Statement from the Radiotherapy Board

Radiotherapy Board response to A Vision for Radiotherapy 2014-2024

The Radiotherapy Board welcomes the joint report by NHS England and CR-UK as a much needed strategic outline of how future radiotherapy services might be best configured and delivered. The Board looks forward to working with both organisations to turn the aspirations into reality.

The three professional bodies that are the core members of the Radiotherapy Board have consistently championed the need for specialised commissioning for radiotherapy services to support the delivery of world class radiotherapy services in a consistent way for all patients. The report provides both an opportunity and a framework to support the development of radiotherapy services enabling evidence-based treatments to be delivered to patients in a timely manner and using modern, advanced radiotherapy techniques.

Commenting on the publication of A Vision for Radiotherapy, Dr Diana Tait, Chair of the Radiotherapy Board and Vice-President, Clinical Oncology, RCR and consultant clinical oncologist said:

“The Radiotherapy Board welcomes this vision document with its aspirations for investment in state of the art radiotherapy equipment, reduced maintenance costs and down-time. However, we strongly believe that the proposed rationalisation, standardisation and development of NHS radiotherapy services can only be achieved with the necessary investment in a skilled workforce. Therapeutic radiographers, clinical oncologists and medical physicists already work closely together in a clinical setting. The workforce in all three professional groups needs to grow to deliver the Vision for Radiotherapy. The value of this integrated model of working can already be seen in better patient outcomes”

As UK-wide professional bodies we wish to see patients across the UK benefit from the best radiotherapy services possible and encourage the other three UK nations to adopt a similar approach.

On the key issue of remote working and networking to facilitate knowledge transfer, we believe the practical difficulties in information sharing of confidential data between Trusts needs to be properly addressed, and any patient concern over sharing of their data for research purposes fully considered.

Similarly, we endorse the report’s call for greater innovation and evaluation by front line radiotherapy staff. The Board is keen to see that the established team-working both within, and between, specialist treatment centres is built on to the benefit of patients. We are committed to sharing and transferring knowledge, skills and learning, particularly information gained from clinical trials.
For further information:

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Notes to Editors:

The Radiotherapy Board provides guidance and support for the continuing development of radiotherapy services in the UK. It was established in April 2013 by The Royal College of Radiologists, the Society and College of Radiographers, and the Institute of Physics and Engineering in Medicine. The Board is chaired by Dr Diana Tait, Vice-President, Clinical Oncology, RCR and consultant clinical oncologist.