



Celebrating nurses in specialist roles who are true leaders in healthcare providing direct patient care, leading evidence-based practice, optimising organisational systems, and advancing nursing practice and research

Nurses in Specialist Roles

2nd Annual Conference

Embedding the Four Pillars of Practice – Reality or Aspiration?

Thursday 18 and Friday 19 September 2025



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[Four pillars of nursing | Levels of nursing | Royal College of Nursing](#)



Healthcare at its best
with people at our heart

Introduction

Welcome to our second annual Nurses in Specialist Roles Conference where we have an exciting and packed agenda in store for you!

Nurse specialists are true leaders in healthcare providing direct patient care, leading evidence-based practice, optimising organisational systems, and advancing nursing practice and research.

Following the success of last year's conference we are back, bigger and better with this year's theme **"Embedding four pillars of practice – Reality or Aspiration?"**

We aim to provide a dedicated platform for our specialist nurses community to network, share knowledge and best practice, learn about advancements in our fields, and enhance our skills – all ultimately improving patient care and outcomes whilst contributing to more efficient delivery of services.

Day One: Thursday 18 September 2025

✦ Open and welcome by Newcastle's Executive Director of Nursing **Ian Joy** who will talk about Nurses in Specialist Roles, the impact of the current NHS climate and **'Embedding the 4 Pillars of Practice'**.

✦ First key speaker – highly respected nursing professional **Professor Alison Leary** highlighting the importance of the **'Visibility of Nurse Specialists'**

Day Two: Friday 19 September 2025

✦ Day Two will be opened by **Paula McLaren** a Senior Nursing Advisor for Advanced Practice with the **Nursing and Midwifery Council** who will discuss ***"advanced roles"***.

✦ Second key speaker - we welcome **Ivan Hollingsworth**, Chair of **Children's Heart Unit Fund (CHUF)**, Life Coach and Culture Consultant exploring ***"How to thrive in a world of change, uncertainty and adversity"***

Breakout sessions

Following the opening speakers there will be a number of concurrent sessions to choose from - we have an extensive programme of interactive talks and presentations dedicated to enlightenment, demystification and breaking down barriers, allowing colleagues to share resources, discuss challenges, and develop strategies for improving patient outcomes.

These sessions have been chosen to cover the four pillars of practice which underpin what makes the Nurse Specialist role so vital:

Clinical

Education

Leadership

Research

Prebook your session

Please ensure you pre-book your preferences for the breakout sessions using the link <https://forms.office.com/e/hGzmB9v8Nk>

Further details regarding the breakout sessions can be found in this handbook.

Please note that due to the high number of attendees your choices cannot be guaranteed however we will endeavour to offer you your 1st or 2nd choice.

Posters

We know nurse specialists use their specialised knowledge to assess, analyse, and deliver patient care, leading to better outcomes for patients. Yet their role delivers so much more.

We encouraged colleagues to submit posters demonstrating the many achievements that make them proud and all of the submissions will be shortlisted for a prize at the end of the conference.

The posters can be found on the [Newcastle Hospitals Skills Academy website](#) and will be available to view at the conference on digital screen around the venue.

You can pre-vote for what you think are the best posters via this link <https://forms.office.com/e/h28PHRke1x>

Venue and directions

Freeman Hospital, Freeman Road, High Heaton,
Newcastle upon Tyne, Tyne and Wear NE7 7DN United Kingdom [+ Google Map](#)

Contact telephone 0191 28 24710

[View Venue Website](#)

Programme

Day One – Thursday 18 September 2025

08:30 - 08:40	Opening of conference, housekeeping and introductions
08:40 - 09:20	Welcome by Ian Joy , Executive Director of Nursing, Newcastle Hospitals Nurses in Specialist Roles, impact of the current NHS climate and Embedding the 4 pillars of practice
09:20 – 10:00	Key speaker - Professor Alison Leary , London South Bank University and Senior Consultant, World Health Organization: Visibility of Nurse Specialists

Comfort break 10.00 - 10.30

Time	Clinical	Education	Leadership
10.30 - 11.00	Health-Related Stigma Mel Hall , Nurse Specialist Haemoglobinopathy (Adults)	Cancer Podcast Caroline Tweedie , Lead Cancer Nurse, ST & Sunderland	Self-compassion and Leadership Karen Priest , Senior Workforce Development Officer
11:00 – 11:30	Nurse-led COPD Clinic Katie Kaiser , Senior CNS, Home Mechanical Ventilation	Enhanced Induction for Nurse Specialists - Building an Agenda (Workshop)	A SCHWARTZ Round on the theme of 'Decision making' facilitated by Jenny Coles , Clinical Psychologist, sharing – Sheila, Annie and Sally
11:30 – 12:00	Tuberculosis (TB) Fiona Cook , Nurse Specialist Lead, North of Tyne TB Service	Rachel Orwin , Lung Cancer Nurse Specialist / Research Fellow	

Lunch and poster viewing 12.00 - 13.00

Time	Clinical	Education	Research
13.00 – 13:30	Introduction to Genomics for nurses – Gill Moss , Nursing Director, NEY GMSA Pharmacogenics – Lindsay O'Dair , Deputy Clinical Lead, Northern Genetics Service	Advanced Communication Skills Training - a Teaser Hayley English , Lung Cancer CNS & Jacqui Beaty , HPB & Rapid Diagnostic Service Nurse Specialist	Introduction to Research James Faraday , Deputy NMAHPs Research Lead
13:30 – 14:00	Genomics & the role of GC – Sharon McDonnell , Principle Genetic Counsellor, NGS Q&A		Research Fellows Panel – research pathways and Q&A session, Sarah Hogg, Matthew Harris & Karen Caulfield

Comfort break 14:00 – 14:25

14:25 – 14:45	Genomics in Practice – Cancer – Anna Whaite , Genetic Counsellor, NGS Genomics in Practice – Inherited Cardiac Conditions – Sarah Lamb , ICC CNS, FRH	Advanced Communication Skills Training - a Teaser Hayley English and Jacqui Beaty , Nurse Specialists	Clinical Academic Role Professor Annette Hand , Professor of Nursing and Clinical Academic - Newcastle Hospitals and Northumbria University
14:45 – 15:15	Where to find out more – Denise Barnes , Lead Midwife, NEY GMSA Q&A		Creating a poster James Faraday , Deputy NMAHPs research lead

Coffee and tea break 15:15 - 15.45

15:45 – 16:25	Navigating Vulnerability: Reflexivity and Emotional Impact in Insider Qualitative Research	Julie Guest , PhD Student at Newcastle University (retired Nurse Specialist, Paediatric Immunology)
16:30 – 17:15	Experience of Nurse Specialist care for Paediatric, Teenage Young Adults and Adult patients Patient panel	

Close 17:15

Day Two – Friday 19 September 2025

08:30 - **Advanced Practice and Roles:** Paula McLaren, Senior Nursing Advisor for Advanced Practice, Nursing and Midwifery Council

09:10 - **How to thrive in a world of change, uncertainty and adversity:**
Ivan Hollingsworth, Chair of CHUF and Life Coach – Culture Consultant

Coffee and tea break 10:00 – 10:30

Time	Clinical	Education	Research
10.30 - 10.55	Steroids and Glucose Management Léa Davidson , Diabetes Nurse Specialist and Zoe Collins , Clinical Governance and Patient Safety Lead	Paediatric Patient Educator for Weight management Alice Walley , Nurse Specialist	Valuing Research Roles in Delivering Excellence Sarah Hogg , Research Nurse
10.55 – 11:20		Nurse Specialist Programme Nurse Specialists Jill Ferguson , Paediatric Metabolics and Clare Smith , Paed Urology / Stoma Care	Demystifying Clinical Research Chris Barron , Cancer Network Team Lead

Comfort break 11:20 – 11:35

11:35 – 12:00	Grand Round Lucy Craig , Nurse Consultant, Paediatric Rheumatology	Student Cancer Spokes Rachel Orwin , Lung Cancer CNS & Research Fellow, Karen Christie , Cancer Educator, Julie Hopper , Practice Placement Facilitator	Research about Uncertainty Anne McDonnell , Nurse Specialist Paediatric Allergy and Immunology
12:00 – 12:25		Academic Roles Lottie Gordon , Assistant Professor of Nursing, Northumbria University	Experience on Patient Participation Becky Sarjeant , Children's Research Nurse

Lunch and poster viewing 12:25 – 13:30 – we will be joined by some special therapy dog

Time	Clinical	Leadership	Research
13:30 – 14:00	Reasonable Adjustments Julie Tucker , Project Manager, North East and Cumbria Learning Disability Network	Confidence in decision making Tracy Hinchliffe , Assistant Professor in Adult Nursing, Northumbria University	“Being Research Positive” What the evidence tells us and how you can help Dr Linda Tinkler , NMAHPs Research Lead, Newcastle Hospitals
14:00 – 14:30	Dementia & Decision Making Emma Prendergast , Nurse Consultant, Newcastle Hospitals	Leadership in Senior Roles David McClinton , Matron, Cancer Services, Freeman	

Special Educational Needs and the Specialist Nurse Dawn Robson, Designated Clinical Officer SEND & Dr Kim Barrett, Consultant Paediatrician, Forensic Paediatrician, SEN (Special Educational Needs) lead for GNCH **(Break optional)**

Coffee and tea break 14:30 – 14:45

14:45 – 15:15	Addressing Health Inequalities Dr Balsam Ahmad , Consultant in Public Health, Newcastle Hospitals	Resilience and Self-care Steven Hewitt , Health Improvement Practitioner	Innovation in Healthcare - “Hack your practice: Rapid problem solving for everyday challenges” Charlotte Fox , Business Innovation Manager
15:15 – 15:45	Autism & Learning Disability Experiences & Staff Training Alexander Wilson , Research Fellow and Psychologist		

Coffee and tea break 15.45 – 16:00

16.00-16.45 **Catherine Feeney and Eilis Moody** Role of Nurse Consultants in transforming care

16:45 – 17:15 **Embedding 4 Pillars of Practice – Reality or Aspiration?**
Ian Joy, Executive Director of Nursing, Newcastle Hospitals

Poster prizes, thank you and close 17.15 – 17:30

Speaker biographies

Day 1 speakers

Ian Joy is the Executive Director of Nursing at Newcastle Hospitals

As Executive Director of Nursing, Ian leads the organisation's 7,000 nurses, midwives and allied health professionals, which collectively make up the Trust's largest professional group.

Ian's key role is to provide professional leadership to deliver and maintain the highest standard of clinical care and the best experience for those who use our services.

Since qualifying as a staff nurse in Newcastle over 20 years ago, Ian has held a number of clinical and senior nursing management roles across the region and has a keen interest in clinical education, workforce planning and staff development.

Ian is a national Chief Nursing Officer (CNO) Safe Staffing Fellow having completed the first cohort of this programme nationally and he supports safe staffing work streams locally, regionally and nationally.



Professor Alison Leary MBE FRCN currently holds the position of Professor of Healthcare & Workforce Modelling at London South Bank University

She has worked across many different industries serving as a senior consultant to the World Health Organization on Human Resources for Health Group and her current work focuses on complex systems in healthcare, using non-linear mathematics and data science to improve workforce planning and patient safety.

For example, her modelling for inflammatory bowel disease nursing led to a recommended staffing ratio that became a European standard.

She was appointed MBE in 2019 by the British government for services to crowd safety in English Football. She is a Fellow of the Royal College of Nursing and the Queen's Nursing Institute.

Alison was named among the Top 70 women in health in 70 years of the NHS and is the recipient of a Winston Churchill Memorial Trust Fellowship to study big data in high-reliability industries. She is currently Deputy President of the RCN.



Day 1 Breakout session speakers

Mel Hall is a Nurse Specialist in Adult Haemoglobinopathy at the Royal Victoria Infirmary

Mel cares for and supports adult patients with haemoglobinopathy in Newcastle's Haematology Department where she has worked for over five years. Haemoglobinopathies, including sickle cell disease and thalassemias can cause problems with the haemoglobin's production and structure. If not closely monitored these can lead to serious complications such as pain, infections, organ damage and even failure especially for the spleen if affected blood cells get trapped blocking blood flow.



With around 140 patients under her watchful eye, she's not just a nurse; she's a lifeline, a source of comfort as unfortunately whilst more is known about blood disorders such as sickle cell disease and treatments are improving all of the time, the condition continues to be misunderstood and still attracts a lot of stigma which led to Mel and one of her colleagues setting up a regional Sickle Cell Support Group which she will discuss during her talk.

Katie Kaiser is a Senior Nurse Specialist specialising in Assisted Ventilation at the Royal Victoria Infirmary

Katie qualified as a nurse in 2006 and began her career working on an intensive care unit for the Newcastle Hospitals. She joined the North East Assisted Ventilation Service as a nurse specialist in 2016 and as part of this role she managed patients with long term non-invasive ventilation (NIV), complex patients and providing support and trained both patients and carers.



Katie has been involved with developing a nurse led Home Oxygen Therapy (HOT) Home Mechanical Ventilation (HMV) clinic and has a particular interest in managing patients with Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD). In April 2024 Katie progressed to a senior nurse specialist role and is the operational lead of the North East Assisted Ventilation Service.

Fiona Cook is a Clinical Nurse Specialist specialising in Tuberculosis in Newcastle upon Tyne

Fiona completed her nurse training in 1989 and has had a varied career including surgical, medical and district nursing experience. She has been a key member of the tuberculosis (TB) service for over 16 years and the lead nurse for four years.

Fiona is passionate about education and strives to offer teaching around TB to a mix of clients. She has had the privilege of teaching nationally as well as locally and has worked hard to ensure Newcastle is recognised as a gold standard organisation for TB care.



The team has been closely involved with research and has undertaken two QI projects in the past year to improve the patient journey and to make care more accessible for groups of patients considered hard to reach. Fiona has been a Queen's Nurse for 15 years, a title given to nurses who show exemplary care standards and she is proud to represent Queen Nurses as the lead nurse for the North East region.

Caroline Tweedie is the Lead Cancer Nurse for South Tyneside and Sunderland

In 2021 Caroline led a digital project to devise a platform to support patients during COVID in her role as a personalised care manager and Breast Clinical Nurse Specialist. This has continued to grow and improve patient experience receiving regional and national recognition scooping Bright Ideas Innovation and British Oncology Nursing awards.

Caroline's presentation will demonstrate how a menu of information support can offer exciting opportunities to improve services and patient empowerment.



Rachel Orwin, Lung Cancer Nurse Specialist and Research Fellow

Rachel qualified in 1993 and worked for 10 years as a staff nurse then ward sister in cardiology at North Tees Hospital in Stockton. She took a career break for 15 years to raise a family and completed a BA in English whilst her children were at school. Rachel returned to the NHS in 2017 as a healthcare assistant whilst studying then restarted her nursing career as a staff nurse in cardiothoracic surgery.

Three months into the first COVID lockdown Rachel was appointed as a Lung Cancer Nurse Specialist, a role in which she was enabled, by her very supportive Band 7, to really develop, learn new skills, and grow as an autonomous practitioner whilst completing a distance learning MSc in Nursing with Dundee University. She subsequently took up a one year secondment in Cancer Practice Development and has now taken on a new challenge as a research fellow working with the Trust's nursing, midwifery and AHP research team.



Rachel is passionate about raising the visibility and value of specialist nurse and enabling Nurses in Specialist roles to embed all four pillars of practice into their job plans.

Karen Priest is a qualified teacher and Senior Workforce Development Officer at the Newcastle Hospitals

Karen works in Newcastle's Learning and Development Team, where part of her role is leading on the further roll out of the Trust's Compassionate Leadership Programme. She has enjoyed over a decade's experience in senior leadership roles, with very diverse and varied teams, and some fundamental drivers of her work are compassion, equality, diversity, inclusion and continual life-long learning.

Karen says that evidence-based and values-led practice are exceptionally important to her. With a degree in Psychology, and as a qualified Special Educational Needs co-ordinator, she has a particular interest in people and how they interact with each other and the systems and structures they operate in; their experience of work and training, and how learning and leadership can influence culture, performance, health and well-being.

Dr Jenny Coles is a Clinical Psychologist, Systemic Practitioner and Schwartz Facilitator

With 18 years post qualification experience of working with children and young people with a range of physical and mental health problems, Jenny currently works in Psychology in Healthcare (Children and Young People) at the Great North Children's Hospital where she has been a Schwartz Facilitator since 2021.



Sheila Sami is a Nurse Practitioner running 'virtual wards' at Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust

Sheila recently retired after 43 years' NHS service including 25 years as a nurse practitioner supporting all clinical specialties across the Newcastle Hospitals as part of the Hospital at Night team. Sheila has now returned to nursing as a member of the urgent community two hour response team with Northumbria Healthcare where her nurse practitioner role runs virtual wards supporting patients to stay at home rather than being admitted into hospital.

Annie Jones is a Systemic Anti-Cancer Therapy Clinical Educator working for the Northern Centre for Cancer Care

Annie came to Newcastle to study adult nursing and fell in love with the city and the people - so much so that she has made it her home! She began her nursing career in neurosurgery and has since worked in cancer services for over five years gaining experience in a variety of settings from inpatient, outpatient and community areas.

Annie hopes to inspire and support the future generation of Systemic Anti-Cancer Therapy (SACT) trained nurses and help create a supportive environment where every individual feels supported through education and training.

When not at work she enjoys spending her days off in the countryside either hiking up a mountain with her dog or going for a run to scope out the newest bakery/coffee shop.

Sally-Anne Ison is a Clinical Educator in the Cardiothoracic Clinical Board at Newcastle's Freeman Hospital

Sally-Anne trained to be a nurse at DE Montfort University in Leicester back in 2004 and then worked at Glenfield Hospital specialising in Cardiothoracic nursing. She moved to North East in 2008 to work in intensive care at the Freeman Hospital.

Critical care outreach nursing was one of Sally-Anne's roles and made her passionate about care of the deteriorating patients. This led her to her current educational role which she has enjoyed over the last 4 years. Sally-Anne is currently studying an MSc in Patient Safety and Human Factors which she believes links strongly to her passion.



The Genomics Team

Gill Moss is the Director of Nursing for Genomics in the North East & Yorkshire and North West of England

Gill plays a pivotal leadership role in integrating genomics into nursing practice across the region. Working within the NHS Genomic Medicine Service, they support the delivery of personalised care by promoting the use of genomic information in diagnosis, treatment, and prevention.

Her role involves providing strategic guidance, developing genomic literacy among the nursing workforce, and ensuring equitable access to genomic services. This includes collaboration with healthcare leaders, educators, and national bodies to embed genomics into clinical pathways, workforce planning, and education. A key focus is empowering nurses to confidently apply genomic knowledge in patient care, from rare diseases and cancer to pharmacogenomics.

Gill champions patient-centred approaches, ensuring that genomic advancements translate into real benefits for individuals and communities, and ultimately helps shape the future of healthcare by making genomics a routine part of nursing practice across the North of England.



Sharon McDonnell is a Principal Genetic Counsellor

Sharon initially trained as a nurse and worked in various specialties. Her introduction to genetics was during an Ophthalmic/Genetic research project and from there she moved into genetics full time. Sharon has now worked in genetics for 25 years and has extensive experience in genetic counselling with specialist focus on Ophthalmic genetics, Neurogenetics and Bone dysplasia.

She is a black belt in karate and can fly a glider – neither of which are a prerequisite for genetic counselling!



Lindsay O'Dair, Lead Genetic Counsellor and Deputy Clinical Lead

Lindsay has worked as a genetic counsellor for 33 years – starting her career working in cancer genetics in Manchester and then moving to general genetics.

She has been in the Newcastle team since 2002 and now has a split role between clinical work and managing the (fantastic) team of genetic counsellors and nurse specialists in the Northern Genetics Service.

Lindsay also took on the Lead Genetic Counsellor role for the North East and Yorkshire Genomic Medicine Service Alliance in 2021 and has enjoyed working with the wider regional team looking at the many challenges that mainstreaming genomics brings.



Anna Whaite is a Genetic Counsellor for the Northern Genetics Service

Anna has worked in Clinical Genetics for more than 20 years. During this time she has discussed inherited health risks with countless families and individuals and given many people life-altering genetic test results.

Echoing the support she received while training she strongly believes that there is no such thing as a silly question and aims to help patients and professionals understand what they need to know about genetics to suit their particular situation. Her special interest is inherited cancer risks.



Denise Barnes is the Lead Midwife for Genomics in the North East and Yorkshire Genomic Medicine Service (GMS)

Denise provides strategic leadership to embed genomics within maternity services. With specialist expertise in fetal and maternal medicine, she champions equitable access to genomic care for women and their families, ensuring midwifery voices are central to service development.

Denise leads initiatives to build genomic awareness and confidence among midwives, creating opportunities for them to expand their role while navigating complex political and service challenges.

Her leadership extends to collaborating with regional and national partners, using data and pathway mapping to evidence gaps in perinatal genomic services and drive improvements. She also provides midwifery oversight for the Generation Study in North East and Yorkshire — a landmark research study exploring the feasibility of whole genome sequencing for newborn babies.



Hayley English is a Lung Cancer Clinical Nurse Specialist

Hayley says she has always wanted to be a nurse since she was nine years old. Her mother had breast cancer and received palliative care from a fabulous district nurse – “she was everything I aspire to be”. However she chose a different path after finishing school and worked at Northern Rock. She was there the day “it all came crashing down – something I won’t forget in a hurry!”

Taking stock of her life Hayley became a carer in the community. This was her first real taste of nursing and she loved it. Hayley joined Ward 34 at the Northern Centre for Cancer Care as a healthcare assistant where she was supported to study for her nursing degree.

Her management placement was in neurosurgery and she worked as a staff nurse on Ward 15 at the RVI for seven years before moving to Ward 18, an intensive care unit just in time for COVID. In 2022 Hayley was appointed a Long Covid Nurse specialist before moving into her current role as a Lung Cancer Clinical Nurse Specialist two years later.



Jackie Beaty is a Clinical Nurse Specialist for Newcastle’s Hepato-pancreato-biliary (HPB) and Rapid Diagnostic Service

Jackie has worked at the Freeman Hospital her entire whole career, over 22 years. Her nursing journey began as a student in the specialty of HPB which she loved and she worked as a staff nurse, ward sister and then senior sister on surgical ward.

Jackie has now been an Obstructive Jaundice Nurse Specialist for nearly four years providing a rapid diagnosis service. Her role endeavours to arrange for patients with suspected pancreatic cancer to receive a diagnosis as quickly as possible in order for them to start treatment as soon as possible.



James Faraday is a Speech and Language Therapist and Deputy Trust Lead for NMAHP Research at Newcastle Hospitals

James’s research is about making mealtimes better for people living with dementia. For his PhD, he worked with local care homes to develop a staff training programme, and he is currently exploring how to roll-out the training more widely, funded by NIHR and Alzheimer’s Society.

He is a committee member of the North East Speech and Language Therapists Research Network, and a Guest Lecturer in the School of Education, Communication and Language Sciences at Newcastle University.



The Research Fellows Panel

Sarah Hogg is a Hepatology Research Clinical Research Nurse and the first Newcastle Hospitals' Research Development Institute Masters Fellow

Sarah began working in hepatology research in 2015 working with clinical colleagues to screen and recruit patients into a variety of different studies. Her role here has enabled her to expand her clinical skills and travel widely to meet with colleagues.



Sarah completed her degree in 2019 and says that she enjoyed learning so much, being able to apply the knowledge and skills to her role that she decided to apply for the Newcastle Hospitals first RDI Fellowship. She says it's been one of the best decisions she's ever made as she feels she has learnt so much and her research finishes this autumn which she is very excited about.

Since embarking on her Fellowship Sarah has joined the British Society of Gastroenterology Nurses and Research Committee, marked NIHR bursary applications and contributed to James Lind Research Priority Settings in Alcohol. She's also written a book chapter and is working with the British Liver Nurses' Association to write national guidelines.

Matthew Douglas-Harris, Extended Scope Podiatry Practitioner at Newcastle's Freeman Hospital

Matthew graduated from the University of Southampton in 2016 and completed an MSc in Clinical Biomechanics in 2021.

Prior to his current role in the Foot & Ankle Orthopaedic team, he worked for the Ministry of Defence at the Regional Rehabilitation Unit in Catterick Garrison. His current research interests are in musculoskeletal pain, foot and ankle biomechanics and menopause.



Karen Caulfield is a Clinical Specialist Paediatric Cardiothoracic Physiotherapist at the Freeman Hospital

Karen works in the highly specialist area of paediatric cardiothoracic where cutting edge medical advances are regular practice. As a physiotherapist she was aware of the lack of evidence within this specialist field and had a number of service development and quality improvement projects under her belt but the world of research felt an unknown entity.

She wanted to be able to develop her own capacity to add to the evidence base but had no idea really where to start. A successful application for a NIHR Internship allowed Karen to dip her toes into research and undertake a small project. Whilst challenging she loved the opportunities to learn,



develop, build a network of professionals with huge support from her supervisor, the research community within Newcastle Hospitals, the ARC and NIHR academy.

Karen says the mutual benefits to the clinical and academic aspects of her role are clear - she has access to patients and can discuss issues that are important to them, making projects clinically relevant as well as being able to bring in new evidence to the shop floor and embed it into practice.

Professor Annette Hand Prof. Doc (Health), MA, Pg Dip (CR), Dip HE, RGN, Professor of Nursing – Clinical Academic, Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust/Northumbria University

Annette began her nursing career in 1991 studying at the Northumbria School of Nursing. Post qualification she worked across various settings including orthopedics, community nursing and palliative care.



Annette has worked within a specialist Parkinson's Team in the UK for over 28 years, starting as the Research Associate before obtaining a nurse specialist post.

For 21 years she worked as a Nurse Consultant in Parkinson's coordinating the Parkinson's service, supporting patients and their families and managing a team of Parkinson's specialist nurses. As an autonomous practitioner Annette is responsible for diagnosis and management of all stages of Parkinson's.

Educationally, Annette has been teaching within Higher Education since 2004. She currently teaches on several post graduate courses for Northumbria University and her interests include non-medical prescribing, Parkinson's, clinical research and research impact.

Annette has continued to have an active research role and been involved with multiple research studies at a local, national, and international level and has published multiple peer reviewed articles.

Her research interests include non-motor symptoms, sexual dysfunction, sleep and care needs in Parkinson's. Her doctorate focused on understanding carer strain and its relationship to care home placement for people with Parkinson's.

Following her doctoral studies Annette is now developing an intervention to help improve the quality of life, and health outcomes, for care partners of people with Parkinson's. In 2021, in recognition for her research work in Parkinson's Annette was appointed to Professor of Nursing – Clinical Academic, the first post of its type in the North East of England. Annette now divides her time between clinical practice, research, and education.

Day 1 Closing speaker

Julie Guest (PGR) is a recently retired Nurse Specialist in Child and Adolescent Haematology/Oncology, Haematopoietic Stem Cell Transplantation, and Clinical Apheresis at the Great North Children's Hospital

During Julie's tenure, she led the development of a nurse-led clinical apheresis service, including the implementation of international training programmes in collaboration with Therakos, specifically tailored for small body weight extra-corporeal photopheresis.



Julie is currently in the final year of her PhD at Newcastle University. Her doctoral research is a qualitative study exploring the lived experiences of children, young people, and their families who are navigating life-threatening conditions and undergoing complex, ongoing treatments. Her research interests include Patient and Public Involvement (PPI), the concept of imposter participants, and ethical considerations surrounding research vulnerability.

She serves as Chair of both the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland Stem Cell Transplant Nurses Group and the British Society of Blood and Marrow Transplantation and Cellular Therapy Allied Health Professionals Group.

Additionally, Julie is an active member of the European Society for Organ Transplantation's Expert Working Group on Extracorporeal Photopheresis for Solid Organ Graft Rejection.

Day 2 Speakers

Paula McLaren is a Senior Nursing Advisor for Advanced Practice with the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC)

Paula joined the NMC in February 2021 as Head of Education and Quality Assurance and is now Senior Adviser for Advanced Practice leading the NMC's review of advanced practice. Paula also leads and supports the prescribing portfolio at the NMC.



Paula is a registered general nurse, having trained in Australia and moved to the UK in 1995. She has worked in a variety of roles within secondary care, primary and community services, higher education and transformation, involved in the development of GP Federations and Training Hubs. Paula was also involved in setting up volunteer 'health champions' in GP practices and developing research practices to improve patient outcomes.

More recently Paula's roles have focussed on the quality of learning environments and now the NMC review of advanced practice, moving into phase 2 to develop and finalise approaches to the additional regulation of advanced nursing and midwifery practice. Paula is an independent prescriber and continues to work clinically when time allows.

Paula's wider interests include population health and supporting equitable access to high quality services, as well as supporting high quality learning opportunities and supporting future workforce development across health and social care.

Ivan Hollingsworth – Founder of Centric Consultants | Leadership & Team Culture Expert

Ivan Hollingsworth is the founder and director of Centric Consultants, a business dedicated to helping individuals and teams thrive through the development of trust, connection, and psychological safety.

With over 16 years' experience in the pharmaceutical industry, Ivan has worked with a wide range of organisations across both the public and private sectors - including ITV, AstraZeneca, and multiple NHS Trusts - bringing a deep understanding of how to build high-performing, resilient teams.



What sets Ivan apart is not just his professional expertise, but the powerful personal journey that shaped it. As a father to Seb, his now 16 year old son who underwent open-heart surgery twice - once as a baby, and again as a teenager - Ivan spent long periods immersed in hospital life. There, he observed more than just clinical excellence; he witnessed the impact of team culture at its best.

What stood out was the way healthcare teams worked together - demonstrating psychological safety, vitality and growth through learning. He credits this culture not only with supporting the wellbeing of the staff but also playing a vital role in Seb's extraordinary recovery.

Motivated by this experience, Ivan has become a passionate advocate for creating work environments where people can truly thrive. Alongside his consultancy work, he has raised over £500,000 for charity through a series of endurance challenges and serves as chair of the Board for CHUF (Children's Heart Unit Fund) and as a board member of the North East and North Cumbria Congenital Heart Disease Network.

Ivan's sessions are rooted in lived experience, delivered with authenticity and insight, and designed to equip audiences with practical, actionable tools to foster resilient, thriving teams. His unique perspective, combining professional insight with a deeply personal narrative, offers a powerful message on leadership, culture, and the human impact of truly effective teams.

Day 2 Breakout session speakers

Léa Davidson is a Diabetic Nurse Specialist at the Royal Victoria Infirmiry

Léa joined the Inpatient Diabetes team at the Newcastle Hospitals in 2020 and works across both the RVI and Freeman Hospital sites. Léa has a background in chronic condition management, including 10 years in remote central Australian Aboriginal health services. She has a Masters in Healthcare Management and recently completed a Post Graduate certificate in Diabetes.



The Diabetes Inpatient Specialist Nurses provide expert support to all inpatient specialty teams which has been shown to prevent harm and reduce length of stay. The team receive over 400 referrals per month, including diabetes emergencies and complex critical care patients. They work autonomously, assessing patients, making diagnosis, providing inpatient management plans and self-management support to ensure safe discharge 7 days a week across both hospital sites.

Zoe Collins is the Clinical Governance and Patient Safety lead for Newcastle's Cancer and Haematology Clinical Board

Zoe is a nurse by background and until the last five years has been delivering SACT (systemic anti cancer treatment) to oncology and haematology patients her whole nursing career.

Over the past five years Zoe has held roles as a Deputy Lead Cancer Nurse and a Matron until she came into this post two years ago.



Zoe says that delivering high standards of safe patient care, driving change and ensuring patients are at the centre of everything has always been her highest priority. She adds that focusing a systems approach to patient safety incidents allows us to fully understand all contributory factors and ensures we can learn, make changes and prevent recurrence, to give reassurance that all of our patients are safe within our care.

Lucy Craig is a Paediatric Rheumatology Nurse Consultant at the Great North Children's Hospital

With over 30 years of experience in paediatrics, Lucy has worked across a variety of medical wards across our hospital before specialising in paediatric rheumatology 15 years ago. In her current role, Lucy leads a regional service caring for more than 300 patients aged 0–18 years and manages a dedicated team of specialist nurses.



She is an active member of the Royal College of Nursing, contributing to publications and national steering groups that promote excellence in nursing practice. Lucy has led multiple quality improvement projects aimed at enhancing patient care and improving the hospital experience for children and their families. She is particularly passionate about transitional care and supporting the development of other nurse specialists.

Alice Walley is a Nurse Specialist for Complications of Excessive Weight (CEW) at the Great North Children's Hospital

Alice left Newcastle for London to train as a children's nurse in 2003. She worked in paediatric infectious diseases, oncology and BMT before becoming a HIV children's nurse specialist and later an adolescent and young adult HIV research nurse.

She has just completed a master's in public health at Newcastle University and is excited to be doing her first job at GNCH, in a brand new role as a Nurse Specialist for Complications of Excessive Weight (CEW). This service offers an intensive MDT programme to try to address the complex medical, social and psychological needs of families covering the North of England. The clinic was set up last year and Alice is the first nurse on the team.



Jill Ferguson is a Children's Metabolic Clinical Nurse Specialist at the Great North Children's Hospital

Jill qualified as paediatric nurse in 2004 and worked in a range of specialties throughout her nursing career including on surgical wards, the emergency assessment unit and medical and respiratory wards before becoming a stoma and urology specialist nurse in 2014.

In 2021 she was presented with the challenge of developing a new metabolic clinical nurse specialist role as part of a newly established national Battens Disease Service at the Great North Children's Hospital to support young patients with inherited metabolic disease, along with their parents and carers who previously had to travel fortnightly to Great Ormond Street Hospital for their treatment.

The enzyme replacement therapy involves an infusion via intracerebroventricular device (ICV) using surgical ANTT which was new to the Trust and required new policies and procedures to be established. Jill worked with clinical, pharmacy and other colleagues to make it a success.



Clare Smith is a Clinical Nurse Specialist in Paediatric Urology and Stoma Care at the Great North Children's Hospital

Clare qualified in 1999 and began her nursing career working on a special care baby unit, followed by a period on a surgical ward before progressing to stoma and urology nurse specialist in 2008. Between 2015 and 2018 she worked as an inflammatory bowel disease nurse specialist but returned to stoma and urology in 2018 with a key focus on delivering support and education for patients, families, carers and staff of children with complex bowel and bladder needs.

Clare says the specialist nurse project provides the opportunity for qualified ward based staff to be seconded to work with a nurse specialist team for one month. It allows the individual to experience working within a specialist nurse team and is proud to say that previous secondments have received positive feedback from all those involved.



Karen Christie is a clinical educator in cancer services and clinical haematology in Newcastle

Karen's role is very diverse and includes the education of staff, the revision of clinical competencies, the implementation of new practice development and whatever else is given to cascade!

She began working in Newcastle in 1992 as a healthcare assistant and completed her registered nurse training in 2006. Karen has worked in cancer services ever since and says that teaching is her absolute passion, enjoying being able to support staff, enabling people to reach their potential, ensuring high standards of patient care.



"I have worked alongside Rachel Orwin since she came into post in her previous role, as a Cancer Practice Development Nurse. Since that time, we have successfully planned and delivered conferences within our trust. Working in collaboration with Julie Hopper, PPF, we recently won an award at our Newcastle Hospitals' NMHAP conference for work we undertook offering student nurses the opportunity to experience a bespoke placement in Cancer Services, with a focus on succession planning for the future of inspired cancer nurses."

Outside of work Karen enjoys spending time with close family and going on holiday with friends and family.

Julie Hopper is an occupational therapist and practice placement facilitator

Julie qualified as an occupational therapist nineteen years ago and has worked at Newcastle Hospitals ever since. She supported many learners when working clinically which contributed to her passion of working within student education and supporting the future of the NHS workforce.

For the last four years Julie has worked in the Practice Education Team as a Practice Placement Facilitator (PPF).



Charlotte (Lottie) Gordon is an Assistant Professor of Nursing, Northumbria University; NIHR NENC Strategic Lead for Diabetic Macular Edema (DME) Research

Charlotte is a registered nurse with an academic foundation in Biological Sciences and a clinical background in critical care. Her career progressed into clinical research delivery, specialising in diabetes risk reduction and management and immune therapies.

She currently serves as Assistant Professor of Nursing and NIHR North East and North Cumbria RDN Strategic Lead for Diabetes, Metabolic and Endocrinology Research.



Awarded the Alice Corey MRC Research Scholarship, she completed an MClinRes at Newcastle University and has recently submitted her PhD exploring user experiences of glucose sensing technologies.

Charlotte leads diabetes education at Northumbria University, integrating teaching, clinical expertise, and research. Her published work focuses on diabetes technology and well-being.

She is a Fellow of the Higher Education Academy and leads the MSc Professional Practice in Health CPD pathways. Her leadership includes serving as Chair of the RCN National Diabetes Steering Group and active membership in national and international research networks.

Chris Barron is a Research Radiographer at the Northern Centre for Cancer Care (NCCC)

Chris qualified as a radiographer from the Newcastle School of Radiography in 1988. After a short time working in Carlisle he moved to the NCCC at Newcastle's Freeman Hospital and stayed in Radiotherapy treatment and planning until 2000.

In September of 2000 he became one of the first two Research Radiographers in NCCC and he has worked in research within Newcastle Hospitals until the present day.

Chris's current role is as Cancer Trials Unit and Experimental Cancer Medicine Centre Manager based in the Sir Bobby Robson Cancer Trials Research Centre. He manages the teams and business aspects of all oncology and malignant haematology research Trust-wide and as well as being involved in the strategic development of all areas of research. Chris was a member of a Research Ethics Committee for 10 years.



Anne McDonnell, a Nurse Specialist (Children and Young People (CYP) - Allergy and Immunology) based at the Great North Children's Hospital

In 2022 Anne was awarded a National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) Pre-doctoral Clinical and Practitioner Academic Fellowship (PCAF) that enabled her to complete an MA in Research Methods (MARM) (Health) at the University of Nottingham.

Anne's research area of interest is the emotional and mental health needs of parents and caregivers of CYP with food allergy. Her masters level dissertation comprised a qualitative study exploring models of uncertainty and the impact or uncertainty, or 'not knowing', on the psychological wellbeing of parents and caregivers of children with food allergy.

Anne has recently submitted an application for a NIHR Doctoral Fellowship (DF). The DF proposal details a research project exploring parent/caregiver uncertainty around the management of anaphylaxis in CYP with food allergy.



Rebecca Sarjeant is a Children's Research Nurse at Newcastle's Clinical Research Facility

Rebecca trained in Liverpool, qualifying in 2013 and moved to Newcastle to take up her first post as a staff nurse on the paediatric intensive care unit (ICU), Freeman Hospital. She worked there for 6 years where, in addition to clinical development, she successfully interviewed for the first cohort of the Trust's NMAHP Research Internship in 2016.

She carried out a small scoping review of developmental care on the cardiac PICU, supported by an academic supervisor, and had the opportunity to spend time within the paediatric clinical research team. This experience led to a collaboration with a physiotherapy colleague on a systematic review of caregiver experiences in the cardiac PICU.



Rebecca left the world of ventilators, VADs and ECMO for clinical research in 2019. She was initially based in general paediatrics with a caseload incorporating rheumatology, allergy, respiratory, and later Covid-19, research. More recently she has been based at the Clinical Research Facility where she led clinical trials focused on Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy, Spinal Muscular Atrophy and mitochondrial disorders. Rebecca completed an MSc in 2024 with a dissertation exploring the experiences of families participating in clinical trials.

Children's Clinical Research Nurses

Clinical research nurses support the delivery of clinical trials and studies through the coordination of patient visits, the collection of data, and the administration and monitoring of any investigational products or interventions. In Newcastle Hospitals, they predominantly deal with trial participants under the age of 18 years across a range of specialties within paediatrics. Children's clinical research nurses run a variety of studies which may include a portfolio of Allergy, Dermatology, Endocrinology, General Paediatrics, Haematology, Immunology, Neuromuscular, Renal, Respiratory, Rheumatology and Surgery.

Clinical trials are essential to patient safety for the diagnosis, treatment, prevention and cures for disease, as they determine the evidence-base for new treatment, medication and interventions. Our role is varied, with clinical responsibilities such as patient observations, carrying out ECGs, obtaining and processing blood samples, and IV/oral drug administration. We are trained on each study protocol and form the link between the study sponsor, medical team, study participants and wider MDT as trials progress.

Julie Tucker on behalf of the North East and North Cumbria Learning Disability and Autism Network

The North East and North Cumbria Learning Disability and Autism Network aim to make this the best place to live for people with a learning disability. We work in partnership with experts with lived experience and health and care experts on a wide range of topics.



The Reasonable Adjustments Digital Flag is one project which is set to positively change the way we work and interact with patients. The flag is a national tool that will link the different NHS digital systems to the central information store and enable a person's reasonable adjustments to be identified and shared. This session will discuss the flag and the benefits it will bring along with explaining how it works.

Dr Balsam Ahmad, PhD, MPH, FFPH, Consultant in Public Health at Newcastle Hospitals and Honorary Lecturer at the Population Health Sciences Institute, Newcastle University

Throughout her career, Balsam has had extensive experience leading successful collaborations at the interface of research and practice.

In her current role, she is the educational lead for Public Health Training and leads on Population Health Management (PHM), prevention and addressing health inequalities. She is co-lead for Public Health at the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) Regional Research Delivery Network (RRDN) for North East North Cumbria.



Balsam is a working carer of a young person who has experienced a sudden lifechanging illness and disability. She uses her lived experience navigating the complex system of health and care to advocate for addressing health inequalities experienced by patients and carers, especially those impacted by a spinal cord injury.

Dr Alex Wilson, clinical psychologist in the neuropsychology service within Psychology in Healthcare at the RVI

Alex works with adults and children with a range of neurological conditions. In his clinical role, he sees patients for cognitive assessment to assist in understanding and managing cognitive difficulties. Alex is supported by a Chief Nurse Post-Doctoral Fellowship funded by the Trust's Researcher Development Institute.



As part of his fellowship, Alex is delivering a research project that is investigating what clinicians are doing currently in the Trust to provide reasonable adjustments for autistic patients and patients with learning disabilities. In exploring clinicians' experiences, successes and challenges in making reasonable adjustments, we hope to make recommendations about improving provision for these patient groups who often have trouble accessing care.

Emma Prendergast is a Nurse Consultant, Vulnerable Older Adults

Emma is a Nurse Consultant specialising in Dementia Care and brings over 20 years of expertise as a Registered Mental Health Nurse and a qualified Non-Medical Prescriber.

Her role encompasses service and practice development, education and training, and the delivery of advanced clinical practice, with a strong focus on supporting vulnerable older adults living with dementia.



A significant aspect of Emma's work involves providing expert cognitive assessments, clinical advice, and tailored support to patients, families, and multidisciplinary teams. This includes the care of individuals admitted with undiagnosed dementia, delirium on a background of cognitive decline, and those with complex presentations.

She also works within the Trust's Memory Clinic, delivering nurse-led diagnostic assessments, medication management, and post-diagnostic support, collaborating closely with medical colleagues including specialists in Old Age Psychiatry and Older People's Medicine.

Through her clinical leadership and specialised practice Emma is dedicated to advancing dementia care pathways, improving the experience of patients and carers, and supporting colleagues in delivering evidence-based, person-centred care across the organisation.

Tracy Hinchliffe (formerly Ord), Assistant Professor (Adult Nursing), Northumbria University

Tracy's nursing career spans over thirty years, with extensive clinical and leadership experience in urology, urogynaecology, and research. She has held senior roles including Nurse Consultant in Urogynaecology and Nurse Specialist in both urogynaecology and urology services.

Tracy led innovative work on the *Trial Without Catheter at Home* programme for post-natal women, which was recognised and published by NHS England as a case study of best practice: NHS England Case Study.

Her academic interests include the impostor phenomenon, a subject she first explored during her MSc in 2017 and has personally experienced since her time as a third-year student nurse. Her research, "*Unmasking Impostor Phenomenon: A Study of Nurses in Specialist Roles*" published in the British Journal of Nursing, 2024, has contributed to the growing discourse on psychological wellbeing in nursing.

Tracy is currently pursuing a PhD focused on this topic and has presented her work at various national and international forums, both in person and virtually.



David McClinton is a Matron in Cancer Services, Newcastle

David qualified as a nurse in 2004, following in the footsteps of his mother who worked as a ward sister for a respiratory ward and then towards the end of her nursing career worked in various nurse specialist roles.

He initially sought a career in the dynamic and fast paced care of acutely unwell patients, in intensive care units or outreach teams and became an Advanced Nurse Practitioner at Guys and St Thomas' Hospital in London, later progressing into a Matron role where he stayed for four years.

David moved up to Newcastle and has been a Matron at the Northern Centre for Cancer Care now for six years. He takes real pride in leading on the development of services and the professional development of individuals ensuring that they are best placed for the next steps of their own careers. He is currently studying for a Masters in Leadership and Management and looks forward to sharing his experiences and discussing successful leadership in senior roles.



Steven Hewitt is a Health Improvement Practitioner (Advanced) at the Newcastle Hospitals

Steven has proudly worked at the Newcastle Hospitals for nearly 6 years, firstly as a Learning and Development Officer within the Education Workforce Development team and for the last two years as the Health Improvement Practitioner Advanced (Staff Health and Wellbeing) as part of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Team.



In the environments we work in, it is vitally important to make sure we take care of ourselves and our colleagues. Steven's selfcare and resilience workshop will include some top tips and signposting to support.

Dr Linda Tinkler is NMAHP Research Lead at the Newcastle Hospitals

Linda's role revolves around facilitating and developing research capacity and capability within our nursing, midwifery and allied health professionals (NMAHP) here in Newcastle. She provides support, mentorship, and signposting to individual clinicians, whilst also developing and leading on trust wide policies and infrastructure.



Linda's aim is to support our NMAHPs who are interested in or already leading their own research to impact on patient care.

Charlotte Fox is the Business Innovation Manager for the Newcastle Hospitals

Charlotte's role is to support innovators as they endeavour to reduce health inequalities and improve the health of people in the North East in a sustainable and high-quality way.

She works closely with colleagues, subject matter experts and industry to understand what the issues are – finding the pinch points, the problems and seeking out those innovative solutions to help bring bright ideas through to deliver outstanding care for patients. And where the ideas don't exist yet, she works with colleagues to look at how to create them through conversations, events and collaboration.



Charlotte says "Innovation in healthcare is the driving force behind providing quality care and the best outcomes for patients so it's extremely rewarding to nurture, support and unlock innovative thinking and opportunities in the NHS.

"We all want to provide the best possible services and care for patients and it's really exciting to help colleagues realise their bright ideas, pioneer new technologies, connect the NHS with industry and companies to collaborate on ground-breaking initiatives."

Day 2 Closing Speakers

Catherine Feeney is a Nurse Consultant working in the nationally commissioned Mitochondrial Service

Catherine qualified as a nurse in 1990 and spent the majority of her career at the RVI in Newcastle, working across various senior nursing roles within Neurosciences. This included serving as a Clinical Nurse Specialist for Parkinson's and later as a Matron, where she developed a strong foundation in managing complex neurological conditions.



She developed an interest in mitochondrial disease whilst caring for patients and families dealing with the complex physical and emotional challenges that rare diseases bring. As the UK's only Mitochondrial Nurse Consultant, Catherine works within the Nationally Commissioned Mitochondrial Service supporting people affected by this rare genetic condition.

She provides direct patient care running the Mitochondrial Reproductive Advice Clinic (MRAC) which reviews and confirms genetic diagnoses, assesses fitness for pregnancy from a mitochondrial disease perspective and offers psychological support and advice regarding reproductive options for IVF-based techniques, including preimplantation genetic diagnosis (PGD) and mitochondrial donation.

Once assessed in this clinic, and if considered appropriate, couples will be referred to the Mitochondrial Assisted Reproductive Technologies (Mito-ART) Clinic at Newcastle Fertility Clinic at Life.

Catherine also coordinates a specialist reproductive pathway for women considering options such as [mitochondrial donation](#) – a pioneering IVF technique that reduces the risk of inherited mitochondrial disorders. This treatment became legally available in the UK in 2016, following landmark legislation.

In the absence of a cure for mitochondrial disease, Catherine helps families make informed reproductive choices to minimise the risk of passing on mitochondrial mutations offering expert consultation to patients, carers and healthcare professionals – not just in the UK, but internationally.

Eilis Moody is a Nurse Consultant in Reproductive Medicine at Newcastle's Life Sciences Centre

Eilis qualified as a nurse at St James's Hospital, Dublin in 1992 and moved two years later to London where she started her career specialising in fertility medicine at King's College Hospital Assisted Conception Unit.

She completed her Diploma in Assisted Conception Nursing at the RCN and developed skills in history taking, fertility consent, ultrasound scanning, embryo transfer and egg retrieval.



Eilis moved to Newcastle in 2002 joining the team at the Newcastle Fertility Clinic and has continued to practice in an advanced role ever since being involved in many service development and research projects that the team has undertaken. She completed her degree in 2005 and masters in 2023.

She describes her Nurse Consultant role as allowing her to work autonomously to deliver a combination of clinical leadership, education, research and advanced clinical practice. She has provided care and expertise across all fertility treatments offered and has a lead role in the surrogacy and mitochondrial donation programmes.

As part of the joint mitochondrial and fertility team at Newcastle Eilis helps patients with mitochondrial disease navigate the fertility aspects of their care, explaining their fertility treatment pathways and offering practical and emotional support as they progress through treatment.

Eilis's research activity includes a research project in conjunction with Duke University to look at how UK and US men adapt to a diagnosis of male factor infertility and she is currently site lead for a research project looking to improve the delivery of difficult results and outcomes to fertility patients. Eilis has written for publication and is currently finalising a book chapter for a publication aimed at nurses entering the fertility field.

She holds two national roles as part of the executive committee for the Senior Infertility Nurses Group and for the British Fertility Society (BFS). These roles allow Eilis to promote the value of fertility nursing, advocate for patients and influence national policy decisions affecting fertility care and practices.

Eilis also delivers teaching during British Fertility Society study week promoting advanced nursing practice in fertility care and she is also involved at various STEM events encouraging young people to consider a career in fertility nursing and educating them about their own fertility.

Breakout sessions

Please use the link below to book your breakout sessions. If you do not submit a choice we will allocate sessions on your behalf.

<https://forms.office.com/e/hGzmB9v8Nk>

Thursday 18th September morning sessions

Time	A - Clinical	B - Education	C - Leadership
10.30 - 11.00	Health-Related Stigma Mel Hall , Nurse Specialist Haemoglobinopathy (Adults)	Cancer Podcast Caroline Tweedie , Lead Cancer Nurse, South Tyneside & Sunderland NHS Foundation Trust	Self-compassion and Leadership Karen Priest , Senior Workforce Development Officer
11:00 – 11:30	Nurse-led COPD Clinic Katie Kaiser , Senior CNS, Home Mechanical Ventilation	Enhanced Induction for Nurse Specialists - Building an Agenda (Workshop) Rachel Orwin , Lung Cancer Nurse Specialist / Research Fellow	A SCHWARTZ Round on the theme of 'Decision making' facilitated by Jenny Coles , Clinical Psychologist, sharing – Sheila, Annie and Sally
11.30 – 12.00	Tuberculosis (TB) Fiona Cook , Nurse Specialist Lead, North of Tyne TB Service		

Thursday 18th September afternoon sessions

Time	D - Clinical	E - Education	F - Research
13.00 – 13:30	Introduction to Genomics for nurses – Gill Moss , Nursing Director, NEY GMSA Pharmacogenics – Lindsay O’Dair , Deputy Clinical Lead, Northern Genetics Service	Advanced Communication Skills Training - a Teaser Hayley English , Lung Cancer CNS & Jacqui Beaty , HPB & Rapid Diagnostic Service Nurse Specialist	Introduction to Research James Faraday , Deputy NMAHPs Research Lead
13:30 – 14:00	Genomics & the role of Genetic Counselling – Sharon McDonnell , Principle Genetic Counsellor, Northern Genetics Service		Research Fellows Panel – research pathways and Q&A session, Sarah Hogg , Matthew Harris & Karen Caulfield
Comfort break 14:00 – 14:25			
14:25 – 14:45	Genomics in Practice – Cancer – Anna Whaite , Genetic Counsellor, Northern Genetics Service Genomics in Practice – Inherited Cardiac Conditions – Sarah Lamb , ICC Clinical Nurse Specialist, Freeman	Advanced Communication Skills Training - a Teaser Hayley English and Jacqui Beaty , Nurse Specialists	Clinical Academic Role Professor Annette Hand , Professor of Nursing and Clinical Academic - Newcastle Hospitals and Northumbria University
14:45 – 15:15	Where to find out more – Denise Barnes , Lead Midwife, NEY GMSA Q&A		Creating a poster James Faraday , Deputy NMAHPs research lead

Friday 19th September morning sessions

Time	G - Clinical	H - Education	I - Research
10.30 - 10.55	Steroids and Glucose Management Léa Davidson , Diabetes Nurse Specialist and Zoe Collins , Clinical Governance and Patient Safety Lead	Paediatric Patient Educator for Weight management Alice Walley , Nurse Specialist	Valuing Research Roles in Delivering Excellence Sarah Hogg , Research Nurse
10.55 - 11.20		Nurse Specialist Programme Nurse Specialists Jill Ferguson , Paediatric Metabolics and Clare Smith , Paed Urology / Stoma Care	Demystifying Clinical Research Chris Barron , Cancer Network Team Lead
Comfort break 11:20 – 11:35			
11:35 – 12:00	Grand Round Lucy Craig , Nurse Consultant, Paediatric Rheumatology	Student Cancer Spokes Rachel Orwin , Lung Cancer CNS & Research Fellow, Karen Christie , Cancer Clinical Educator, Julie Hopper , Practice Placement Facilitator	Research about Uncertainty Anne McDonnell , Nurse Specialist Paediatric Allergy and Immunology
12:00 – 12:25		Academic Role Lottie Gordon , Assistant Professor of Nursing, Northumbria University	Impact on Patient Participation Becky Sarjeant , Children's Research Nurse

Friday 19th September afternoon sessions

Time	Clinical	Leadership	Research
13:30 – 14:00	Reasonable Adjustments Julie Tucker , Project Manager, <u>North East and Cumbria Learning Disability Network</u>	Confidence in decision making Tracy Hinchliffe , Assistant Professor in Adult Nursing, Northumbria University	“Being Research Positive” What the evidence tells us and how you can help Dr Linda Tinkler , NMAHPs Research Lead, Newcastle Hospitals
14:00 – 14:30	Dementia & Decision Making Emma Prendergast , Nurse Consultant, Newcastle Hospitals	Leadership in Senior Roles David McClinton , Matron, Cancer Services, Freeman	
Special Educational Needs and the Specialist Nurse Dawn Robson, Designated Clinical Officer SEND & Dr Kim Barrett , Consultant Paediatrician, Forensic Paediatrician, SEN (Special Educational Needs) lead for GNCH (Break optional)		Coffee and tea break 14:30 – 14:45	
14:45 – 15:15	Addressing Health Inequalities Dr Balsam Ahmad , Consultant in Public Health, Newcastle Hospitals	Resilience and Self-care Steven Hewitt , Health Improvement Practitioner	Innovation in Healthcare - “Hack your practice: Rapid problem solving for everyday challenges” Charlotte Fox , Business Innovation Manager
15:15 – 15:45	Autism & Learning Disability Experiences & Staff Training Alexander Wilson , Research Fellow and Psychologist		

Poster presentations and voting link

Link to posters <https://skillsacademy.newcastle-hospitals.nhs.uk/about/coming-soon/nurses-in-specialist-roles-conference-2025/>

Link to vote <https://forms.office.com/e/h28PHRke1x>

Pre conference optional reading and viewing

[Principles for advanced practice - The Nursing and Midwifery Council](#)

[NMC's Principles for advanced practice Practitioner Webinar on YouTube:](#)

[NMC's Advanced practice conversations with Professor Alison Leary on YouTube](#)

Access Learning Lab (internal Trust staff only) for '[An Introduction to Clinical Research and the Role of research Nurses within the NHS](#)'

[Clinical researchers in the UK: reversing the decline – UKRI](#)

[The Nurse Researcher Podcast](#)

[Job Planner - Apollo Nursing Resource](#)

Conference planning committee – meet the team

Rachel Orwin is a Lung Cancer Nurse Specialist and Research Fellow (see [previous bio](#))

Rachel is passionate about raising the visibility and value of Nurse Specialists and enabling Nurses in Specialist roles to embed all four pillars of practice into their job plans.

She has been at the helm of organizing the Newcastle Hospitals' Nurses in a Specialist Role conference since the inaugural conference last year and is delighted to see it return bigger and better than before with inspirational speakers on both days, alongside a wide and diverse range of topics to be explored.



Karen Christie is a Clinical Educator in Cancer Services and Clinical Haematology (see [previous bio](#))

Karen is passionate about enabling people to reach their potential, ensuring high standards of patient care and has worked alongside Rachel to successfully plan and deliver conferences with a focus on nurses in specialist roles as well as cancer services in recent years.

She looks forward to seeing this second conference unfold.



Lee McKay, Nurse Consultant - Children's Home Ventilation Service at the Great North Children's Hospital

Lee has worked at the Newcastle Hospitals since qualifying in January 2002. She has worked as a staff nurse and sister within general paediatrics and children's respiratory before moving into a nurse specialist role within the children's respiratory department, specifically home ventilation. She has recently progressed into a Nurse Consultant post.

Lee completed a senior leadership apprenticeship and as part of this she gained an Msc in Global Leadership and Management in Healthcare and Chartered Management status.



Hayley English, Lung Cancer Nurse Specialist, Newcastle upon Tyne (see previous bio)

Hayley originally joined Ward 34 at the Northern Centre for Cancer Care as a healthcare assistant where she was supported to study for her nursing degree. She has worked in neurosurgery and intensive care before being appointed as a Long Covid Nurse Specialist and then moving into her current role as a Lung Cancer Clinical Nurse Specialist.



Carly Blagojevic, Nurse Specialist in the Children and Young People's Diabetes Team

Carly has worked at the Royal Victoria Infirmary since 2001, firstly as a staff nurse on a number of different children's wards before taking up the role of Nurse Specialist which she has enjoyed for the last 20 years. As the management of diabetes has evolved, she has seen the service grow from two specialist nurses to a current team of five.

Carly has recently completed a senior leader apprenticeship, incorporating a MSc in Global Leadership and Management in Healthcare and chartered management institute qualification. As part of her dissertation, she undertook research into the first year of care provided to children with Type 1 Diabetes. She feels she can now say that research is fully embedded as one of the four pillars of her practice and looks forward to doing more.

Carly has enjoyed working on the conference planning committee and hopes that children's nurses can share learning and best practice with adult nursing colleagues.



Carol Ferriman, Lipid and Metabolic Nurse Specialist, Newcastle

Carol has been qualified for 25 years, has a medical background and has worked as the Trust's lipid and metabolic specialist nurse for six years.

Sponsorship and support

This year's Nurses in a Specialist Role Conference is kindly supported by:

Newcastle Hospitals Charity



We would also like to thank our sponsors:

- Abbott Diabetes Care
- Bristol Myers Squibb
- B Braun

Please note we will have industry representatives attending our two-day conference:

Newcastle Hospitals Skills Academy

For course enquiries, bookings and other queries:

Email: nuth.newcastlehospitalsskillsacademy@nhs.net

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11 September 2025



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