



Annual Review 2022





Libby O'Shaughnessy was delighted to get her hands on the Liam MacCarthy Cup during the Limerick hurlers' visit to the Children's Ark at University Hospital Limerick.

Front Cover:

Heidi Buckley, Rachel Hickey and Leah O Mahony, newly qualified nurses and midwives pictured at their training graduation, University Hospital Limerick.

Photo Credits:

Brian Arthur Photography, Alan Place Photography, Keith Wiseman Photography, ULHG Communications and ULHG Staff Members.

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CEO Overview

I am delighted to share this overview of activity across our six hospital sites during 2022.

The year began with a significant achievement, the delivery of the 500,000th Covid-19 vaccination dose by our regional teams. A growing confidence that we were finally over the worst of the pandemic allowed us to better focus on our primary goal of delivering excellent, person-centred care.

After such considerable pandemic disruptions, it was imperative that we increase activity in 2022 - and we achieved this across the board. A record 219 patients presented to our Emergency Department every day. There were over 44,000 new and review attendances to our Injury Units at Ennis, Nenagh and St John's; an annual increase of 26% with more than one in three emergency presentations across the Group now being managed at our smaller hospitals. It was also a record year for activity in our Medical Assessment Units in these hospitals.

In scheduled care, there was an increase of 16% in new and review outpatient attendances across our hospitals. Our new theatres in Croom Orthopaedic Hospital saw 2,225 elective, 683 trauma and 3,783 day cases. In addition to building capacity, judicious use of the various government waiting list reduction programmes allowed UL Hospitals Group to meet the national targets for inpatients, day case and endoscopy. We reduced our outpatient waiting list by 20% last year and the number of patients waiting longer than 18 months by 58%.

While we can be proud of the progress made, we must also recognise that the reality for too many of our patients is that access to care is uneven and too often suboptimal, whether that is for the patient on a surgical waiting list or the patient admitted through the Emergency Department and waiting for a bed.

During 2022, we welcomed the Performance Management and Improvement Unit (PMIU) of the HSE to work with us on patient flow processes within the acute and community settings. This intervention, at the request of the Minister for Health, was given added impetus through the publication of the HIQA Report on UHL in June. The PMIU worked with UL Hospitals Group and HSE Mid West Community Healthcare for an initial six-week period during the summer and that engagement continues.

Arising from this work, we were funded to hire additional NCHDs and discharge co-ordinators as well as a new Head of Operations for UHL. Other measures have included a new Geriatric Emergency Medicine Unit and a renewed focus on long-stay patients. This has built on ongoing work with community colleagues

as we prepare the ground for the establishment of health regions under Slaintecare in 2024. During 2022, we saw the continued evolution of hospital avoidance and integrated care pathways such as ICPOP and Pathfinder as well as joint consultant appointments for the management of chronic disease in the community.

This ongoing work and the PMIU intervention has seen gradual but steady progress on reducing PET times in our ED at a time when demand continues to increase. It is a tribute to both acute and community staff that the Mid West continues to perform excellently on delayed transfers of care.

The great promise of Slaintecare from a regional perspective is that resources will be allocated according to local population health needs. Prior to the PMIU intervention, I had commissioned Deloitte to examine the health needs and resources of our region and we were pleased to publish the report in September. Deloitte has recommended a significant uplift in bed capacity and staffing resources to meet the needs of patients in this region.

We were delighted to welcome Minister Stephen Donnelly to UHL in October to break ground on the first of our 96-bed inpatient blocks. Capital projects completed over the year included Phase 1 of the redevelopment of the Neonatal Unit at University Maternity Hospital Limerick; the new Injury Unit at Ennis and the new OPD extension in Nenagh which opened new regional services for ambulatory gynaecology and menopause.

Designing these new services requires a keen focus on strategic objectives and I was pleased to strengthen this key function within the Group in 2022 with the establishment of the Strategic Transformation Office. This new office will facilitate strategic oversight of key projects across the Hospital Group, as well as ensuring the implementation of the Corporate Strategy.

I wish to acknowledge the professionalism, the dedication and the kindness of each and every member of staff, examples of which we are proud to share in this review.



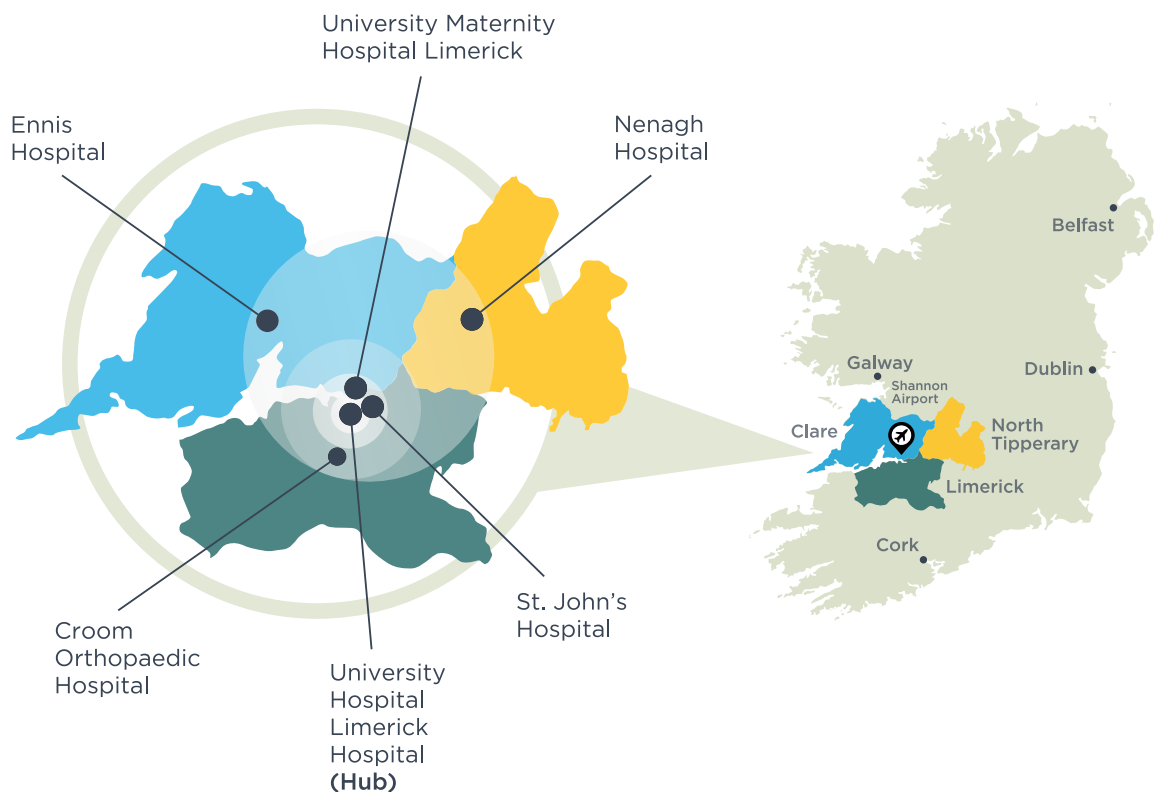
Professor Colette Cowan
CEO
UL Hospitals Group

About UL Hospitals Group

UL Hospitals Group comprises six different hospital sites in the Midwest of Ireland (Limerick, Clare and North Tipperary).

- University Hospital Limerick (UHL)
- University Maternity Hospital Limerick (UMHL)
- Nenagh Hospital
- Ennis Hospital
- Croom Orthopaedic Hospital
- St. John's Hospital (Voluntary)

Operating on a hub-and-spoke system, the centralised critical care facilities at UHL are supported by Model 2 and Model 2S (Specialist) hospitals. We operate on this basis to achieve economies of scale, to allow for a more streamlined and specialised regional service, and to ensure people can still be treated as close to home as possible. Together, these hospitals deliver a range of crucial services and provide a robust, comprehensive healthcare network for our patients across the Midwest.



Academic Partner

Our academic partner is the University of Limerick (UL). Our relationship with UL is important in improving standards of care, fostering education, clinical research and innovation.



University of Limerick



Clinical Education and Research Centre, UHL

The Clinical Education and Research Centre (CERC) at UHL provides first class training facilities. It is home to UL's graduate entry medical school as well as the educational and research needs of our hospital staff.

The Health Sciences Academy, based in CERC is a partnership between UL, ULHG and HSE Midwest Community Healthcare. Its primary aim is to improve health and wellbeing for people in the Midwest.

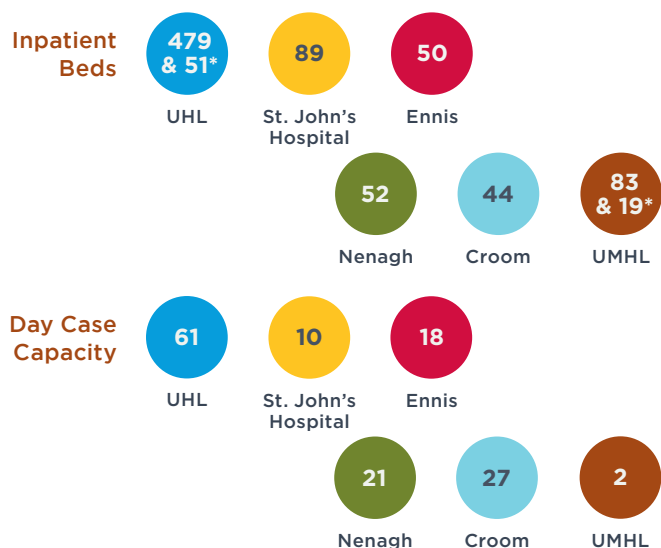
What does UL Hospitals Group do?



UL Hospitals Group provides emergency, surgical and medical services on an inpatient and outpatient basis to a catchment area of some 410,000 people in the Midwest of Ireland.

Our circa 5,700 staff are proud to serve our community, and we are committed to treating our patients with care, compassion and kindness.

Hospital Beds



*UHL has 479 adult beds and 51 paediatric beds.

*UMHL has 83 inpatient beds and 19 cots in the neonatal unit.

*Inpatient is a patient who goes into hospital to receive medical or surgical care and stays there one or more nights while they are being treated.

*Day Case is a patient admitted on an elective basis; no overnight stay; admitted and discharged on same day. Patient care that resulted in a birth/delivery is not included in day case capacity figures.

University Hospital Limerick (UHL)

UHL is the largest hospital in the Group, providing emergency and critical care to the people of the Midwest, especially those who require more complex medical and surgical care.



UHL is one of just eight specialist cancer centres in Ireland.

The hospital has a dedicated coronary care centre treating patients for serious heart attacks, and a thrombolysis centre, providing vital care for acute stroke.

UHL provides cutting edge surgical and non-surgical healthcare services.



UHL has the only ED in the Midwest, caring for patients 24/7, 365 days a year.

Ennis, Nenagh and St. John's Hospitals

Treatment for minor injuries (Injury Units)

Medical Assessment through GP referral

Day Surgery

St John's Hospital also cares for more complex surgical patients who require a short hospital stay.

Specialist Maternity and Orthopaedic Services

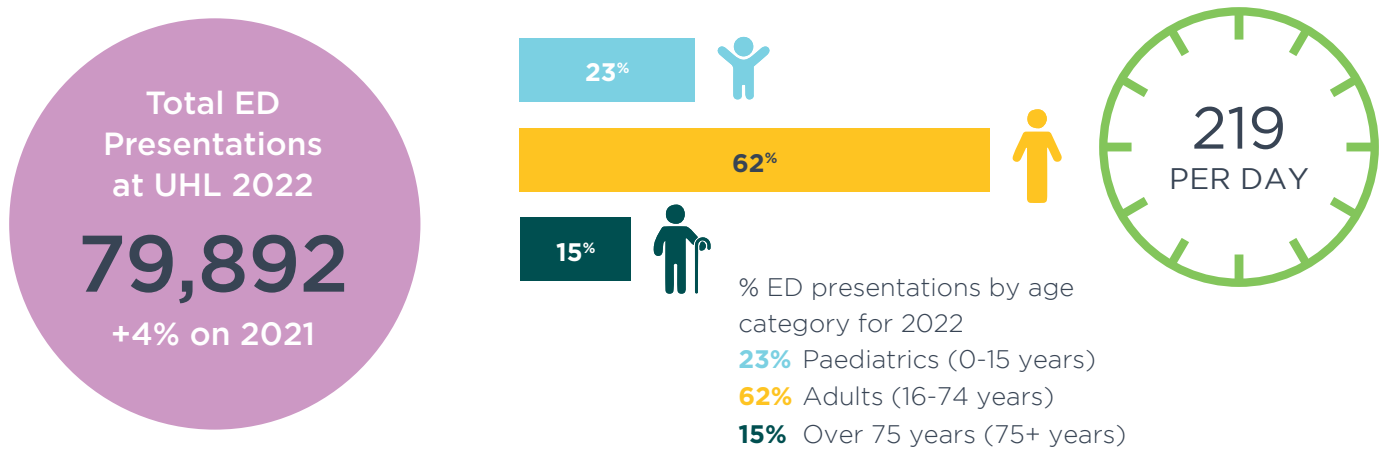
The Group has two Specialist hospitals, University Maternity Hospital Limerick, and Croom Orthopaedic Hospital, a regional centre of excellence.



UL Hospitals Group: Our Year in Figures

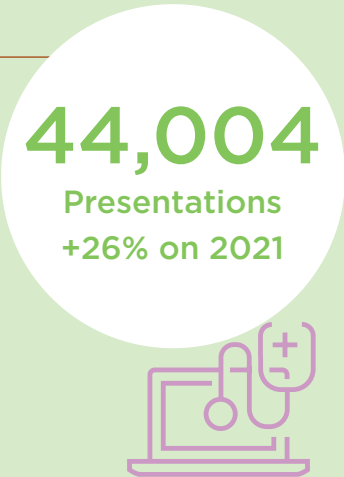
Activity & Operational Performance for 2022

Emergency Department (ED) University Hospital Limerick (UHL)



Injury Unit

Injury Unit presentations accounted for 36% of all emergency presentations across the Group.



Readmission Rates

Medical



The Group's 2022 emergency readmission rate for acute medical conditions, to the same hospital within 30 days of discharge, 12.2%. The national target was < 11.1%.



Surgical

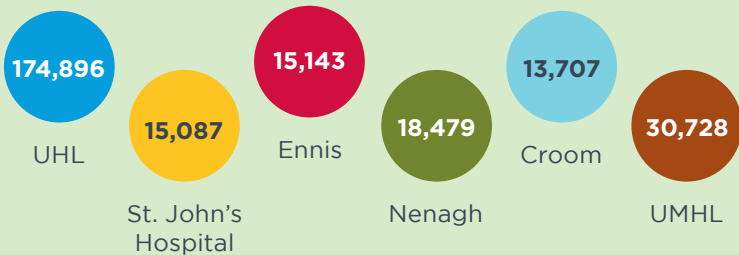


The Group's 2022 surgical readmission rate, to the same hospital within 30 days of discharge, 2.06%. The national target was < 1.3%.



Outpatient Attendances

Total of new and return outpatient attendances across all sites in 2022.



Average Length of Stay (ALOS)

MEDICAL 5.1 Days

ULHG remained under the 2022 national benchmark target of ≤5.4 days.

SURGICAL 5.1 Days

ULHG achieved the 2022 national benchmark target of ≤5.1 days.

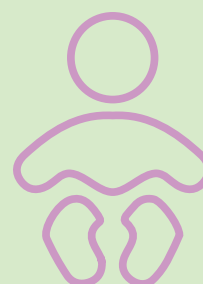
UL Hospitals Group average daily activity in 2022



Births

3,931
BIRTHS
-8% on 2021

University Maternity Hospital Limerick is the busiest maternity hospital outside of Dublin and Cork.



Day of Surgery (DOSA)

Rate of elective surgical inpatients who had principal procedure conducted on day of admission was 70.3%. The 2022 national target was 91.6%.

Inpatient & Day Cases

Medical



Day Cases

45,965*

36,633

Inpatients

*This includes 22,502
Dialysis Day Cases

Surgical



Day Cases

19,712

19,599

Inpatients

Maternal & Child Health



Day Cases

1,426

9,929

Inpatients

Staff, Industry and Professional Awards



Category: Innovation in Service Delivery
Project: Integration of existing Warfarin Clinic and DVT service
Pictured (l to r) Breda Berkery, CNM2, Rapid Access Medical Unit (RAMU), Professor Colette Cowan, CEO UL Hospitals, Deborah Bourke, CNM2, RAMU, Helen Sheehy, CNM2, RAMU, Lorraine Rafter, Group Director of HR, UL Hospitals Group.



Category: Improving Patient Experience
Project: ANP led Trauma Assessment Clinics: A novel approach to Service delivery
Pictured (l to r) Professor Colette Cowan, CEO UL Hospitals Group, Professor Brian Lenehan, Chief Clinical Director, UL Hospitals Group, Audrey Butler, ANP, Trauma, Lorraine Rafter, Group Director of HR, UL Hospitals Group.

Health Service Excellence Awards

Professor Colette Cowan, CEO and Lorraine Rafter, Director of HR presented Certificates of Achievement to the ULHG finalists of the 2022 Health Service Excellence Awards.

Congratulations to all. It is a huge achievement to reach the finalist stage.



Category: Improving Patient Experience
Project: ULHG Pain Management Centre
Pictured (l to r): Professor Colette Cowan, CEO, UL Hospitals Group, Professor Dominic Harmon, Consultant in Pain Medicine, Croom Orthopaedic Hospital, Anna Marie Kiernan, Pain ANP, Croom, Fiona Irwin, Pain ANP, Croom, Lorraine Rafter, Group Director of HR, UL Hospitals Group and Majella Corkery, Director of Nursing, Medicine Directorate.



Healthy Eating Award

Congratulations to the catering team at University Hospital Limerick (UHL), on achieving the Silver Happy Heart Healthy Eating Award.

Pictured are Jason Smith Executive Chef and Fiona Fitzpatrick Restaurant Supervisor at UHL with an array of fresh food displays available in the UHL canteen.



Staff, Industry and Professional Awards



NCHD Conference

Above: Professor Paul Burke, Chief Academic Officer, UL Hospitals Group, and Dr John McManus, Training Lead, UL Hospitals Group, with Dr Niall Dalton, Gold Medal winner at the Annual NCHD Conference at University Hospital Limerick.

Right: Dr Niall Dalton, Gold Medal winner at the Annual NCHD Conference at University Hospital Limerick, with Dr Emma Porter who was awarded a prize for best poster.



New graduate nurses and midwives awarded ULHG badge

On 4 March we recognised our graduate nurses and midwives by presenting them with a ULHG commemorative badge. The badges are an acknowledgement of the graduates' achievements and their contribution to patient care during their placement. We wish them all well in their careers as staff nurses and staff midwives.

Pictured is Niamh Murphy. Other team members included Therese Dunne, Senior Dietician, UL Hospitals Group and Emma Gentles, Children's Hospital Ireland.



Spark Ignite winner

Congratulations to Niamh Murphy, Senior Paediatric Dietitian and team as regional winners at Spark Ignite innovation programme 2022.

Niamh pitched the design and development of PNPlus, a paediatric nutrition app, which supports healthcare professionals in optimising critically ill neonatal and paediatric nutritional care.



More than a half-million COVID-19 vaccine doses delivered in the Midwest

In January, UL Hospitals Group and HSE Mid West Community Healthcare marked the administration of 500,000 doses of COVID-19 vaccines in the region.

UL Hospitals Group CEO, Professor Colette Cowan, Group COO Noreen Spillane, and HSE Mid West Community Healthcare Chief Officer, Maria Bridgeman, visited the Mid-West COVID-19 Vaccination Centres in Limerick (Scoil Carmel), Ennis (West County Hotel) and Nenagh (Abbey Court Hotel) to congratulate vaccination teams on passing the half-million milestone.

Top: Pictured (l to r) Irene O'Connor, General Manager, Mid-West COVID-19 Vaccination Centres, Professor Colette Cowan, CEO, UL Hospitals Group, Nora Barry, Operations Manager, Mid-West COVID-19 Vaccination Centres, Noreen Spillane, Chief Operations Officer, UL Hospitals Group and Maria Bridgeman, Chief Officer, HSE Mid West Community Healthcare.

ULHG Achieve



In January, ULHG.Achieve was launched via HSeLanD which enables us to deliver, manage and report on all training activities.

There are a range of courses available for all staff disciplines. Search ULHG on HSeLanD for a full list of courses.

1546 staff have enrolled in programmes on ULHG.Achieve and there were 31 courses added to the course catalogue in 2022.



Health Sciences Academy Early Careers Event

The Health Sciences Academy (HSA) Early Careers Event encouraged TY students to consider a career in healthcare. It was attended virtually by over 10,000 students.

20 different healthcare professions were represented at the two-day online careers event, which was open to students throughout Ireland.

The HSA is a partnership between the University of Limerick, UL Hospitals Group and HSE Mid West Community Healthcare. The online event gave students valuable information about the educational courses and careers that are open to them in healthcare in the Midwest region.

Patient story - St John's Injury Unit

The Injury Unit at St John's Hospital is staffed by an expert team of three full-time Registered Advanced Nurse Practitioners (RANP's) and one trainee Advanced Nurse Practitioner (ANP), along with two registrars, administrative support and led by Dr Gareth



Quin, a senior Consultant in Emergency Medicine. The team provides timely treatment for injuries that are non-threatening to life or limb, but which still require expert and prompt medical attention.

County Clare resident Kate Gilroy found herself in need of such attention last February. Kate attended St John's Injury Unit where she was seen to straight away and received the care she needed.

After some follow-up appointments in St John's Injury Unit and referral to the Fracture Unit at University Hospital Limerick, Kate is now fully recovered.

Top: Pictured (l-r) Health Sciences Academy Manager Miriam McCarthy, Students Rian McArthur, Emily Byrne, Clara Blake and Hugh Costello from St Anne's, Community College, Killaloe with Louise Cantillon from Spin South West

Right: St. John's Injury Unit, St John's Hospital, Limerick



New €2m Injury Unit at Ennis Hospital

In March, the doors of the new €2m Injury Unit at Ennis Hospital opened, bringing an immediate improvement to the clinical environment and experience for healthcare staff and thousands of patients. A purpose-built facility adjacent to the main entrance to the hospital, the new Injury Unit replaces the existing unit that had operated out of the main Ennis Hospital building since 2013.

The new Injury Unit at Ennis Hospital assists the Emergency Department at University Hospital Limerick in prioritising emergency care for the sickest and most seriously injured patients who need it most.

Lymphoedema project

The Irish Cancer Society launched a three-year pilot lymphoedema project at University Hospital Limerick, focusing on the early detection of cancer-related lymphoedema.

Early detection can reduce the risk of developing lifelong lymphoedema by 95 per cent.

Each patient will have their lymphoedema index score measured by a certified lymphoedema therapist in the physiotherapy department of the hospital pre and post treatment.



If required, patients will then be treated with compression garments, skin care and tailored exercise programmes and monitored for up to two years.

The programme also offers education and information sessions, online resources and support to patients.

Top: Ennis Injury Unit

Right: Pictured (l-r) Senior Physiotherapist Sinead Cobbe at the launch of the Lymphoedema Early Detection service with Irish Cancer Society Head of Services Donal Buggy and Senior Physiotherapist Kathy Nugent.



Mayor visits Children's Ark

Cllr Daniel Butler, Mayor of the City & County of Limerick met with staff of the Children's Ark Paediatric Unit at University Hospital Limerick in April following a donation to the unit from the Mayor's Christmas Fund.



Top: Pictured (l-r) In front of a welcome poster prepared by the children are Cllr Daniel Butler with Dr Siobhan Gallagher, Clinical Director, Maternal & Child Health Directorate and Consultant Paediatrician.

Right: Back row (l to r) Liz Barry, Orla Hammersley, Niamh Hogan, Front row (l to r) Liz O'Leary, Joanne Mannion and Kathleen Keane, PALS Managers at UL Hospitals Group.

PALS feature in Our People Our Services

Our Patient Advocacy and Liaison Service (PALS) team act as the main contact between patients, their families, carers and the hospital. They ensure that the patient voice is heard either through the patient directly or through a nominated representative.

PALS featured in Our People, Our Services in April, through a series of graphics, video and a blog which were shared on our social media platforms.



A new era of energy sustainability

Efforts to future-proof new developments and upgrade existing building stock helped to reposition UL Hospitals Group to the fore of a national HSE campaign aimed at providing quality healthcare that minimises impact on the environment.

Work undertaken to date through collaborative initiatives between HSE Capital and Estates and ULHG is already having a significant impact, resulting in six-figure cost savings, reducing CO2 emissions, and enabling the group to power itself independently when demand has the potential to destabilise the national grid.

Top: Pictured Kevin Mahoney, Electrical Maintenance Manager, UL Hospitals Group; Rachel Keating, Energy Officer, HSE Capital and Estates; Niall Joyce, Group Building and Maintenance Manager, UL Hospitals Group and Clodagh Hanratty, Estates Manager, HSE Capital and Estates.

Right: Nursing staff from Nenagh Hospital attending the ULHG Reflect, Respect, Regroup Nursing and Midwifery conference.



Reflect, Respect, Regroup Nursing and Midwifery Conference

The UL Hospitals Reflect, Respect, Regroup Nursing and Midwifery conference took place on 14 May in the Clinical Education and Research Centre (CERC), University Hospital Limerick.

Congratulations to all the members of the Nursing and Midwifery Professional Council for organising this excellent event.



Minister for Health opens Regional Hub in Nenagh

Minister for Health, Stephen Donnelly TD was welcomed to Nenagh Hospital in June to open the Regional Hub for Women's Health. The hub revolves around three core services: an ambulatory gynaecology unit, a specialist menopause clinic and a subfertility service.

We are privileged to be able to offer these services to the women of the MidWest.

Top: Pictured (l-r) at the official opening of the Regional Hub for Women's Health at Nenagh Hospital were, Minister for Health, Stephen Donnelly TD, Jackie Cahill TD, Dr. Naro Imcha, Consultant Obstetrician Gynaecologist, Catrina Ryan, Director of Nursing Nenagh Hospital, Noreen Spillane, Chief Operations Officer, UL Hospital Group, Claire Hartnett, General Manager Maternal and Child Health and Dr. Cathy Casey, Consultant Obstetrician Gynaecologist.



New brand guidelines introduced in June

We have updated our UL Hospitals Brand Guidelines. These will help us to standardise the way our brand looks. We have updated our style guide and tone of voice to help us write in a consistent style.

New colours and design features have also been added, with a new HSE logo.



First Advanced Nurse Practitioner (ANP) in paediatric diabetes at University Hospital Limerick

Alison McCaffrey's appointment as ANP in paediatric diabetes at University Hospital Limerick (UHL) will empower young people to self-manage their condition, improve health outcomes and general quality-of-life.

The paediatric diabetes service at UHL currently manages 220 young patients. Every year, between 20 and 30 patients will transfer to the adult service and part of Alison's role adds a new dimension to this service.

Top: Pictured (l to r) Dr Orla Neylon, Consultant Paediatric Endocrinologist, Alison McCaffery, ANP in Paediatric Diabetes and Professor Clodagh O'Gorman, Consultant Paediatrician.

Right: Pictured (l-r) Mairead Cowan, Directorate Nurse Manager, Medicine Directorate, Jane Rainsford CNM 6B, Breda Duggan, GM Cancer Services Directorate, Dr Denis O'Keeffe, Clinical Director, Cancer Services Directorate, Paul Reid, CEO, HSE

UHL welcomes Paul Reid for a visit

Paul Reid Chief Executive Officer of the HSE, visited the health services in Limerick and Clare as part of a series of visits to services around the country, to meet staff. He heard how acute and community services are collaborating to improve health outcomes.

At UHL, Mr Reid met the Cancer Services and Stroke teams and also the Optimend team in the Emergency Department (ED), focusing on assessment and intervention with elderly patients in the ED.

An important element of the visit was to acknowledge and thank staff for their work and effort throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.





New Pain Management Centre at Croom

The new Pain Management Centre at Croom Orthopaedic Hospital is providing enhanced quality of service to patients, with dramatically reduced waiting times. Investments in the infrastructure at Croom, and in the staffing of the service led by Professor Dominic Harmon, have led to a reduction in wait times from referral to review from 49 months to 60 weeks, while the intervention lists have decreased in line, from 60 weeks to twelve weeks.

The Pain Management Centre is located in the hospital's old theatres and the former St Mary's Ward, which were completely refurbished and re-equipped to accommodate the service.

Top: Pictured is Professor Dominic Harmon outside Croom Orthopaedic Hospital.

Right: Pictured are staff from across UL Hospitals Group, promoting SunSmart to staff and the public.

SunSmart at UL Hospitals



Our Dermatology Department in University Hospital Limerick continued to promote Sun Awareness messages with staff across the group during 2022.

The team organised information stands on all sites during the summer and discussed sun protection with both staff and public. Please remember the **5 S's: Slip on clothing, Slop on sunscreen, Slap on a hat, Seek shade and Slide on sunglasses.**

September



University Hospital Limerick is launchpad for cycle to raise awareness of Multiple Myeloma

A two-day Wild Myeloma Way Cycle, in aid of Multiple Myeloma Ireland, departed from University Hospital Limerick (UHL) in September. The event is a highlight of Blood Cancer Awareness Month.

The cycle route traverses the stunning landscape of the Wild Atlantic Way, from Limerick to Spanish Point via the Cliffs of Moher on day one, and returning to Limerick via the coast on day two.

The participants took part in memory of Michael Fleming, who tragically lost his life in a recent road traffic accident while training for the cycle.

Multiple Myeloma Ireland is the only Irish charitable organisation focused exclusively on Multiple Myeloma patients, their families and carers.

Top: Pictured (l to r) Delma Hackett, Advanced Nurse Practitioner, and Dr Cian McEllistrim, Consultant Haematologist, both UHL.

Right: Adrian Callinan and Louise Kehoe, Chefs from the Catering Department at UHL..



Staff Appreciation Day at UHL

Smiles all round as staff enjoyed ice cream and a little autumnal sunshine in UHL as part of a staff appreciation treat. It was supported by UL Hospitals Sports & Social club.



Minister Donnelly Breaks Ground on 96-Bed Block at UHL

Work commenced on the new 96-Bed Block at UHL in October, the next step in increasing acute bed capacity in the Midwest. Construction will take at least two years to complete.

The new €90m, 9,800 square-metre block will be built over the existing Emergency Department and Dialysis Unit and will consist of 96 en-suite single rooms over four floors.

Approximately half of the beds will be new beds for inpatients while the remainder will be replacement beds allowing the hospital to close or refurbish some of the more outdated inpatient accommodation on the site.

Top: Pictured (l to r) are Professor Colette Cowan and Minister Donnelly at ground breaking ceremony, UHL.

Right: Pictured (l to r) Blaithe Lally, Senior Physiotherapist; Linda O'Rourke, Advanced Paramedic; Nicola Donohue, Clinical Specialist Physiotherapist; Pat McCarthy, Advanced Paramedic and Niamh Ganley, Senior Occupational Therapist.



Pathfinder service is launched

Pathfinder is a National Ambulance Service (NAS) led service designed to safely keep older people who phone 112/999 in their own home rather than taking them to a hospital Emergency Department.

Pathfinder went live in Limerick in October, as well as Tallaght and Waterford. The Pathfinder service is provided by NAS staff in conjunction with staff from its acute hospital partners. Health and Social Care Professionals including physiotherapists and occupational therapists are central to the delivery model.

November



GP Education Evening

The office of the Chief Clinical Director along with the GP representatives on the UL Hospitals Group GP Forum held a GP Study evening in November.

This event allowed us to engage with GP colleagues to develop further professional relations in the interests of patient safety and care.

The evening was attended by almost 90 GPs from across the Midwest. There were opportunities for shared learning and a greater understanding of the challenges faced in both acute and community settings through the many presentations.

Flu Vaccination Campaign

The staff flu vaccination campaign had a successful start in 2022, with 33% (1,922) staff vaccinated in the first five weeks.

UL Hospital Group's Staff headcount has increased by 5% from 2021 (5484) to 2022 (5760), requiring more staff to be vaccinated.



Top: Pictured (l to r) Professor Colette Cowan, Dr Naro Imcha and Professor Brian Lenehan

Inset: Pictured (l to r) Dr Paula Gaire and Dr John English

Right: Pictured (l-r) Josephine Guillermo and Celestino Rubica, Catering UHL.



New OPD entrance at University Hospital Limerick

The University Hospital Limerick (UHL) outpatients entrance re-opened for public use in December after refurbishment.

This new entrance is a convenient drop off and pick up point for all service users at UHL. Staff are on hand to direct service users and check visitor bookings upon arrival.



Dementia train at Nenagh Hospital

Patients were invited to take a simulated train journey at Nenagh Hospital through a system called 'RemPod', which has been in use in care homes and hospitals in the UK for a number of years.

An LCD screen displays footage of rolling countryside, tunnels and stations along the journey, stimulating positive memories in older patients with cognitive impairment, and helping to reduce anxiety.

Patients can board the train while having a meal, while welcoming a visitor for hospital or while waiting to be transferred or discharged. Feedback has been very positive from patients, families and staff to date.

Top: Pictured are some of the wonderful team who worked on the new outpatients entrance project with CEO Professor Colette Cowan.

Right: Pictured on a simulated train journey on Medical Ward 1 in Nenagh Hospital were Siobhan Toomey, CNS Patient Flow, Nenagh Hospital; Vimal Mathai, CNS ICPOP Thurles; Celia Dwan, ADON Nenagh Hospital; and Elaine O'Sullivan, CNM2 Medical Ward 1, Nenagh Hospital. This quality improvement project for people uses reminiscence therapy to improve the experience of patients with dementia in Nenagh.

National Inpatient Experience Survey

Over 920 patients provided their feedback on their inpatient experience at University Hospital Limerick (UHL), Ennis Hospital, Nenagh Hospital, St John's Hospital and Croom Orthopaedic Hospital through the National Inpatient Experience Survey (NIES) 2022, the results of the survey were released in December.

The NIES is part of the National Care Experience Programme, a joint initiative by the Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA), the Health Service Executive (HSE) and the Department of Health.

The aim of the survey is to find out what is working well and where we can improve. Questions examine various stages of care from 'Care on the ward' to 'Discharge or Transfer'. Feedback helps us to drive quality improvements in our services. Some highlights from the 2022 results included:

At **UHL**, 'Care on the ward' was the highest scoring stage with 71% of people saying that the room or ward they were in was very clean. An area for improvement was 14% of people said that they did not have enough time to discuss their care and treatment with a doctor.

88% of people who were admitted to **Nenagh Hospital** said they had a good to very good 'overall experience', compared to 82% nationally. 'Discharge or transfer' was the lowest-rated stage.

Ennis Hospital scored above or similar to the national average for all survey questions. Positive feedback included help from staff to eat meals, and privacy when being examined or treated. 'Discharge or transfer' was also the lowest-rated stage at Ennis.

Ratings for 'care on the ward', 'care during the pandemic' and 'overall experience' were above the national average at **Croom Orthopaedic Hospital**. 29% of people said that their family or someone else close to them was not given all the information they needed to help care for them.

92% of respondents said that they were always treated with respect and dignity while they were in hospital at **St. John's**. Ratings for 'care during the pandemic' were lower in 2022 than in 2021.



Pictured at a recent presentation of the NIES results to catering staff at UHL were, (l to r) Sheila Bowers and Niamh Hogan, UHL Patient Experience Committee, Mike Conlon, Head of Services, ULHG, Peter Hobbs, Strategic accounts manager, Noonan Catering, and Katiana Picolli UHL Patient Experience Committee.

Our Patient Council

The Patient Council was established in 2016 to enable patients to become active partners in the delivery of services at UL Hospitals Group. Its membership comprises both voluntary, or public, members and senior HSE staff.

Strengthening the voice of patients and families in the MidWest, the Patient Council increased the number of voluntary/public members to 16 during 2022.

This has enabled the partnership of senior hospital staff and voluntary/public members achieve the Council's key objectives.

One way Council members are actively involved in improving services is through membership of various hospital committees. Nutrition and hydration; patient experience surveys; end-of-life care; hospital signage (including road signage) are a few examples of the Council's committee work for improving access, care and safety for patients and families.

In 2022, our voluntary members undertook a "Hello My Name Is" telephone survey, targeting compliance with this HSE-approved patient communication policy. This was a good opportunity for voluntary members to carry out an important project for the benefit of the hospital group and for patients and families in the region.



The Patient Council was invited to participate in a UCD study aimed at co-designing a new model for Open Disclosure. This study will also review the current National Inpatient Experience Survey format to see if it can become more beneficial in assessing outcomes to further improve inpatient care.

Rollout of new HSE health regions is planned to commence, on a phased basis, in early 2024. During 2022 intensive work was undertaken to ensure the patient voice is heard at all levels in the new health regions. Staffed Patient Partnership Offices (PPOs) are to be established as a means of effecting this. The Patient Council can play a key role in establishing the PPOs in our region.

John Hannafin, Chairman, Patient Council

Pictured above: UL Hospitals Patient Council members, with (front row) Prof Colette Cowan, CEO and John Hannafin, Patient Council Chairman.

Some compliments from our patients in 2022

UHL: My daughter was brought to A&E in the early hours with a head injury. She received prompt and excellent care. She was thoroughly checked over with the kindness and experience of your staff. Only for the quick thinking of your staff, she may have suffered serious injuries. I want to thank them. She was admitted to ward 2C and then transferred to 2B where the excellent care continued. So, thank you so much, we will always be grateful.

UHL: I would just like to say a huge thank you to the doctors, nurses, cleaners, porters, admin and catering staff on the cardiology day ward for the wonderful professional care and kindness they showed me when I had an angiogram yesterday, they were simply amazing!!

Nenagh Hospital: I would just like to say a huge thank you to all the staff in your hospital, I was recently in there for 9 days in medical 1, I must say that I received the best care ever, in these uncertain times I felt that I was in very capable hands. I am a patient of Dr Moloney and his team and was a weekly visitor to the infusion centre where I must say I have always been treated with the greatest of care.

Croom Orthopaedic Hospital: I had a very positive experience during my recent admission to the Surgical Day Ward in Croom. The hospital itself is really lovely since the new wing was opened. Everybody I met was really kind and caring. From the check in to going home. Secretaries, porters, nurses, doctors, everyone was friendly and professional.

Children's Ark UHL: My 5 year old daughter was admitted for 2 nights in October. The teachers in the Children's Ark school were absolutely outstanding in making her feel comfortable while there, she was delighted to be able to do some school work and was so happy to receive by post the painting she had done when we got home the following week.

UMHL: From the receptionist to the nursing/ medical staff I was dealt with in a very caring and understanding manner and so efficiently. I can't compliment this service enough for how they treated me in a very distressing time. They put me at ease and explained every step of the process to me in advance. I just wanted to thank this service for all that they do and for them to know that their empathy towards women in my position does not go unnoticed.

Croom Orthopaedic Hospital: To all staff members, I had surgery for my wrist 1 week ago and an overnight stay and I want to let you know I'm so thankful for making my stay so comfortable. Thanks to surgeons, anaesthetists, doctors, Margaret head of nursing staff, nurses especially Lauren, Catrina who was on duty that night very attentive to me, also porters and kitchen staff.

Ennis Hospital: Exceptional experience in Ennis, which led to a stress free admission and procedure. The standard of care is excellent.

