



MINUTES OF THE RADIOTHERAPY ADVISORY GROUP (RAG) HELD ON THURSDAY 14TH MAY 2009, AT THE OFFICES OF THE SOCIETY OF RADIOGRAPHERS, 207 PROVIDENCE SQUARE, LONDON SE1 2EW

PRESENT:

Gaile Biggart {GB}
Michael Graveling {MG} {Chair}
Jane Head {JH}
Susan Lamb {SL}
Kate Love {KL}
Julie Massey {JM}
Bernadette McCarthy {BM}
Christine Richards {CR}
Donna Routsis {DR}
Noreen Sinclair {NS}

IN ATTENDANCE:

Sarah James {SLJ}
Valerie Asemah {VA} {Minutes}

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION OF NEW MEMBERS

1.1 MG welcomed everyone to the meeting and brief introductions were made.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2.1 Apologies for absence were received from Charlotte Beardmore, Hazel Colyer, Nicky Cornelius, Angie Craig, Angela Duxbury, Steve Harris, Nicola Redgwell and Karen Smith.

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 13TH JANUARY 2009

3.1 The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 13th January 2009 were approved as a true and accurate record.

4. MATTERS ARISING OTHERWISE NOT ON THE AGENDA

4.1 There were no matters arising.

5. UPDATE ON SCoR GUIDANCE RELATING TO IMPROVING STUDENT RETENTION

5.1 SLJ reported that the guidance relating to improving student retention has been approved by Council and is in the final proofing stages. It is hoped that it will be published in the next few weeks. It will also be available from the website. SJL will email copy to the group.

ACTION: SLJ

6. TO RECEIVE REPORTS/UPDATES FROM EACH OF THE UK COUNTRIES AND CONSIDER ANY SUPPORTING ACTIONS/WORK REQUIRED BY SCoR RAG

- 6.1 England NRIG: JH reported that the minutes of the March NRIG meeting had been circulated to Radiotherapy Managers on 20th April 2009. JH, CB and SLJ recently attended the Skills Mix Pilot site meeting which was organised by NCAT, we are still awaiting the report which is being compiled by Tim Cooper {TC}. Wales has been invited to send a representative to attend NRIG meetings. There was also discussion regarding the fractions per hour target and it was agreed that this is an issue that NRIG should review. JH also discussed the possibility of a HSJ article about radiotherapy workforce needs, in particular focussing on the 4 tier structure and professional leadership. Those present agreed this is a good idea.
- 6.2 Scotland TRiS & SRAG: No report was available and the representative from Scotland had sent apologies.
- 6.3 Wales: BM reported that as previously stated NHS Wales is in middle of a major restructuring exercise. Velindre Hospital will remain as a Trust although the exact remit is yet to be decided but a decision is hoped to be reached over the summer. There is around a million pounds in the budget for radiographic staff to provide additional linac hours which is being used to fund assistant practitioners and band 5 radiographers. However, it is not available for higher grades, consequently the 4 tier structure is not being implemented. All new and replacement linacs are to be IMRT and IGRT compatible.

BM also discussed that she has no training funds. This led into a longer discussion about RT managers experiencing problems with retaining training budgets. It was agreed SLJ would discuss with AMP, with a view to surveying both therapy and diagnostic service managers.

ACTION: SLJ

BM also wishes to attend the SW region R-Port workshop. SLJ agreed to confirm from TC that all of the other countries can send a representative to these workshops.

ACTION: SLJ

- 6.4 Northern Ireland: GB gave a verbal report and also informed the group that Northern Ireland is in the process of putting together the regional health authority cancer services framework. A business case is being prepared for another centre in the North West (to be opened in 2115) not sure if this will be for the provision of only radiotherapy. GB also reported similar problems regarding the implementation of the 4 tier structure as in Wales. There is no funding for assistant practitioners. SLJ suggested that she will email the Wales, Scotland and NI RAG representatives to request a brief update on progress on implementing the 4 tier structure in each respective country.

ACTION: SLJ, BM, GB & NR

7. RAG SUBGROUP REPORTS

- 7.1 SLJ apologised for the delay in getting the new radiotherapy staffing guidance published, and reported that the document should be finalised within the next few weeks and it will be circulated via email to the RT managers.

It was confirmed that the staffing recommendations within this guidance will be:

- A Registered Therapeutic Radiographer is the radiotherapy Service Leader/Manager
- 1.33 WTE per linac hour (benchmark figure) for Radiotherapy service delivery @ a maximum of 10% Assistant Practitioners **plus** 1 Expert Practitioner (Consultant radiographer/advanced practitioner radiographer, per key speciality (can be site specific and technical speciality). SCoR recommend that 20% of these experts to be at consultant practitioner level.

Charlotte Beardmore {CB} is currently in discussion with the Peer Review Measures group to include a standard relating to the new staffing guidance recommendations. The revised peer review measures will be going out to consultation in July 2009 and are due to be published in September.

8. TO RECEIVE UPDATE WORK FROM THE RCR SCoR IPEM RADIOTHERAPY DEVELOPMENT BOARD

8.1 DR gave a verbal report and commented on the following pieces of work:

- Review of evidence supporting use of IMRT. This piece of work is ready for submission will be published in clinical oncology
- Both the review of IMRT activity in the UK – and the Quality Standards documents are ready for publication
- The review of IMRT peer review measures is in progress
- The identification of training needs work is also completed

IMRT training needs are also being considered by NRIG to support centres with the clinical introduction of IMRT. It is being proposed that three professionals (oncologists, physicist and therapeutic radiographer) from each department will be trained and they will then cascade information within their departments. This will be discussed further by the newly formed NRIG technology subgroup which is due to hold its first meeting soon. JH is attending and will report back.

DR also gave a brief update on the proton patient pathway which is now in place. 30 patients have been referred so far. A report is due to go to Ministers in August with recommendations for either 1 or 2 UK based proton centres.

DH funding has been approved for the E-learning technical radiotherapy programme. The RCR, IPEM and SCoR are collaborating on this which is in the early stages of development.

9. ACORRN

9.1 Verbal update from KL, funding from the NCRI for ACORRN has ceased. The Steering Committee are due to meet to discuss the possibility of ACORRN becoming a charity; this would have negative implications on their future activities. MG requested that KL write a short report for SCoR Council once a decision is made.

ACTION: KL

10. TO RECEIVE A REPORT FROM THE RCR CLINICAL ONCOLOGY FACULTY BOARD MEETING

- 10.1 MG reported on the last meeting held at the end of February. There is currently discussion about medical staff re-certification and CPD requirements. The Patient Liaison Group (PLG) voiced their concerns about the implementation of NRAG and shortages of therapeutic radiographers; they intend to write to Mike Richards. The next meeting is to be held at the end of June 2009. MG will circulate information as soon it is ready.

ACTION: MG

11. TO RECEIVE A REPORT FROM THE SCoR REPRESENTATIVE TO THE RCR CLINICAL AUDIT SUBCOMMITTEE

- 11.1 NC was unable to attend this meeting but has recently emailed SJL who updated the group. The Audit Sub Committee was pleased with the improved level of responses from RT Centres regarding the recent cord compression audit and has asked for suggested future audit topics for RT managers to lead. This is to be discussed at the next RT Managers meeting in October. It was agreed that both NC and Gerri Briggs should be invited to this meeting to continue this discussion. The next manager meeting date was confirmed as 15th and 16th October in Southampton.

ACTION: NC

12. TO RECEIVE A REPORT FROM THE RCR CLINICAL ONCOLOGY PATIENTS LIAISON GROUP

- 12.1 No report was available.

13. SCoR VERT PROJECT

- 13.1 To note that the presentation from the Radiotherapy Weekend and the February 2009 DH report were circulated with the agenda papers. No questions were asked by the group.

14. NPSA

- 14.1 SLJ reported that the NPSA guidance will be launched at their conference scheduled for 4th June 2009, in Birmingham. Invitations for this event have been circulated to all RT departments from the NPSA team. The NPSA RT Safety Group is to be disbanded as its objectives have been achieved.

15. REPORT FROM RT MANAGERS MEETING

- 15.1 SL gave an update on the last radiotherapy manager's meeting and it was noted that it was an informative meeting. TC gave an update presentation on R-Port. The Macmillan patient information leaflet for black and ethnic minority patients was discussed. NC reported back regarding the RCR Audit Sub Committee. Julia Solano reported on the RT Peer Review Measures, and there was lengthy discussion about the RT Data Set. A straw poll of managers present revealed that only 30% were ready to submit their data.

16. OTHER NATIONAL WORKING GROUPS

- 16.1 RCR multidisciplinary group to establish paediatric guidelines and the next meeting is to be held on 18th May 2009.
- 16.2 RCR/RCN/RCP joint working group to develop consider reducing IP stays for cancer patients. Christine Richards representing SCoR.
- 16.3 Joint working group to develop radiosurgery guidelines. Moira Tomlinson and Kate Burton representing SCoR.
- 16.4 Review of Cancer Peer Review Measures. Revised standards due out for consultation mid 2009 and publication in December 2009. Julia Solano representing SCoR.
- 16.5 Dosimetrists working group. Pilot training proposal approved at March NRIG meeting.
- 16.6 RCR/SCoR/IPEM RT Planning Working Group. Guidelines in progress, publication likely to be autumn 2009.

17. NICE UPDATE

- 17.1 To note that the NICE Breast Cancer Guidelines were published in March 2009.
- 17.2 To note that the IMRT appraisals (breast, head and neck, prostate) has stopped. (JH to check whether this has been stopped or suspended.
- 17.3 To note that the Lung Cancer Clinical Guidelines as still awaiting publication.
- 17.4 To note that the Ovarian Cancer Clinical Guidelines scoping consultation closed on 18th March 2009. Lisa Punt, Consultant Radiographer at Addenbrookes is the SCoR representative.
- 17.5 Colorectal Cancer Clinical Guidelines scoping consultation closed on 18th March 2009. Rosalind Waugh, Consultant Radiographer at St James Cook Hospital is the SCoR representative.
- 17.6 Update to technology appraisal process consultation closed on 3rd March 2009.
- 17.7 Provision of information for the general public on the prevention of skin cancer consultation closed on 3rd April 2009.
- 17.8 Topic selection process for technology appraisals consultation ends on 22nd May 2009.

18. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- 18.1 SLJ reported to the group on the DH census for which the NATCANSAT team is still validating data. It is hoped the final report will be published soon.
- 18.2 SLJ reported that the CHKS accreditation programme is about to circulate their oncology standards for consultation. She will circulate (by email) for the group to comment.

ACTION: SLJ

- 18.3 CR queried as to how the rest of the group were implementing the recent new guidance documents: 'On Target: ensuring geometric accuracy in radiotherapy and the revised edition of the RCR management of unscheduled treatment interruptions. It was generally agreed that funding is not available for their implementation as they are 'guidance' and not mandatory.
- 18.4 MG updated the group on the E-learning facility on the SCoR website. Existing modules are reasonably priced and it is anticipated that some radiotherapy specific modules will be developed in the future.
- 18.5 MG discussed the recent motion at ADC regarding rebanding of Assistant Practitioners to band 5. The RT Managers present were in favour in principle.
- 18.6 JH discussed that the proposal to launch the SCoR accreditation scheme at UKRC, disadvantages radiotherapy managers, as not many will attend this event and requested a 'launch' for the radiotherapy community. KL also asked if the advanced letter still stands regarding the appointment of non medical consultant posts. SJ agreed to discuss with AMP and CB.

ACTION: SLJ

Post meeting note:

SLJ has discussed the request about launching the accreditation scheme and it is proposed that AMP will attend the RT managers meeting in October to discuss the scheme with RT managers before launching to the wider RT community at the 2010 RT Conference. It has also been confirmed that the principles of the Advance Letter still remain in place, although it is recognised that this was part of Whitley Council which has been superseded by Agenda for Change.

- 18.7 MG discussed the future of RAG and asked for views from those in attendance. It was agreed that VA would circulate the Terms of Reference and all present should email SLJ with their comments by 8th June. There was a brief discussion regarding the membership of the group, and if meetings could be held via telephone conference. MG requested the professional officers provide a report and recommendations for the July Council meeting.

ACTION: ALL

19. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

- 19.1 The date of the next meeting was agreed at Wednesday 16th September 2009 commencing at 11.00am. Venue or telephone conference to be confirmed.