

Census of the Radiotherapy Radiographic Workforce in the UK, 2014

1. Background

This report has been produced by the Society and College of Radiographers (SCoR). It is intended to update the UK national radiotherapy workforce surveys from 2010,¹ 2011,² 2012³ and 2013.⁴ This report provides a summary of the UK radiotherapy radiographic workforce in the National Health Service (NHS) and private/independent healthcare sector. It is deemed to be of interest to the NHS England Radiotherapy Clinical Reference Group and similar groups in the other UK countries, the Radiotherapy Board, NHS Centre for Workforce Intelligence, Health Education England,⁵ Local Education and Training Boards, Migration Advisory Committee⁶ and commissioners and providers of radiotherapy.

2. Data collection

Data collection was performed during the period November 2014 to January 2015. The SCoR contacted radiotherapy centres asking them to complete the survey to reflect the position in their department as of 1st November 2014 (the census date). Data was collected by means of a Survey Monkey™ online questionnaire distributed to radiotherapy service managers.

Full coverage was achieved, with all 70 NHS centres that provide radiotherapy services in the UK submitting data to the SCoR census.

A breakdown of the figures in this report by NHS health board and trust can be found in the accompanying spreadsheet.

3. Constraints

This census asked for the total numbers of therapeutic radiographers, assistant practitioners and trainee assistant practitioners (together referred to as the 'radiotherapy radiographic workforce' in this report) within the budgetary control of the radiotherapy service manager. Radiotherapy helpers and administration staff are not included in the figures.

This report assumes that numbers reported in AfC band 5 and above refer to therapeutic radiographers, and numbers reported in AfC band 4 and below refer to the associated assistant practitioners (APs) and trainee assistant practitioners (TAPs).

This survey is not directly comparable to the UK national radiotherapy workforce survey in 2010¹ as, unlike later surveys, the 2010 survey included radiotherapy helpers and administration staff. This report excludes the physics and engineering radiotherapy workforce and clinical oncologists. Enquiries about the physics and engineering workforce in radiotherapy should be directed to the Institute of Physics and Engineering in Medicine. Enquiries about the clinical oncology workforce should be directed to the Royal College of Radiologists.

To verify the accuracy of this census, the SCoR data for Agenda for Change (AfC) band 5 and above in the NHS in England (ie qualified therapeutic radiographers) is compared with the equivalent NHS Information Centre data. There is a 4.2% discrepancy between the census figure (2389 WTE as of Nov 2014) and the NHS Health and Social Care Information Centre (HSCIC) figure (2496 WTE as of Sept 2014) .⁷ The exact cause of this discrepancy is unknown but is possibly owing to the survey dates being 2 months apart.

4. Summary

Workforce

The total whole time equivalent (WTE) radiotherapy radiographic workforce in the UK is 3170. Looking just at the NHS, the total WTE therapeutic radiographer workforce is 3027. And the total WTE of APs/TAPs is 124.

Vacancies

The vacancy rate for the radiotherapy radiographic workforce in the UK is 7.3%.

Within the NHS, the vacancy rate for therapeutic radiographers is 7% and the vacancy rate for associated APs/TAPs is 6.1%.

5. NHS radiotherapy radiographic workforce data

NHS workforce by country

The table below shows the total NHS WTE of 3027 with a breakdown for each country. The number of posts, vacancies and vacancy rate are also displayed.

Country	Workforce	WTE	Posts	Vacant WTE	Vacancy Rate
England	Therapeutic radiographers	2389	2598	165	6.35%
	APs/TAPs	114	132	11	8.33%
England Total		2503	2730	176	6.45%
N Ireland	Therapeutic radiographers	127	124	38	30.65%
	APs/TAPs	0	1	0	0.00%
N Ireland Total		127	125	38	30.40%
Scotland	Therapeutic radiographers	240	266	5	1.88%
	APs/TAPs	8	10	0	0.00%
Scotland Total		248	276	5	1.81%
Wales	Therapeutic radiographers	148	166	6	3.61%
	APs/TAPs	1	1	0	0.00%
Wales Total		149	167	6	3.59%
UK NHS	Therapeutic radiographers	2903	3154	214	6.79%
	APs/TAPs	123	144	11	7.64%
UK NHS Total		3027	3298	225	6.82%

Note: AP/TAPs = Assistant practitioners / Trainee assistant practitioners

Respondents to the census also reported the number of posts which had been vacant for at least 3 months. The results show a 3 month vacancy rate of 6.3% for the radiotherapy radiographic workforce in the NHS.

NHS workforce by Agenda for Change (AfC) band

The table below illustrates that 86% of the radiotherapy radiographic workforce are employed in AfC bands 5 to 7.

Workforce	WTE by AfC band									Total
	3	4	5	6	7	8a	8b	8c	8d	
Radiotherapy radiographic workforce	38	86	779	1065	764	205	74	15	11	3027

NHS reasons for absence

The census also asked about reasons for absence: of the 3298 radiotherapy radiographic workforce NHS posts, 16 post holders are on career break (0.48%), 26 on long term sick leave (0.79%) and 144 on maternity leave (4.3%).

Reason for absence	Posts (headcount)	Percentage of post holders
Career break	16	0.48%
Long term sick leave	26	0.79%
Maternity leave	144	4.3%

Radiotherapy radiographic workforce in non-NHS radiotherapy providers

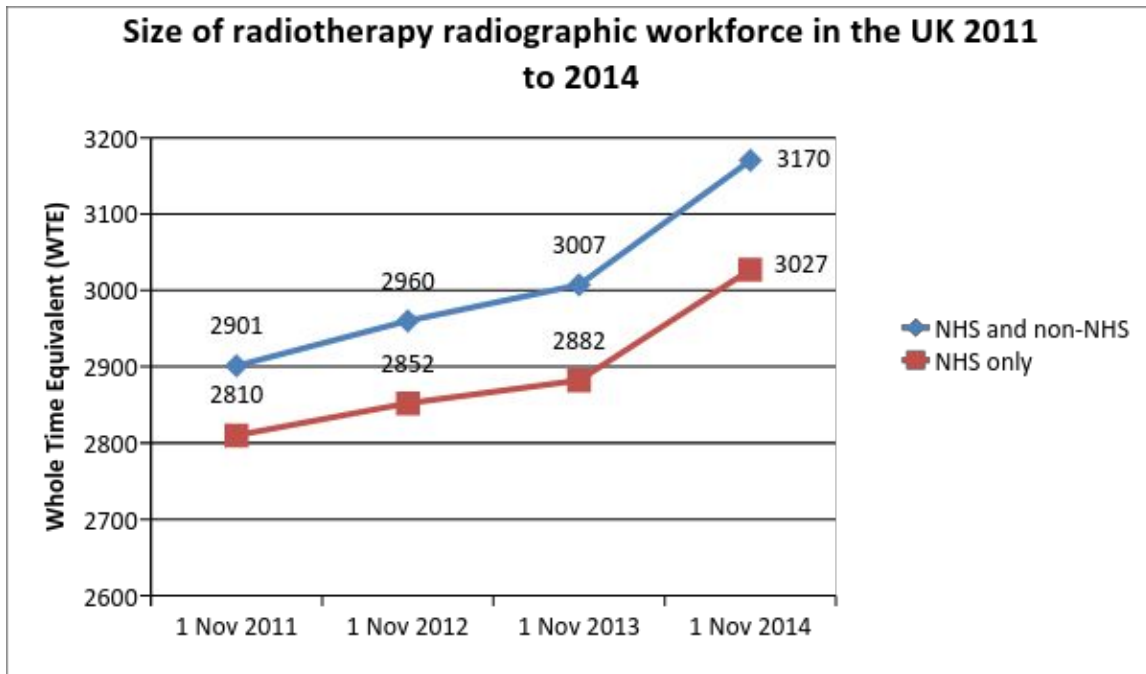
There are currently eight non-NHS providers of radiotherapy in the UK (one of which operates on 8 sites, and one of which operates on 3 sites). All centres submitted data to the SCoR census.

Workforce	WTE	Posts	Vacant WTE	Vacancy Rate
Non-NHS Total	143	148	6	4.2%
Combined NHS & non-NHS Total	3170	3445	231	7.3%

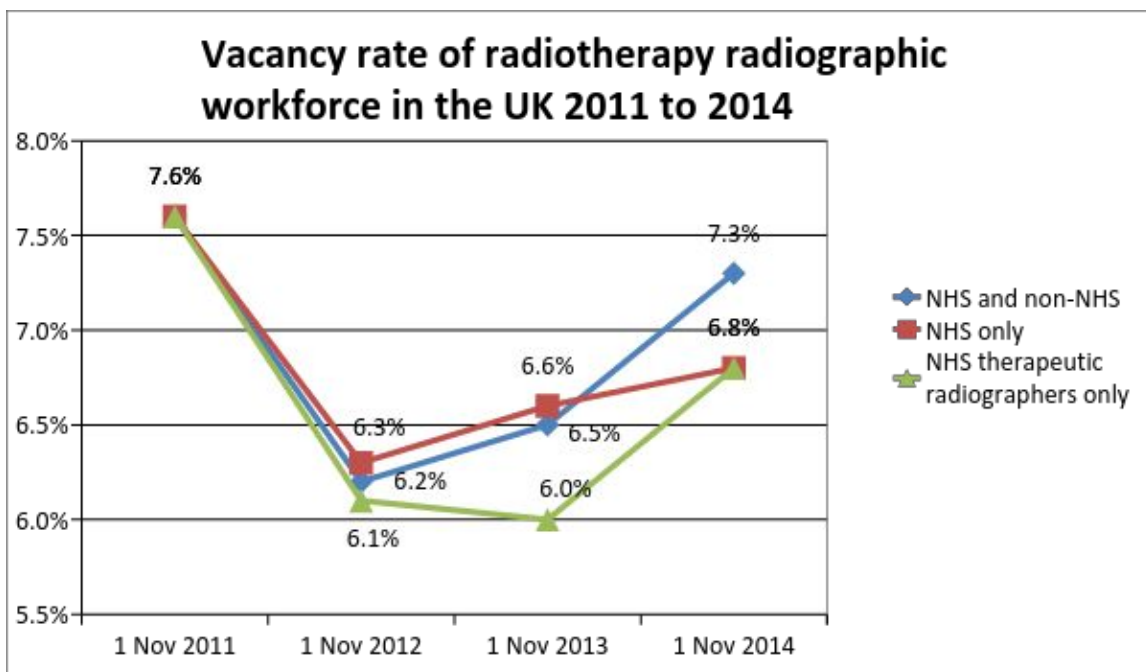
Note the figures for non-NHS providers are not reported by AfC band as providers do not necessarily use an equivalent system.

6. Trends

The graph below shows that the radiotherapy radiographic workforce in the UK grew by 5.8% between 2011 and 2014.



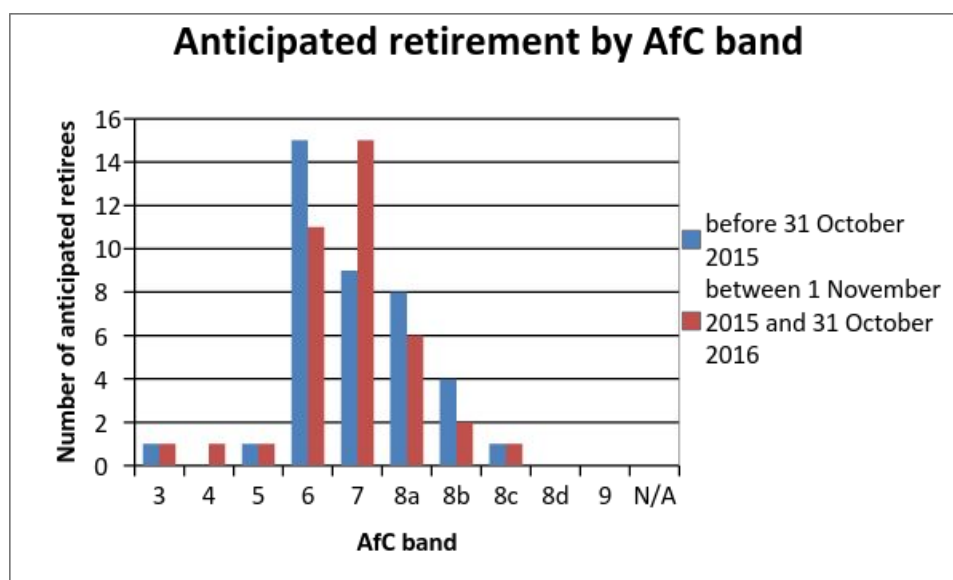
The graph below shows that the vacancy rate within the radiotherapy radiographic workforce in the UK reduced from 7.6% in 2011 to 7.3% in 2014.



7. Future expectations - retirement

Radiotherapy centres were asked approximately how many WTE radiography staff they anticipated would be retiring between 1 November 2014 and 31 October 2015. Radiotherapy centres were also asked approximately how many WTE radiography staff they anticipated would be retiring between 1 November 2015 and 31 October 2016.

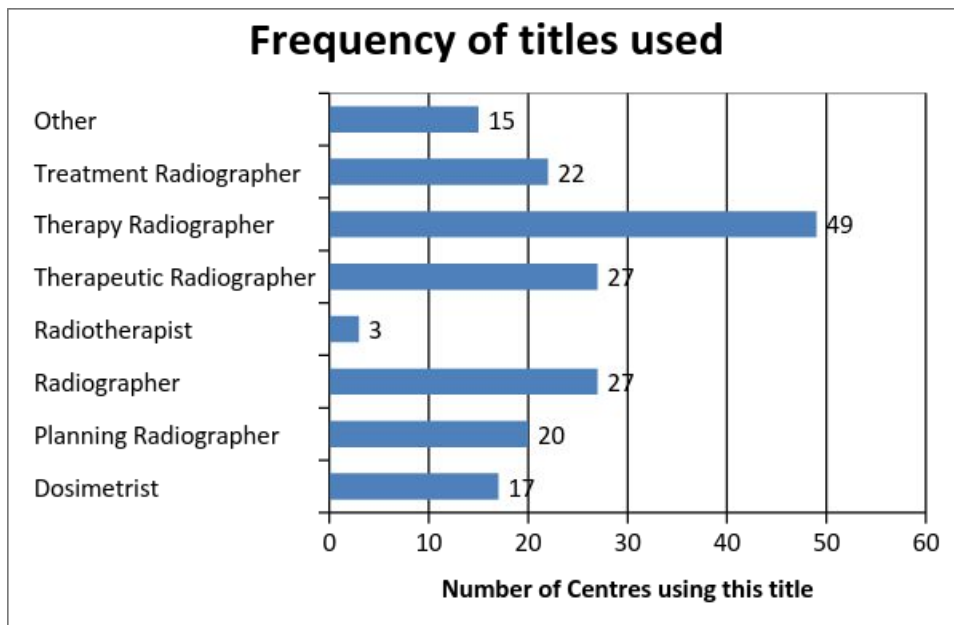
Country	AfC	Post holder to retire before 31 October 2015		Post holder to retire between 1 November 2015 and 31 October 2016	
		Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
UK NHS	3	1	2.6%	1	2.6%
	4	0	0.0%	1	2.6%
	5	1	2.6%	1	2.6%
	6	15	38.5%	11	28.9%
	7	9	23.1%	15	39.5%
	8a	8	20.5%	6	15.8%
	8b	4	10.3%	2	5.3%
	8c	1	2.6%	1	2.6%
	8d	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
	9	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
	N/A	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
UK NHS Total		39		38	
Percentage of post holders		1.2%		1.2%	



Note that the 'Radiotherapy Services in England 2012' report⁸ published by the Department of Health in England states that at least 80 additional therapeutic radiographers will be required for the proton service in England. This number will be increased between 2015 and 2020/21.

8. Protected titles

The two protected titles are “Therapeutic Radiographer” and “Radiographer”. The following chart shows which other titles are currently in use.



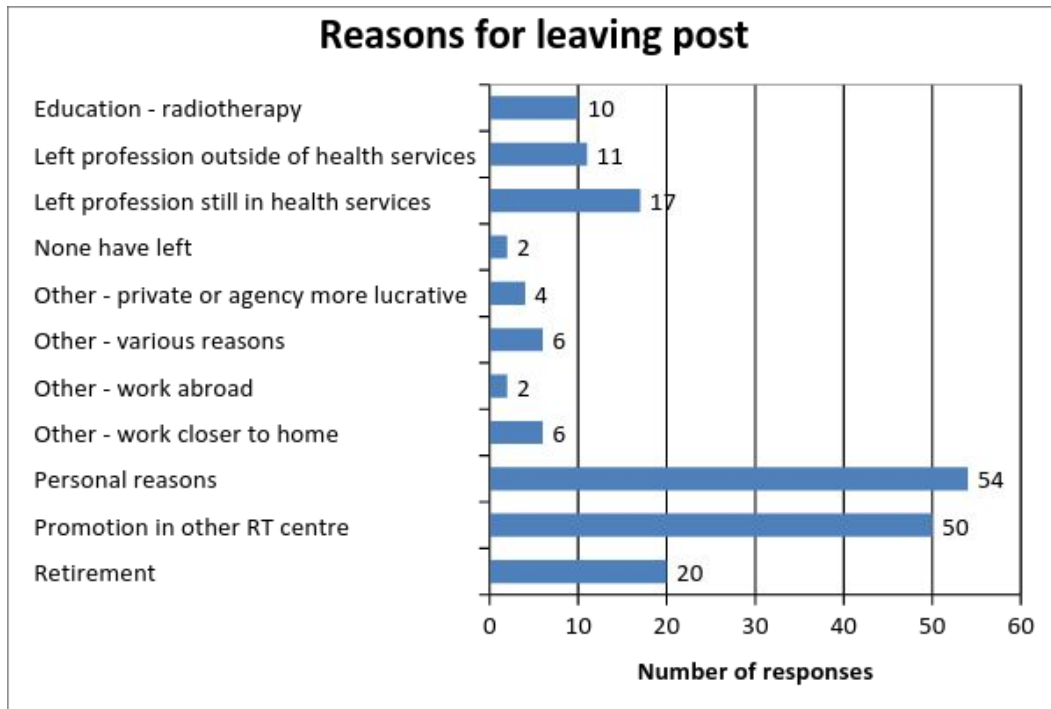
One centre indicated that there was a trend towards using “Therapeutic Radiographer”.

One centre indicated that specialist post titles precede the Radiographer title (Consultant, Lead, Macmillan)

A variety of “other” titles are also in use, these include: Advanced Practice Radiographer, Advanced Practitioner, Senior Practitioner, Lead Radiographer (x2), Pre-treatment Radiographer (x2), Radiotherapy Radiographer (x2), Specialist Practitioner, Planning Supervisor, Treatment Supervisor, Clinical Educator, Practice Educator, and Clinical Specialist.

9. Reasons for leaving posts

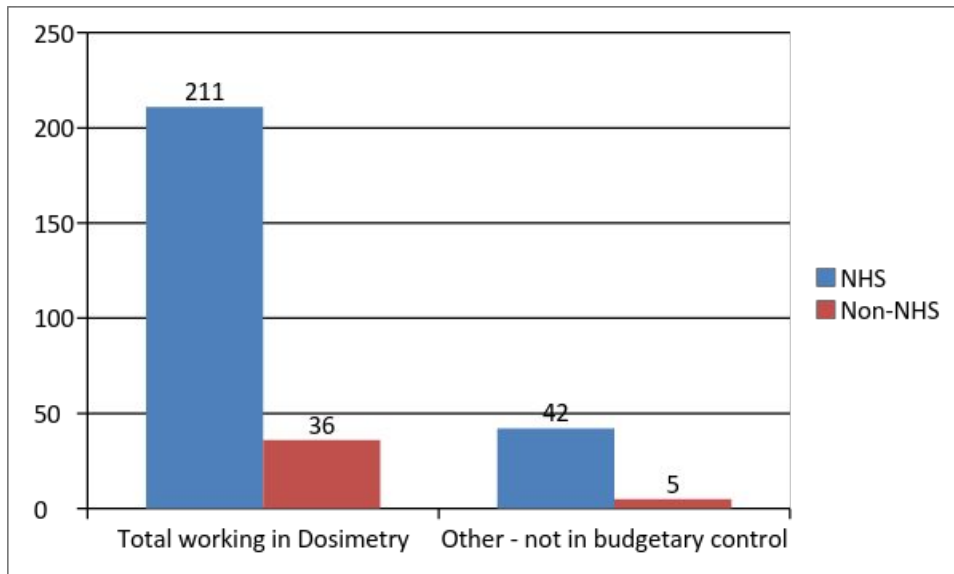
The following chart illustrates the most common reasons for leaving a radiotherapy post. This includes NHS and eight non-NHS centres:



Other reasons included: leaving to work for an agency (x2) or private sector provider (x3), returning to university to study another course, health reasons, moving to a post nearer home (x 5), work abroad (x2), change of post (x2), working hours not possible with travelling.

10. Dosimetry

There are currently 211 members of the radiotherapy workforce working in the NHS and involved in dosimetry compared to 36 non-NHS members. There are others working in dosimetry but not under the direct budgetary control of the radiotherapy centre and these figures are reflected in the chart below:



References

1. National Cancer Services Analysis Team (2011) *UK Census of Radiotherapy Workforce 2010*
http://www.natcansat.nhs.uk/rt/pub_rtworkforce2010.aspx
2. Society and College of Radiographers, Institute of Physics and Engineering in Medicine (2012) [*Report on the Census of the Radiotherapy Workforce in the UK 2011*](#)
<http://www.sor.org/learning/document-library/report-census-radiotherapy-workforce-uk-2011>
3. Society and College of Radiographers, Institute of Physics and Engineering in Medicine (2013) [*Report on the Census of the Radiotherapy Workforce in the UK 2012*](#)
<http://www.sor.org/learning/document-library/report-census-radiotherapy-workforce-uk-2012>
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<http://www.sor.org/learning/document-library/census-radiotherapy-radiographic-workforce-uk-2013>
5. Health Education England (2015) *Investing in people Workforce plan for England [Draft Workforce Plan for England](#)* : Proposed Education and Training Commissions for 2015/16
<http://hee.nhs.uk/wp-content/blogs.dir/321/files/2014/12/Investing-in-People-Workforce-Plan-for-England-2015-16.pdf>
6. Migration Advisory Committee (2015) [*Partial review of the Shortage Occupation Lists for the UK and for Scotland*](#), see Chapter 3, in particular the table on page 37 and summary on pp. 51-55
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/406775/Partial_review_of_the_SOL_for_UK_and_Scotland_Report.pdf
7. The NHS Health and Social Care Information Centre (2015) *NHS Workforce: Summary of staff in the NHS: Results from September 2014 Census*
<http://www.hscic.gov.uk/catalogue/PUB16973/nhs-staf-2004-2014-over-rep.pdf>
8. Department of Health (2012) *Radiotherapy services in England*
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/213151/Radiotherapy-Services-in-England-2012.pdf

(All links accessed 29/4/2015)