

# Alumni in Focus - Mrs Scarlett McNally

- [Mrs Scarlett McNally \(Clinical Education 2008\)](#)

## Mrs Scarlett McNally (Clinical Education 2008)



Mrs Scarlett McNally is a Consultant Orthopaedic surgeon at East Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust and a member of the Royal College of Surgeons of England. She was in the first cohort to graduate in the Masters in Clinical Education and here she tells us about work life balance and how difficult it is to put that in to practice.

### Where are you now?

Eastbourne District General Hospital, working as a Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon

### What has been your proudest moment?

Being elected onto the Council of the Royal College of Surgeons of England. This was in 2011. I was the ninth woman ever. I feel like I have changed the direction of surgery (training, standards and how surgery is viewed by others). A close second is graduating with an MSc in Clinical Education in 2008, I was with the first cohort of students ever graduating as doctors from BSMS! I had taught some of them during their surgery placements in Eastbourne so it felt like we were part of the same posse. We were all proud of each other!

### What are you favourite memories of BSMS?

It was a close-knit group doing the Masters in Clinical Education. The discussion groups were wide-ranging and allowed developing and understanding of different viewpoints. I loved that. It felt much more profound and supportive than doing an online course.

### What or who has inspired you most in life?

I didn't realise how unusual it was for my husband, Jay, to be there for our four children and me. Children and life admin take time that isn't valued enough. Things are better if you share and everyone has different strengths. It is too easy (especially for medics) to get stuck in perfectionism and work intensities. It is good to be re-focused away from all that and spend time playing with or listening to the children. People's strength don't have to be split along gender lines.

### What brought you to study in Brighton?

I sensed that there was a whole academic area around teaching and learning that was a mystery to me and could be applied to doctors and other people in healthcare, including patients. I wanted to challenge myself and study alongside doctors from all different specialties, but from the local area.

**What is the skill that you would most like to have?**

Having the discipline to follow up on tedious stuff! I get distracted by other people's deadlines, emails and projects. I give talks on work-life balance (eg, being good enough rather than perfect and not doing things just because you can) but it can be hard to put it into practice!

**Where would you like your career to take you?**

I would like to run the NHS. Surgical thinking has a clarity and simplicity that can be replicated across other aspects of health. I was very ill in 2019, with months off work (myeloma with cardiac amyloidosis, on chemotherapy). I am doing very well, with awesome treatment and an e-bike to build up heart function and keep me sane. I am now back doing clinical work part-time. I had to fight against other senior people thinking I should rest, when I want to do everything I can do, even more than ever, because you only get one life.

**What is the best piece of advice you have ever been given?**

Just do it. Once you have the name badge on, people double-take (ie, unconscious bias) and then trust you to get on with it. It isn't about you being perfect. Just keep being good enough.

**What do you feel has been the biggest benefit from studying at BSMS?**

This sounds stupid when I had been a doctor for a number of years before doing my Masters in Clinical Education at BSMS, but I had never really realised that people learn, think and are motivated in very different ways. We are protected as doctors, because people trust us and we are surrounded by other very academic minds. The Masters had a lot of discussion with others and analysing educational literature. It changed my way of teaching and also of listening and interacting with others. For example, when to listen, how to include diverse views, how to stimulate people to work to their strengths, what minimum standards need agreement and when you need to pull everything together to set a position paper or change a culture. This paved the way for other work I did, eg leading on 'Exercise the miracle cure' about how and why to help people to be fitter for primary health prevention and treatment of common diseases.

**Describe BSMS in 3 words:**

Focused. Inclusive. Educational.