

How did you first get involved with UKONS, and what drew you to it?

I have been in cancer nursing all of my professional career and I have always valued being engaged with national and international opportunities to work with fellow cancer nurses. I remember the first year when UKONS was set up and I have seen it grow and develop to become a powerful agent for positive change, for nursing and for people living with cancer. My involvement with UKONS began with attending the annual conference and keeping up with projects including, the Acute Oncology Service Triage Tool, the Systemic Anti-Cancer Therapy Passport and the focus on cancer nursing workforce development. I have seen these projects implemented in my own nursing practice and in many of the services I was engaged with. I have always enjoyed the annual conference and see it as a great opportunity to meet colleagues from the four nations and to learn from one another, an opportunity to support and feel supported by like-minded people, a force for good. A highlight for me each year is meeting colleagues that I have had the privilege to work with over the years, in various hospitals, services and roles. In the last few years I have joined the board, and in that board role, I try to raise the work of UKONS among my great colleagues in Northern Ireland, work closely with industry as the UKONS Partnership Lead, and I Chair of the Haemato-oncology Members Interest Group with over 5000 members. I am truly grateful for all of my nursing colleagues and their willingness to give off themselves to support the work of UKONS, and who are not afraid to laugh.

How has UKONS influenced your career?

Over the years I have had the opportunity to work in many roles, each one influenced by and supported by colleagues that I have met through UKONS and other networking opportunities. I have had the opportunity to work as a nurse on cancer and haematology wards, a clinical nurse specialist, a matron, a consultant nurse, a lead nurse, a deputy chief nurse, a director of nursing, a senior lecturer and researcher. I enjoy being a nurse and I am very proud to be part of UKONS and to be part of a profession helping to support people living with cancer, helping to keep the focus on the person behind the illness.

In what ways has UKONS influenced or supported your cancer nursing career?

I think one of the strongest aspects of UKONS for me is the opportunity to work with colleagues who share a similar vision of what good cancer nursing care can be. Over my career, I have been able to lean on colleagues from UKONS as a much needed resource, to seek advice, feel supported, and to remind me why I chose to come into cancer nursing practice. All good relationships are reciprocal, and I like to think I have been able to offer some of that guidance and support to others. Keeping true to the vision of what it means to be a cancer nurse can at times be challenging amidst today's demands and challenges, however, working with my colleagues and UKONS enables me to keep that vision alive.

Dr Barry Quinn (he/him)

Senior Lecturer/Adjunct Associate Professor /UKONS Partnership Lead