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UCD Geary Institute for Public Policy / UCD Centre for Japanese Studies
UCD School of Social Policy, Social Work and Social Justice
UCD Ageing Network

University College Dublin (UCD) & Chiba University research collaborations since 2016

Public Seminar

[JSPS London Symposium and Seminar Scheme FY2025]

“Caring Communities in Japan and Ireland: Collaboration, engagement and intergenerational relations for realising Ageing in Place”

Date/Time: Tuesday 28 October 2025, 10:00-16:00

Venue: [UCD Quinn School of Business](#) – QUI113, Belfield Campus, UCD

[You can click ‘UCD Quinn School of Business’ above to find Google map. A separate simple map can be found on the final page for those coming in from the front gate of the university]

Abstract

Population ageing is a global phenomenon and presents a societal challenge in every industrialised economy. To optimise the mental and physical capacity and social participation of older people, an integrated, person-centred care model must be developed. Japan is at the forefront of ageing societies, having implemented several policy measures to support it. Ireland, a relatively ‘young’ country located in Northwestern Europe, is proactively addressing similar issues through reforms in its health and social care systems.

This interdisciplinary seminar brings together academics, practitioners, and early-career researchers from both countries to discuss current policies and practices at the intersection of life sciences (public health and nursing) and social sciences (social gerontology, social work, and public policy). It explores how older persons’ ability to age in place can be supported through community engagement (collaboration among municipalities, academics, and older people) and integrated housing concepts, such as multi-generational housing and ageing-friendly community approaches.

Programme

10:15-10:35: Welcome & Opening remarks

- Prof. Michelle Norris (Director, UCD Geary Institute for Public Policy)
- Mr Koji Hirohata (Chargé d’Affaires, Embassy of Japan in Ireland)
- Mr Pat Brennan (Board Secretary, Carnew Community Care)
- Dr Diarmuid O’Shea (President, Royal College of Physicians of Ireland, RCPI)

10:40-11:00: JSPS London activities & funding streams

- Prof. Masahiko Hara (Director, JSPS London) & Mr Yusuke Nishida (JSPS London)

Session 1 (11:00-12:00): Integrated Community Care in Japan

- Prof. Mina Ishimaru (Chiba University, Japan) – “Different types of caring communities and a variety of collaborations”
- Ms Sanae Murai (WaWaWa-no-kai, Higashi-Chiba, Japan) – “Wa(和)-style Caring Community in Higashi-Chiba: In search of a community model which enables ‘living the life we/older people wish to live’”
- Dr Kaori Hotta (Gunma University, Japan) – “Social participation for older people in Japan: understanding the meanings of group volunteering opportunities”

12:00-13:00: Lunch Break

Served on the ground floor in Quinn’s Contemplative Space (the round room as you enter the building)

Session 2 (13:00-14:00): Ageing in Place – Policy & Practice in Ireland and Japan

- Dr Nat O’Connor (UCD) – “‘Ageing in place’ in the Irish context”
- Dr Taichi Sato (Chiba University, Japan) – “Starting with outreach: Caring of healthcare professionals for hard-to-reach groups in communities”

14:00-14:15: Tea/Coffee Break

Served on the ground floor in Quinn’s Contemplative Space (the round room as you enter the building)

Session 3 (14:15-15:45): Promoting social inclusion in Ireland

- Assoc. Prof. Sarah Donnelly (UCD) – “Fight against ageism and safeguarding older people in Ireland”
- Dr Catherine Elliott O’Dare (Trinity College Dublin(TCD)) – “Intergenerational friendship in Ireland”
- Dr Maria Pierce (Maynooth University) – “Caring communities for People with Dementia”

15:45-16:00: Closing remarks

- Dr Catherine Elliott O’Dare (TCD) & Assoc. Prof. Naonori Kodate (UCD)

This seminar is organised under the [JSPS London Symposium and Seminar Scheme 2025](#)

Biographies

Directors / President of Supporting Organisations

Prof. Dr. Masahiko Hara Director, JSPS (Japan Society for the Promotion of Science), London Office, UK, and Tokyo Institute of Technology (Institute of Science Tokyo), Japan



Masa Hara is Professor Emeritus at the Tokyo Institute of Technology (Tokyo Tech) and Director of JSPS London. He graduated from Tokyo Tech in 1980 and studied at the University of Manchester as an exchange student. He later joined RIKEN as a researcher and received his Dr degree in Engineering. At RIKEN, he led numerous international research teams and collaborative programs, and has held positions including Lecturer at Chiba University, Professor at Tokyo Tech, Adjunct Professor at Hanyang University (HYU) in Korea, and Director of RIKEN-HYU Collaboration Research Center in Seoul. His research interests include nanotechnology and nanomaterials, self-assembly, bio-interface, spatio-temporal functions, chemical origins of life, and natural intelligence. He initiated new science-art installation experiments during his tenure as a Senior Fellow at RWTH Aachen University in Germany and as a Scientist in Residence at Central Saint Martins, University of the Arts London.

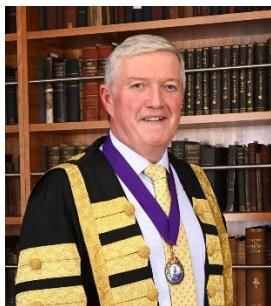
<https://www.linkedin.com/in/masahiko-hara-b6a63937/>

Prof. Michelle Norris Director, Geary Institute for Public Policy, UCD, Ireland



Michelle Norris is Full Professor of Social Policy and Director of the Geary Institute for Public Policy at UCD. Her research interests focus on housing policy and urban regeneration. She has led over 30 research projects on these issues and produced 200 publications on the results. Michelle has served as an independent member of National Economic and Social Council which advises the Taoiseach on economic, social and environmental policy on three occasions and as a member of the boards of two of the main agencies responsible for providing social housing in Ireland (the Housing Finance Agency and Land Development Agency) and of the Housing Commission, which established by the minister for housing to review housing policy and reported in 2024. Michelle co-authored the *Housing2030 report* on improving affordable housing outcomes which commissioned by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe and UN Habitat and published in 2022. She is the coordinator of the €4.4 million Horizon Europe funded project EqualHouse-From Housing Inequality to Sustainable, Inclusive and Affordable Housing Solutions. In 2025 she was appointed as a member of the Royal Irish Academy (RIA).

Dr Diarmuid O'Shea President, Royal College of Physicians of Ireland (RCPI), Ireland



Dr Diarmuid O'Shea, MD FRCPI, is President of the Royal College of Physicians of Ireland (RCPI). A graduate of University College Dublin, he is a Consultant Physician in General and Geriatric Medicine in St Vincent's University Hospital, Dublin, Ireland. He completed his MD in Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Tennessee and trained in General Internal and Geriatric Medicine in the RVI and Freeman Hospitals, Newcastle, United Kingdom. He was Clinical Lead for the National Clinical Programme for Older People with the CPI and HSE until 2019. He is a former President of The Irish Gerontological Society of Ireland (IGS). Diarmuid has held a number of roles in the RCPI including Masterclass Series Convenor, Vice-President of Education and Professional Development, Chair of the Irish Committee on Higher Medical Training and Registrar. In 2023, Diarmuid became the 143rd President of the College in 2023. He has been taking part in several interdisciplinary and international research projects on the use of digital technologies in care settings ("Harmonization towards the establishment of Person-centered, Robotics-aided Care System (HARP: RoCS)", PI: Dr Nao Kodate (UCD) & Co-PIs: Profs. Kazuko Obayashi, Wenwei Yu and Sayuri Suwa (Chiba University), 2019-22) Diarmuid visited Japan and gave a special lecture at Graduate School of Nursing, Chiba University in 2019.

Speakers

Prof. Mina Ishimaru Graduate School of Nursing, Chiba University, Japan



Mina Ishimaru (Ph.D., PHN., RN.) is a Professor in the Department of Innovative Nursing for Life Course, Graduate School of Nursing, Chiba University. Her specialty is community/public health nursing. Her research interests include community development, partnership, particularly, person-centred caring community for people with dementia using participatory research methods. She is the leader of the Caring Community Project (JSPS KAKENHI), which looks at tools that enable the co-design of a caring community, promoting a shared understanding of goals among residents, care professionals, and policymakers, and moving forward with a future-oriented approach and joy. Mina has authored and co-authored over 90 papers in refereed journals, book chapters, and more than 140 international and domestic conference papers. She is Director of the Japanese Society of Cultural Nursing Studies and a convenor of JBI Chiba University Centre for Evidence - Based Practice.

Dr Catherine Elliott O'Dare School of Social Work and Social Policy, TCD, Ireland



Dr Catherine Elliott O'Dare is Assistant Professor in Social Policy at Trinity College Dublin. Catherine's research focuses on the sociology and social policies of ageing in everyday life - work, society and ageism (with an overarching emphasis on equality and social inclusion), intergenerational solidarity, friendship, and qualitative research methods. Catherine's current funded research projects are: "Understanding self-directed ageism: A qualitative study with older people in Ireland" and "Exploring Age-Diverse Workplace Relationships". Catherine's research on intergenerational friendship and ageism, and grounded theory method, have generated high impact international publications including in *Canadian Journal on Ageing*, *Ageing and Society* and *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*. In addition, Catherine has participated in international conferences [including in Finland, Germany, UK, and Norway] and nationally. Catherine has engaged with NGO, enterprise (including the European Central Bank) and interest organisations on the topics of ageism, intergenerational solidarity and intergenerational relations in the workplace and society.

Ms Sanae Murai *Higashi-Chiba Wa-Wa-Wa no Kai*, Chiba, Japan



Sanae Murai is a representative of a voluntary residents' association called the *Higashi-Chiba Wa-wa-wa no Kai*. *Wa* can mean harmony (和), a circle (輪) and a network (環), and the association was established in 2015 to create a community model which enables 'living the life we/elder people wish to live' in our own town. Sanae worked for Co-op Mirai for more than 20 years and was in charge of promoting voluntary activities in local communities, particularly in relation to the environment, food, mutual aid and community development. Currently, Sanae serves as Chairperson of the Chiba City Social Welfare Council (Higashi-Chiba District). She has experience in living with and providing home and end-of-life care for her parents, both of whom stayed at home until their passing. As a community advocate, Sanae was invited to work with Prof. Mariko Otsuka (President, Nagano College of Nursing), and has been working ever since with Prof. Ishimaru, researchers and nursing students at Chiba University.

Mr Pat Brennan Carnew Community Care, Co. Wicklow, Ireland



Pat Brennan has been honorary secretary of Carnew Community Care since the foundation of the organisation in 1984. The charity was established at a time when there were many older people living in very poor conditions. Many resided in rural areas where social isolation and loneliness were also being experienced. The main objective of Carnew Community Care is to provide sheltered housing to enable older people to live independently - supported by a range of services from the Day Care Centre. Great emphasis is placed on promoting wellbeing, social interaction and involvement in healthy activities. Pat spent his career from 1973 until his retirement in 2010 as a teacher in the local post primary school, Coláiste Bhríde. During his final 10 years there he held positions in senior management.

Dr Kaori Hotta Graduate School of Health Sciences, Gunma University, Japan



Kaori Hotta received her Doctor of Science in Nursing from Chiba University in 2022. She has worked as a nurse in a neurology department, and as a public health nurse in Niigata City. She is an Assistant Professor in Health Sciences, Graduate School of Health Sciences, Gunma University. Her specialty is community/public health nursing. Her research interests include improving the well-being of older people and creating communities by supporting voluntary groups. Through her research, she has been providing support for residents to create a local community where independent-living residents can help each other, in the other words, a caring community. She obtained competitive research funding such as JSPS KAKENHI and has been regularly participating in the community groups' activities for and by older people.

Dr Sarah Donnelly School of Social Policy, Social Work and Social Justice, UCD, Ireland



Sarah Donnelly is an Associate Professor of Social Work and Director of Professional Practice at the School of Social Policy, Social Work and Social Justice, University College Dublin and Chairperson of UCD's Ageing Network. Sarah has co-edited the 'Critical Gerontology for Social Workers' Book (2022, Policy Press) and is the academic advisor on Adult Safeguarding to the Irish Association of Social Workers. Sarah has acted as co-convenor of the European Network for Gerontological Social Work 2018-2023. She is also a member of the Board of Directors of Care Alliance Ireland and a member of their Research Advisory Committee. Sarah was the recipient of the 2024 Recipient of the ALONE/Irish Gerontological Society Willie Bermingham Medal, and her research interests include ageing, dementia, human rights, capacity and decision-making, carers and carer harm, adult safeguarding and homecare robotics.

Dr Taichi Sato Institute for Advanced Academic Research, Chiba University, Japan



Taichi Sato received his PhD from Chiba University in 2023. He served as a JSPS Research Fellow for Young Scientists at the Graduate School of Nursing, CU from 2022 to 2023. He has been a project assistant professor at the Institute for Advanced Academic Research, CU from 2023. His specialty is community/public health nursing. His research interests are focused on the role of public health nurses in the provision of care for vulnerable individuals and families and their efforts in care quality improvement through case conferences. One of his research outputs include a guidebook detailing how to run case conferences. It has been used and validated in several municipalities in Japan. He successfully obtained competitive research funding (e.g. JSPS KAKENHI).

Dr Nat O'Connor School of Social Policy, Social Work and Social Justice, UCD, Ireland



Nat O'Connor is Assistant Professor of Social Policy at the School of Social Policy, Social Work and Social Justice at UCD and a fellow of the UCD Geary Institute for Public Policy. Prior to joining UCD, Nat was senior adviser to Age Action Ireland, and he has also worked in the Oireachtas [Irish parliament], Ulster University, Maynooth University, TASC and the Dublin Homeless Agency. Nat is also a panel member, covering social policy, on the Government of Ireland COVID-19 Evaluation and the co-chair of the HSE's Population-Based Planning Expert Advisory Group.

Dr Maria Piercece Department of Applied Social Studies, Maynooth University, Ireland



Maria Pierce is Assistant Professor in Social Policy in the Department of Applied Social Studies at Maynooth University. Maria holds a Bachelor of Social Science (Social Policy and Sociology) from UCD (1997) and received a PhD in Social Policy and Ageing from Trinity College Dublin in 2010. Prior to joining Maynooth University, Maria held academic positions in UCD and TCD and has worked as a researcher in the independent and community and voluntary sectors. Her research interests are primarily in the areas of health and long-term care, with a particular focus on older people, people with dementia, disability and family caring. Her research is focused on providing evidence to inform the development and implementation of health and long-term care policy and she has led/co-led several research projects with this focus. Maria is a member of the European Social Policy Analysis Network (Ireland country team).

Lead Organiser/Project Leader

Dr Naonori Kodate School of Social Policy, Social Work and Social Justice, UCD, Ireland



Naonori Kodate is Associate Professor in Social Policy and Welfare Technology at UCD and the founding Director of UCD Centre for Japanese Studies. Nao is also affiliated with the Geary Institute for Public Policy, the Center for Frontier Medical Engineering, Chiba University, Japan and Christ University, India. His research interests include comparative public policy, patient safety, and science, technology and society, particularly the use of assistive technologies in care settings. He led several multidisciplinary cross-national projects, co-produced a documentary film '*Circuits of Care: Ageing and Japan's Robot Revolution*' and co-edited the book '*Systems Thinking for Global Health*' (Oxford University Press, 2022). Together with Prof. Ishimaru and Ms Murai (Chiba), and Dr Antoine Boivin and Ms Ghislaine Rouly (Montréal), Nao has been engaged in Caring Communities research projects.

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Embassy of Japan in Ireland & Embassy of Ireland, Japan

Team CARNEW, particularly, **Ms Anne Kavanagh** (Manager) & **Ms Rena Byrne** (Lead Nurse)

Ms Yurie Maeda Ph.D Student [Public Policy], UCD School of Social Policy, Social Work and Social Justice & Lecturer, Department of Business Technologies Retail and Supply Chain, Technological University Dublin

Mr Fabian Wijngaard MSc Student [Disability], UCD School of Psychology

UCD Ageing Network & Colleagues at **Chiba University** (Graduate School of Nursing & Center for Frontier Medical Engineering) and **Trinity College Dublin** (Department of Social Work and Social Policy)

Ms Clodagh Whelan Local Coordinator for DLR, Healthy Age Friendly Homes Programme, Age Friendly Ireland

Last but not least, the team of us – **Catherine, Sarah, Maria, Nat, Mina, Sanae & Katsunori, Taichi, Kaori, Antoine & Ghislaine.**



