

Bridging Gaps, Building Futures: Integrating Disability and Inclusion through Academic Health Science Practice

Friday 3rd October 2025

The Exam Hall Trinity College Dublin



**The Third Annual Conference of the
National Chief Academic Officer (CAO) Group**

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

Dr Niamh Lennox-Chhugani



Dr Niamh Lennox-Chhugani is Chief Executive of the International Foundation for Integrated Care. With her background as a clinician, academic and consultant, she is an Integrated care researcher and implementer in an international context. She is a regular speaker at conferences, on panels, has authored peer-reviewed papers and book chapters, led and contributed to health system reviews and integrated care evaluations globally. She has a PhD from Imperial College London in organisation change in healthcare. She is on the editorial board of the International Journal for Integrated Care and sits on the advisory board of numerous integrated care research programmes.

Professor Mark Mon-Williams



Professor Mark Mon-Williams (MMW) is Chair in Cognitive Psychology at the University of Leeds, Professor of Psychology at the Bradford Institute of Health Research, Professor of Vision Science at The Norwegian Centre for Vision and a Turing Fellow at The Alan Turing Institute (the UK's National data analytics and AI Centre). He is Director of the Wolfson Centre for Applied Health Research and Impact Director for Medicine and Health at University of Leeds. He founded the Centre for Immersive Technologies, leads the Centre of Applied Education Research, and is on Born in Bradford's and Child Health Outcome Research At Leeds (CHORAL) executive boards.

Professor Mary McCarron



Professor Mary McCarron is a leading expert in ageing and intellectual disability. She is Director of the Trinity Centre for Ageing and Intellectual Disability (TCAID) and Executive Director of the National Intellectual Disability Memory Service. As founder and Principal Investigator of IDS-TILDA, the first longitudinal study of ageing in people with intellectual disabilities, she has shaped policy and improved care nationally and internationally. She has led groundbreaking research on dementia in individuals with Down Syndrome and established Ireland's first dedicated memory service for people with Intellectual disabilities. She has been instrumental in developing ethical, inclusive models of research that prioritise the voices of people with intellectual disabilities. An Honorary Professor at Queen's University and Visiting Professor at Duke, she is a Fellow of the American Academy of Nursing. With over €20 million in funding, 500+ publications, and significant policy influence, she continues to advance inclusive, impactful research and healthcare innovation.

Professor Louise Gallagher



Professor Louise Gallagher is Chief of the Child and Youth Mental Health Collaborative at the Hospital for SickKids, the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH), Director of the Division of Child and Youth Mental Health and Professor at the Dept of Psychiatry, Temerty Faculty of Medicine and the Patsy Jamie Anderson Chair of Child and Youth Mental Health. She is currently leading the strategic development of the Thriving Minds Partnership, a clinical innovation between SickKids, CAMH and the Gary Hurvitz Centre for Community Mental Health to provide accessible and seamless care to children and youth with mental health disorders. In her role at SickKids she is the Co-Chair of the SickKids Mental Health Strategy and the Co-Lead of the Gary Hurvitz Centre for Brain and Mental Health. She is a Senior Scientist at the SickKids Research Institute and at the Campbell Family Centre for Mental Health Research at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health.

Session 1 The Challenge of Intersectionality
Chair Professor Tim Lynch

TIME	TITLE	SPEAKER
08:30	Registration. Tea & Coffee	
09:00	Welcome Address	Professor Helen Whelton Chair CAO Group, and Head of College of Medicine & Health, UCC CAO HSE SW
09:10	Opening Remarks	Professor Rosemary Gowran Clinical Lead for the National Clinical Programme for People with Disability - HSE
09.20	Introduction	Professor Tim Lynch CAO HSE Dublin and Southeast
09:25	Disability & Inclusion A Road Less Travelled	Dr David Loughrey Assistant Professor in Community Health in the School of Nursing, Psychotherapy and Community Health - DCU
09:45	Introduction	Professor John Laffey CAO HSE West NW
09:50	Integrated Care – Defining for the future through the eye of the beholder	Dr Niamh Lennox-Chhugani Chief Executive of the International Foundation for Integrated Care.
10:10	Introduction	Professor Tim Lynch
	Case Study in Personalised Disability Support	Mr Duncan Hughes and Leon Video
10:15	Introduction	Ms. Mei Lin Yap PPI Ignite & TILDA IDS Ambassador
10:20	10 Years of TILDA-IDS Radical Reform – Leading with Humanity	Professor Mary McCarron (via Zoom) Professor of Ageing and Intellectual Disability, Director of the Trinity Centre for Ageing and Intellectual Disability (TCAID) and Executive Director of the National Intellectual Disability Memory Service.
10:40	Panel Discussion	Dr David Loughrey, Dr Niamh Lennox-Chhugani, Mr Duncan Hughes, Prof Rosemary Gowran, Mr TJ Duggan
11:00	Coffee Break	

Session 2 Marginalised Identities
Chair Professor Martina Hennessy

11:20	Introduction	Professor Martina Hennessy CAO HSE Dublin and Midlands
11:25	Sláintecare – Sláinte Cuimsitheach ag Ardu, Inclusion Health Rising	Professor Clíona Ní Cheallaigh – ‘It takes a pandemic (creating inclusion Health Services).’ Dr Fionnuala Cooney – ‘Needs assessment in congregate settings.’ Professor Sean Dinneen & Professor Sally Ann Lynch – ‘Werner Syndrome in an Irish Traveller family’
11:55	Health Equity and Health Outcomes. Multiplying Vulnerabilities	Professor Mark Mon-Williams Director of the Wolfson Centre for Applied Health Research and Impact Director for Medicine and Health at University of Leeds.
12:15	Q&A Session	Professor Martina Hennessy
12:25	Introduction	Professor Susa Benseler CAO Children’s Health Ireland
12:30	Bridging Gaps for Neurodivergent Youth: Building Inclusive, Neuroaffirmative Mental Health Systems	Professor Louise Gallagher Chief of the Child and Youth Mental Health Collaborative (CYMHC) at the Hospital for SickKids, the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health and the University of Toronto.
12:50	Introduction	Ms Kate Killeen White
12:55	Irish Cerebral Palsy Programme of Excellence	Lily Collison Advocate, Author, Programme Director, Gillette Children's Healthcare Press
13:05	“In Conversation” Building an Academic Health Science System for Impact	Ms Kate Killeen White REO HSE Dublin and Midlands in conversation with Lily Collison and Dr Linda Doyle Provost Trinity College Dublin
13:25	Closing Remarks	Ms Kate Killeen White
13:30	END OF CONFERENCE	

SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES



Lily Collison

Lily Collison is a globally recognised advocate for individuals with cerebral palsy (CP). Motivated by her son's diagnosis of spastic diplegia, she has been dedicated to improving outcomes for those affected by CP. She is author of *Spastic Diplegia* (2020), and co-author of *Pure Grit* (2021). In 2022, Lily was appointed Programme Director for Gillette Children's Healthcare Press at Gillette Children's Hospital, Minnesota, leading the writing of a nine-book series on childhood-acquired physical and neurological conditions. Each volume explains the condition, best-practice treatments, and families' lived experiences, with proceeds funding research. Lily has been pivotal in establishing the Irish Cerebral Palsy Programme of Excellence, creating leadership and research hubs at UCC, TCD, and RCSI to transform CP care in Ireland. Lily is a Board Member of the Health Service Executive. She was awarded an Honorary Doctorate in Medicine by UCC.



Professor Cliona Ní Cheallaigh

Professor Cliona Ní Cheallaigh is an Associate Professor in the Department of Clinical Medicine, TCD and a Consultant in Infectious Diseases and General Medicine in St James's Hospital, Dublin. She is the Clinical Lead of the Inclusion Health Service in St James's Hospital dedicated to improving access to specialist hospital care for socially excluded individuals. The service started in 2016 and now consists of a full interdisciplinary team providing inpatient and outpatient care. The team uses an integrated, trauma-informed, harm reduction approach to meet the needs of socially excluded people.



Dr David Loughrey

Dr David Loughrey is an Assistant Professor in Community Health at the School of Nursing, Psychotherapy, and Community Health, based in Dublin City University. He earned his PhD in Psychiatry at the TCD School of Medicine, where he was funded by the Irish Research Council's employment-based postgraduate research scholarship in partnership with Chime, and by the Dr. Ciaran Barry Research Scholarship awarded by the Central Remedial Clinic. He is also a senior Atlantic Fellow for Equity in Brain Health at the Global Brain Health Institute (GBHI), based at Trinity College Dublin and the University of California San Francisco, and at the Atlantic Institute based in the Rhodes Trust, University of Oxford. Dr. Loughrey's research focuses on understanding how social factors and disabilities, such as sensory impairment, may impact brain health and increase the risk of dementia.



Professor Sally Ann Lynch

Prof Lynch's interests are in rare diseases. She is the author of >200 publications including a catalogue of >100 inherited rare disorders found amongst the Irish Traveller population (2018) and a catalogue of rare variants found amongst the Roma population (2025). She received the inaugural Health research impact award from HRCI foundation in 2022. She is currently the chair of the Diagnostic Scientific committee of IRDiRC (International Rare Disease Research Consortium). She is the Irish co-ordinator for the European Reference Network ERN-ITHACA. She set up the Irish training scheme for Clinical Genetics with RCPI.



Professor Sean Dinneen

Professor Sean Dinneen is an Academic Endocrinologist based in the West of Ireland. Past leadership roles include Head of the School of Medicine, University of Galway (2013 to 2016) and National Lead for Diabetes, HSE (2016 to 2022). He was an Editor with Diabetic Medicine from 2017 to 2024. In March 2021 he became National Lead for the PPI Ignite Network, aiming to increase capacity for high quality public and patient involvement in health and social care research in Ireland <https://ppinetwork.ie/> In January 2025 he was appointed as Ireland's first Clinical Lead for a National Diabetes Registry.



Dr Fionnuala Cooney

Dr Fionnuala Cooney is the Regional Director of Public Health in the HSE Dublin and Midlands Region. Dr Cooney has 20 years' experience working in Public Health, having previously worked in hospital medicine and primary care. Her areas of special interest include women's health, child health and human lactation (as a certified Lactation Consultant) as well as population-based planning and public health ethics. The prevention of disease and the improvement of population health and wellbeing are central to her practice.



Professor Rosemary Gowran

Professor Rosemary Gowran is Clinical Lead – National Clinical Programme for People with Disability with the HSE. She is also Associate Professor in Occupational Therapy, University of Limerick and Hon Professor with the Global Disability Innovation Hub, UCL. An academic, implementation scientist and human rights activist, Rosie adopts a human security approach to support persons with disability, to address service system challenges and erosion of personhood. By collaborating to achieve goals and manage change, she successfully directs solution focused programme operations. Rosie has a proven track record of stakeholder centred co-design that engages people, services, providers, and policy makers.



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RCSI



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LIMERICK
OLLSCOIL LUIMNIGH



Sláinte Leanáí Éireann



Children's Health Ireland

The CAO Group wish to extend their heartfelt appreciation to our esteemed speakers, panellists, and contributors.

A special acknowledgment to HSE Dublin and Midlands for graciously hosting this event and to TCD for providing the historic Exam Hall as our venue.

