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**The Faculty of Health Sciences**  
presents

# The Inaugural Lecture of Professor Noel McCarthy

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# Perspectives and Public Health

Professor Noel McCarthy



Noel McCarthy is Professor of Population Health Medicine at Trinity College. He grew up in Dublin and attended Scoil Lorcáin, Kilbarrack and St Fintan's High School, Sutton before studying Medicine at Trinity, qualifying in 1989. He completed basic medical training through the Cork rotational medical scheme and as a nephrology registrar at Beaumont. In Cork he had the great good fortune to meet Mary, sharing life together in the following decades, and their two children Aise and Ciaran. A belated gap year (and a half) was spent volunteering at a l'Arche Community in France, studying tropical medicine in Liverpool and working with Médecins Sans Frontières in Zaire (now the Democratic Republic of Congo). This experience redirected his path to structural determinants of health and wellbeing alongside individual patient care.

Noel participated in the European Programme for Intervention Epidemiology Training based at the Swedish Institute for Infectious Disease Control in Stockholm, worked on food safety with the Food Safety Authority of Ireland, and undertook specialist public health medicine training on the Anglia and Oxford regional public health training schemes. He completed higher degrees in public health, statistics and zoology at the Karolinska Institute, London School of Hygiene, and University of Oxford. Appointment as Consultant in Communicable Disease Control for Oxfordshire in 2004 was in a job share alongside a part time research role at the University of Oxford Department of Zoology. His job share partner from that consultant appointment Éamonn O'Moore has also recently returned to Ireland as Director of Health Protection. This self-created clinical academic combination supported joint public health research and practice. Noel's research focussed mainly on integrating pathogen population genetics into infectious disease surveillance and outbreak investigation practice working closely with Prof Martin Maiden, his DPhil supervisor, and with colleagues in clinical and public health practice. Alongside applied and translational work bringing research approaches into practice this research used the sampling frame afforded by public health practice to address pure research questions.

*Inaugural lectures provide newly appointed professors with the opportunity to showcase their academic activity to the College community and members of the public. An inaugural lecture is a significant event in an academic staff member's career. At Trinity College, inaugural lectures are a ceremonial occasion, which is why academic robes are worn by the inaugural professor and the rest of the platform party.*

A special interest in immunisation included developing a joint advice, teaching and health service research team in this area as a collaboration across Public Health England and the Oxford Vaccine Group. Alongside these more focussed areas of work a regional research lead role within the Health Protection Agency supporting colleagues and doctors in training undertaking and publishing research outputs from diverse areas of public health practice.

Noel has worked extensively in foundation doctor and specialty training in public health, in particular integrating academic work within training. This included developing academic learning sets to support academic training for public health registrars in the West Midlands won by tender to Health Education England. He was awarded the inaugural Oxford Deanery Trainer award in Public Health and Primary Care and the Faculty of Public Health (England) national prize for trainer of the year (2019).

His service public health role moved to the Public Health England Field Epidemiology Service in 2014 as a consultant epidemiologist and he was appointed Professor of Epidemiology and Evidence at the University of Warwick in 2015. Alongside this professional mid-life move to a full clinical academic post, private mid-life exploration was around a queer identity instead of something less complicated like purchasing a Porsche. At the University of Warwick he led the University bid and contribution to the National Institute for Health Research Health Protection Research Unit (HPRU) in Gastrointestinal Infection a five-year research programme as the academic partners to the national public health agency for research in this area and also a large study on Campylobacter infection in humans and through the food chain. He was co-investigator leading medical school input to the Midlands Health Data Research UK consortium and continues a co-investigator role in a study on the transmission of gastrointestinal infections in Pakistan.

Noel took up his current post in March 2021 and has been head of discipline for Public Health and Primary Care since autumn 2021. Ambitions in this post include contributing collegially to the Medical School community, supporting medical students in gaining transformative educational experiences in becoming curious, intellectually rigorous, and reflective patient-focussed physicians, and developing areas of research integrated in public health practice in Ireland.