

## [#SundayWiMIN23](#) Week 40: Dr Susan Connolly

Dr Susan Connolly is a Consultant Cardiologist University Hospital Galway/Community Healthcare West since 2022 and responsible for leading out the newly established cardiology integrated care service in the Galway City Hub.

She graduated from University College Dublin and undertook her specialist training in cardiology in the Mater Misericordiae University Hospital. After gaining her PhD from UCD, she took up a research post in the National Heart and Lung Institute, Imperial College, London in 2004.

She became a Consultant Cardiologist in Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust in 2005 and was Lead for the Imperial Cardiovascular Health Programme. In 2017 she moved to the Western Health and Social Care Trust in Northern Ireland where she set up the “Our Hearts Our Minds Programme for Cardiovascular Health”. This programme was derived from the research carried out in Imperial College and was a nurse-led, multidisciplinary, community-based preventive cardiology/rehabilitation programme with an emphasis on lifestyle management, management of medical risk factors, prescription of cardioprotective therapy and promotion of psychosocial health. It was aimed at patients with established CVD and those at high risk of developing same.

During Covid, the whole programme moved to a virtual platform using video consultations, home equipment kits including blood pressure monitors and Fitbit smartwatches to deliver the physical activity intervention. Evaluation showed the virtual programme was as effective as the face-to-face programme and going forward in Galway, programme participants will have the option of a centre-based programme, virtual, or hybrid using wearables. This project has demonstrated to Dr Connolly the power of digital health.

She previously was the UK National Coordinator for CVD Prevention for the European Society of Cardiology. She is a past member of the Council for the British Association of Cardiovascular Prevention and Rehabilitation and a co-author of its 2012 Core Components and Standards. She was also part of the writing group for the 3rd Joint British Societies Consensus for CVD Prevention in Clinical Practice 2014. She was a section editor for the preventive cardiology curriculum in Education in Heart. She is now a member of the advisory board of the National Institute of Preventive and Cardiovascular Health (NIPC) and in 2021 was awarded an NIPC Honorary Fellowship.

Susan is a single parent of 9 year old twins Clara and William and also have a 5 year old collie Harry and a cat called Bluey. Life is hectic but enjoyable and her childminder is a key figure in making everything work. More recently she has taken up sea swimming in Galway, something she never would have foreseen before her move there.