of Limerick*

10.05 Executive Panel Q&A



Session **Two**

Population Health and Science: Integration for Improvement



Chairs: *Dr Terence Hennessy, Clinical Lead for Model 2 Hospitals, UL Hospitals Group, Ms Aisling Ryan, Head of Service Older Persons, Midwest Community Healthcare*

10.20 Our Population

Dr Anne Dee

*Consultant in Public Health Medicine, Public Health HSE
Midwest*

Research with Impact - Synergy for Service Improvement

Dr Patrick O'Donnell

Associate Professor of General Practice, University of Limerick

Utilising Role-Emerging and Community Outreach

Placements to Impact Population Health – Experiences and Lessons from a MSc Dietetic Programme

Prof Audrey Tierney

Associate Professor and Discipline Lead in Human Nutrition and Dietetics, University of Limerick

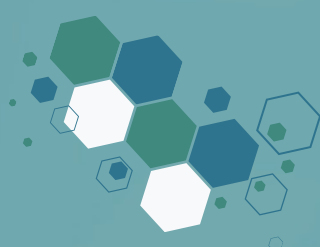
Cystic Fibrosis; from Population Screening to Personalised Medicine

Prof Barry Linnane

Consultant in Paediatric Respiratory, UL Hospitals Group and Adjunct Associate Professor, University of Limerick

11.10 Q&A

11.25 Network and Refreshment Break





Session **Three**

Education & Innovation: AHSS Building Blocks



Chairs: **Dr Damien Ryan**, Urgent Emergency Care Clinical Director, UL Hospitals Group,
Dr Katie Robinson Senior Lecturer in Occupational Therapy and Director of
Postgraduate Research for the Faculty of Education and Health Sciences.

11.50 Implementing Collaborative Education

Prof Alice Coffey

Professor of Nursing, University of Limerick

An Inter-Professional Education Initiative: The Journey so Far

Ms Ann Marie Bright

*Assistant Professor, Mental Health Nursing,
University of Limerick*

Clinical Needs Led Innovation and Rapid Design Responses

Prof Leonard O'Sullivan

Director of Rapid Innovation Unit, University of Limerick

Championing the Call to Care:

Nurturing the Next Generation of Healthcare Providers

Mr Donncha O'Treasaigh

*Director of Schools at Limerick and Clare Education and
Training Board*

12.45 Q&A



Keynote and Grand Rounds **Speaker**

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

13:00 **Prof David Burn**

Director of Newcastle Health Innovation Partners (NHIP), Pro-Vice Chancellor and Professor of Movement Disorders Neurology, Newcastle University



Presentation:

Academic Health Science System Impact: The Newcastle Experience

“NHIP delivers collaborative health and care research, innovation, education and training to improve citizen health, address health inequalities and generate economic growth”.

13.40 **Q&A**

13.50 **Lunch**



Session **Four**

Research Informing Practice: Impacting Patient Services



Chairs: *Dr Ana Terres*, Head of Research & Evidence, Assistant National Director HSE,
Prof Declan Lyons, Consultant Physician, Director of Research, Midwest Health Region

14.35 Physical Activity for Health - Collaboration for Applied Research

Dr Róisín Cahalan

Associate Professor in Physiotherapy, University of Limerick

Building Clinical and Academic Partnerships to Advance Healthcare for Older Adults Attending the Emergency Department

Prof Rose Galvin

Professor in Physiotherapy, University of Limerick

Enabling Patient-Centred Collaborative Cancer Research

Prof Ruth Clifford

Consultant Haematologist, UL Hospitals Group and Associate Clinical Professor, University of Limerick

Insights and Learnings from the Irish Kidney Disease Surveillance System

Prof Austin Stack

Consultant Nephrologist, UL Hospitals Group and Professor of Medicine, University of Limerick

15.30 Q&A





Closing **Address**



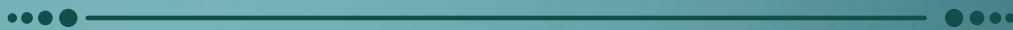
Chair: Prof Paul Burke, *Chief Academic Officer, UL Hospitals Group and Vice Dean (Health Sciences), University of Limerick*

15.45 Closing Remarks

Prof Helen Whelton

Chief Academic Officer, SSW Hospital Group / Head of College of Medicine and Health, University College Cork

16.00 END OF PROGRAMME





Conference Organising Committee



Prof Paul Burke
UL Hospitals Group /
University of Limerick



Ms Miriam McCarthy
UL Hospitals Group /
University of Limerick



Ms Suzanne Dunne
UL Hospitals Group



Prof Alan Donnelly
University of Limerick



Prof Audrey Tierney
University of Limerick



Dr Anne Dee
Public Health HSE Midwest



Ms Niamh Wallace
Midwest Community
Healthcare



Ms Verity Hayes
UL Hospitals Group



Ms Laura Ginty
UL Hospitals Group



Conference MC



Ms Suzanne Dunne, Chief of Strategy and Transformation, UL Hospitals Group

A qualified nurse since 1996, Suzanne subsequently completed a B.Sc. in Nursing Studies at the University of Limerick in 2008, and has over 26 years clinical and management experience including at Director of Nursing level. In 2018 Suzanne was awarded a 70% scholarship by the '30% Club Funding for Women in Leadership' and completed a two year Executive MBA at the University of Limerick. Suzanne has successfully completed numerous leadership courses throughout her career.

Suzanne has been working on key strategic priorities for UL Hospitals Group since 2016 and has been involved in the Health Science Academy since its inception. Suzanne has recently established the Strategic Transformation Office for UL Hospitals Group and also oversees the Governance Department, Digital Data Services, Digital Transformation and Health & Wellbeing.

Suzanne is Executive Lead for Health & Wellbeing and continually strives to improve workplace health & wellbeing for patients and staff.





Biographies – Session One

Building an Academic Health Science System in the Midwest Region

Chairs: Ms Suzanne Dunne, Chief of Strategy and Transformation, UL Hospitals Group, Professor Alan Donnelly, Director, Health Research Institute (HRI)

Conference Speakers



Prof Paul Burke, Chief Academic Officer, UL Hospitals Group / Vice Dean (Health Sciences) University of Limerick

Professor Paul Burke is Chief Academic Officer of the UL Hospital Group and Vice Dean of Health Sciences at the University of Limerick. A graduate of Trinity College Dublin, he has been a general and vascular surgeon in the Midwest region since 1994 when he was appointed to St Johns Hospital and the Mid West Regional Hospitals. He has a life-long interest in health affairs, having served on the Mid Western health board for two terms, director of reconfiguration of acute services in the Mid-West 2008 –2011 and Chief Clinical Director of the UL Hospitals Group from 2016 – 2019.

Paul received his medical doctorate from Trinity College in 1988 and was appointed an Adjunct Professor of Surgery at UL Graduate Entry Medical School in 2016. During his tenure as chairman of Irish Association of Vascular Surgeons, vascular surgery was awarded independent specialty recognition by the Irish Medical Council. Paul was also an examiner and council member of both the European Society Vascular and Endovascular Society, and the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland where he served on council for eight years.



Ms Miriam McCarthy, Health Sciences Academy Manager

Miriam McCarthy is pivotal in establishing an Academic Health Science System in the Midwest. She leads collaborations with University of Limerick, UL Hospitals Group and Midwest Community Healthcare through the Health Sciences Academy which unifies research, education, and innovation, elevating educational experiences, career growth, and patient outcomes. Miriam's AHSS accolades include securing sizeable Q Exchange funding, an Irish Healthcare Centre Award for the Academy's equality and inclusion work, and successful HSE SPARK conference submissions.

Actively engaged in the national Chief Academy Officer Forum, Miriam engages nationally to support the AHSS vision. As a physiotherapy graduate, she built on her clinical expertise to establish Adult Cystic Fibrosis physiotherapy services at UHL and primary care service in Limerick.

Moving to non-clinical roles, she was part of the Irish Hospice Foundation team, then moved to develop the Patient Advocacy and Liaison Service in UL Hospitals Group and was Faculty members in the royal College of Physician in Ireland in their quality improvement programme. Miriam holds a Healthcare Management Masters, an International Coaching Federation ACC credential and currently pursuing an EMBA at UL.





Executive Panel Discussion Speakers



Prof Colette Cowan, Chief Executive Officer, UL Hospitals Group

Colette Cowan is Chief Executive Officer of UL Hospitals Group, leading a workforce of over 6,000 in delivering acute hospital care to a population of over 400,000 across Limerick, Clare and Tipperary. A critical care nurse by background, Colette was one of the first Chief Nurses in the Public HSE, setting up the Saolta Healthcare Hospital Group, managing 8,000 nursing staff across 7 Hospital sites. She was appointed CEO to UL Hospitals in 2014. Colette manages an annual budget of €550 million and has delivered capital projects well in excess of €100 million in value since taking up her current role. She led the hospital group through the Covid-19 pandemic, considerably growing the workforce and inpatient and critical care bed capacity. Under Colette's leadership, UL Hospitals Group operated the only field hospital in the country completed in response to the pandemic and the Group ran a network of mass vaccination centres that delivered 500,000 doses in the first year of operations. Capital and service developments advanced during Colette's tenure – including the Critical Care Block, Emergency Department, Blood Sciences Project, Leben Building, CERC and Molecular Lab which have not only addressed legacy infrastructural deficits but have equally placed UL Hospitals Group as a major tertiary centre outside Dublin. The robotic assisted surgery programme at UHL has to date treated over 600 patients, the first public robotic service in Ireland.

A former Director of Nursing at Nenagh Hospital, Colette is a passionate advocate for enlarging the role of smaller hospitals. The expansion of services in model 2 hospitals in recent years has seen the establishment of a national ophthalmology centre and regional Women's Health Hub at Nenagh and the operation of the best-performing Medical Assessment Unit in the country at Ennis, alongside a new Local Injuries Unit. Specialist hospitals are also leading on service development and innovation; including University Maternity Hospital Limerick, which has opened the first specialist perinatal mental health service outside of Dublin and a new neonatal unit is underway. Croom Orthopaedic Hospital has been significantly redeveloped under Colette's tenure to include new theatres, a diversification of day case activity and a regional centre for pain management.

UL Hospitals Group is on course to meet the National Waiting List Action Plan targets for 2023, improving access to scheduled care through increases in clinic and theatre activity, new technology platforms and judicious use of national initiatives such as the NTPF. An experienced CEO, Colette has advised various strategic national committees, including the National Maternity Strategy, Trauma Networks, Department of Health, Department of Health National Clinical Effectiveness Committee and NCHD Taskforce. She is an attendee at the Sub Committee of the HSE Board on "People and Culture" and is a recent member of the National Steering Oversight Group for Health Regions.





Executive Panel Discussion Speakers



Prof Colette Cowan, cont...

Colette's commitment to public and patient participation is embodied in the establishment of a Patient Council for the group. She is a proud member of Limerick Chamber and the Limerick Forum, supporting the economic development of Limerick and the wider region under Limerick 2030.

Colette believes in Academic Health Science Systems to drive research, innovation and clinical excellence. She has overseen the development of robust corporate and clinical governance systems to ensure quality of care and positive outcomes for patients. She has introduced a performance achievement framework to ensure staff are aligned with the overall vision of the Group, with staff needs supported through a range of initiatives including the establishment of a network of staff health and wellbeing centres. Colette holds a BA in Public Administration and Management, an MA in Business and Finance, a Diploma in Executive Coaching and Leadership. She is Adjunct Professor in Kemmy Business School, UL with an interest in developing business acumen and skills for clinical leaders.



Prof Kerstin Mey, President, University of Limerick

Kerstin Mey studied for an MA equivalent in Art, and German language and literature at Humboldt University of Berlin, Germany, and obtained a PhD in Art Theory and Aesthetics there. She held academic positions in universities in Germany and the UK before she joined University of Limerick (UL) as Vice President Academic Affairs and Student Engagement and Professor of Visual Culture in 2018. She was appointed as Interim President of UL in September 2020 and to the role of President in October 2021.

Over the past 30 years, Kerstin Mey has built a track record of successfully initiating and implementing pioneering institutional change programmes, academic and research initiatives and cultural projects in higher education. Her research interest focuses on 20th century and contemporary art and theory. It is concerned with art in the public space and public pedagogies, artistic research and the relationship between art, its documentation and archives. Amongst her numerous publications are the book *Art and Obscenity* and edited volumes *Art in the Making*; *Sculpsit* and *Cross-Wired*. She was the Director of ISEA2009, the International Symposium of Electronic Arts held on the island of Ireland under the theme 'Engaged Creativity in Mobile Environments'.

Amongst others, she is a member of the DAAD (German Academic Exchange Service) Kuratorium, the European University Associations Institutional Evaluation Peer Panel and chairs the IUA Council in 2023. She serves as a Board Member of the Irish Chamber Orchestra, EVA International Biennale, the Irish Aerial Creation Centre and the Hunt Museum and acts as a reviewer for international funding bodies and publishing houses.





Executive Panel Discussion Speakers



Dr Mai Mannix, Area Director, Public Health in the Mid-West

Dr. Mai Mannix is Area Director for Public Health in the Mid-West, including Limerick, Clare and North Tipperary. Dr. Mannix led the Mid-West Public Health response to the Covid -19 pandemic and also led the national response to Covid in Meat Processing Plants. Areas of interest include public health health intelligence, environmental public health and health inequalities



Ms Maria Bridgeman, Chief Officer, Midwest Community Healthcare

Maria Bridgeman, Chief Officer HSE Mid West Community Healthcare has over 32 years of healthcare experience. As lead for Mid West Community Healthcare, Maria has governance responsibility for Primary Care Services, Older Person Services, Disability Services, Mental Health Services and Health & Wellbeing services to a population in excess of 410,000 across the counties of Limerick, Clare and North Tipperary. Her goal is to deliver these services using an integrated approach by providing sustainable, high quality, safe and effective health and social care services to meet the needs of the Mid West area.

Maria brings to her position a wealth of experience, prior to her appointment as Chief Officer in 2019 she was Head of Service for Health and Wellbeing and previous to that Senior Operations Manager with responsibility for community services across Limerick City and County and North Tipperary. Starting out as a Registered General Nurse over thirty years ago and holding a Master's in Business Practice, Maria has led on major changes and developments in the health sector playing a pivotal role in restructuring residential services for Older Persons in North Tipperary, she led on the design of the Community Healthcare Network Operating Model, developed and introduced the new GP out of hours model known as Shannondoc and led on the development of thirty of the forty two primary care teams in the Mid West.



Professor Vincent Cunnane, President, Technological University of the Shannon

Professor Vincent Cunnane became the inaugural President of Technological University of the Shannon: Midlands Midwest on the 1st October this year. Previously Professor Cunnane was President of LIT where he joined in September 2016 from IT Sligo, and where he had been President since 2014. He was formerly Chief Executive Officer of Shannon Development until its merger with the Shannon Airport Authority to form the Shannon Group (2008-2013). Prior to that, he was Vice President of Research at the University Limerick, where he also lectured and researched (1990-2008).

Professor Cunnane is an internationally renowned researcher in the field of physical electrochemistry. He recently stepped down as Chair of the Governing Council of the Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies (DIAS) after 10 years in the role & was previously a member of the board of the National Institute for Bioprocessing Research & Training (NIBRT). He is currently Chair of the Technological Higher Education Association (THEA) and Chair of the President's Council of the Regional University Network – European University.





Biographies – **Session Two**

Population Health and Science: Integration for Improvement

*Chairs: **Dr Terence Hennessy**, Clinical Lead for Model 2 Hospitals, UL Hospitals Group, **Ms Aisling Ryan**, Head of Service Older Persons, Midwest Community Healthcare*

Conference Speakers



Dr Anne Dee, Consultant in Public Health Medicine, Public Health HSE Midwest

Dr Anne Dee is a Consultant in Public Health Medicine, working in the Department of Public Health in Limerick since 2010. A graduate of UCC, she worked in Accident and Emergency Medicine and General Practice prior to completing her training in Public Health Medicine. Anne also spent some time working in a Leprosy hospital in Nepal. Her main areas of interest are health economics, health inequalities and global health, and she has recently been appointed as HSE Public Health Mid-West area lead for health improvement.



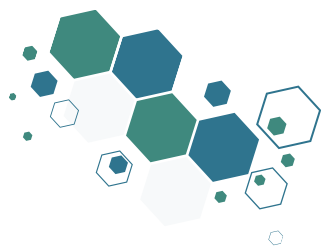
Dr Patrick O'Donnell Associate Professor of General Practice, University of Limerick

Dr. Patrick O'Donnell, General Practitioner, HSE Social Inclusion and Associate Professor of General Practice, UL School of Medicine, specialises in inclusion health. He holds a Global Health Masters from Trinity College Dublin. His research interests include social exclusion, health equity, homelessness, addiction, and healthcare for marginalized groups. He received his PhD, conducted associated research on social exclusion and health at UL. Dr. O'Donnell is a member of the HSE Naloxone Quality Assurance Group and HRB National Mental Health Research Strategy Expert Group. He played a key role in establishing and expanding low-threshold inclusion health clinics in Limerick, now core HSE services.



Prof Audrey Tierney Associate Professor & Discipline Lead in Human Nutrition & Dietetics, University of Limerick

Professor Audrey Tierney is Discipline Lead for Nutrition and Dietetics at the School of Allied Health, University of Limerick. On completion of her PhD in Nutrition at Trinity College Dublin and a post-doctoral fellowship in Nutrigenomics at The Conway Institute, UCD, Audrey moved to Melbourne, Australia to the Mediterranean Diet Research Group at La Trobe University. Audrey's interest and expertise is in the investigation of the Mediterranean Diet in diseases with an underlying inflammatory pathogenesis, and in particular the application of the Mediterranean Diet in non-Mediterranean populations. She also worked as a Clinical Specialist in Cystic Fibrosis for 10 years and is active in researching diet quality, food, health and wellbeing in people with this condition. Audrey moved back to Limerick in 2017 and set up a MSc in Human Nutrition and Dietetics at University of Limerick, to complement the suite of allied health course offerings at the School of Allied Health. Audrey is a member of the executive committee of the Health Research Institute and a founding member of the Centre for Implementation Research in UL.





Conference Speakers



Prof Barry Linnane, Consultant in Paediatric Respiratory, UL Hospitals Group and Adjunct Associate Professor, University of Limerick

Professor Linnane is a Paediatric Respiratory Consultant in University Hospital Limerick, where he takes the clinical lead in the provision of care to children with cystic fibrosis (CF). He was a member of the National Steering Group for the Introduction of CF Newborn Screening in Ireland in 2011, and sits on the National Bloodspot Screening Programme Governance Group. In addition, he is a member of the Scientific Advisory Committee of the CF Registry of Ireland, and the Medical and Scientific Council of Cystic Fibrosis Ireland.

He currently sits on the National Clinical Programme – CF Working Group. He is a member of the European CF Society Screening, and Diagnosis, Working Groups, and is a member of European Respiratory Society Infant and Pre-school Working Group.

Biographies – Session Three

Education and Innovation: AHSS Building Blocks

Chairs: Dr Damien Ryan, Urgent Emergency Care Clinical Director, UL Hospitals Group, Dr Katie Robinson Senior Lecturer in Occupational Therapy and Director of Postgraduate Research for the faculty of Education and Health Sciences.



Prof Alice Coffey Professor of Nursing, University of Limerick

Professor Alice Coffey is the Chair in Nursing and Midwifery Research, University of Limerick, Director of the Implementation Research Cluster, UL and Programme Lead for Professional Doctorate in Healthcare Practice. Her research spans Implementation Science, Evaluation, Transitional Care, Gerontology, Delirium, Dementia, and Palliative Care.

Alice is the recipient of competitive funding as Principal Investigator from the HEA North South Research awards, Health Research Board, Irish Research Council, European Commission and Health Service Executive. Her publications include commissioned reports and publications in high impact international journals.





Conference Speakers



**Ms Ann Marie Bright,
Assistant Professor, Mental Health Nursing, University of Limerick**

Ann-Marie Bright is an Assistant Professor in Nursing (Mental Health) at the Department of Nursing & Midwifery, University of Limerick. Ann-Marie is a Registered Psychiatric Nurse (RPN). Ann-Marie's research interests are the mental health needs of women in prison as well as perinatal mental health, general mental health and nurse education.

Ann-Marie teaches and supervises undergraduate and postgraduate nursing and midwifery students and leads the nursing contribution to the Inter-Professional Education working group of the Health Sciences Academy.



Prof Leonard O'Sullivan, Director of the Rapid Innovation Unit

Leonard is a Professor in the School of Design at the University of Limerick and Director of the Rapid Innovation Unit (RIU at www.riu.ie). The RIU specializes in applying innovation and design to address unmet clinical challenges in healthcare. Collaborating with clinical stakeholders across the University Hospital Limerick Group, the unit tackles a spectrum of challenges, from immediate solutions to research program development. This presentation highlights recent innovation and design projects undertaken by the unit across the Hospital Group.



Mr Donncha Ó Treasaigh, Director of Schools at Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board

Donncha Ó Treasaigh, Schools Director, Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board, is an esteemed education leader. With an Honours Degree in Gaeilge & Geography, Higher Diploma in Education, a postgraduate degree in ICT, First Class Honours Masters in Education and a Diploma in Law. He is a Founding principal of Gaelcholáiste Luimnigh, recognised for contributions to ICT, he participates in national and international education technology conferences.

Donncha is also Chairperson of the Hunt Museum Board, Limerick Principals & Deputy Principals Association, NAPD Region 6, NAPD ICT, ETBI ICT, and prior chairmanship of Limerick Education Centre. Donncha is a Guest speaker at events for Apple, Google, and Zoom, serving on Department of Education Implementation Advisory Groups and Board Member of the Plassey Campus Centre at University of Limerick in addition to multiple Boards of Management for Community Schools.





Keynote and Grand Rounds **Speaker**

Academic Health Science System Impact: The Newcastle Experience

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



Prof David Burn Director of Newcastle Health Innovation Partners (NHIP), Pro-Vice Chancellor and Professor of Movement Disorders Neurology, Newcastle University, UK

Professor David Burn took up the position of Pro-Vice Chancellor of the Faculty of Medical Sciences, Newcastle University, UK in 2017. David is also Professor of Movement Disorders Neurology and Honorary Consultant Neurologist for Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust. His research has focused on dementia associated with Parkinson's.

Since designation by NIHR and NHS England in March 2020, David has been Director of Newcastle Health Innovation Partners, the Academic Health Science Centre for the Northeast of England and North Cumbria. David is a Fellow of the Academy of Medical Sciences and Emeritus NIHR Senior Investigator. He chaired the NIHR Translational Research Collaboration for Dementia 2017-2023.

David has been Chair of the Northern Health Science Alliance Board since July 2018 and was President of the Association of British Neurologists 2019 - 2021. He is President-elect of the International Parkinson and Movement Disorder Society.





Biographies – Session Four

Research Informing Practice: Impacting Patient Services

Chairs: Dr Ana Terres, Head of Research & Evidence, Assistant National Director HSE, Prof Declan Lyons, Consultant Physician, Director of Research, Midwest Health Region

Conference Speakers



Dr Róisín Cahalan Associate Professor, Physiotherapy, University of Limerick

Associate Professor Róisín Cahalan, based at the University of Limerick's School of Allied Health, specialises in Respiratory and Cardiovascular Physiotherapy. Her research spans physical activity in chronic diseases, pain and injury management in elite athletes and dancers. Róisín is the founder of the SingStrong project, a singing intervention for chronic respiratory disease, and a steering committee member for the IRFU Irish Rugby Injury Surveillance (IRIS) project. A founding member of the Physical Activity for Health research centre at UL, she contributes to building an international hub of excellence in physical activity and health research.



Prof Rose Galvin, Professor of Physiotherapy, University of Limerick

Rose Galvin is a Professor in Physiotherapy at the University of Limerick. She has a long-standing interest in applied health research in ageing, reflecting her professional background in physiotherapy and her post-doctoral training in applied clinical epidemiology. She is a recipient of a Health Research Board 2020 Research Leader Award exploring models of integrated care for older adults following discharge from the Emergency Department.

Rose was Vice President of the Irish Gerontological Society (2019-2022) and a founding member of the Ageing Research Centre at UL.



Prof Ruth Clifford, Consultant Haematologist, UL Hospitals Group

Professor Ruth Clifford is a Consultant Haematologist at University Hospital Limerick since November 2016 and a Clinical Professor at the School of Medicine, UL. Ruth is the Director of the HRB funded Limerick Cancer Trials Group, the Associate Clinical Director of the Cancer Directorate, and the Clinical Director of the LDCRC. Ruth is the co-chair of the Haematology and Lymphoma Cancer Trials Ireland network.

Ruth graduated from NUI Galway in 2002 and is dual trained between the Irish and UK HST programs in Haematology. She was awarded a Cancer Research UK Fellowship to undertake doctoral research focused on the applications of Next Generation Sequencing Technologies in Leukaemia at the University of Oxford. She has published with numerous CLL groups and maintains active national and international collaborations in leukaemia research.





Conference Speakers



Prof Austin Stack, Consultant Nephrologist, UL Hospitals Group and Professor of Medicine, University of Limerick

Austin Stack, is the Professor and Foundation Chair of Medicine at the University of Limerick, Ireland, and a Consultant Nephrologist at University Hospital Limerick. Trained at the University of Michigan, he specializes in epidemiology, focusing on chronic kidney disease (CKD) and acute kidney injury (AKI).

A fellow of the American Society of Nephrology and Royal College of Physicians of Ireland, he leads national studies on CKD and AKI, advancing Ireland's Kidney Disease Surveillance System. Internationally, he collaborates on clinical trials exploring novel urate lowering therapies for kidney disease prevention.

Austin's work has been funded by the American Heart Association, National Institutes of Health (NIH), Irish Health Research Board, and Enterprise Ireland. He is a reviewer for Wellcome Trust UK, Chief Scientist Office for Research Scotland and National Institutes of Health.

Closing Remarks

Chair: Prof Paul Burke, Chief Academic Officer, UL Hospitals Group and Vice Dean (Health Sciences) University of Limerick



Prof Helen Whelton, Chief Academic Officer, SSW Hospital Group / Head of College of Medicine and Health, University College Cork

Professor Helen Whelton, Head of UCC's College of Medicine and Health and SSWHG Chief Academic Officer, was formerly Dean of Dentistry at the University of Leeds. She has coordinated three large EU funded research programmes, the latest being a major EU H2020 grant on Big Data in dentistry, which involved dental insurers across six EU countries. At UCC, her previously held roles include Vice Head of College, Dean of the Graduate School, Professor of Dental Public Health, and Director of the Oral Health Services Research Centre, a WHO Collaborating Centre.

Helen served on boards including Irish Health Research Board and National Obesity Task Force. She is a recent past President of the International Association for Dental Research, Washington DC and has co-leads the iED Hub initiative, securing €8.7m for developing Health & Life Sciences graduates under HCI 3 Pillar funding.