



## **Annual Conference**

# ***Stabilise, Reform and Delivery***

## **SPEAKERS' BIOGRAPHIES**

(in order of appearance on the conference programme)

**2<sup>nd</sup> December 2025**

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## **Bronagh Scott – Chair of NIPEC Council – Chair of Morning Conference Programme**

Bronagh Scott registered as a nurse in 1984 having completed her studies in Northern Ireland. She specialised as a critical care nurse and worked in a number of critical care units. She has held a number of Executive Director of Nursing roles in Northern Ireland, London and Wales. While in England she chaired two Care Quality Commission inspections of large NHS Trusts. She also led the development of a national leadership programme for senior nurses from Black and Minority Ethnic groups. In 2015, she was appointed, by the Health Minister, as the Nurse Adviser to the Expert Independent Panel chaired by Professor Rafael Bengoa, tasked with leading an informed debate on the best configuration of Health and Social Care services in Northern Ireland.

From 2014-2024 Ms Scott was a Trustee for the Charity United Response which provides community-based services for people with learning disability across England and Wales.

She also held one other public appointment as Interim Non-Executive Member (Nursing) of the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority NI from October 2020-February 2024.

Bronagh was appointed to the position of Chair of NIPEC in December 2021 and will be stepping down from this position on completion of her 4 year term in December 2025.

Bronagh is currently a Patient Advocate with the organisation Myeloma Patients Europe and sits on the Myeloma UK Patient Advocacy Panel.

## **Maria McIlgorm – Chief Nursing Officer, Department of Health**

Maria was appointed Chief Nursing Officer for the Department of Health for Northern Ireland in March 2022.

Maria previously worked across a range of acute and community settings within Health and Social care in England and Scotland and has gained extensive leadership, management and strategic experience.

As Northern Ireland's Chief Nursing Officer, Maria leads the nursing, midwifery and allied health professionals' contribution to the development and implementation of health and social care policy in NI. Her team provides advice on adult and children's acute services, mental health, elderly care, learning and physical disabilities, public health, community health, primary care, midwifery, and international issues. Maria also carries responsibility for the development of nursing and midwifery training and education arrangements alongside Health & Social Care Trusts and Higher Education Institutions in the region. Her vision for the future of the Nursing & Midwifery professions in Northern Ireland was launched in May 2023, and significant work is underway to implement it in coming months.

## **Linda Kelly, RN, BSc(hons), PGDip, MSc, Honorary Professor of Nursing Practice QUB - Chief Executive, NIPEC**

Linda has been a registered nurse with the NMC since 1990. She has enjoyed a wide spanning career across acute and community sectors, including, District Nursing, Care Management and Governance Lead posts. In 2011, Linda took up post as Assistant Director of Nursing: Safe and Effective Care, in the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust where she worked for nine years. Following two years working as Deputy Chief

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Nursing Officer and Interim Chief Nursing Officer at the Department of Health, Northern Ireland from 2020-2022, she has held the post of Chief Executive of NIPEC.

Linda completed her BSC (Hons) in Nursing, Post Graduate Diploma in Healthcare Management and MSc in Public Health before progressed her interest in continuous quality improvement through completion of the Institute of Health Improvement (IHI) Improvement Advisor Programme in 2016. In 2019, she graduated from the Aspiring Nurse Director Programme (South Bank University London) and completed the IHI Chief Quality Officer/Quality Leaders Europe Professional Development Programme in 2024. In 2025, Linda was delighted to be offered a Honorary Professor of Nursing Practice with Queens University Belfast.

### **Kelly Forbes – RCN Nurse of the Year 2025**

Kelly Forbes has worked in NHS/HSCNI services for over 17 years. She achieved her RMN training in England and worked in Eating Disorder Services, CAMHS and Older Adults Services.

Originally from Northern Ireland her family moved to England in the 1980s. Kelly returned "home" 5 years ago and now works in Southern GP Federation providing mental health services alongside GPs in surgeries.

Kelly is passionate about person centred, accessible care and working with groups that struggle to get timely support, such as survivors of trauma. Kelly won RCN NI Nurse of The Year 2025 for her patient projects that involved working differently, thinking creatively and putting community nursing and patient need at the heart of her work. Kelly is discussing her projects today at NIPEC.

### **Dr Janine Stockdale - Lead Midwife for Education, QUB**

Dr Janine Stockdale, who is a Senior Lecturer and Lead Midwife for Education, QUB. Janine is also a NIPEC Council member. After completing her doctorate in 2007 (funded by the Research and Development Office NI), Janine continued to develop her unique expertise in motivational learning design. Since then, she has held different roles including that of the Research Fellow for the Royal College of Midwifery, Board Director of the International Board of Lactation Consultant Examiners, Simulation Lead for Midwifery and Academic Practice Lead for Midwifery at Queen's University Belfast. Janine currently co-leads the Education and Practice Research Simulation Group. This has enabled her to drive forward her passion for technology-supported learning, including video-based and virtual reality education.

### **Brenda Carson – Senior Professional Officer, NIPEC**

Brenda joined NIPEC at the end of 2022 and has a huge passion for all things Quality. She began her nursing career in 1986 in the Royal Victoria Hospital, Belfast and worked in a number of nursing positions across South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust (SEHSCT)

Brenda trained with the Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI) as a Patient Safety Officer, an Improvement Coach and an Improvement Advisor and progressed to the

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role of Senior Lead Nurse for Patient Safety and Quality Improvement within SEHSCT leading on a number of large initiatives across the organisation alongside developing a Quality Improvement Academy. Brenda has been recognised for her leadership having twice been awarded the Northern Ireland RCN Chief Nursing Officers award for Patient Safety in 2007 and 2014.

Brenda is also privileged to work with the Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI) in Boston as an Improvement Advisor and part of the Faculty, since 2018.

### **Jonah Atos – International Nurse Co-ordinator - WHSCT**

Jonah is a dedicated nurse with 31 years of experience. Originally from the Philippines, she became the first Internationally Educated Nurse (IEN) to join the Western Health and Social Care Trust.

Currently, Jonah serves as the International Nurse Co-ordinator, where she offers pastoral support and training to newly recruited IENs. Beyond her clinical work, Jonah is a passionate advocate for diversity, inclusion, and belonging. She is the founding member and first Chair of Western Trust's Ethnically Diverse Staff Network (EDSN) and the inaugural Chair of the Royal College of Nursing Ethnically Diverse Network. In addition, she has worked as Professional Officer for Ethnic Diversity and Inclusion at NIPEC to improve access to education and leadership opportunities for staff from the global majority.

Jonah is also a founding member of the registered charity Kabalikat, which promotes Filipino culture and traditions. She actively supports her fellow IENs as the Regional Director for the Filipino Nurses Association UK (FNA UK), assisting with career development. As an alumni of the Florence Nightingale Foundation (FNF), Jonah is committed to continuing her professional growth. She has recently taken on a new role as a committee member for RCN Anti-racism subgroup representing Northern Ireland.

### **Deepthi Roshan - Clinical & Patient Flow Co-ordinator, SHSCT**

Deepthi is a Patient Flow and Clinical Co-ordinator with the Southern Health and Social Care Trust (SHSCT) and a Professional Officer with NIPEC. She represents SHSCT on the regional project board- Enhancing Education and Leadership Opportunities for Ethnically Diverse Workforce, supporting nurses, midwives, AHPs and their related support staff.

Originally from India, Deepthi completed her BSc Nursing in 2002 and worked in medical-surgical care before relocating to Northern Ireland. She joined SHSCT in 2009, progressing to Senior Staff Nurse in Trauma and Orthopaedics. She completed a Master's in Advanced Practice Nursing at Queen's University Belfast (2013), focusing on delirium care and contributing to the pilot introduction of a delirium assessment tool. She later undertook the Fracture Nursing Course and worked as a Trauma Co-ordinator, supporting NHFD and the KIWI Project.

Deepthi is passionate about supporting internationally educated nurses. She created a 'VOICE Forum' and presented this work at the Florence Nightingale Windrush Leadership Celebration in 2025. She also completed Windrush Leadership Programme and leads Women's Support at Trinity Mar Thoma Church, Belfast.

**Prof. Paula Holt MBE DL - Senior Nursing Adviser for the Code & Revalidation NMC  
EdD MSc (Health Psych) PgD(Ed) BScHons (Psych) FHEA RN(A) RN(MH) CMHN**

Paula started her career as a Registered General Nurse, working in acute medicine, then became a Registered Mental Health Nurse working in acute and dementia services. She served as an Army Officer for 8 years in England, Germany and Scotland heading up mental health services for Forces personnel and their families. She undertook operational tours of Bosnia in 1993/4 (with the UN) and 1997 (with NATO) providing responsive mental health care. Back in the NHS she led a drug and alcohol team, a mentally disordered offender service and developed and delivered a court mandated drug treatment and rehabilitation programme.

She enjoyed a 19-year career in Higher Education, developing nursing and AHP education portfolios with a focus on widening participation into these professions, and supporting student success through innovative pedagogy. She spent many years as UK regulation lead for the Council of Deans of Health. She left the HE sector as a Pro Vice Chancellor and Dean in September 2021.

Paula currently works for the Nursing and Midwifery Council as a Senior Nursing Adviser. The role draws on her significant practice and educational experience, and she has led work around pre-registration nursing standards, education quality and simulated practice. Paula has multiple statutory and charitable roles regionally to support veterans and the armed forces community.

**Paula McLaren - Senior Nursing Adviser for Advanced Practice NMC**

Paula joined the NMC in February 2021 as Head of Education and Quality Assurance and is now Senior Adviser for Advanced Practice leading the NMCs review of advanced practice. Paula also leads and supports the prescribing portfolio at the NMC. Paula is a registered general nurse, having trained in Australia and moved to the UK in 1995.

Paula has worked in a variety of roles within secondary care, primary and community services, higher education and transformation, involved in the development of GP Federations and Training Hubs. Paula was involved in setting up volunteer 'health champions' in GP practices and developing research practices to improve patient outcomes.

More recently Paula's roles have focussed on the quality of learning environments and now the NMC review of advanced practice, moving into phase 2 to develop and finalise approaches to the additional regulation of advanced nursing and midwifery practice. Paula is an independent prescriber and continues to work clinically when time allows.

Paula's wider interests include population health and supporting equitable access to high quality services, as well as supporting high quality learning opportunities and supporting future workforce development across health and social care.

## **Kieran McCormick - Deputy Chair of NIPEC Council**

Kieran McCormick has been a Registered Nurse since 2008 and since then he has worked in a variety of nursing roles across the public, private and voluntary sector. Kieran's clinical nursing background is in care of the elderly and learning disability, before he later moved in to management in the South Eastern HSC Trust, and more latterly into regulation, having held a Nursing Inspectors post in RQIA.

Kieran is currently the Managing Director of Balmoral Healthcare Agency based in Belfast. Kieran is also an Honorary Lecturer at the School of Nursing and Midwifery, Queens University Belfast. Kieran is proud to be part of the NIPEC Council and thoroughly values working with NIPEC staff and the Department of Health in supporting the ongoing development of standards, best practice/guidance, education and professional development for nurses and midwives.

## **Prof. Jason Leitch CBE FRCS**

Professor Jason Leitch is one of the UK's most respected public health leaders, known for his strategic expertise, clear communication, and global engagement. He recently served as National Clinical Director in the Scottish Government, where he played a pivotal role in shaping health policy and system transformation.

Over the past three years, Professor Leitch has:

- Played a key role in Scotland's clinical response to COVID-19, advising ministers and guiding public health strategy through the pandemic and recovery phases.
- Engaged internationally, including speaking at WHO events, collaborating with global health leaders, and contributing to cross-border pandemic preparedness.
- Moderated and participated in high-level panels on health system resilience, leadership, and public trust—bringing clarity and insight to complex challenges.
- Advanced health communication, becoming a trusted public voice through media, government briefings, and public engagement.
- Supported leadership development, mentoring senior health professionals and contributing to strategic improvement initiatives across the UK and beyond.

He is a Consultant Oral Surgeon, holds a Doctorate from the University of Glasgow and is a graduate of Harvard's School of Public Health. In recognition of his service, he was appointed Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE) in 2019 and nominated to the National Academy of Medicine in 2020.

## **Stephen Beattie - Interim Director of Strategic Planning and Customer Engagement**

Stephen is an accomplished ICT leader with over 30 years of experience across public and private sectors. Stephen is Interim Assistant Director of Information Technology Services (ITS) at BSO in Belfast although he is currently serving as Acting Director of Strategic Planning and Customer Engagement at BSO. He has previously held leadership roles including Head of ICT at Northern Health and Social Care Trust and Head of Operations for Joint Ventures in BSO. Stephen drives multi-year, multi million pounds programmes and services, ensuring the safe and effective operation of critical clinical and business systems.

Stephen is passionate about leveraging technology to improve outcomes, having led ground-breaking initiatives such as Northern Ireland's regional electronic care record and pioneering patient portals that empower individuals to access their own health data securely. A keynote speaker and national award winner, Stephen combines deep technical expertise with strategic vision, underpinned by advanced qualifications including an MBA, MSc in Health Informatics, and certifications in ITIL, MSP, and cybersecurity.

His leadership has consistently delivered enterprise-level resilience, ISO-certified governance, and transformative digital strategies that set new benchmarks for service excellence. His expertise spans strategy, governance, and delivering complex technology programs that improve patient care and operational efficiency.

## **Rock Choir**

Rock Choir is the UK's largest, contemporary community choir offering local weekly rehearsals, performances and life-affirming events to more than 400 towns and communities across the UK. The South Belfast and Lisburn choirs, conducted by Clare Galway, have enjoyed singing together for the past 3 years. They sing well known pop and rock songs with energy, dynamism and joy, and perform at a wide variety of local and national events.

The choir has created an inclusive, welcoming and uplifting micro-community, with members forming lasting friendships and sharing joyous experiences such as performing on the iconic Titanic staircase at the Titanic museum, at the Edinburgh festival and also in local residential care homes. They regularly sing at Horatio's Garden within the Spinal Injuries unit at Musgrave Park Hospital, the Royal Belfast children's hospital and also the Cancer Centre at Belfast City Hospital. The choir and Clare are delighted to be asked to perform at this years NIPEC conference and would encourage you to sing along where you can!