



**Northern Ireland Practice Education Council for  
Nursing and Midwifery**

**CANCER NURSING CAREER PATHWAY**

**WORKSHOP REPORT**

**29<sup>th</sup> September 2022**



## **Contents**

		<b>Page</b>
<b>1.0</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Workshop</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Facilitated Table Discussion &amp; Results</b>	<b>5</b>
	• <b>Core Clinical Roles</b>	<b>5</b>
	• <b>Lack of consensus for some cancer nursing roles</b>	<b>7</b>
	• <b>Parameters of work, care settings &amp; feedback</b>	<b>8</b>
	• <b>Project aim &amp; objectives &amp; steering group membership</b>	<b>11</b>
	• <b>Workshop evaluation</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>12</b>
	<b>Appendices</b>	
	<b>Appendix 1 Workshop Programme</b>	<b>13</b>
	<b>Appendix 2 Workshop Attendance</b>	<b>14</b>

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1** In 2022, the Chief Nursing Officer (CNO) commissioned the Northern Ireland Practice and Education Council (NIPEC) to develop a Cancer Nursing Career Pathway. The aim of the career pathway is to enhance and develop roles and responsibilities for registered nursing and nursing support staff to improve the quality of care and treatment of patients with cancer.
- 1.2** To support this programme of work, a Project Steering Group will be established, co-chaired by Lesley Mitchell, Interim Assistant Director of Acute Services (Nursing) for Cancer and Diagnostics, Western Health & Social Care Trust (WHST) and Lorna Nevin, Nurse Consultant Cancer, Palliative and End of Life Care, Public Health Agency (PHA). Steering Group members will comprise representation from Senior Nurses within HSC Trusts, Education Providers, Department of Health (DoH), Royal College of Nursing (RCN) in addition to Directors of Human Resources (HR) Forum, Staff Side and people with a lived experience of cancer. The NIPEC Project Lead is Geraldine McKendry supported by Cathy McCusker, NIPEC's Career Pathway Lead.

## **2.0 WORKSHOP**

- 2.1** In order to commence the development of any clinical career pathway the Steering Group require to have a clear idea of the roles to be included in the pathway. The Project Team (Project Co-Chairs and NIPEC leads) agreed that the most effective way to achieve this was to host a workshop with all the key stakeholders. The main purpose of the workshop was to inform the core roles, the parameters of the pathway and to confirm the key constituent membership of the Steering Group.
- 2.2** The workshop was held on 29th September 2022 and the 60 participants who attended included key stakeholders representing a wide variety of clinical, management, leadership and education roles across a range of settings and most importantly people with a lived experience of cancer.
- 2.3** Lesley Mitchell welcomed everyone to the workshop and set out the purpose of the workshop and the main programme (Appendix 1). Fidelma Carolan, Senior Consultant, HSC Leadership Centre, facilitated the capture of feedback and data collection through the use of Mentimeter poll. At the end of the introduction, participants entered words into the Mentimeter weblink via their smart phones, to describe their feelings at the beginning of the workshop. Participants described feeling excited, interested, hopeful and curious see Figure 1 for the wordle created via Mentimeter.

**Figure 1: How are you feeling this morning about starting this journey?**



- 2.4** Speaking about the “Direction of a pathway”, Linda Kelly, NIPEC Chief Executive, set out the strategic context and direction for Nursing, as presented in the Nursing and Midwifery Task Group (NMTG) Report (DoH 2020)<sup>1</sup>
- Theme 1 Maximising Population Health;
  - Theme 2 Maximising the Capacity and Capability of the Nursing and Midwifery workforces; and
  - Theme 3 Professional Clinical Leadership alongside Right Care, Right Time and Right Place.
- 2.5** The focus in Theme 2 is about enhancing the clinical workforce and increasing the number of nurses in specialist roles as well as growing the population of Advanced Nursing Practice (ANP) and Consultant Nurse roles. The development of a cancer nursing career pathway ensures that the capability and the capacity of the workforce is enhanced in line with the NMTG Report’s recommendations.
- 2.6** Lorna Nevin evidenced what is known about the current Cancer nursing workforce sharing details from the NI Cancer Nursing Census completed in 2021<sup>2</sup>. The workshop participants acknowledged that at every point along the cancer pathway, be it individually or as part of a multidisciplinary team, nurses provide a significant contribution. The roles included within the census and the introduction of three Cancer Consultant Nurses, demonstrate that with appropriate knowledge, skills, attitude and values, nurses play a critical role in leading, planning, coordinating, transforming and providing person-centred care to people living with cancer.
- 2.7** The guest speaker Helen McGarvey, a retired Senior Lecturer in Nursing, shared moments from her personal experience of living with secondary breast cancer. Helen evidenced the positive impact cancer nurses can have on an individual’s experience of care and identified examples which established confidence, safety

<sup>1</sup> [Nursing and Midwifery Task Group \(NMTG\) Report and Recommendations | Department of Health \(health-ni.gov.uk\)](https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/nmtg-report-and-recommendations)

<sup>2</sup> [2021 Census of the cancer workforce in NI \(macmillan.org.uk\)](https://www.maccmillan.org.uk/2021-census-of-the-cancer-workforce-in-ni)

and person-centred care. Helen also shared some examples when behaviours of nurses resulted in a poor experience of care. Helen helped to highlight the essential competencies including knowledge, skills and behaviours required for the roles of the nurses/ support workers.

- 2.8** This session finished with a video clip called “Catherine’s Story”. A reflection recorded by a Macmillan Nurse which captured the personal impact of care for a cancer nurse. This brought into focus the importance of listening, connecting and supporting each individual from the start of their diagnosis. It beautifully articulated an example of compassionate and person-centred care. Catherine’s story also demonstrated the value of personal growth through reflection on experiences which shape and hone us as nurses.
- 2.9** Cathy McCusker introduced the other Career Pathways<sup>3</sup> that NIPEC has led. These included the General Practice Nursing Career Pathway and the District Nursing Career Pathway. Participants were asked via Mentimeter to state their hopes and concerns for the development of the Cancer Nursing Career Pathway. The majority of those that replied hoped that the Project would result in:
- development of self and others, a skilled workforce;
  - safe and effective care delivered by a confident, empathetic workforce;
  - clear guidance in relation to roles, knowledge, skills and behaviours;
  - workforce stabilisation, sustainability of services and retention of staff.
- 2.10** The main concerns were that the career pathway “won’t happen” either through lack of funding or timescales being unachievable. There was a worry that it would be too inflexible to be practical or that it wouldn’t have a broad enough focus to include all roles. These hopes and concerns are valuable messages for the Steering group to address as the pathway moves forward.

### **3.0 FACILITATED TABLE DISCUSSION & RESULTS**

#### **CORE CLINICAL ROLES**

- 3.1** A table top exercise was used to allow workshop participants to discuss the roles which currently exist and how they would fit in the Cancer Nursing Career Pathway. The roles reflected the NI Cancer Workforce Census Report. Table 1 presents the alignment of the current cancer nursing roles to the core roles suggested for the career pathway.

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<sup>3</sup> NIPEC’s Career Pathways <https://nipec.hscni.net/microsites/>

**Table 1: Current cancer nursing roles aligned to proposed core roles in cancer nursing career pathway**

Proposed Core Clinical Roles in the Cancer Nursing Career Pathway	Current Cancer Nursing Roles in HSC Trusts aligned to the proposed roles in the Cancer Nursing Career Pathway
Senior Nursing Assistant	Healthcare Assistant Senior Health Care Assistant
Cancer Support Worker	Cancer Support Worker
Staff Nurse General Nursing	Clinical Staff Nurse
Staff Nurse Cancer Nursing	Pre-Assessment Nurse Paediatric Haematology & Oncology Nurse Chemotherapy Nurse *
Senior Staff Nurse	Deputy Sister/ Charge Nurse Triage Helpline Nurse Chemotherapy Nurse * Chemotherapy Sister Clinical Research Nurse *
Specialist Nurse Cancer Nursing	Haematology Transplant Coordinator Nurse Practitioner * Oncology Nurse Practitioner * Clinical Nurse Specialist Practice Education Development Nurse Haematology Nurse Practitioner * Teenage & Young Adult CNS *
Advanced Nurse Practitioner Cancer Nursing	Teenage & Young Adult CNS * Nurse Practitioner * Oncology Nurse Practitioner * Clinical Research Nurse * Haematology Nurse Practitioner * Advanced Nurse Trainee Practitioner Advanced Nurse Practitioner
Consultant Nurse Cancer Nursing	

## **LACK OF CONSENSUS FOR SOME CANCER NURSING ROLES**

**3.2** Participants found some of the roles difficult to allocate to one particular role within the proposed cancer nursing career pathway. These roles are identified with an asterix\* in Table 1 above and are:

- Chemotherapy Nurse – included in both Staff Nurse and Senior Staff Nurse roles;
- Clinical Research Nurse - included in both Senior Staff Nurse and Advanced Nurse Practitioner roles; and
- Nurse Practitioner; Oncology Nurse Practitioner; Haematology Nurse Practitioner; Teenage & Young Adult CNS - included in both Specialist Nurse and Advanced Nurse Practitioner roles.

**3.3** Some of the other roles that require further discussion by the Steering Group include:

- Lead Nurse
- Clinical Academic Nurse
- Clinical Research Manager
- Secondary Cancer Nurse Specialist
- Prevention and Early Intervention
- Clinical Trials/Specialist Research Nurse
- Radiology
- PICC Placers
- Acute Oncology

**3.4** The difficulties reaching a consensus in the alignment of the current cancer nursing roles demonstrates the importance of a regionally agreed career pathway comprising core roles, competencies and education. It is proposed that this will also help with the reduction in the number of different and confusing job titles.

## PARAMETERS OF WORK & CARE SETTINGS

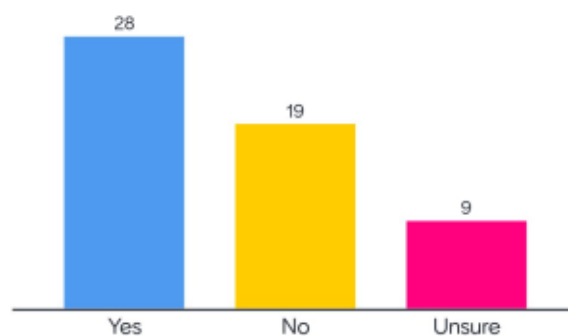
3.5 The Mentimeter Poll was used again to gain answers to five questions, see Table 2, about the areas of practice to include in the pathway along with care settings.

Table 2: Mentimeter Poll Questions	
Question 1 a.	<i>Does the room agree, that the Cancer Nursing Career Pathway includes all registered nurses working outside cancer centres and cancer units?</i>  A Yes/ No/ Unsure      B Rationale / Justification of answer
Question 1 b.	<i>What clinical settings does the pathway span?</i>  8 choices: Acute hospital medical, Acute hospital surgical, community, cancer centres/cancer units, primary care, care homes, voluntary/ independent sector?
Question 2.	<i>Is this Cancer Nursing Career pathway aligned only to nurses caring for adult patients?</i>  A Yes/ No/ Unsure      B Rationale / Justification of answer
Question 3.	<i>Does the cancer nursing career pathway include palliative care?</i>  A Yes/ No / Unsure      B Rationale / Justification of answer
Question 4.	<i>Does the room agree, that the Cancer Nursing Career Pathway includes Cancer Support Workers?</i>  A Yes/ No/ Unsure      B Rationale / Justification of answer

3.6 The Mentimeter results to the questions are detailed under the headings below and the Steering Group will consider these in relation to the development of the Career Pathway.

### Q1a. Should the Career Pathway Include all Nurses Caring for Cancer Patients?

Figure 2.



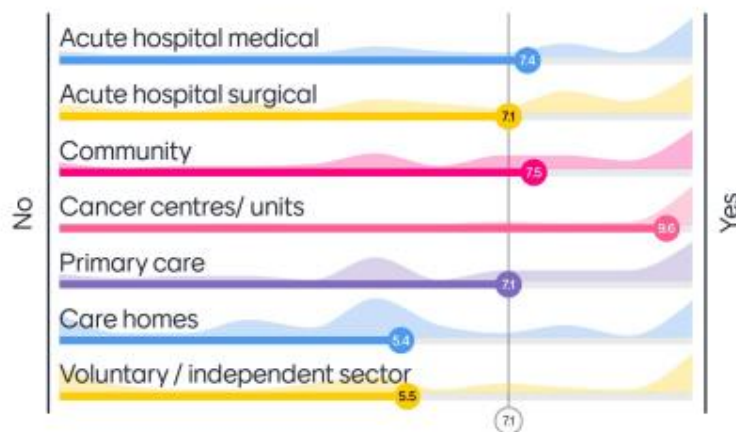
3.7 The results to this question show that there were more in favour of including all those caring for cancer patients in the career pathway rather than solely those in cancer centres/units (Figure 2). For those who didn't agree or were unsure many



did state that it was important that nurses caring for cancer patients in a non-cancer care setting should complete a focused training package to include communication skills appropriate to the person with cancer's need. It is important to recognise that most cancer journeys begin and end outside of cancer units or cancer centres and therefore nurses should be able to develop competencies and access learning activities/education required for their role.

**Q1b. Should the Career Pathway Include Nurses Caring for Patients in settings other than Cancer Centres/Units?**

**Figure 3**

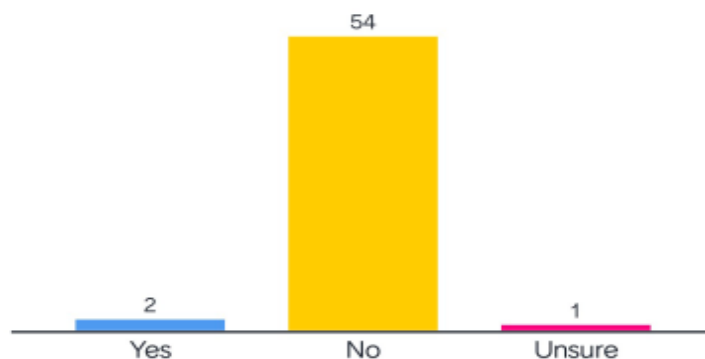


**3.8** The participants were in favour of the career pathway including those nurses working in Acute Medicine or Acute Surgery, Primary and Community Care, in addition to cancer centres and cancer units. There was less support for the career pathway including those working in the Independent and Voluntary Sectors.

**Q 2. Should the Career Pathway Include Only Nurses Caring for Adult Patients?**

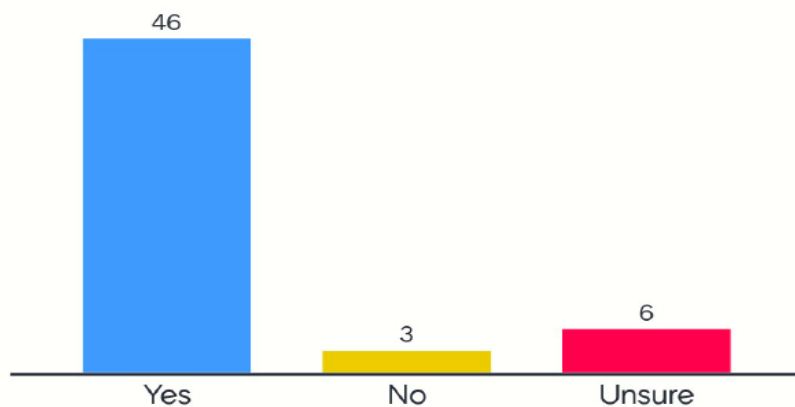
**3.9** There was unanimous support for the Career Pathway to include all nurses caring for people across the life span: children, teenagers, young adults as well as adults (Figure 4). The main rationale expressed was that cancer affects everyone.

**Figure 4.**



**Q 3. Should Nurses working in Palliative Care be included in the Pathway?**

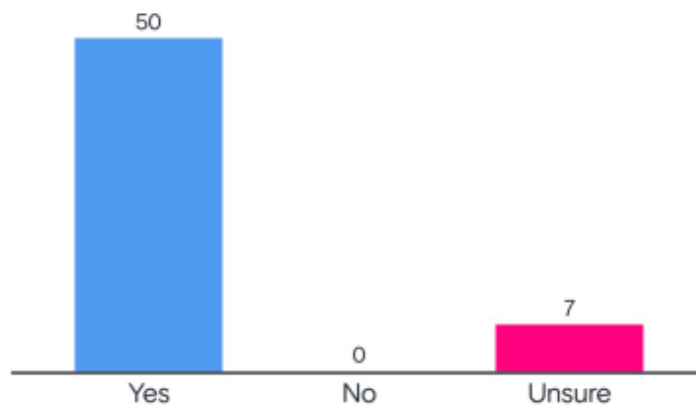
**Figure 5**



**3.10** The feedback from the workshop participants was supportive for Nurses working in Palliative Care to be included in the career pathway (Figure 5). However, it was also acknowledged that Palliative Care included conditions other than cancer.

**Q4. Should Cancer Support Workers be included in the Career Pathway?**

**Figure 6**



**3.11** There was significant support for inclusion of the Cancer Support Worker role in the career pathway (Figure 6). In addition, participants highlighted the invaluable nature of the role; the need to split the administrative focus from it and the importance of staff retention. Support Workers were represented at the workshop and the high esteem within which they were held was clearly articulated.

## PROJECT AIM & OBJECTIVES AND STEERING GROUP MEMBERSHIP

- 3.12** The draft overarching aim for the project was presented to the workshop participants:

### ***Draft Project Overarching Aim Presented at the Workshop***

*“The Project Steering Group will work with key stakeholders to develop a cancer nursing career pathway to support the development of registered nursing staff and nursing assistants, across a range of care settings. This will include; Acute Medicine, Acute Surgery, Primary Care in addition to cancer centres and cancer units. It will also include, all nurses caring for people along the lifespan: children, teenagers, young adults, as well as adults”.*

- 3.13** It was agreed that it would need to be further refined by the Steering Group as a result of the discussions and consensus reached with the workshop participants. The objectives of the workshop were also shared along with the proposed key constituent stakeholders to be invited to sit on the Steering Group.
- 3.14** In bringing the workshop to a close, Lorna Nevin thanked everyone for their engagement and contribution throughout the workshop. She asked the delegates to pause and think “How do we collectively sustain and grow the cancer nursing workforce across our organisations to be the inspirational transformation we need for people living with cancer in Northern Ireland”. Keeping this thought central will be a key driver to enabling nursing to flourish and grow along the cancer nursing career pathway. Participants were each given a small pack of wildflower seeds to take home to plant, nurture and watch grow. A reminder that the purpose of the career pathway is to “Nurture and Grow the Cancer Nursing Workforce”.

## WORKSHOP EVALUATION

- 3.15** Participants were asked for a final word or comment to reflect how they felt at the end of the workshop (Figure 7). The success of the workshop was evident by the positive words and comments presented in the wordle. The majority of participants felt hopeful, motivated, inspired and excited and no one suggested they remained nervous, anxious or apprehensive at the end of the workshop.

**Figure 7: Workshop “Wordle” Evaluation of Participants Feelings at the end of the Workshop**



#### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

The Workshop report will be shared with all those invited to and who attended the workshop. The Project Team will also share the report at the first Steering Group meeting. The richness of the information gained at the workshop has been invaluable for guiding and shaping the development of the Cancer Nursing Clinical Career Pathway.

## Cancer Nursing Career Pathway WORKSHOP PROGRAMME

**Date: 29<sup>th</sup> September 2022 at 9.30am**

**Venue: Craigavon Conference & Civic Centre**

*Facilitators: Cathy McCusker & Geraldine McKendry, NIPEC*

09.30am	Welcome and Introductions	Lesley Mitchell
09.40am	The Direction of a Pathway	<i>Linda Kelly</i>
09.50am	What do we know about the cancer nurse workforce today?	<i>Lorna Nevin</i>
10.00am	What do we know about the impact cancer nurses have?	<i>Helen McGarvey (Guest Speaker)</i>
10.15am	What's it like to be a nurse working in cancer?	<i>Catherine's Story</i>
10.25am	Nursing Career Pathways	<i>Cathy McCusker</i>
11.00am	Comfort Break	
11.15am	Facilitated Table Discussion	<i>Lesley Mitchell</i>
11.30am	Parameters of work	<i>Lesley Mitchell</i>
12.15pm	Career Pathway Project Plan & Steering Group	<i>Cathy McCusker</i>
12.45pm	Next Steps to Flourish on the Pathway	<i>Lorna Nevin</i>
1.00pm	Close with Lunch	

## WORKSHOP ATTENDANCE LIST

## Workshop Presenters &amp; Facilitators

<b>Name</b>	<b>Job Role/Representing</b>	<b>Organisation</b>
Lesley Mitchell	Co-chair, NICAN Nurse Leaders Reference Group	WHSCCT
Lorna Nevin	Co-chair, Nurse Consultant, Cancer, Palliative & End of Life Care	PHA/ NICaN
Linda Kelly	Chief Executive, NIPEC	NIPEC
Cathy McCusker	Senior Professional Officer	NIPEC
Geraldine McKendry	Senior Professional Officer	NIPEC
Eunice Strahan	Senior Professional Officer	NIPEC
Fidelma Carolan	Senior Learning and Development Consultant	HSC Leadership Centre
Helen McGarvey	Retired Senior Lecturer in Nursing living with cancer	

### Workshop Participants

<b>Name</b>	<b>Job Role/Representing</b>	<b>Organisation</b>
Sandra Aitcheson	Assistant Director of Nursing	PHA
Edel Aughey	Macmillan Consultant Nurse, Oncology	BHSCT
Claire Black	Cancer Education Facilitator	SEHSCT
Ruth Boyd	Clinical Research Nurse	BHSCT
Geraldine Byers	Divisional Nurse, Cancer & Specialist Medicine	BHSCT
Sally Convery	NI Specialist Palliative Care Senior Nursing Reference Group	NHSCT
Brenda Creaney	Executive Director of Nursing	BHSCT
Ciara Curran	SACT Nurse/ In-Patient/ Out-Patient Services	BHSCT
Joanne Davenport	NICAN Nurse Leaders Reference Group	BHSCT
Roisin Devlin	On behalf of Executive Director of Nursing	SEHSCT
Celia Diver Hall	NICAN Nurse Leaders Reference Group	WHSCCT
Michelle Duffy	Out-Patient Services	WHSCCT
Tracie Fleming	Assistant Director of Nursing Workforce On behalf of Executive Director of Nursing	NHSCT
Paula Forrest	Deputy Director of Nursing Workforce, Education, Regulation & Informatics	BHSCT
Edel Fitzpatrick	Nursing Workforce Lead Representative	WHSCCT
Jenyth Gorzalska	Inspector, Independent Healthcare Team	RQIA
Loretta Gribben	Trade Union Representation	RCN
Louise Gribben	Advanced Nurse Practitioner, Haematology	SHSCT
Kristy Lee Greene	NICAN Nurse Leaders Reference Group	NHSCT
Helen Horner	CNS, Haematology, SPQ Post Registration Student	NHSCT
Allison Hunter	Radiotherapy Nursing	BHSCT
Siobhan Johnston	Staff Tutor, Nursing	OU
Fiona Keegan	CNS, Colorectal	SHSCT
Matthew Kelly	CNS, Lung	SHSCT
Jill Kennedy	CNS, Sarcoma	SEHSCT
Helen Kerr	Education Providers & Student Nurses	QUB
Karen Kirkwood	SACT Unit Manager, Laurel House	NHSCT
Davina Lee	Interim Service Manager, Hematology & Cancer Services	BHSCT
Julianne Lee	Community Children's	SHSCT
Joanne Lewis	Children's CNS, Brain	BHSCT
Sharlene Mansell	CNS, Upper GI	SEHSCT
Lisa McAuley	AOS ANP	NHSCT

Sarah McBride	Cancer Support Worker	SEHSCT
Caroline McCaughey	Cancer Education Facilitator	BHSCT
Sarah McCauley	Macmillan Advanced Nurse Practitioner Trainee, Oncology	SEHSCT
Sharon McClean	CNS, Brain	BHSCT
John McGarvey	Assistant Director of Nursing Services, Governance/Safe & Effective Care	WHSCCT
Tracey McGuigan	HNP	BHSCT
Kirsty McKay	ONP	NHSCT
Angela McKeever	Cancer Service Improvement Lead	WHSCCT
Dympna McParlan	Vascular Access Lead Nurse	BHSCT
Moyra Mills	Cancer Service Improvement Lead	NHSCT
Evelyn Mooney	Representing Education Providers	OU
Tom Mulligan	Senior Education Manager	CEC
Denise O`Boyle	Student Nurse	UU
Martina O`Brien	Radiotherapy Nursing	North West Cancer Centre
Shirleen Porter	Vascular Access Lead Nurse	SEHSCT
Clair Quin	NICAN Nurse Leaders Reference Group	SHSCT
Renee Reid	Teenage & Young Adult CNS Forum	BHSCT
Patricia Rogers	CNS, Gynae	NHSCT
Cherith Semple	Reader in Clinical Cancer Nursing	SEHSCT/ UU
Nicola Shannon	NICAN Nurse Leaders Reference Group	SHSCT
Andrea Shepherd	Representing Education Providers	UU
Joanne Stewart	Inpatient Services	BHSCT
Kerrie Sweeney	Teenage & Young Adult CNS Forum	NHSCT
Hazel Templeton	CNS, Uro-Oncology	WHSCCT
Ruth Thompson	NICAN Nurse Leaders Reference Group	SEHSCT
Amy Ward	In-Patient Services	SHSCT
Jacque Warwick	Consultant Nurse	WHSCCT
Debbie Wightman	Representing Clinical Directors and Assistant Directors for Cancer	BHSCT





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**October 2022**