NHS
Spinal Network
East Midlands

East Midlands Spinal Network Conference
Thursday 6 November 2025
"Spines A New Era"

Michelle Emsley – Regional Spinal Cord Injury Clinical Lead

'SCI: A Networked Model of Care'

Michelle is a registered Physiotherapist with over 25 years of experience within the NHS, including 15 years as the Clinical Lead Physiotherapist on the Spinal Unit at Nottingham University Hospitals NHS Trust. During this time, she developed a specialist interest in Spinal Cord Injury (SCI), which has led to her current role as the Clinical Lead Spinal Cord Injury Practitioner. In this capacity, Michelle supports SCI patients across the East Midlands as part of the SCI Network Model of Care, leading a dedicated team of practitioners focused on delivering high-quality, patient-centred spinal care.

Michelle's expertise and passion for spinal health also led to a secondment with the East Midlands Spinal Network, where she served as the Quality Service Improvement (QSI) and Education Lead for two and a half years. She continues to contribute to the Network as the Education Lead, maintaining a strong commitment to advancing spinal care, service improvement, and education across the region

Duane Mclean – EMSN Chair

Duane has over 30 years of experience within the NHS, with over 21 of these years spent in senior positions as a pharmacist, senior clinical leader and as a senior operational leader/executive.

Like many who work within the NHS I have been a patient for many years and now a carer for my wife who lives with a long-term condition.

Throughout my career in the NHS, I have strived to not only delivery excellent patient care and staff experience directly and have worked to have a broader impact through organisational and system working to deliver benefits in quality, productivity, safety and experience for staff and patients alike. I am energised by supporting teams and individuals to develop, achieve their goals and realise their potential.

I am delighted to be working with the East Midlands Spinal Network and the range of operational and clinical colleagues from across the region who are committed to improving the care our patients receive and the experiences of patients, carers and staff.

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Mr Wai Yoon – EMSN Medical Lead - FRCS (Tr&Orth) and specialist registration CCT

'Network Update'

Wai Graduated from University College London & The Middlesex Hospital in 2000 before completing his specialist training on the prestigious Barts & The Royal London Rotation. He was awarded the FRCS (Tr&Orth) and specialist registration CCT in 2012.

He undertook dual complex Spine fellowship training at the Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital, London and The Royal Adelaide Hospital, Australia working with the top Australian spinal surgeons. He was conferred the Charles Manning award for his work on early onset scoliosis in 2013.

Wai is internationally recognised and was appointed as a Consultant Spinal Surgeon based at the Queens Medical Centre in Nottingham and the University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust since 2015.

His practice covers all spinal problems from the neck and back to the coccyx. Mr Yoon has a special interest in paediatric and adult deformity and is member of the British Association of Spinal Surgeons, British Scoliosis Society and holds committee positions in the Scoliosis Research Society as well as the European Spinal Society.

Stephanie Foulds

Degenerative Cervical Myelopathy

MSK Advanced Physiotherapy Practitioner

Steph is an experienced physiotherapist who qualified from Birmingham University in 2007, specialising in MSK practice since 2011 and gaining her MSc in Advanced Clinical Practice in 2022. She has worked as an MSK advanced physiotherapist based in the MSK interface and physiotherapy service at Sir Robert Peel Hospital in Tamworth for 10 years.

Steph has a special interest in spines, clinical leadership and service development. She has had publications in Physiotherapy and MSK Science and Practice journals exploring the MSK advanced practice diagnosis and management of degenerative cervical myelopathy and low back pain.

Louise Neale

Conservative Management Options for Adolescent Idiopathic Scoliosis

Louise is a clinical specialist spinal physiotherapist and scoliosis extended scope practitioner who has worked a Nottingham University Hospital for the past 17 years. She has a special interest in scoliosis and practices the Schroth method within her clinic to treat scoliosis related pain and posture, in adolescents and adults. She also treats a range of other spinal conditions including post-operative care following spinal surgery. Her work in spinal clinic as a practitioner involves the triaging and diagnoses of adolescent idiopathic scoliosis patient and adolescent spinal pain.

Paul Lewis

Communication – Can We Do Better?

Paul is an Advanced Practice Physiotherapist at University Hospitals of Leicester, specialising in the assessment and management of spinal conditions. He holds extensive clinical experience across spinal orthopaedic clinics, Primary Care, MSK triage, and complex spinal rehabilitation. Beyond his clinical responsibilities, Paul provides mentorship and supervision within primary care and has achieved formal competencies in both FCP and Cognitive Functional Therapy (CFT). He has contributed to research and education in CFT and remains committed to advancing evidence-based practice. His current research focuses on communication skills in clinical practice, reflecting his broader passion for enhancing patient engagement.

Craig Bolton

I'm 47 years old, a proud dad to two amazing kids aged 8 and 9. When I'm not at the gym, out for a walk, or looking after my reptiles, I'm working on the railway as a mechanical fitter, keeping the machines running smoothly so everyone gets a safe, comfortable ride.

Today, I'll be sharing something very personal, the journey my wife and our family have been on since her accident, when a fall left her with a broken neck

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Mr Ellie Najjar

Do Machines Dream of the Human Hand? – AI and Machine learning Spectrum

Spine Surgeon, Researcher, and Writer

Mr Elie Najjar is a fellowship-trained spine surgeon based at Queen's Medical Centre, Nottingham, UK. His clinical practice spans complex spinal deformity, minimally invasive techniques, and trauma reconstruction. He is the founder of Frankenspines, a multinational research consortium dedicated to advancing data-driven and patient-centred spine care, with over thirty active collaborators across Europe, the Middle East, and Asia.

Mr Najjar's research focuses on artificial intelligence, surgical innovation, and psychosocial outcomes in spinal disorders, with numerous publications in leading journals including European Spine Journal, Global Spine Journal, and Spine Deformity.

Beyond surgery, he is an accomplished writer whose essays and short stories have appeared in Hektoen International, The Bangalore Review, and other literary journals, where he explores the intersection between medicine, myth, and the human condition.

Dr Faisal Khan

Spinal Cord Injury Referrals at Royal Derby Hospitals: Sources, Trends and Outcomes- An Audit of Referral Pathways and Patient Outcomes 2023-2025

Dr Faisal Khan is a Specialty Doctor T&O at the Royal Derby Hospital in England. He previously served as a Neurosurgery Registrar at Ayub Teaching Hospital in Pakistan. Dr Khan is actively pursuing entry into higher specialty training, with a special interest in spinal surgery.

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Marie Watson

Driving change in Partnership: Update on the SCI Network Model of Care

I have worked within The Princess Royal Spinal Injuries Centre in Sheffield for the last 23 years, working on predominantly the acute and readmission wards, the latter 9 years working as the lead UNS based in the spinal OPD. In October 2024, I became regional network coordinator for the network model of care for the east midland's region. I am still based within the PRSCIC but now as part of my new role get to experience and visit the hospitals within the East Midlands region who are looking after SCI patients which is my overall key interest, ensuring their care is optimised and delivered to the highest standard. My passions are my family, my work and my music as well as dabbling in the love of makeup, who doesn't love a lippy!!

Kirstie Spencer, Paediatric Spinal Cord Injury Practitioner, Nottingham University Hospitals

Driving change in Partnership: Update on the SCI Network Model of Care

Kirstie is an Occupational Therapist with over 25 years' working experience in health, social care and private practice, managing paediatric and adult patients with long term neurological conditions. She is passionate about improving the lives of patients and is a keen advocate for those she works with.

Kirstie has been working at the Children's Hospital in Nottingham for over 10 years, taking on this role 2.5 years ago as a secondment opportunity to scope the service from a spinal cord injury perspective. Kirstie has been instrumental working alongside NHSE to gain permanent funding for this post and was successfully recruited into the role in October 2025.