

Manifesto For Radiotherapy

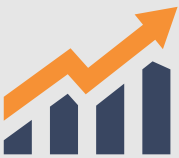
Improving cancer survival with modern world-class radiotherapy

COVID recovery radiotherapy manifesto update

5 things that need to happen to tackle the cancer backlog crisis, “super-boost” radiotherapy and deliver world class cancer outcomes



It is essential that a proportion of the recently announced extra NHS funding is ring-fenced for cancer services and that of that ring-fenced money, a significant amount is allocated for radiotherapy. Radiotherapy plays a vital role in cancer care and continues to be the stand out cancer treatment during the pandemic.



Investing in radiotherapy is one of the most immediate and cost effective ways to tackle the cancer backlog and help lift the UK from the worst to the best in the cancer league tables.

Invest in radiotherapy technologies to “super-boost” COVID safe capacity and get patients their treatments faster:

- Invest £230M to replace machines over the 10-year-old recommended lifespan
- Launch a £200M radiotherapy innovation fund to rapidly deploy cutting edge IT solutions and capacity building technology
- Invest in the various radiotherapy workforce disciplines to address the current 20% shortfall



Strip away the bureaucracy that holds back radiotherapy and restricts frontline professionals from using the most advanced techniques for their patients.



Lift the level of access to radiotherapy from the current level of 27% to match or exceed the international standard of 53-60%; invest £250M to bring radiotherapy closer to people’s homes; increase access for the 3.5 million people living outside the 45-minute recommended travel time; integrate radiotherapy treatment technologies into the rollout of some of the proposed NHS Diagnostic Hubs to create world leading infrastructure to speed up modern cancer care.



Develop a radical national radiotherapy plan which is data and outcomes led with integrated cloud-based technology solutions rolled out across the country to remove health inequalities and address capacity challenges. Appoint a radiotherapy Tsar working with a cancer minister responsible for this transformation.



APPGRT

**All Party Parliamentary
Group for Radiotherapy**

The UK was at the bottom of the international cancer survival league tables pre COVID and the pandemic caused the biggest crisis in cancer services seen in a generation. This pushed cancer services to the limit, creating a huge backlog. Of all the health backlogs, cancer is the most time critical and deadly, because for every week of delay cancer survival can drop by as much as 10%. Without urgent action, cancer experts predict we will see cancer survival rates put back by 10-15 years and tens of thousands of extra cancer deaths. This is an unacceptable human tragedy. Cancer patients deserve better.

Radiotherapy can, and should, play a key role in tackling the cancer backlog. Most people are surprised to learn that radiotherapy is needed in over half of all cures. And costing typically £4k-7k per patient it is the most cost-effective cancer cure. Radiotherapy is internationally recognised as the most COVID safe treatment and can substitute for surgery which helps tackle waiting lists. But, for a variety of reasons, it has suffered years of underinvestment and an undeserved low profile. As a result, lifesaving radiotherapy innovations in other countries have bypassed UK patients. Over half of trusts are using machines over the 10 year recommended lifespan, bureaucracy stops clinicians from using the most advanced techniques and millions of people live outside the recommended distance from radiotherapy centres. Before the pandemic the APPG RT called radiotherapy “Britain’s Secret Lifesaver”. Today it feels like Ministers and NHS leaders are failing to recognise it as the cancer backlog game changer that it is.

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With a multibillion pound funding package flowing into the NHS to clear the backlogs, it is vital that a ringfenced portion of this goes to cancer. And of that funding substantial investment must go to radiotherapy. The recommendations in this manifesto are supported by the radiotherapy community and industry. They outline the steps needed to transform and reinvigorate radiotherapy. Many of these steps are achievable with a modest amount of funding and others with the flick of a Minister’s pen. But all are vital for tackling the cancer backlog, with the added benefit of leapfrogging the UK from the bottom to the top of international league tables. Failure to act will lead to national tragedy.

Facts about radiotherapy

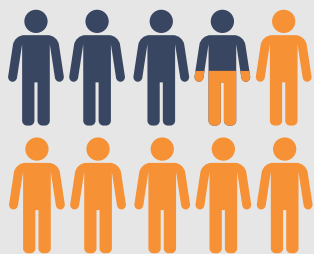
What is radiotherapy?

Radiotherapy (RT) is a highly effective, safe, COVID resilient cancer treatment and is extremely economical. High precision radiation is used to treat and kill cancer cells making it one of the most curative cancer treatments. It is a high-tech medical discipline, delivered by a highly specialised, multidisciplinary workforce of around 5,000 people across the UK.



It is the most cost effective cancer treatment typically costing £4-7K.

But current commissioning holds back the most advanced treatments and many in the radiotherapy community feel it is constrained by the ‘dead hand’ of bureaucracy.



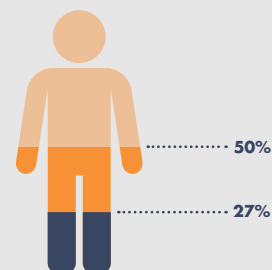
Radiotherapy can help cut down waiting lists / substitute for surgery.

But 3.4 million people live over the recommended 45 minutes travel time.



Today’s most advanced treatments can cure patients in as little as 20 minutes.

But half of trusts are using machines over 10 years old.



Radiotherapy is needed in **half** of treatments but according to CRUK only **27%** of UK cancer patients receive it.