

Hello, my name is Jeanette Dickson and I am clinical oncologist. I am currently Vice President of Clinical Oncology at the Royal College of Radiologists. Many thanks for inviting me to speak at this exciting and important event. It is great to see radiotherapy recognised as a modern technologically advanced treatment by the wider population. It is also great to have the energetic and vocal support that can be mobilised by an APPG to promote that message at the highest levels.

Those of us involved in radiotherapy delivery have always been aware of the importance of radiotherapy in the treatment of cancer patients. This reflects not only patients being cured of their disease but also the significant impact that can be made alleviating distressing symptoms such as pain. Recent technological advances have brought the treatment firmly into the twenty-first century and much more able to deliver the promise of cure without debilitating long term side effects.

Given the benefits of radiotherapy, it is therefore of paramount importance to build further on recent investment. A guaranteed rolling hardware and software replacement programme will ensure all those requiring radiotherapy have access to the most modern treatment available, regardless of where they are in the country.

Radiotherapy is a team activity with the three professions working closely together for the benefit of patient care. However, all three professions are facing significant workforce shortfalls. To maximise the benefit radiotherapy brings to the population, a sustainable workforce pipeline is essential across all the professions. The three professions have made great strides in developing skill mix to improve patient experience and, undoubtedly, more can be achieved. It is saddening that these innovative developments are currently limited by gaps in the treatment team.

Radiotherapy technology is, like all aspects of medicine, becoming more dependent on advances in imaging to ensure the cancer is accurately identified and the normal tissues avoided. As such, and given the College I am part of I would say this, we are working more closely with our radiology colleagues than ever before as well.

As I said at the start it is great to see an active, forceful national voice for the benefits of radiotherapy emerge as is embodied in this manifesto. Those of us at the front line welcome the chance to support radiotherapy to gain its rightful place in the sun. This can only serve to improve outcomes for cancer patients nationally. Thank you again.