



Annual Conference 2025

12 November 2025

John McIntyre Conference Centre, Edinburgh

From System Holes to Whole System

9.00am **Registration, Tea & Coffee.**

9.30am **Welcome & Scene-Setting**

Mark Hazelwood

Chief Executive
Scottish Partnership for
Palliative Care

9.40am **Whole System Approaches to Palliative Care**

What do people mean by “the system”? What is the connection between the system and meaningful outcomes in people’s lives? How could things be managed and organised differently to achieve the improvements we want to see? Toby will draw on practical examples and provide opportunities for interaction.

Toby Lowe

Professor of Public
Management at
Manchester Metropolitan
University and Visiting
Professor at Centre for
Public Impact

10.40am **People and Family Experiences Part 1**

30,000 people are diagnosed with cancer each year in Scotland. A third of these people live less than a year, and their pathways, experiences and outcomes are largely unknown to “the system”. In the first of two sessions Jo, Stephen and colleagues will share the latest learning from the major i-Qual-PPC research study which is tackling this invisibility. What do people and their families experience? What do they really value about the system and what needs to change? How might this study inform improvement for people with other conditions

Jo Bowden

Consultant in Palliative
Medicine & University of St
Andrews Clinical Research
Fellow

Stephen Fenning

Consultant in Palliative
Medicine

and Colleagues

11.00am **Break - refreshments, networking, poster exhibition viewing.**

11.30am **The Trees of Hallaig: roots of care, leaves of memory**

In this session Donald will explore the often unseen and undervalued role of social care staff in providing physical, practical, social, emotional and spiritual support to both individuals and their family members.

What can other parts of the system learn from social care?

Donald Macaskill

Chief Executive, Scottish Care

12.00pm Community First

Institutions and healthcare systems often struggle to get their heads round notions of community. In this session Cormac will help us think about 'community' in new ways. How can institutions and professionals truly serve communities?

Cormac Russel
Managing Director, Nurture Development

12.45pm People and Family Experiences Part 2

30,000 people are diagnosed with cancer each year in Scotland. A third of these people live less than a year, and their pathways, experiences and outcomes are largely unknown to 'the system'. In the second of two sessions Jo, Stephen and colleagues will share the latest learning from the major i-QUAL-PPC research study which is tackling this invisibility. What do people and their families experience? What do they really value about the system and what needs to change? How might this study inform improvement for people with other conditions

Jo Bowden
Consultant in Palliative Medicine & University of St Andrews Clinical Research Fellow

Stephen Fenning and Colleagues
Consultant in Palliative Medicine

1.00pm Lunch, networking & poster exhibition viewing**2.00pm Rapid fire presentations OR**

A series of short presentations selected from the poster competition, showcasing innovative and important work taking place across Scotland and beyond.

Exploring Uncertainty through Movement

A small group session with Ariel Dempsey giving participants a unique opportunity to explore how we experience and respond to uncertainty in medical practice. nt.

2.50pm Parallel Sessions

Delegates can choose from four simultaneous sessions. Each session will tackle a topic which has system-wide relevance and impact.

- A. A system for everyone: psychological care and a trauma informed approach
- B. Living and Working in Uncertainty
- C. Introducing the potential of AI within Public Health and Healthcare Systems in Scotland
- D. To be confirmed

See overleaf for full session details

Clare McGowan
Ariel Dempsey
Chris Harkins

3.50pm Hoping for change - reflections and conclusions on better systems for people and families

A chance for:

- speakers and delegates to reflect and draw conclusions from what they have said or heard.
- 'Keynote Listeners' to hear important messages from the conference.

Delegates, Speakers & Keynote Listeners.

Keynote Listeners are specially invited people of influence, eager to hear from the conference.

4.25pm Thanks and Conference Close

Mark Hazelwood

4.30pm-6.00pm Baroque, Bacharach, Boogie, Burgandy, Beer and Banter

Catch up with colleagues and make new connections over music and drinks.



Parallel Sessions – 2.50pm – 3.50pm

Delegates can choose to attend one of four parallel sessions. Each session will tackle a topic which has system-wide relevance and impact.

Session A: A system for everyone: psychological care and a trauma informed approach

Clare McGowan

Consultant Clinical Psychologist, Beatson West of Scotland Cancer Centre and the National Haematopoietic Stem Cell Transplant Service

In this session Clare will reflect on the psychological care and support which people often need, and the roles played by different health and social care professionals in addressing different levels of complexity. She will then consider how a trauma-informed approach can help to ensure that the system serves people who may find it difficult to engage with services.

Session B: Palliating Uncertainty: Tools from the Philosophy of Pragmatism

Ariel Dempsey

Physician and postdoctoral fellow in the University of Oxford Faculty of Theology and Religion

“Medicine is a science of uncertainty..”

~William Osler, Father of Modern Medicine

Uncertainty is inherent to the practice of palliative care. In this session, we'll explore insights from the philosophy of pragmatism and discover practical tools to help you, your colleagues, and your patients not just manage uncertainty, but act in the midst of it and live with it well.

Session C: Introducing the potential of AI within Public Health and Healthcare Systems in Scotland

Chris Harkins

Public Health Programme Manager, Glasgow Centre for Population Health

Artificial Intelligence is all around us. It is changing the world in ways which are scary and ways which are full of potential for good. In this session Chris will provide an introduction to the role of AI in Scotland's public health and healthcare. He'll consider AI's capacity to supplement clinical practice and decision-making, analyse vast amounts of complex population health data at near instantaneous speed, improve healthcare systems efficiency, and personalise patient care. He will also consider how ethical frameworks, good governance, careful evaluation and understanding how the public feels about AI in healthcare, can mitigate some of the risks which this technological revolution brings.

Session D to be confirmed.