



NORTHERN IRELAND
**ADVANCING
HEALTHCARE
AWARDS 2025**

WINNERS' GUIDE

ADVANCING HEALTHCARE AWARDS
NORTHERN IRELAND 2025

**Celebrating the winning entries,
presented on Thursday 23 October 2025
Stormont Hotel, Belfast**



Chamberlain Dunn Events

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**INNOVATION
CREATIVITY
LEADERSHIP
COMPASSION**



Congratulations to all our winners and finalists

Welcome to the work of the finalists of the 2025 Advancing Healthcare awards Northern Ireland for allied health professionals, healthcare scientists and those who work alongside them.

The Advancing Healthcare Awards Northern Ireland ceremony was held in Belfast at the Stormont Hotel on Thursday 23 October 2025. We achieved over 100 entries this year, which is a fantastic achievement at a time when the healthcare workforce is facing so many challenges. It's a huge tribute to the dedication and creativity of AHPs and healthcare scientists in Northern Ireland.

A special thank you to our sponsors and supporters who not only provided financial support but helped us with the huge task of judging. These organisations are:

Our award category sponsors:

- Ulster University, School of Health Sciences
- HCS Clinical Education Centre
- Public Health Agency
- Institute of Biomedical Science
- Ulster University, School of Nursing and Paramedic Science
- Macmillan Cancer Support
- HSC Leadership Centre
- 38 (Irish) Brigade & Joint Military Command (Northern Ireland)

Our special supporters:

- Allied Health Professions Federation Northern Ireland
- Unite the Union
- Chartered Society of Physiotherapy Northern Ireland
- Northern Ireland Ambulance Service
- Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists Northern Ireland

Our judging day was kindly hosted by the Clinical Education Centre on Tuesday 9 September 2025.

The judges found the experience inspiring and challenging, selecting winners from so many outstanding entries. This Winners' Guide summarises the work of the finalists and gives contact details.

Thank you to everyone who helped to make the 2025 Northern Ireland Awards so successful.

Will Chamberlain-Webber

Managing director, Chamberlain Dunn
November 2025



Our Winners' Guide is a vital part of the Advancing Healthcare awards programme. We are proud of it for (at least) four reasons:

1

It gives participants, guests, entrants and the wider healthcare world a chance to digest more fully the work of the finalists

2

It is a more permanent record of the achievements of AHPs and Healthcare Scientists in Northern Ireland in 2025 than an awards ceremony can ever achieve

3

It gives contact details for those wanting to find out more to build on their own work and to share experiences

4

It helps us to stand out from the crowd – very few award organisers take the trouble to deliver this final piece of the jigsaw.

If you would like to be involved in the Advancing Healthcare Awards, please contact:

Ellie Hayden on
ellie@chamberdunn.co.uk or call

020 8334 4500



Award for Creative and Innovative Practice

WINNER & OVERALL WINNER

Narrowing the search – Maternity and Paediatric equipment within the Northern Ireland Ambulance Service

Orla Morrow

Clinical Practice Lead (Acute Care), Northern Ireland Ambulance Service

The Northern Ireland Ambulance Service (NIAS) undertook a project to address clinician-highlighted barriers in caring for paediatric and maternity patients.

The result was the development and rollout of a remodeled, combined maternity and paediatric response bag, making NIAS the first in the UK to implement such a combined bag. Clinicians were actively involved from the start in the co-design and co-production process and expert input was also sought from paediatric clinicians in the local emergency department.

A key successful outcome from this project is the increase in clinician self-rated confidence levels when managing maternity or paediatric emergencies. Clinician feedback described the new bag as 'fantastic and very beneficial' and 'invaluable in enhancing skills and abilities'.

The judges felt that it was clear that patient care is more efficient, and staff are more prepared with better cognitive knowledge, as a result of this excellent work - citing the fantastic communication between all stakeholders, along with the fact that the project is highly scalable and cost effective among the reasons that this entry was chosen as the overall winner of the Advancing Healthcare Awards Northern Ireland 2025.

“...Patient care is more efficient, and staff are more prepared with better cognitive knowledge as a result of this excellent work”

CONTACT: Orla Morrow, Clinical Practice Lead (Acute Care), Northern Ireland Ambulance Service, Orla.Morrow@nias.hscni.net

HIGHLY COMMENDED



“The day we went to Bangor...” House 10 – From a Hospital to a Home

Clare Sheridan-Henry, Lead Occupational Therapist – Mental Health & Resettlement Project Lead, South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust and the House 10 Staff Team

This project saw the creation of a 6 bedded, intensively supported living environment for people with Treatment-Resistant Schizophrenia.

This was enabled via intensive Mental Health Occupational Therapy and a partnership between the South Eastern Trust, Choice Housing & Inspire.

Contact: **Clare Sheridan-Henry**
Clare.Sheridan-Henry@setrust.hscni.net

FINALISTS



Establishing a Primary Care multidisciplinary pain review clinic

Leanne Holmes and Janet Eves, First Contact Physiotherapists, South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust

The Multidisciplinary Chronic Pain Review Clinic (MDT CPRC) was established at Donaghadee Health Centre to support patients with persistent pain in their GP Setting, aiming to reduce opioid use through a holistic MDT approach that offers safer, evidence-based alternatives.

Contact: **Leanne Holmes and Janet Eves**
leanne.holmes@setrust.hscni.net
janet.eves@setrust.hscni.net



Neurophysiology resources for empowering patients with complex needs

Susannah Hill, Deputy Manager and Healthcare Scientist in Neurophysiology, Southern Health and Social Care Trust

Following consultation, walk through videos of awake and sleep deprived electroencephalograms (EEG) were commissioned and filmed, to reduce anxieties on attending and aid in successful, more clinically informative EEG recordings.

Contact: **Susannah Hill**,
susannah.hill@southerntrust.hscni.net



Award for Partnership Working in Public Health

Sponsored by Public Health Agency

WINNER

Beyond the session: embedding therapeutic practice in school culture

Stuart Watson, Music Therapist, Make a Melody

This groundbreaking work focused on creating sustainable change by building the capacity of education staff. Identifying a critical gap in service delivery—sustaining therapeutic support after Allied Health Professional withdrawal—this winning team collaborated with AHP therapists to deliver music a new model of therapy clinical treatments with a triple purpose: capacity building for staff; clinical intervention for pupils; hearing the voice of the child.

This approach transforms temporary intervention into permanent delivery, embedding evidence-based practices into the school culture for lasting impact. The pilot program demonstrated showing development in communication, choice-making, functional hand-use, and attention span of pupils, while education staff confidence increased significantly.

To ensure genuine up-skilling, sessions progressively transitioned from AHP-led demonstration to education staff leading the interventions. This replicable framework demonstrates scalability across schools in Northern Ireland and to other AHP multidisciplinary team settings like brain-injury units and stroke rehabilitation.

The judges praised the creation of this sustainable practice, using music therapy as an enabling agent to capture the voice of children with no voice, by guiding them to use their bodies as instruments.

“...a sustainable practice, using music therapy as an enabling agent to capture the voice of children with no voice”

CONTACT: Stuart Watson, Music Therapist, Make a Melody
stuartwatson@makeamelody.co.uk



FINALISTS



‘Better Days Pain Support Programme’ – An interdisciplinary, community development approach to chronic pain

Heather McFarlane, AHP Consultant and Co-Chair of Better Days, Public Health Agency; **Tony Doherty**, Regional Co-Ordinator, Healthy Living Centre Alliance and the collaborative and Co-Chair of Better Days

Better Days is a co-designed, community-led support programme addressing N.Ireland's 25% chronic pain prevalence. Delivered in socially deprived areas, this independently evaluated interdisciplinary approach has improved health and wellbeing for over 2,000 people.

Contact: **Heather McFarlane**
Heather.McFarlane@hscni.net



Connect with me

Seána Kerr, Lead Speech and Language Therapist for SureStart (Belfast Health and Social Care Trust), and **Tracey Ripley-McElvogue**, SureStart Co-Ordinator, and **the full team** at East Belfast SureStart

This project combined a book, group programme and staff training package to give parents a tool to connect with their children. This will accelerate children's' brain development, enhance their learning potential, foster good mental health and life choices, reduce health inequalities.

Contact: **Seána Kerr**
seana.kerr@belfasttrust.hscni.net



Supporting the welfare needs of Ambulance Service patients: a collaborative approach to prehospital safeguarding and Social Prescribing in Northern Ireland

Des Flannagan, Head of Safeguarding, Northern Ireland Ambulance Service and **Ciara McClements**, Service Manager, Connected Community Hub, Belfast Health and Social Care Trust

A collaborative approach between the Northern Ireland Ambulance Service and Belfast Health and Social Care Trust to develop a single point of referral to the Connected Community Care (CCC) Hub, a social prescribing service, resulting in an enhanced quality of care provided to patients.

Contact: **Des Flannagan** and **Ciara McClements**
des.flannagan@nias.hscni.net
ciara.mcclements@belfasttrust.hscni.net

Award for Excellence in a Support Role

WINNER

Ronan Leyden

Administrative Officer and Therapy Assistant for the Regional Functional Electrical Stimulation Service, Belfast Health and Social Care Trust

Our judges highlighted that Ronan makes quality improvement an everyday event. A celebrity among patients for his engaging and helpful manner, his knowledge, enthusiasm and professional curiosity make them an asset to their team, the service, and to patient care.

Ronan played a crucial role in establishing the Regional Functional Electrical Stimulation (FES) Service at Belfast Health and Social Care Trust, proactively evolving his role into an innovative hybrid administrative and therapy assistant job. The FES Service, which began seeing patients in April 2024, provides non-invasive treatment using electrical charges to stimulate weak leg muscles, helping people with Multiple Sclerosis (MS) who suffer from foot drop. For the first time in Northern Ireland, this service offers the long-term loan of devices for at-home use.

“...A celebrity among patients for his engaging and helpful manner, his knowledge, enthusiasm and professional curiosity make them an asset”

CONTACT: Ronan Leyden, Administrative Officer and Therapy Assistant for the Regional Functional Electrical Stimulation Service, Belfast Health and Social Care Trust
ronan.leyden@belfasttrust.hscni.net

He is the "absolute backbone" of the service, managing medical device processes, collecting and analyzing data, staffing a user helpline, ensuring clinics run smoothly, and advocating for service users.

Ronan's work has enabled everyone with MS and foot drop in Northern Ireland to access FES assessment and device loan. Patient outcomes have been life-changing, with an average 30% improvement in walking speed, an 89% reduction in falls risk, and an 89% increase in exercise tolerance. The service has a 100% positive experience review, described by users as "truly person-centred". Ronan has also ensured service sustainability by writing Standard Operating Procedures, building databases, and using data to secure future funding.

FINALISTS



Stephen Grainger

Physiotherapy assistant, Belfast Health and Social Care Trust

Stephen, having previously worked in special education, has brought his extensive experience and passion for improving care of Autistic children to the service and he has been the key driver in a project aimed to make the physiotherapy service for Haemophilia patients more Autism-friendly.

Contact: **Stephen Grainger**

stephen.grainger@belfasttrust.hscni.net



Kelsey Knowles

Dietetic Assistant Practitioner, Northern Health and Social Care Trust

Kelsey is a motivated, enthusiastic and eager to learn member of the cancer prehabilitation team. She constantly goes above and beyond for both patients and colleagues, in a kind, person-centered way. Kelsey is the glue that holds the team together, from administration duties to patient contacts, continuously striving for excellence.

Contact: **Kelsey Knowles**

kelseyknowles16@gmail.com



Award for Excellence in Cancer Care

Sponsored by Macmillan Cancer Support

MACMILLAN
CANCER SUPPORT

WINNER

‘Tube Fed, Home Led’

Sarah Jayne Faloon, Clinical Specialist Head & Neck Oncology Dietitian, Northern Ireland Cancer Centre, Belfast City Hospital, and the Head & Neck team at Belfast Health and Social Care Trust

The 'Tube Fed, Home Led' project successfully redesigned the management of head and neck radiotherapy patients requiring a nasogastric tube (NGT) by providing outpatient management of NGT feeding, moving care out of the inpatient setting.

This collaborative redesign involved multi-professional stakeholders and service users who were vital in shaping the new protocol and educational materials. The impact has been significant. The service has saved approximately 909 inpatient bed days in six months. It reduces pressure on NHS resources and Acute Oncology Haematology Unit admissions. Patients benefit by remaining in the comfort of their homes, which supports better recovery, reduces infection risks, and improves emotional wellbeing and autonomy.

The project also eliminated the need for unnecessary chest X-rays for tube confirmation through staff training and the use of recyclable products, significantly lowering the NHS carbon footprint. The model is highly transferable and has garnered interest from other Trusts both regionally and nationally. The judges praised this winning project enables patients to return home when previously they could not, granting them greater autonomy over their care.

“...this winning project enables patients to return home when previously they could not, granting them greater autonomy over their care”

CONTACT: Sarah Jayne Faloon, Clinical Specialist Head & Neck Oncology Dietitian, Northern Ireland Cancer Centre, sarahjane.faloon@belfasttrust.hscni.net



FINALISTS



Delivering a model of equitable patient-centred prehabilitation for people living with cancer across Northern Ireland

Kelly Carolan, Macmillan NICAN Regional Pathway Integration Lead, Strategic Planning and Performance Group and **the collaborative team** across the PHA, South Eastern, Southern, Northern, Western and Belfast Health and Social Care Trusts, 11 District Councils and Macmillan Cancer Support

The Macmillan NI Prehabilitation Programme delivered personalised physical, nutritional, and emotional support to cancer patients across Northern Ireland. It improved treatment readiness, recovery, and wellbeing, while fostering long-term healthy behaviours. The programme demonstrated strong potential for scalable, integrated cancer care.

Contact: **Kelly Carolan**
Kelly.Carolan@hscni.net



Radiotherapy prostate prehab team

Sarah Jane Flynn and Denise Crone, Urology Clinical Site Specialist Radiographers, Belfast Health and Social Care Trust

The prostate prehab clinic is an innovative, patient-focused service improvement project, set up in the Radiotherapy department at the Cancer Centre, Belfast. Its aim is to inform patients about their upcoming prostate radiotherapy treatment, including preparation that the patient needs to undertake to optimise their treatment.

Contact: **Sarah Jane Flynn and Denise Crone**
SarahJane.Flynn@belfasttrust.hscni.net
Denise.Crone@belfasttrust.hscni.net

Rising Stars



Jennifer Ramsbottom

Specialist Dietitian, Belfast Health and Social Care Trust

Jennifer played a pivotal role in the development and authorship of the 'Encompass Outpatient Standard Practice Guide for Dietitians', now widely adopted across regional dietetic departments. Her tireless efforts has created safe and effective digital processes and she is widely recognised as an out-patient subject matter expert.



Meg Minihane

Specialist Dietitian, Belfast Health and Social Care Trust

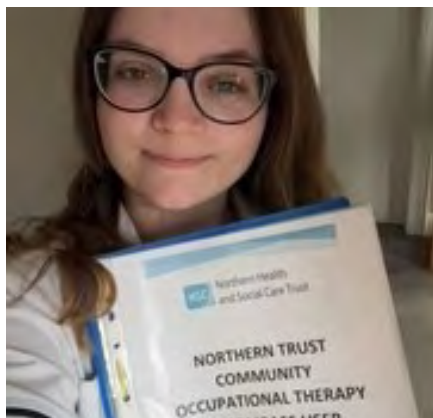
Meg has demonstrated exceptional motivation, professionalism, and clinical expertise throughout the Regional Encompass Go Live. Her proactive approach identified workflow gaps, leading to collaboration with analysts to optimise system design. She contributes to senior-level groups and regional teams and her maturity, dedication and collaborative spirit highlight her as a future leader in Dietetics.



Kathy Donaghy-Smith

Podiatry Assistant Practitioner, Primary Care and Older Peoples Service South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust

Kathy always goes the extra mile; driven, determined and hardworking. she has the job done before you even ask her. Kathy uses her own initiative and now manages her own caseload with diabetic patients and nail surgery redresses.



Aoife Campbell

Community Occupational Therapist, Northern Health and Social Care Trust

A few weeks after joining the OT team, Aoife broke metatarsal bones & wasn't able weight bear or attend Encompass training. Rather than miss 'Go live', Aoife taught herself and coached her colleagues on Encompass. This alleviated anxiety amongst the team during this period of change. Aoife also offered her assistance outside of the team and became a great resource in helping OTs across the Trust.



Fiona Harris

Occupational Therapist, Belfast Health and Social Care Trust

Fiona stands out for her exceptional time management, strong clinical judgment, and unwavering commitment to patient-centred care. Balancing both bed-based and home-based caseloads, she consistently prioritises effectively and combines compassion with confidence. Senior management have noted her maturity, leadership potential, and willingness to speak up for what's right.



Claire Tuohey

Occupational Therapist, Belfast Health and Social Care Trust

Claire goes above and beyond to make the service better. She has created a poster for the OT department to help new colleagues understand complex seating systems and introduced a monthly CPD in-service. She is consistent and a sponge for knowledge, never getting complacent with her work and always seeking new opportunities to learn professionally and personally.



Emma-Jane Simpson

Clinical Scientist (Respiratory & Sleep Physiology), Southern Health and Social Care Trust

Emma-Jane Simpson has demonstrated exceptional initiative, leading a national survey on post-qualification staff retention and using the findings to inform workforce strategy. She is also re-establishing a respiratory and sleep science network in Northern Ireland, showing both leadership and commitment to the profession. Her productivity, strategic thinking and ability to drive projects forward make her stand out as an emerging leader within healthcare science.

Award for Outstanding Service Delivery by an AHP or Healthcare Scientist Working Outside the NHS

WINNER

‘A Breath of Fresh Care’ – Transforming access to early respiratory diagnostics

Melissa Traynor, Respiratory Physiologist, Southern GP Federation

Our judges described this winning project as truly transformative, demonstrating remarkable improvements that have attracted international attention. Melissa initiated the creation of an innovative mobile respiratory diagnostics service to address a critical healthcare gap: long patient waiting times for respiratory diagnosis, which previously stretched up to 91 weeks. The judges commended its success in making high-quality diagnostics more accessible, shifting services out of hospitals and delivering care closer to home.

The physiologist-led mobile lab visits 22 GP practices, delivering advanced, quality-assured tests like DLCO (Lung Diffusion Testing) and FeNO (Fractional Exhaled Nitric Oxide) directly in the community.

This approach dramatically reduced the average waiting time for a diagnosis to just 10 weeks. The impact on patient outcomes has been substantial.

The service empowers GPs to act fast, leading to sooner treatment for conditions like asthma and COPD, resulting in better control, less deterioration, and reduced patient anxiety. This model is highly transferable, demonstrating high potential for replication across Northern Ireland and beyond.

“...This award-winning project is truly transformative, demonstrating remarkable improvements that have attracted international attention”

CONTACT: Melissa Traynor, Respiratory Physiologist, Southern GP Federation
Melissa.Traynor@armaghdungannonfed.co.uk



FINALISTS



Buddy Chat

Sue McBride, Policy Advisor, **Ruth Sedgewick**, Speech and Language Therapist and Head of NI Office, Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists and **Angela Murphy**, Speech and Language Therapist, Consultant for the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists

Buddy Chat is a free, co-designed multimedia programme for primary schools in Northern Ireland. It raises awareness of speech, language, and communication needs (SLCN) through interactive video lessons, games, and real-life stories, fostering empathy and inclusion, and empowering children and staff to create communication-friendly environments.

Contact: **Sue McBride**
sue.mcbride@rcslt.org



Julianne Dickenson

Specialist Weight Management Dietitian, Solutions Weight Management by Julianne

Solutions Weight Management is the only dedicated dietetic weight management service in Northern Ireland. Julianne is a passionate advocate for those living with obesity, offering a free monthly weight loss support group to provide access to those at greatest need.

Contact: **Julianne Dickenson**
info@solutionsweightmanagement.co.uk

Award for Service Improvement

Sponsored by the HSC Clinical Education Centre,
Business Services Organisation

WINNERS

The CoreLIMS Project transforms NI laboratory systems, enhancing patient care

The CoreLIMS team, at Business Services Organisation

The CoreLIMS Project successfully completed the nationwide roll-out of a single, modern Laboratory Information Management System (LIMS) across all Health and Social Care Trusts and the NI Blood Transfusion Service. This 18-month project replaced seven separate, outdated systems. CoreLIMS is a key enabler for pathology transformation, delivering a safer, more efficient, and higher-quality service.

Patient benefits include reduced waiting times, and by eliminating duplicate testing, the system aims to reduce the annual pathology spend and ensures service sustainability with standardised regional processes. The judges stated that this project shows how engaging with people that actually use systems is vital to building relationships, creating buy-in and delivering successful improvement to a vital service.

CONTACT: Niall O'Hagan, Programme Manager - CoreLIMS, Business Services Organisation, Niall.Ohagan@hscni.net



“...shows how engaging with people that actually use systems is vital to building relationships and delivering successful improvement to a vital service”

The Paediatric Complex Needs Physiotherapy Team

South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust

The Paediatric Complex Needs Physiotherapy Team empowered families to manage their children's respiratory needs at home, addressing difficulties accessing GPs or the Emergency Department by training two physiotherapists as Non-Medical Prescribers.



This allowed them to prescribe respiratory medications and eliminate unnecessary hospital visits. This redesign, which included co-designing accessible respiratory care plans with families, has increased family confidence. The model is highly transferable and supports the wider development of "hospital at home" services for paediatrics. The judges praised how this team created meaningful, reciprocal relationships with their peers to ensure a robust mechanism for change.

**CONTACT: Lynsey Cunningham, Advanced Paediatric Physiotherapist in Complex Needs, South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust
Lynsey.Cunningham@setrust.hscni.net**

FINALISTS



Sleep easy – A service redesign to support new CPAP users in managing their sleep apnoea with improved therapy compliance

Charlene Kearney, Head of Clinical Physiology, and the team at Northern Health and Social Care Trust

The Sleep Physiology team undertook to improve earlier CPAP therapy compliance through improved communication and support. They have developed a system that empowers patients to be in control of their therapy, benefit earlier and make informed choices.

Contact: **Charlene Kearney**
Charlene.Kearney2@northerntrust.hscni.net



Inhale the future, exhale the past

Niall Totten, Senior Chief Sleep Physiologist, Clare McMahon, Chief Sleep Physiologist, Mater Hospital, and the team at Belfast Health and Social Care Trust

A new physiologist-led bi-level treatment service was established in 2020 for CPAP patients who were experiencing residual symptoms on treatment. This has resulted in significant cost savings, increased bed capacity and improved patient quality of life.

Contact: **Niall Totten and Clare McMahon**
Niall.Totten@belfasttrust.hscni.net
ClareL.McMahon@belfasttrust.hscni.net



The Virtual Fatigue Management Programme for Clients Living With MS

Nuala McIvor, Advanced Practitioner Occupational Therapist Neurology Outpatient Service, and the team at Northern Health and Social Care Trust

The VFMP supports clients with MS in managing fatigue through online Multidisciplinary group sessions. It offers the client education, self-management strategies, peer support and positively impacts service delivery/efficiency by increasing accessibility, reducing waiting times and promoting collaboration.

Contact: **Nuala McIvor**
Nuala.McIvor@northerntrust.hscni.net

“...created meaningful relationships with their peers to ensure a robust mechanism for change”

Award for Masters Clinical Research

Sponsored by the School of Health Sciences, Ulster University



WINNER

Artificial Intelligence in Videofluoroscopy and Fiberoptic Endoscopic Evaluation of Swallowing analysis

Alison Keys, AHP Lead for Workforce, Education and Regulation, Department of Health Northern Ireland, **Dr Orla Duffy**, Speech and Language Therapy Research Lead, Ulster University, Rosalind Rogers, School of Health Sciences, Ulster University and **Dr Clare Rainey**, Medical Imaging and Radiation Therapy, University College Cork

This research, a systematic scoping review of eighteen studies, investigated the emerging role of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in analysing gold-standard instrumental swallowing assessments: Videofluoroscopy Swallowing Study (VFSS) and Fiberoptic Endoscopic Evaluation of Swallowing (FEES). These assessments for dysphagia are typically costly, time-consuming, and prone to variability due to human subjectivity.

The review found promising progress in developing AI models for tasks like pharyngeal phase detection, anatomical segmentation and identifying penetration-aspiration in VFSS.

Although a fully automated, end-to-end AI solution has not yet been realized, the technology holds significant potential to enhance clinical decision-making, improve diagnostic accuracy, and streamline workflows.

Implementing AI could improve equity of access to these critical assessments and generate substantial cost savings for health services by reducing life-threatening complications like aspiration pneumonia. The research recommends establishing standardized reporting metrics to accelerate the successful integration of AI into clinical practice.

The judges praised the transferability of this research to other clinical research areas, calling it “topical and timely”. This submission is likely to inform practice and the potential benefit to patients and the system cannot be underestimated.

CONTACT: Alison Keys, AHP Lead for Workforce, Education & Regulation Office of the Chief AHP Officer, Department of Health, Alison.Keys@health-ni.gov.uk

FINALIST



The question of sexual dysfunction during cauda equina screening: the views of Advanced Practice Physiotherapists

Suzanne Johnston, Advanced Practice Physiotherapist, Southern Health and Social Care Trust, Shane Collins, Lecturer Physiotherapy, and **Dr Joanne Marley**, Lecturer Physiotherapy, Ulster University

Advanced Practice Physiotherapists (APPs) play a crucial role in the identification and assessment of Cauda Equina Syndrome (CES), a rare but serious spinal condition which can result in permanent impairment of bladder, bowel and sexual dysfunction. This qualitative phenomenological study aimed to explore the experiences of APPs around their current screening practices for sexual dysfunction in suspected CES and highlight suggestions for pragmatic training opportunities.

Contact: **Suzanne Johnston**
suzieandpaul@hotmail.com

“...topical and timely. This submission is likely to inform practice and the potential benefit to patients and the system cannot be underestimated.”



Award for Outstanding Leadership

Sponsored by the Institute of Biomedical Science



WINNERS

My Heart Skips a Beat – a new initiative to reduce the waiting times for a Cardiac Monitor to be fitted

David Moorhead, Senior Chief Cardiac Physiologist, **Noel Black**, Principal Cardiac Physiologist, and **the team** at South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust

This winning project created a new pathway to drastically reduce patient waiting times for a cardiac monitor fitting from over 52 weeks to a clinically acceptable timeframe. The initiative addressed the high volume of palpitations referrals and involved close collaboration with primary care, allowing monitors to be fitted in GP surgeries and then analyzed by secondary care Cardiac Physiologists.

This 'refer to test' model provided rapid diagnosis, reassurance for patients, and reduced the burden on cardiology outpatient waiting lists. This collaborative, efficient approach has been highly praised by both patients and GPs; the judges commended how this team puts patients at the centre of everything they do. They have substantially reduced waiting times to change and save lives, providing a regional model that works with Trusts for maximum impact.



CONTACT: Noel Black,
Principal Clinical Physiologist
Operational Manager for Cardiology and Palliative Care,
Noel.Black@setrust.hscni.net

“...substantially reduced waiting times to save lives, providing a regional model that works with Trusts for maximum impact”

‘No Show, Know Why’ – DNA as a signal for action

Ashling McElvanna, Principal Podiatrist, **Jennifer Madden**, Consultant Podiatrist, and **the podiatry team** at Belfast Health and Social Care Trust

The 'No Show, Know Why' project by the Belfast podiatry team sought to understand "Missingness" (missed appointments) in high-risk patients with diabetes foot ulceration, where 40% miss multiple appointments, risking amputation. The team reframed missed appointments as a system signal, not a patient failure. Research showed that the vast majority of these patients manage four or more long-term conditions and face significant socio-economic barriers.

Interventions included flexible scheduling, proactive follow-ups, tailored communications, and bringing care to patients, such as at regional dialysis units. This collective leadership approach improved access, reduced health inequalities, and delivered better, timely outcomes for those most at risk. The judges were impressed team has taken the time to understand the patient perspective and offer positive change, improving the relationship between service and user to tangibly improve the culture around non-attendance and reduce DNAs in the highest risk groups – treating DNAs as people, not statistics, to reduce health inequalities.

CONTACT: Ashling McElvanna, Principal Podiatrist, Belfast Health and Social Care Trust,
Ashling.McElvanna@belfasttrust.hscni.net

FINALISTS



Making Dreams Possible with CPAP Therapy

Gemma Moss, Chief Respiratory Physiologist and **all the team** at South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust

South Eastern Trust Respiratory Physiologists began setting patients up on a ventilator used during sleep, in a group of 12 patients at one time to allow them to get the therapy they need faster. These group set ups resulted in improved patient satisfaction and a significant reduction in waiting times.

Contact: **Gemma Moss**
Gemma.Moss@setrust.hscni.net



Refocus Every Hour to Achieve Better (REHAB) – how the Belfast Trust Community rehab team enhanced rehab delivery to clients

Elaine Monan, Clinical Lead Physiotherapist, **Emma Corrigan**, Clinical Lead Occupational Therapist, and **Craig Ballentine-Kearns**, Operational Manager, Community Rehab Service, Belfast Health and Social Care Trust

The Community Rehabilitation Service (CRS) offers short-term, multidisciplinary input to clients recently discharged from hospital. AHPs faced challenges balancing new client demands, waiting lists and targets. The project aimed to optimise the provision and timeliness of rehabilitation, with positive outcomes benefitting both clients and staff morale.

Contact: **Elaine Monan**
Elaine.Monan@belfasttrust.hscni.net

“...treating DNAs as people, not statistics, to reduce health inequalities”



Outstanding Paramedic Science Undergraduate of the Year

Sponsored by the School of Nursing and Paramedic Science, Ulster University

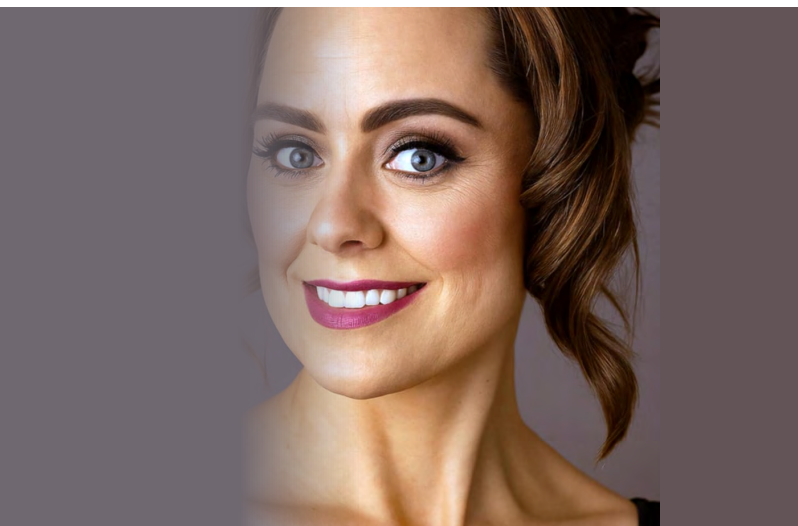


WINNER

Kristina McDaid

Paramedic Science Undergraduate (Year 3), Ulster University

CONTACT: Kristina McDaid, Paramedic Science Undergraduate (Year 3), Ulster University, mcdaid-k7@ulster.ac.uk



“...The Ambulance service and the Healthcare Service are unbelievably blessed to have such an amazing paramedic”

Award Nominated by a Patient or Service User

WINNER

Caroline Wilson

Lead Speech and Language Therapist, Knockmore Primary School Lisburn, South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust

CONTACT: Caroline Wilson, Lead Speech and Language Therapist, Knockmore Primary School Lisburn, South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust, caroline.wilson@setrust.hscni.net

“...a wonderful example of care and compassion”

The service user who nominated this winner spoke highly of their creative and innovative ways of working; citing their phenomenal support and encouragement not just of the user themselves, but of the entire family. Caroline goes out of her way to share journals, research and up-to-date information to help the family understand more, acting as their advocate by liaising with medical teams and coordinating a range of AHPs to conduct MDT assessments.

Their message to Caroline was this: “thank you for all you do for our son and the other children you care for. Your passion for your job, infectious enthusiasm and overall kindness helps parents navigate the uncertain territories of caring for a child with special educational needs. You are a wonderful example of care and compassion!”

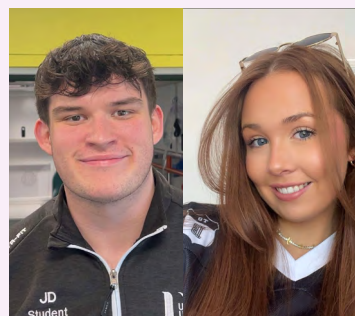
FINALISTS



Dearbhla Cunningham

Paramedic Science Undergraduate (Year 3), Ulster University

Contact: **Dearbhla Cunningham**
Cunningham-D20@ulster.ac.uk



Jonah Ditty & Lily Hamill

Paramedic Science Undergraduates (Year 1), Ulster University

Contacts: **Jonah Ditty** and **Lily Hamill**
ditty-j1@ulster.ac.uk
hamill-l15@ulster.ac.uk



Award Nominated by a Patient or Service User

Congratulations to all of our shortlisted finalists - we are delighted to share what a significant impact you are having on healthcare in Northern Ireland

Physiotherapy and Occupational Health Teams

Neurology Unit, Musgrave Park Hospital

"You change lives. You should be immensely proud of the work you do and the knowledge you have. I cannot express fully how grateful I am to you all. Keep doing what you do. It truly matters."

Aisling O'Neill

Occupational Therapist, Belfast Health and Social Care Trust

"Thank you for being extraordinary at your job and bringing a small boy successfully through a terrible ordeal so that he is now happy, chatty and bubbly and a joy to be around."

Aoibheann Maguire

Paediatric Speech & Language Therapist, Southern Health and Social Care Trust

"Thank you so much Aoibheann!

You made such a positive difference. You are wonderful at your job. Without you, Ben wouldn't have made the amazing improvements that he did. You are truly the BEST paediatric speech and language therapist that my son had.

We were very lucky to get you."

Emma Loughran

Speech & Language Therapy Support Assistant, Belfast Health and Social Care Trust

&

Wendy McConnell

Speech & Language Therapy Support Assistant, Belfast Health and Social Care Trust

"The sessions helped me to develop confidence and although I was nervous especially during the first few weeks having Emma, Wendy and the Fortwilliam staff beside me enabled me to do it and complete the course successfully and get my certificate. Everyone was really easy to work alongside and I really looked forward to our weekly sessions and seeing the plan grow each week. Thank you for all your support!"

Natalie Dean

Occupational Therapist, Belfast Health and Social Care Trust

&

Melanie Douglas

Physiotherapist, Belfast Health and Social Care Trust

"Thank you for the care, commitment and compassion you show every single day. You gave our children strength and joy and made us feel seen and supported. We are endlessly grateful — and so proud to have you caring for families like ours."

Angela Crocker and her Speech and Language Therapy Team

Belfast Health and Social Care Trust

"Thanks, we're so grateful to Angela and her brilliant team for believing in us and helping make our Easy Reads clear and strong. Their support and kindness give us confidence every day. Angela's always up for fun, even with daft glasses on TILII TV! We couldn't do this without you."



Military Medical Professional of the Year

Sponsored by 38 (Irish) Brigade & Joint Military Command
(Northern Ireland)



38 (Irish) Brigade &
Joint Military Command
(Northern Ireland)

WINNER

Lance Corporal William Bevan

2nd Battalion, The Rifles

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“...the 'go to' medic in the Battalion...He has
an outstanding work ethic and excels in all
aspects of medicine”

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hY'5Xj UbVJb['< YUH'WfY'5k UfXgB cfhYfb'fY'UbX'8&8)"

Outstanding Undergraduate of the Year

Sponsored by the School of Health Sciences, Ulster University

WINNER

Alanna O'Donnell

Diagnostic Radiography, Ulster University

CONTACT: Alanna O'Donnell, Diagnostic Radiography, Ulster University
alannasarahodonnell@gmail.com



FINALISTS



Ellie Fraser

Undergraduate in Radiotherapy and Oncology,
Ulster University

Contact: **Ellie Fraser**
elliefraser19@gmail.com



Stephanie Scrase

Undergraduate in Speech and Language
Therapy, Ulster University

Contact: **Stephanie Scrase**
scrase-s@outlook.com

The Patricia Blackburn award for Significant Contribution and Achievement

Sponsored by HSC Leadership Centre

WINNER

Pauline Douglas

Senior Lecturer in Dietetics, Ulster University

“...a cornerstone of the Northern
Ireland dietetic community,
leaving a lasting impact on the
profession”

This year's Patricia Blackburn award has been won by someone who has shaped dietetic education and practice both nationally and internationally over four decades of visionary leadership, mentorship and service.

Pauline's legacy will be marked by decades of mentorship, educational excellence, and leadership in shaping dietetic standards. Through her leadership in clinical practice, teaching, and research, she has advanced the profession and empowered generations of dietitians—ultimately enhancing patient care and outcomes.

Known for her passion, approachability, and commitment, Pauline stands as a cornerstone of the Northern Ireland dietetic community, leaving a lasting impact on the profession, the many she has mentored, and the patients whose care has benefited from her work.



Thank you to all of our judges...

Jane Hughes

Macmillan Cancer Support

Jenny Kirkwood

AHP Federation NI

Joanna Andrew

IBMS

Professor Daniel Kerr

Ulster University

Ashling Haughey

Western Health and Social Care Trust

Cora Regan

Society of Radiographers

Professor Chris Hopkins

Academy of Healthcare Science

Peter Burbidge

Department of Health Northern Ireland

Alan Hounsell

Belfast Health and Social Care Trust

Geraldine Teague

Public Health Agency

Alison Geddis

IBMS

Sinead Fitzpatrick

Healthcare Science NI Steering Group

Denise Nixon

Department of Health Northern Ireland

Dr Joanne Marley

Ulster University

Colin Dunlop

Department of Health Northern Ireland

Paul Cavanagh

Department of Health Northern Ireland

Michelle Tennyson

Department of Health Northern Ireland

Fiona McCallion

HSC Clinical Education Centre

Diane Taylor

HSC Leadership Centre

Dr John Cathcart

Ulster University

Noel Black

South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust



...And congratulations to all our winners and finalists!



Chamberlain Dunn Events

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www.chamberlainedunn.com



38 (Irish) Brigade &
Joint Military Command
(Northern Ireland)

