



# NATIONAL LEAD NCHD NEWSLETTER

*September 2022*



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**NDTP**  
National Doctors Training & Planning

[www.hse.ie/doctors](http://www.hse.ie/doctors)  
@NDTP\_HSE



I'm delighted to introduce myself as the NDTP 2022/2023 National Lead NCHD Fellow. I have worked as an NCHD full time for the last 9 years and have recently completed CST in paediatrics. I have a Master's in Healthcare Management from RCSI and a Certificate in Essential Leadership for new Consultants, RCPI. I acted as trainee representative to the department of paediatrics in RCPI in 2020/2021 and as Lead NCHD in CHI at Crumlin 2021/2022. I'm excited to use this experience as I take on the National Lead NCHD fellowship.

I'm keen to promote NCHD engagement and hope to give you an insight into some of the work being done by NDTP for and on behalf of NCHDs both in training and not in formal training roles. I have created a National Lead NCHD twitter account and will highlight NDTPs work there, as well as share opportunities and application deadlines. This newsletter will be published quarterly and I welcome content from the Leads on sites across the country.

As National Lead I am responsible for overseeing, developing and embedding the Lead NCHD Programme throughout the country. Each lead NCHD works with their committee to act as a vital link between NCHDs and hospital management. We encourage and facilitate quality improvement initiatives which are NCHD designed and led; tackling areas such as NCHD education, wellbeing and risk management. All of this is a prudent means of contributing to the improvement of NCHD welfare and working conditions, and therefore improving the recruitment and retention of doctors in our healthcare system. I encourage you all to get involved with your NCHD committee. Along with Prof. Kinirons, NDTP's medical director, I presented at grand rounds in Limerick and CHI this month. We plan a site visit to Galway University Hospital early next month to meet with NCHDs there.

Our first Lead NCHD workshop for 2022/2023 was held on 23<sup>rd</sup> September, in person in Dublin. It was an opportunity for the incoming leads to get together, network, and see last year's winning QI projects presented. It was fantastic to see so much engagement and enthusiasm in the room and I was delighted to meet so many of the Lead NCHDs in person. I'll share updates from this workshop in the next Newsletter.

My role also involves representing NCHDs nationally and regularly engage with stakeholders on your behalf. The National Taskforce on the NCHD workforce established by Minister for Health, Stephen Donnelly kicked off last week. I'm delighted to represent you at this taskforce, to address issues faced by NCHDs. There is a real appetite for change within government, and I'm confident that this group will provide timely solutions.

Through these Newsletters, the website and my twitter feed I plan to keep you up to date with opportunities available to all NCHDs. If you have any queries or content you'd like included in the next newsletter, please do not hesitate to contact me on [nl.nchd@hse.ie](mailto:nl.nchd@hse.ie). Follow the Lead programme on twitter [@NLNCHD](https://twitter.com/NLNCHD) and [@NDTP\\_HSE](https://twitter.com/NDTP_HSE).

Sincerely,

*Jennifer Finnegan*

Dr Jennifer Finnegan

## NCHD Wellbeing Supports

### Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)

Confidential work-based support service available to all HSE employees. It is an independent service and supports employees with psycho-social issues, whether personal or work-related.

You can self-refer to EAP by calling the 24/7 national phone line on **0818 327 327**.



### Coaching

Did you know the HSE has a free coaching service for all staff?

Coaching aims to support people when they want to bring about personal or professional change in their lives or work, to shift their perspective, reflect on their choices and realise their individual potential. Coaching is a unique experience that offers support, encouragement, challenge and feedback. The application form is available here [HSE Coaching](#)

Contact the coaching service at [hr.nationalcoachingservice@hse.ie](mailto:hr.nationalcoachingservice@hse.ie)

Parental Leave

### Update to Parent's Leave Entitlement

From **1<sup>st</sup> July 2022**, the current entitlement for parent's leave is 7 weeks. Employees who had taken 5 weeks' parent's leave prior to 1<sup>st</sup> July 2022 will now have an entitlement to an additional 2 weeks. Parent's leave must be taken within 2 years of the birth or adoptive placement of the child.

[Find more information about parent's leave](#)



### National GP Directory for NCHDs, Trainees

The National GP Directory, compiled by the ICGP, lists GPs who have indicated that they have capacity to register NCHDs, trainees and interns seeking a GP within their locality during their clinical rotations.

- Self-care is important for all doctors
- Self-treatment is not compatible with good self-care
- Accessing GP care in a timely manner supports good health outcomes

The GP Directory makes registration as a patient easier, considering the rotational nature of training for doctors.

Find the Directory Here: [National GP Directory for NCHDs](https://www.nationalgpdirectory.ie/)



### Practitioner Health Matters

Practitioner Health Matters Programme provides independent, confidential care for doctors, dentists & pharmacists facing mental health & addiction difficulties.

They offer support to those experiencing stress, burnout, depression or anxiety. You can find user testimonials at their website.

If you need support, phone them on 0857601274 or 012789369.

Email: [confidential@practitionerhealth.ie](mailto:confidential@practitionerhealth.ie)



Perhaps you could set up a wellbeing initiative in your site or consider joining your local wellbeing committee.

To have your wellbeing initiative featured in the next newsletter, email [nl.nchd@hse.ie](mailto:nl.nchd@hse.ie)



## Continuous Professional Development Support Scheme

Each NCHD on the general or supervised division and not enrolled in a formal training programme must register on a Professional Competence scheme with the relevant training body. Part of the professional competence requirements of each practitioner is to achieve 20 externally validated CPD credits. They are also required to accrue internal credits and fulfil audit requirements.

### What is CPD-SS?

CPD-SS is funded by the HSE. It provides these NCHDs with a suite of professional educational training courses and activities, and provides up to 20 external credits or three days/year, whichever is greatest.

NCHDs have access to a range of clinical courses/activities provided by all the Irish Training bodies. The forum of postgraduate training bodies produce a consolidated prospectus detailing all courses available across all training bodies.

Guidance document & prospectus can found [here](#)

Be sure to register for your free CPD-SS scheme before the **30<sup>th</sup> September 2022** deadline.



## Continuous Professional Development Support Scheme (CPD-SS)

Continuous Professional Development Support Scheme (CPD-SS) is now accepting applications for 2022 via relevant Postgraduate Training Bodies

Closing date for #CPD-SS for #NCHDs is **30<sup>th</sup> September 2022**

Guidance Document and more information is available on [www.hse.ie/doctors](http://www.hse.ie/doctors)







# CPD Certificate

## Delivering Change in Health Services

Available to all healthcare staff interested in developing people and culture change skills for improving health and social care services.

12 CPD Points

 [changeguide@hse.ie](mailto:changeguide@hse.ie)
 [www.hse.ie/changeguide](http://www.hse.ie/changeguide)

### CPD Certificate - Delivering Change in Health Services

The CPD Certificate - Delivering Change in Health Services is available to all healthcare personnel who wish to develop as change leaders and to lead their teams to introduce innovative practices to deliver better outcomes for service users. It is a collaboration between HSE Organisation Development and the RCSI Institute of Leadership.

Once you have completed the eLearning Programme you are encouraged to identify a change challenge within your service and apply the learning, knowledge, skills and tools to your service improvement in collaboration with your service manager and team colleagues. The application of learning to your change challenge can take place over 9 months from completion of the eLearning programme. This programme is approved for 12 CPD points.

The next submission intake date for this programme is the **1<sup>st</sup> October**.

Full information on how to apply can be found here: [CPD Certificate - Information](#)

Direct questions send to [changeguide@hse.ie](mailto:changeguide@hse.ie)

## Don't forget about the financial supports available to you!

There are three schemes in operation and funded by NDTP:

### 1. Training Support Scheme (TSS)\*

The training support scheme is offered to all NCHDs.

NCHDs are able to make claims for expenses accrued by attending exams, courses and conferences. Professional Competency Scheme registration is also included. Travel and accommodation associated with relevant activities may also be claimed.

The bursary available to each grade is below. Note, this balance resets each training year.

Grade	Amount
Intern	€750.00
SHOs and Registrars	€1,250.00
SPRs/GP Registrars/Psychiatry SRs on a training scheme	€2,000.00

### 2. Clinical Course and Examination Refund Scheme (CCERS)\*

CCERS is open to all NCHDs and provides funding towards an approved list of clinical courses and exams, the full cost of which is eligible to be refunded. Applications are submitted online via the NCHD NER portal. This scheme covers professional membership exams as well as mandatory specialty specific life support courses.

### 3. Specialist Training Fund for Higher Specialist Trainees (HSTs)

Higher Specialist Trainees, and third and 4<sup>th</sup> year GP Trainees have access to a further educational bursary. This fund offers €500.00 per year of training and can be rolled over each calendar year. Trainees can use this fund to support participation in relevant educational and training events, to support the purchase of textbooks and specialist medical equipment specifically required as part of HST training programme. Applications are made through your postgraduate medical training body.

Guidance documents and user guides for each of these schemes are available on the [NDTP website](#).

\*Access TSS and CCERS through your NER. This will soon be easier to access when the NER App is launched later this month.

## Think about Flexible Training or Job Sharing

Are you considering flexible training for next year? Do you know what's available to you?

The National Supernumerary Flexible Training Scheme funds up to 32 supernumerary posts, at 50% of WTE each year. It is open to all doctors on formal training programmes, including intern year, and from second year BST onwards. Applications are submitted to NDTP and are extremely competitive.

A pilot job sharing scheme is being rolled out across the post-graduate training bodies. It's hoped that the outcome of this will pave improvements in access to less than full time training for all NCHDs.

If flexible training suits your needs, why not contact your training body. As the supernumerary flexible training scheme is so popular, everyone cannot be guaranteed a place. Training bodies have been asked to highlight jobs that may be suitable for job-sharing. Perhaps you and a colleague could share a role. This will allow you more flexibility in the hours you wish to work. NDTP are working closely with the Postgraduate training bodies to increase opportunities for job-sharing and also provide for an overlap in funding to allow two trainees to work up to 60% WTE each, compared to 50% on the supernumerary scheme.

Two things to think about this autumn:

- 1) Get in touch with your training body about options available to you.
- 2) Get your flexible training scheme application in by the **1<sup>st</sup> November**. Make sure to read the guidance document for information on filling an application and the review process.

The guidance document and application form are available on the [NDTP website](#).

### NER E-portfolio

The E-portfolio was launched in September 2021. It offers NCHDs a way to create a useful portfolio of their training under subheadings, such as training plan, clinical experience and procedures.

**NCHD E-Portfolio**

The principal objective of the E-Portfolio will allow NCHDs who are not on a formal training scheme have access to a generic standard document to record their training and career development. It also gives the opportunity to have their experience validated by their supervising Consultant where applicable.

All NCHDs will be able to access the E-Portfolio, however it is principally aimed at Non Training Scheme Doctors.

The E-Portfolio, which launches 16th September 2021, will allow NCHDs to record their experience under a number of headings and will enable them to generate a Logbook.

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**NDTP**

The e-portfolio allows you to record your competencies. The training activities recorded will be sent to your supervising consultant to sign off. You can then download all of your records in PDF format. This aims to improve the experience for non-training scheme doctors in particular, providing a portfolio of training activities similar to those accessed by trainees.

The launch of the NER app this month will make it even easier to record career progression.

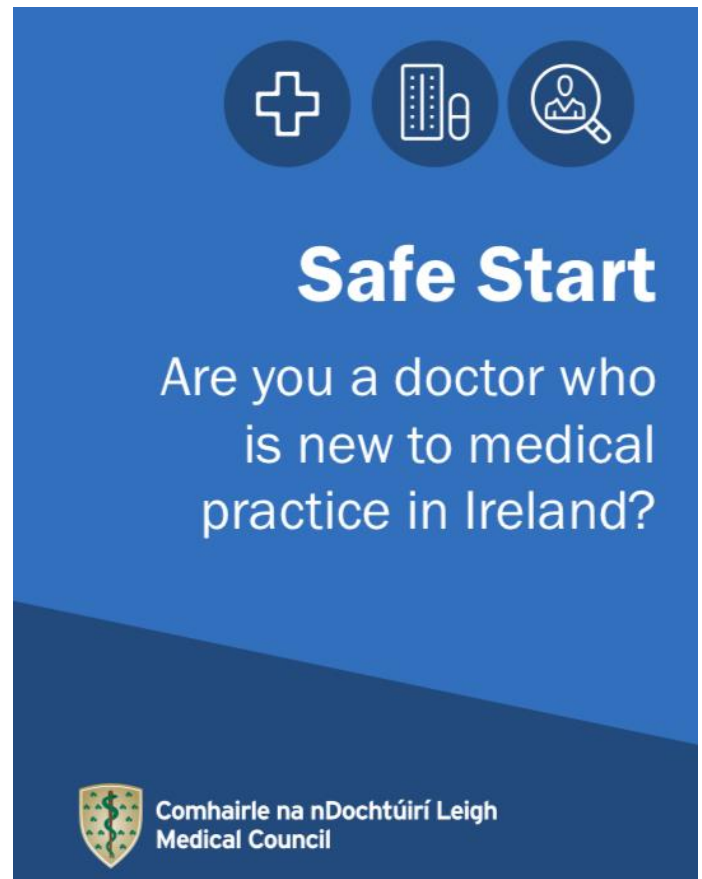
For now it's available on DIME, and will be incorporated in the app when it launches.



## Safe Start – Medical Council

The Irish Medical Council is the body that sets the standards for medical education and training in Ireland and acts as our regulatory body.

They have produced a guide for all doctors who are new to or returning to practising in Ireland. It's a really useful guide and reminder of our indemnity requirements as well as a guide to professional competence. It serves as a reminder of professional conduct and ethics. Also included are prescribing guidelines and guidance on medical record keeping. It's a really useful resource. I'd recommend sharing with your team members who may be new to Ireland.



## Irish Clinical Academic Training (ICAT)



The ICAT Programme is a unique all Ireland cross-institutional, comprehensive national training programme for clinician scientists based at six major Irish universities and their affiliated hospital groups.

National Lead NCHD Dr Jennifer Finnegan spoke to Dr Cathal O'Connor to find out more about the programme.

Dr Cathal O'Connor is a PhD fellow with the ICAT programme and is a Specialist Registrar in Dermatology with the Royal College of Physicians of Ireland (RCPI), dual training in general paediatrics.

He graduated from University College Cork in 2013 and undertook Basic Specialist Training with RCPI in both Paediatrics and Adult Medicine. He has dual membership of the RCPI in Paediatrics (2015) and Medicine (2017). His PhD study (the SPINDLE study) is examining the impact of eczema on sleep disturbance in infants, and is being performed in the INFANT research centre in University College Cork.

He has over 60 academic publications and has a special interest in paediatric dermatology, with primary research interests including eczema and genetic skin disease. He has been chosen as a 'Future Leader' by the executive board of the European Society for Paediatric Dermatology for 2021-2024.

**Jennifer: Thanks for chatting to me Cathal. Why did you apply for ICAT?**

**Cathal:** I applied for ICAT in 2018 during the first iteration of the programme. I had been interested in research for some time and thought this was an incredible opportunity to perform high quality research with amazing mentors in world-leading research centres with lots of support from ICAT. The blending of clinical and academic training appealed to me, as I felt that taking time out of training to do an MD or PhD might be a bit disjointed. I was also hugely inspired by senior colleagues I had worked with during my Paediatric BST such as Prof. Deirdre Murray and Prof. Alan Irvine.

**Jennifer: What are the benefits of the ICAT programme?**

**Cathal:** One of the main benefits of ICAT is access to a network of world class supervisors and mentors. The volume of excellence we have in Ireland in terms of academic clinicians is staggering. Not only do we have access to these unbelievable clinician scientists, but ICAT strongly encourage us to collaborate with other Irish universities and also with the very best research centres in the world to ensure that our projects are truly cutting-edge. The process of defending the PhD proposal was strenuous and really made sure that there were absolutely no flaws. In fact I had to go back to the drawing board with my original project, and this led to a much better project and supervisor structure. Another benefit in terms of lifestyle is that you can stay in the one centre for the first four years (one clinical-dominant year and three research- dominant years), so there is no moving around the country. The salary is at SpR grade and we also have access to the HSE trainee support scheme.

**Jennifer: What area are you studying for your PhD project?**

**Cathal:** My PhD is examining sleep in infants with atopic dermatitis (eczema) using sleep EEG polysomnography, overnight sleep actigraphy, infant sleep questionnaires, and parental sleep questionnaires and interviews. We also have some novel assessment tools for deeper characterisation of our participants' eczema, and we have had some novel recruitment techniques for control participants.

**Jennifer: What has your experience been like so far on ICAT?**

**Cathal:** I have really enjoyed the whole process of ICAT so far (maybe apart from my initial failed proposal!). The study days are really excellent, and we have an annual 'retreat' (greatest misnomer going!) in Malahide where we present our research in front of international experts and get feedback. It has been tougher since Covid to maintain the social connections and comradery which we had in the pre-pandemic days but we hope that this will revert to normal this year!

**Jennifer: How important is it to find a good supervisor and good research centre?**

**Cathal:** It is really important to find an excellent supervisor and excellent research centre. I would recommend to closely examine a supervisor's previous publications in an area to ensure that they have the background and track record to support you.

It is a good idea to meet with up a few supervisors with whom you might work well before committing to any particular project, especially to explore different avenues in terms of the research idea. Prospective ICAT fellows will be working hard on their thesis for at least four years so it is important to be interested in the area, and also to get on well with your supervisor!

**Jennifer: How has your experience been of working clinically in parallel to your PhD study?**

**Cathal:** It is definitely challenging to be working clinically in parallel to the PhD research and balancing the two, but it is probably good practice for later on when we are pulled in every direction as consultants! One of the biggest challenges is actually limiting my non-PhD research efforts as I still find it hard to say no to shiny new projects. I start my week with a paediatric dermatology clinic on Monday mornings which means I can focus on my research for the rest of the week. I am back doing Paediatric Registrar call this year doing regular 24-hour calls to meet my Paediatrics specialist register requirements, so that is busy enough as you know yourself, but overall it is still just about manageable!

**Jennifer: What advice would you have for any potential ICAT applicants?**

**Cathal:** I would first of all say to make sure that you are genuinely interested in the opportunity, as it is tough work for a relatively long time, but if you are interested, then it is an amazing opportunity and you should fully embrace it. The application process has changed slightly from year to year, but I believe recently the focus has been heavily based on the candidate rather than any potential research idea or supervisor. The process is also now open to veterinary trainees and dentistry trainees, which is brilliant for diversifying the research outputs and opportunities for collaboration. The deadline for application is September 30th, but there is always next year if this year is too early for you. It is no harm to apply as soon as you are eligible, as previous interest can be a positive factor for future applications. All the ICAT fellows are absolutely lovely so don't be afraid to ask around for advice, especially from people allied to your specialty. The ICAT directorate are also extremely kind and helpful and are always happy to take specific questions about the application process. Applicants should also listen back to the webinar which was held in August for further information.

**Jennifer: Thanks for the info Cathal and thanks for your time!**

**Cathal:** No problem at all. Best of luck to all this year's applicants and I look forward to meeting them at the next 'retreat'!

The next application call for fellowships starting in 2023 will open on the 28<sup>th</sup> July 2022, with a closing date of **30<sup>th</sup> September 2022**.

For more information, click <https://icatprogramme.org/>



# IRISH CLINICAL ACADEMIC TRAINING (ICAT) PROGRAMME



**ICAT**  
Irish Clinical Academic Training

**APPLICATION CALL  
for PhD fellowships**

ICAT is open to trainees in all medical, surgical, dental and veterinary specialties

[info@icatprogramme.org](mailto:info@icatprogramme.org)

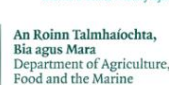
[www.icatprogramme.org](http://www.icatprogramme.org)

[@ICATProgramme](https://twitter.com/ICATProgramme)

Visit the ICAT website for eligibility criteria and further information.

**DEADLINE FOR APPLICATIONS - 30 SEPTEMBER**

**OPENS  
28 JULY  
2022**





**Deadlines for your Diary**

September 30<sup>th</sup>: CPD-SS

September 30<sup>th</sup>: ICAT Programme

November 1<sup>st</sup>: National Supernumerary Flexible Training Scheme

November 4<sup>th</sup>: 2023 Medical Intern Training

**Next Newsletter will be published in December**

Featuring: The model 3 project, the NDTP Clinical Director for Education and Training pilot, a feature for interns, Lead NCHD Quality Improvement award winners.

If you have a quality improvement initiative you'd like featured, or something you're doing for NCHDs on your site, get in touch to be featured.