



**UL HOSPITALS
GROUP STRATEGY
2018-2022**
Achievements Overview



Strategic Overview

UL Hospitals Group Strategic Plan 2018-2022 Overview

Foreword



Professor Colette Cowan
CEO

In our five-year strategy, 2018-2022, we acknowledged that the long-standing demands on our hospital group and services would continue to grow. At the time, we could not have predicted a global pandemic and the challenges which it would bring. Our team's unwavering commitment to delivery of services during COVID-19 meant that we were able to not only meet demand during this very difficult time, but also expand significantly.

Our Clinical Transformation pillar kept us focused on enhancing clinical activities, patient outcomes and addressing infrastructural requirements. Under

the Collaboration & Alliances pillar, we strengthened alliances; we continued to develop our strong research and education ethos in conjunction with UL in line with Education, Research and Innovation and Digital Health during the pandemic compelled us to find new ways of delivering services.

All of our work is underpinned by our vision to be a valued, trusted and leading provider of excellence in healthcare services to the people of the Midwest.

Our new strategic planning process for the next five years is complete and we look forward to the launch of our new strategy in the coming weeks.

Executive Summary



Suzanne Dunne
Chief of Strategy and Transformation

Our strategic plan 2018-2022 was developed as part of our response and commitment to the evolving healthcare needs of the people of the Midwest region.

As we review the achievements of the strategic period in this overview, I would like to thank everyone for their work across all of our sites in delivering on the strategic goals for the greater benefit of our patients.

COVID-19 meant we needed to be agile and respond to unplanned events. We explored new ways of delivering and integrating

services and combined them with planned developments in a system wide approach to implementation.

We have achieved many deliverables over the past five years, including an additional 98 beds on the UHL campus, further development of Robotic Assisted Surgery programme and a dedicated Pain Management Centre in Croom Orthopaedic Hospital.

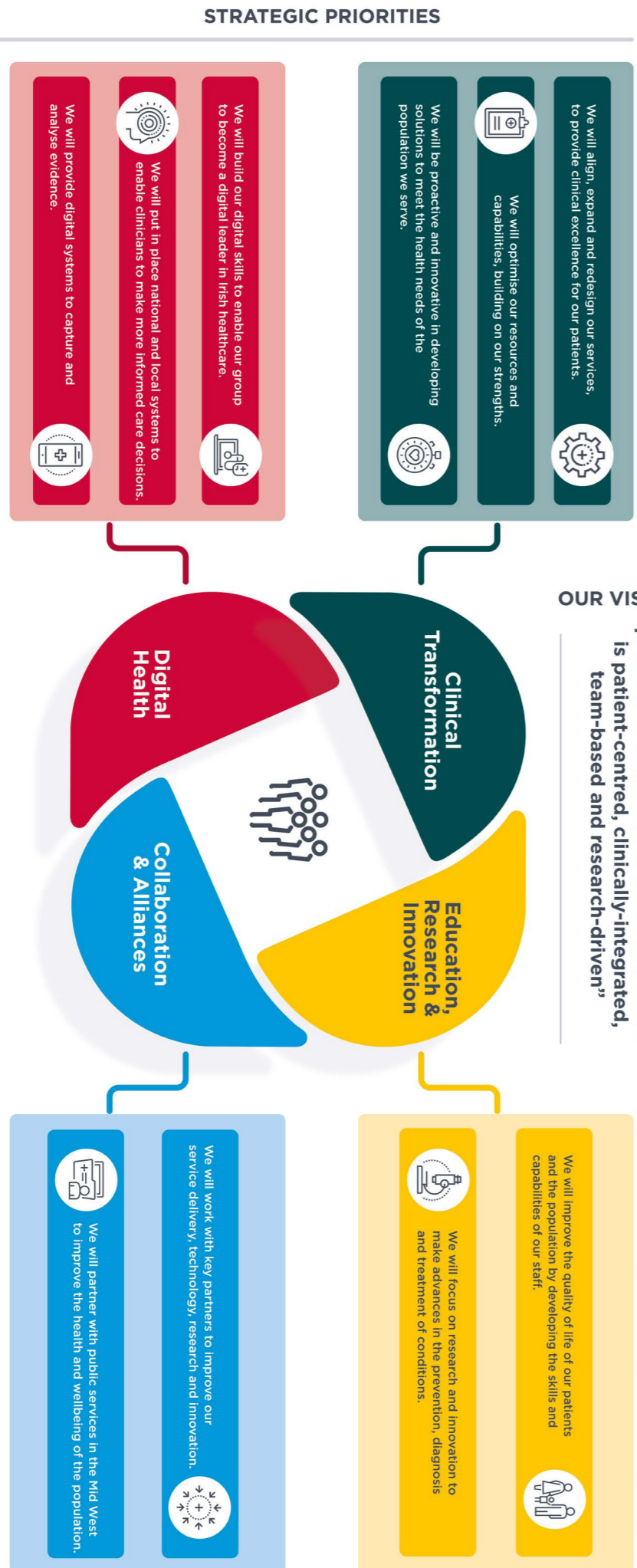
None of this would have been possible without the support of our enablers, including the commitment and determination of our People, the Operational Excellence and Financial Sustainability in our organisation.

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OUR VISION

"Be a valued, trusted and leading provider of excellence in healthcare which is patient-centred, clinically-integrated, team-based and research-driven"



Clinical Transformation

- We will align, expand and redesign our services, to provide clinical excellence for our patients.
- We will optimise our resources and capabilities, building on our strengths.
- We will be proactive and innovative in developing solutions to meet the health needs of the population we serve.

Digital Health

- We will build our digital skills to enable our group to become a digital leader in Irish healthcare.
- We will put in place national and local systems to enable clinicians to make more informed care decisions.
- We will provide digital systems to capture and analyse evidence.

Education, Research & Innovation

- We will improve the quality of life of our patients and the population by developing the skills and capabilities of our staff.
- We will focus on research and innovation to make advances in the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of conditions.

Collaboration & Alliances

- We will work with key partners to improve our service delivery, technology, research and innovation.
- We will partner with public services in the Mid West to improve the health and wellbeing of the population.

People & Culture

We will attract, retain, and develop high performing team members to represent the organisation's values and ambitions.

Operational Excellence

We will manage our resources, processes, systems, technology and infrastructure in an appropriate, purposeful and optimal way.

Financial Sustainability

We will use our resources in a financially viable and sustainable way.

Governance

Strategic Priority 1: Clinical Transformation

- Optimise our resources and capabilities, building on our strengths, and adopting proactive and innovative approaches to meet the needs of the population we serve.

Strategic Objectives

- Consolidate, expand and redesign the scale, specialization and academic excellence of clinical services across Hospital Group Sites.
- Progress enhanced forms and levels of integration between hospital and community services.
- Become an exemplar site for clinical transformation with a specific service delivery and research focus on:
 - models of integrated care (hospital and primary care / community-based services)
 - delivering accessible, timely and safe care across a Hospital Group (Model 4, Model 2, Specialist Hospitals)
 - clinical scalability and financial sustainability.

Overview of Priority 1 achievements

Emphasis was put on enhancing clinical activities, patient outcomes and infrastructural requirements which demonstrated excellent leadership in relation to integrated care models.

A total of 98 inpatient beds and 10 critical care beds have been opened in UHL since 2020 and these additional facilities proved crucial in keeping cancer, renal, respiratory and other vulnerable patients safe during the height of the pandemic.

The additional bed capacity allowed patients waiting for urgent surgical procedures to receive care at a time when so much elective care in the Group and the country was deferred.

“A total of 98 inpatient beds and 10 critical care beds have been opened in UHL since 2020”

■ University Hospital Limerick (UHL)

- **New 60 Bed Block**
€19.5m block, with modern, single-room inpatient accommodation.
- **24 Bed Block (Cancer Unit 6B)**
New facility for cancer patients, providing an improved inpatient experience.
- **New €4m Molecular Laboratory**
In response to COVID-19, now allowing increased scope for molecular testing in other infectious diseases.
- **New Acute Fracture Unit**
An innovative model of care for acute fracture patients.
- **Paediatric Emergency Department (ED), UHL**
Expansion of the Paediatric ED

■ University Maternity Hospital Limerick (UMHL)

- **Neonatal extension**
Phase 1 of a two-stage project, extending the neonatal intensive care unit at UMHL.
- **Paediatric Cardiology Service**
A dedicated Paediatric Cardiology Clinic and services at UHL and UMHL.

■ Ennis Hospital

- **Upgrade of Medical Assessment Unit (MAU)**
Extensive upgrade of MAU, for patients with chronic medical conditions.
- **New Injury Unit**
€2m Injury Unit, for treatment of breaks, sprains and minor burns.
- **New Outpatients (OPD) Department**
15 clinical rooms, a phlebotomy bay, four waiting areas, offices and changing rooms.



“New Outpatients Department at Ennis Hospital”

■ Nenagh Hospital

- **Heart Failure Support Unit**
A designated space for the Heart Failure Support Unit.
- **New Sub Fertility/ Ambulatory Gynaecology Hub**
Offering improved access and wait times for gynaecology patients and new menopause and fertility care.
- **Dedicated Cataract Unit**
A €1m investment, making Nenagh a centre of excellence for cataract surgery.

■ St John’s Hospital

- **Medical Assessment Unit (MAU) relocation**
Enabling more patients to be seen.
- **Rapid Innovation Unit (RIU),**
Involving ULHG and UL looking at 3D printing technologies and fostering an innovation ecosystem.
- **Injury Unit**
Increased opening to seven days / week, from five.



Courtyard of Mague Unit, Croom Orthopaedic Hospital

“Croom Orthopaedic Hospital’s surgical capacity increased by 100%”

■ Croom Orthopaedic Hospital

- **Mague Unit**
A new state-of-the-art ward complex with 24 en-suite single rooms.
- **€15m Theatre Suite**
A new theatre suite with four operating theatres, increasing the hospital’s surgical capacity by 100%.
- **St Anne’s Day Ward**
Renovation and refurbishment of St. Anne’s Day Ward.
- **Pain Management Centre**
Providing an enhanced quality of service to patients, with reduced wait times.

18-
22



Strategic Priority 2: Digital Health

- Set further foundations to enable UL Hospitals Group to become a future digital leader in the Irish healthcare landscape whilst enabling our priorities in terms of clinical transformation, education, research and innovation.

Strategic Objectives

- **Develop UL Hospitals Group capability, capacity and culture to support the implementation of state-of-the-art digital systems.**
- **Develop our data architecture and analytics function to support the development of evidence-based practice and data-driven care.**
- **Extend our technological infrastructure to support patient care, safety and operational effectiveness.**

Overview of Priority 2 achievements

COVID-19 compelled all departments to find new ways of providing services and care to patients. They have been successful in the delivery of digital health care and learnings from this will inform future expansion of services.

Central to continued patient engagement and provision of care during COVID-19 were virtual consultations, both individual and group sessions. UL Hospitals successfully recruited a new Group eHealth Director to lead new digital ways of working across the Group.

“...new ways of providing services and care to patients”

- **Clinical Information System (CIS) in the Intensive Care Unit (ICU)**

A CIS is an information system designed specifically for use in intensive care to facilitate data processing and display, automate routine patient care tasks, augment clinical decision-making and improve patient safety. Modules such as e-prescribing have also enhanced patient care. The ICU CIS was implemented in 12 ICU beds and involved training 120 healthcare professionals.

- **Fingerprint for Central Sterile Services Department (CSSD) in UHL, Nenagh and Ennis Hospitals**

Fingerprint is the national instrument set track and traceability system. We are delighted to be progressing the integration of Fingerprint in the Group.

- **Red2Green patient flow system**

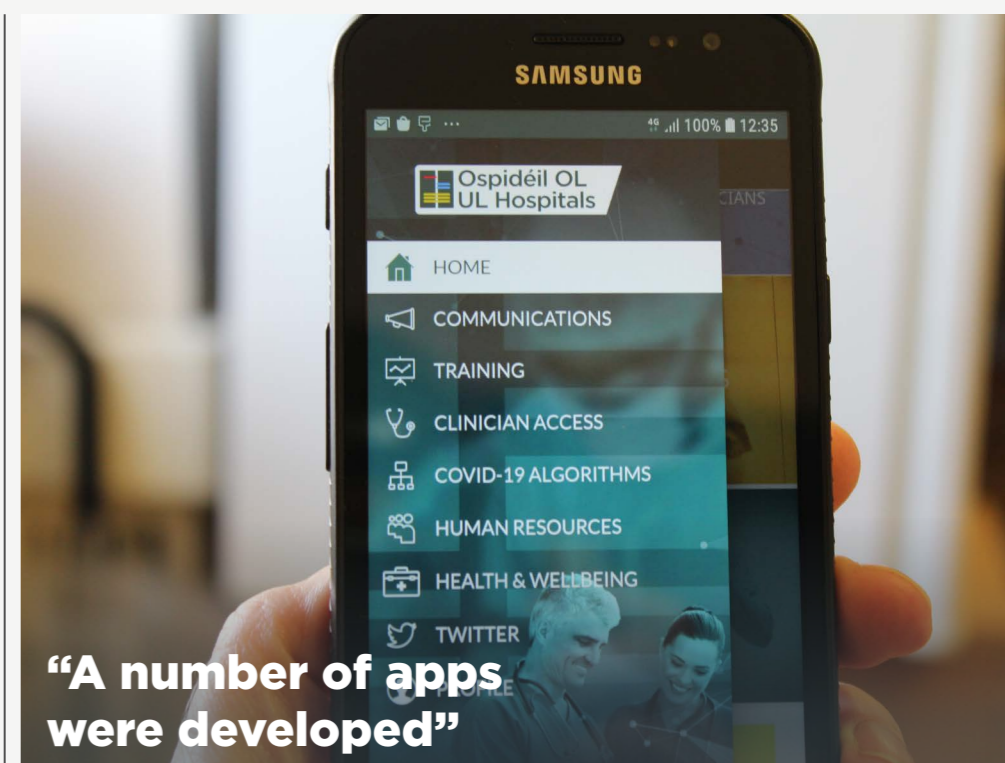
Red2Green is an electronic patient flow system, to assist in managing patient flow, predicting date of discharge or transfer of patients.

- **Digital Dictation in the Histology Department**

Installation of voice recognition replaced manual transcription for pathologists.

- **Blood Sciences project**

The Blood Sciences project is the automation of processes for Clinical Biochemistry, Haematology, Coagulation and Serology laboratories. Blood Sciences laboratory instrumentation is equipped with advanced software programs, enhancing the quality and safety of diagnostic testing.



- **UL Hospitals Group Apps**

A number of apps were developed including a Staff App, Visitor Booking App; a Diabetes in Pregnancy App, a Nursing and Midwifery App and an NCHD App.

- **Successful management of Cyber Attack**

On 14 May, 2021 the HSE suffered a major ransomware cyber-attack which severely impacted our services. Our eHealth department worked alongside national IT colleagues to manage UL Hospitals Group systems during the attack and restore them afterwards.

- **Virtual Clinics**

The COVID-19 pandemic brought many challenges. Virtual clinics helped us to adapt to ensure patients continued to receive excellent care during the biggest healthcare crisis in modern times.

- **Digital communications**

Our Communications Department introduced a number of new digital and social media platforms including a Facebook page and YouTube channel, a new corporate website and services and consultant directories. We have continued to grow our following on Twitter and LinkedIn.

“Virtual clinics helped us to adapt to ensure patients continued to receive excellent care”

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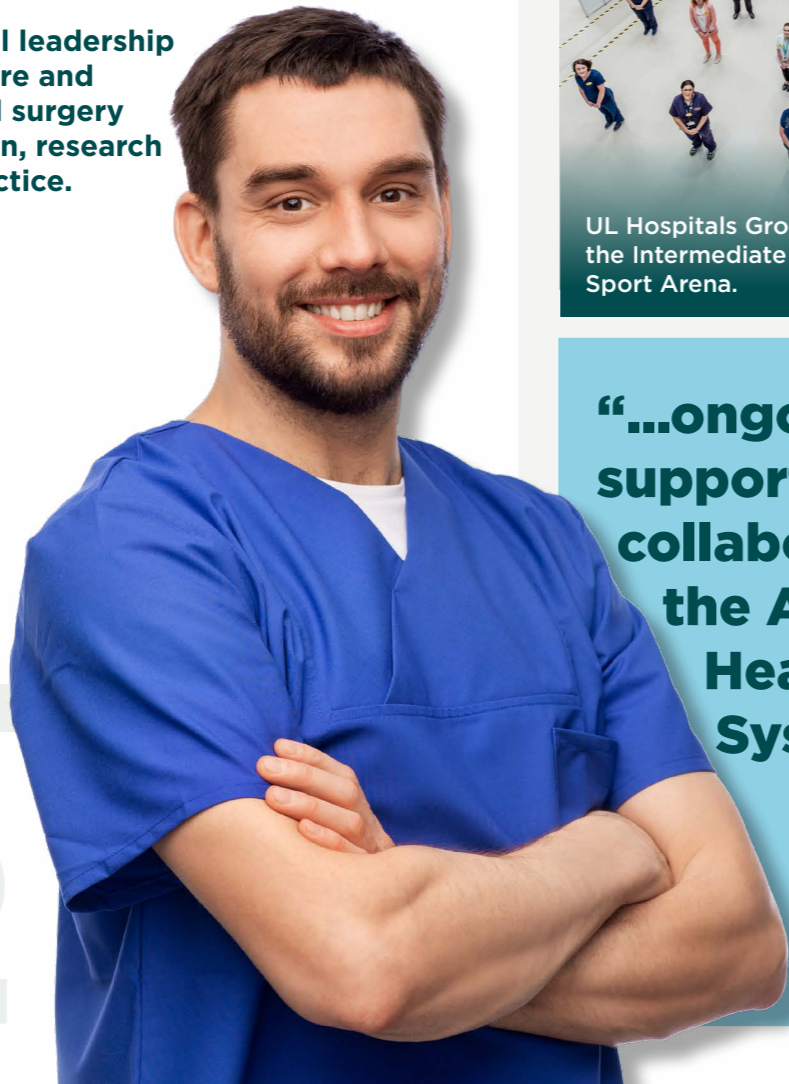


Strategic Priority 3: Education, Research and Innovation

- Improve the quality of life of our patients and populations through our commitment to skill and capability development, while also optimising our focus on research and innovation to continue service delivery advances across the prevention, diagnosis and treatment spectrum.

Strategic Objectives

- Co-lead the strategic development of the UL Academic Health Science System (AHSS) with the University of Limerick.
- Support the planning and establishment of a Healthcare & Life Sciences (HLS) campus to foster multi-disciplinary, cross-industry and health-focused innovation.
- Provide national leadership in integrated care and robotic assisted surgery across education, research and clinical practice.



Overview of Priority 3 achievements

There is a strong research and education ethos across all departments within UL Hospitals Group. This is evident through collaboration with the University of Limerick and other colleges in the provision of student placements.

There is ongoing support and collaboration with the AHSS to identify education needs and further innovation in service delivery.



UL Hospitals Group staff pictured at the Intermediate Care Facility in UL Sport Arena.

“...ongoing support and collaboration with the Academic Health Science System”

• Health Sciences Academy (HSA)

The HSA is a partnership between UL Hospitals Group, University of Limerick and HSE Mid-West Community Healthcare, launched to bring research, education and innovation closer to clinical practice. The HSA aligns with the vision of the Academic Health Science System (AHSS) a fully co-ordinated partnership between a university, healthcare system and the community. Some of the programmes undertaken to date include:

- Structured education programmes, for Type 2 Diabetes and Gestational Diabetes Mellitus
- Limerick Digital Cancer Research Centre, a multidisciplinary research initiative dedicated to improving our understanding of the biology of cancer, and finding ways to prevent, diagnose and treat the disease
- Exercise is Medicine (EIM) Midwest, an exercise-led community-based rehabilitation programme
- Intermediate Care Facility (ICF) research project, developed at UL Sport Arena as a contingency facility and solution to patient flow during the pandemic in 2021

- Junior Health Sciences Academy (JHSA), involving the Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board. Projects include the annual JHSA Early Careers event for TY students; Care Aware Crew, supporting third and fourth class students to be health promotion champions in their schools and a virtual clinic journey following a cardiac event through the patient's eyes

See healthsciencesacademy.ie



(l to r) Prof Rachel Msetfi, Dean Education & Health Sciences, UL, Prof Paul Burke, Chief Academic Officer, UL Hospitals Group and Vice Dean Education & Health Sciences UL and Miriam McCarthy, Manager Health Sciences Academy.

• Robotic Assisted Surgery (RAS)

The RAS programme uses a Da Vinci Xi Dual Console system for training of future consultant surgeons. The system allows for dual consultant surgeon operating, facilitating real-time and parallel multidisciplinary inputs during surgery.

RAS allows doctors to perform many types of complex procedures with more precision, flexibility and control than is possible with conventional techniques.

The RAS programme at UL Hospitals Group commenced in 2016 as a partnership between the Group and the University of Limerick (UL). It was the first such installation in Ireland, funded by the Mid-Western Hospitals Development Trust and UL.

RAS offers many benefits to patients compared to open surgery, including:

- shorter hospitalization
- reduced pain and discomfort
- faster recovery time and return to normal activities
- smaller incisions, resulting in reduced risk of infection
- reduced blood loss and transfusions
- minimal scarring

To date, well over 600 robotic surgeries have been performed as part of the RAS programme across three specialities, Colorectal, Urology and Gynaecology.

Outcomes have been widely presented nationally and internationally as well as being published in the international literature, and the programme has achieved a number of awards.



Da Vinci Xi Robot

“...well over 600 robotic surgeries have been performed as part of the RAS programme”

Strategic Priority 4: Collaboration and Alliances

- Adopt a proactive and strategic approach to collaboration. Together with our strategic partners we will achieve more.

Strategic Objectives

- **Lead the design and establishment of a Public Services Working Together for the Midwest Programme to progress the development of a strategy for an integrated and structured approach to public service delivery and collaboration in the region.**
- **Progress strategic partnerships with service providers to enhance patient access to high quality service provision.**
- **Progress strategic partnerships with local, national and international partners to advance research, development and innovation objectives.**



Overview of Priority 4 achievements

UL Hospitals Group has successfully identified and developed a range of collaborations and alliances across service delivery, education and research.

Within our hospital group, HSE Mid West Community Healthcare, patient organisations, private businesses and the education sector, collaborations have assisted to achieve the best outcomes for service users.

Many staff serve on national clinical programmes, individual professional bodies and local groups.

“...range of collaborations and alliances across service delivery, education and research”

- **‘Learning for Lives’ Ghana volunteer project**

‘Learning for Lives’ Ghana volunteers from UL Hospitals Group and UL established a pre-hospital emergency care skills training programme in Ghana, West Africa. The programme was officially accredited by ESTHER Ireland, which supports sustainable partnerships between health institutions in Ireland and the developing world.

Ghana has a population of some 30.8m, with just 0.11 physicians per 1,000 (compared with Ireland’s 2.7 per 1,000). It has an infant mortality rate of 44 per 1,000 live births (compared with 3 in Ireland), and a maternal mortality rate of 319 per 100,000 births (compared with 8 in Ireland).

From 2016 to 2019, ‘Learning for Lives’ Ghana provided 240 Community Health Planning & Services (CHPS) workers with basic life-saving skills, and delivered specialist instruction in hand hygiene, sepsis, physiotherapy, nutrition and neonatal care, for hospital staff and CHPS workers. The volunteers also devised a “Train The Trainer” programme. The team was recognised by the Mayor of Limerick, Cllr Michael Sheahan at a Mayoral reception in Limerick in 2019.

- **Pathway for Prisoners**

A collaboration with UL Hospitals Group and the Prison Service, Pathway for Prisoners aims to develop a policy regarding the care and management of prisoners attending hospital.



(l to r)
Hala Ali, ESTHER Ireland, Prof Colette Cowan, CEO, UL Hospitals Group, Katie Sheehan, ADON, Croom Orthopaedic Hospital, Prof Rachel Msetfi, Dean Education & Health Sciences, UL.

- **Midwest Interagency Group**

During COVID-19 the communications team set up an Interagency Group to co-ordinate the sharing of messages at a local level using the hashtag #Midwesttogether.

The group involved councils, higher education establishments in Limerick, Clare and Tipperary as well as Shannon Airport. Post-COVID, we continue to collaborate on new initiatives.

- **Health Management Institute of Ireland (HMI), Regional Committee**

Collaboration with Saolta University Health Care Group to set up a HMI Regional Committee for the North West, West & Midwest with a key task to set up a regional seminar.

- **Insourcing model, breast & endoscopy services**

Following a reduction in breast radiology resources and capacity restraints because of COVID-19, the Symptomatic Breast Service, UHL implemented an insourcing initiative to facilitate out of hours and weekend clinics for patients. Additional

waiting list clinics were held to ensure patients’ needs were met through national key performance indicators.

Endoscopy lists were run for Ennis, Nenagh, St Johns and UHL with a view to completing 1,000 scopes over a twelve-month period. Scoping lists commenced in June 2022 and were scheduled over weekends to ensure they did not impact on existing resources and ensure maximum opportunity for efficiency.

“Learning for Lives’ Ghana provided

**240
Community Health Planning & Services (CHPS) workers with basic life-saving skills”**

Enabling Factor 1:

People & Culture

Attract, retain and develop high performing team members to represent the organisation's values and ambitions.

Our Human Resource Department has significantly contributed to the implementation and successes of our UL Hospitals Group Strategy 2018 – 2022, delivering key initiatives in areas including Recruitment and Learning and Development.

Recruitment

- Comparing the total workforce position at UL Hospitals Group in 2019 to that of 2022 reflects a 25% growth rate.*
- The rollout of the Framework for Safer Nursing Staffing and Skill Mix commenced in University Hospital Limerick (UHL) in 2021.
- Magnet4Europe is a four-year Horizon 2020 EU-funded project that aims to improve mental health and wellbeing amongst health professionals in Europe. In 2021 a survey was completed on nursing and medical staff in UHL, with quality improvements implemented in 2022 following the findings.

*Data Source: HSE Workforce Reports

“Key initiatives in Recruitment, Learning and Development and Health and Wellbeing.”

Learning and Development

- Annual CEO sponsored Certificate in Management programme, a unique partnership between UL Hospitals Group and Kemmy Business School, University of Limerick.
- Ongoing support for other formal academic programmes.
- A bespoke automated learning management system, ULHG Achieve, was piloted.
- A ‘mentoring through coaching’ programme was developed.
- Employee Relations, guidance on policies and procedures.
- Performance Achievement, designed to support the development and performance of staff.
- Exit interviews, to identify trends and patterns over time to help make positive changes.
- The annual HSE Staff Survey ‘Your Opinion Counts’.
- National Integrated Staff Records and Pay Programme (NiSRP) rolled out.



Values in Action



Values in action aims to build a culture in our health service which creates a more positive environment for staff and improved experiences for our patients and service users.

Staff Health & Wellbeing

At UL Hospitals Group, the health and wellbeing of our staff is a priority. Below are some key projects achieved:

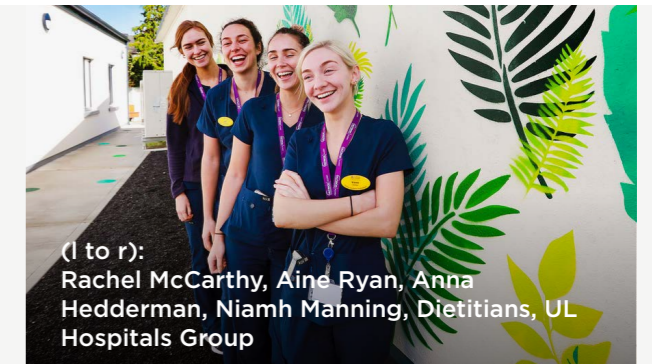
Staff Health and Wellbeing Centre

The new Staff Health and Wellbeing Centre, opened in September 2021 was a key development to support the health and wellbeing of our circa 5,000 staff. The facility offers:

- weekly classes- Yoga/HIIT/Spinning/self-defence, booked on the Staff App; virtual classes were held during the pandemic
- a place for relaxation and timeout from busy work environments, staff can avail of the facilities any time during the day
- recreational gatherings
- hub for a variety of health initiatives such as the Couch to 5k and Operation Transformation
- classes and timetables are based on feedback received through staff surveys



(l to r): Aisling O' Carroll, Health Promotion and Improvement Officer, UL Hospitals Group, Sarah McCormack, national Healthy Ireland lead and HSE national lead for Staff Health and Wellbeing, Prof Colette Cowan, CEO UL Hospitals Group, Suzanne Dunne, Chief of strategy and Transformation and Eimear Laffan, Health and Wellbeing lead, UL Hospitals Group.



(l to r): Rachel McCarthy, Aine Ryan, Anna Hedderman, Niamh Manning, Dietitians, UL Hospitals Group

Reimagine project

In partnership with Limerick City & County Council, University Hospital Limerick (UHL) together with Drake Hourigan Architects scoped out a new outdoor pathway and network of spaces on the grounds of UHL to support staff and patients/visitors health and wellbeing. Prototyping took place in October 2022.

Flu campaign

In total, 3,594 UL Hospitals Group staff received the flu vaccine during the 2022/2023 flu season, giving us a total uptake of 62%, the highest flu vaccination uptake in the Group to date.

Other Health & Wellbeing initiatives which have taken place include:

- Staff Appreciation Day
- Steps to Health Challenge
- Walktober
- Cycle into Summer Challenge
- UL Hospitals Group Cycle Challenge
- Health Eating Awards awarded by the Irish Heart Foundation to all sites
- Smarter Travel Survey
- Operation Transformation weekly health checks for staff
- Arts & Health initiatives

National Policy Programmes:

- Quit Midwest for staff and patients
- UL Hospitals Group Tobacco Free Campus working group re-established and policy re-launched
- Make Every Contact Count (MECC), chronic disease prevention using routine healthcare interactions to address behaviours in smoking, alcohol and drugs, healthy eating and active living. Training programme available to all healthcare professionals

Enabling Factor 2:

Operational Excellence

Manage our resources, processes, systems, technology and infrastructure in an appropriate, purposeful and optimal way

UL Hospitals Group strives to be a valued, trusted and leading provider of excellence in healthcare. Services continue to be delivered in an environment where the population is growing, demand for our services is increasing and public expectation for quality services is also increasing.

We have introduced many initiatives to address patient flow, enhance the patient experience, reduce wait times in the Emergency Department (ED) and increase the bed capacity in the Group. Such measures include:

- Integrated Care Development, a collaboration with HSE Mid-West Community Healthcare to enable improved patient flow between the acute setting and the community. Examples of integrated care initiatives under the Enhanced Community Care (ECC) programme:
 - Integrated Care Programme for Older Persons (ICPOP) ambulatory hubs in Limerick, Ennis and Thurles
 - Frailty at the front door in the ED, to improve quality of care to frail older adults.
 - Geriatric Emergency Medicine (GEM) unit, for over 75's in ED who can benefit from multi-disciplinary assessment with a view to avoiding hospital admission
 - Community Healthcare Network (CHN), Community Intervention Team (CIT) nurses are now attending the hospital to promote early discharge

Our Operational Services Directorate (OSD) provides support services to all existing and new service developments. During the lifetime of the strategy, some key initiatives included:

- appointment of Site Services Supervisors in 2021 to Ennis, Nenagh and Croom Orthopaedic Hospitals and University Maternity Hospital Limerick
- new Medical Equipment library opened in UHL
- RFID (Radio Frequency Identification) Asset Labelling of Medical Equipment/ Devices across the Group. RFID refers to a wireless system used to track the location of patient files
- medical gas resilience and fire alarm and emergency lighting upgrades in University Hospital Limerick



Enabling Factor 3:

Financial Sustainability

Use our resources in a financially viable and sustainable way.

- Enhanced Financial Reporting and Monitoring established to track funding sources.
- Development of local Activity Based Funding (ABF) implementation plan to support the national plan. The plan sets out 35 actions for the Irish health system which will enable the ongoing implementation and expansion of ABF.
- Implementation of Electronic Data Capture (EDC) to support the private billing process through the rollout of tablet devices at admissions points to support paperless processes.
- Rollout of new consultant billing portal to support hospital and consultant debtor management.
- Participation in the new national Integrated Financial Management System (IFMS).
- Extensive training in procurement and National Financial Regulations (NFR).

- Strong collaboration with National Procurement division and Corporate Procurement Plan developed for UL Hospitals Group.
- Engaged with Internal Audit division to ensure stronger tracking in place for implementation of audit recommendations across the Group.



Conclusion and next steps

UL Hospitals Group Strategy 2018-2022 was built around four key strategic priorities. Thank you to all our staff who have been pivotal to the implementation of the Strategy.

UL Hospitals Group Strategic Priorities 2023 - 2027:

For the past few months we have been working on our next UL Hospitals Group Strategic Plan 2023- 2027. Giving due cognisance to the development of Regional Health Areas (RHAs) our key strategic priorities will include:

- Patient Experience and Public Engagement
- People Performance and Culture
- Academic Health Science System
- Integrated Care System

Our Enablers will include:

- Operational Excellence
- Financial Resilience
- Strategic Transformation Office
- Digital Excellence
- Effective Communications

