

## #SundayWiMIN23 Week 23: Dr Cathy Gibbons

Dr Cathy Gibbons is a Consultant in Paediatric Intensive Care and Critical Care Retrieval. She graduated from Medicine with first class honours in 2007. She completed her Paediatric BST and RCPI examinations in 2010 and entered HST. With a clear focus on critical care medicine, she was supported by the RCPI to pursue her dream of becoming a paediatric intensivist by completing fellowships in paediatric critical care within her HST training. Her first fellowship was in The Hospital for Sick Children, Toronto which was followed by a fellowship in Birmingham Children's Hospital UK; at the time, the largest PICU in Europe.

She took up her Paediatric Intensivist post in 2016 in CHI @ Temple Street. This was the first post with a dual appointment in both PICU and Critical Care Retrieval. Areas of special interest include early enteral nutrition, early mobility and ultrasound guided vascular access which led to the establishment and chairing of the hospital vascular access committee which has standardised and streamlined vascular access care throughout the hospital. She has been known to roam the halls of the hospital before Christmas armed with PICC lines to help get kids home for Santa with the home IV team!

She became National Clinical Lead of the IPATS Retrieval service in January 2017 and has focused on establishing as robust a service as possible with the view that PICU care should start on the arrival of the team. She has also used this joint appointment to establish a critical care retrieval service for children in PICU at the end of life, a service which has helped bring many children home despite invasive ventilation/inotropic requirements.

She was appointed an Associate Clinical Professor of Paediatrics in University College Dublin in 2022 and plays an active role in undergraduate and postgraduate education. She delivers outreach education to each Regional Unit on the care and transfer of critically ill children on a monthly basis and has developed an extensive website with educational resources to facilitate the standardisation and improvement of the care of critically ill children around the country.

In 2021, however, the fast pace of career progression, the inherent stress of a dual appointed role and significant staff shortages during the first year of the pandemic caught up with her, and she experienced a significant episode of mental health distress and burnout. To say that this was a frightening and identity-questioning experience would be putting it mildly. Thankfully, with a lot of professional support and hard work, she was able to return to work nine months later, albeit in a modified role. Realising that the risk of recurrence was high without a change of work practice, she has been supported in making positive changes to her role and is now on secondment working fully within the IPATS retrieval service, finally feeling like she is achieving her career goals in a balanced and sustainable way. She would like to help break the stigma of healthcare professionals talking about their mental health and would like to add to the conversation on how the roles of work culture, rostering and staffing levels can lead to what her mental health team labelled 'an occupational brain injury'.

Outside of medicine, She is a trained mezzo-soprano and avid choral singer and currently sings with National Symphonic Chorus, the Irish Doctors choir and the award-winning chamber choir New Dublin Voices. She is a regular soloist with each choir and enjoys the thrill of live performance. She also enjoys baking, crocheting and interior design and is working on turning into a real life crazy cat lady!