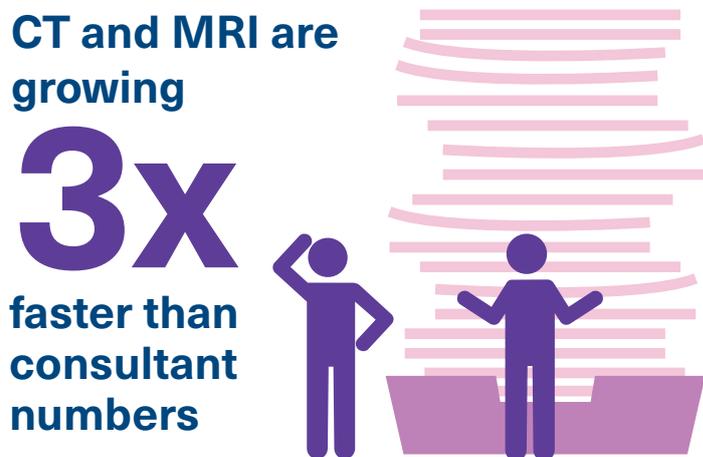
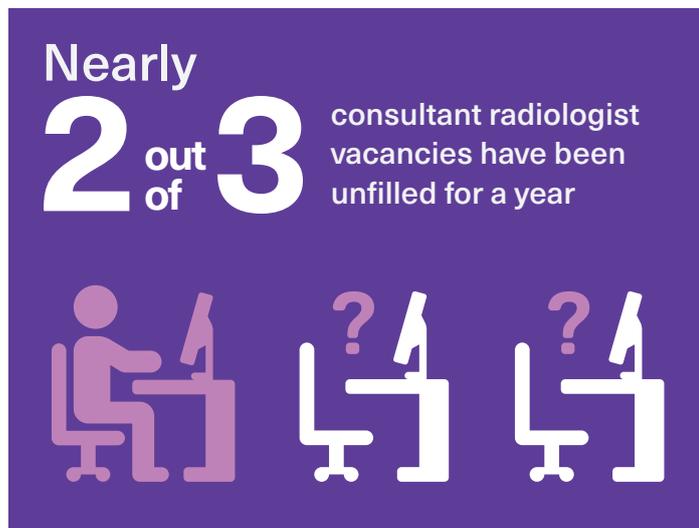
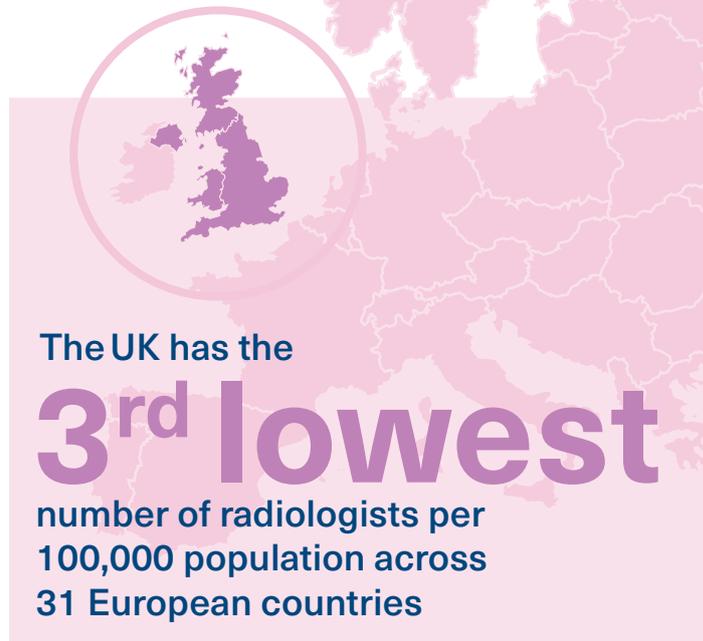


# Radiology workforce crisis still not being addressed by Government: patients will continue to suffer

These key findings highlight the growing workforce crisis in clinical radiology





# No end in sight for the UK's radiologist staffing crisis – patients will continue to suffer

**Modern healthcare is highly dependent on diagnostic imaging scans and interventional radiology. Clinical radiologists are crucial to the patient pathway, reporting on scans and contributing to patient-management decisions and treatment; the workforce providing this vital service is in crisis.**

**The Royal College of Radiologists' (RCR) 2016 workforce census report highlights the continued problems filling consultant radiologist posts across the UK, and that too few new doctors are joining the workforce to replace those leaving.**

Key findings of the clinical radiology UK workforce census 2016 are:

- Nearly one-in-ten UK radiologist posts (9%) were vacant during 2016; nearly two-thirds of which (61%) were unfilled for a year or more. This is likely to be an underestimate as some trusts do not actively recruit when they anticipate that a post will be difficult to fill. Many departments have tried to recruit from overseas but this is not always successful. Challenges of international recruitment include language difficulties, visa requirements, time and costs.
- The UK has the third lowest number of radiologists per population of 31 European countries for which this information is available, with 7.5 clinicians (radiology trainees and consultants combined) per 100,000 patients; the European average is 12.7.

- 22% of the consultant radiologist workforce are expected to retire in the next five years. Radiology has the second lowest trainee to consultant ratio of all hospital-based specialty groups. There are insufficient numbers of trainees and training places to replenish the already over-stretched workforce.
- Adding to the considerable pressure that radiology departments are already under, demand for computed tomography (CT) and magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) is increasing three times faster than consultant numbers. The increased use of CT and MRI contributes not only to the volume of work, but also the extent and complexity of diagnostic reporting demands.
- Last year, only 3% of NHS imaging departments were able to report all their patient scans within normal working hours. Departments are having to find alternative methods to meet their reporting demands, including consultants working paid overtime to report outside of contracted hours, outsourcing to independent companies and employing *ad hoc* locums.
- NHS spending on the insourcing and outsourcing activities to meet reporting demands was nearly £88 million in 2016 (a very similar level of expenditure to the 2014–2015 financial year) – enough to pay for 1,028 full-time consultant radiologists. This is a £30 million increase on the estimated spend in 2013–2014.

The figures reported in the *Clinical radiology UK workforce census 2016 report* are alarming and this is a worsening problem. It needs to be addressed by investment in the training of many more radiologists, otherwise the ongoing shortage of radiologists will mean patients will wait longer for the results of their imaging examinations, delaying treatment initiation and resulting in poorer patient outcomes.