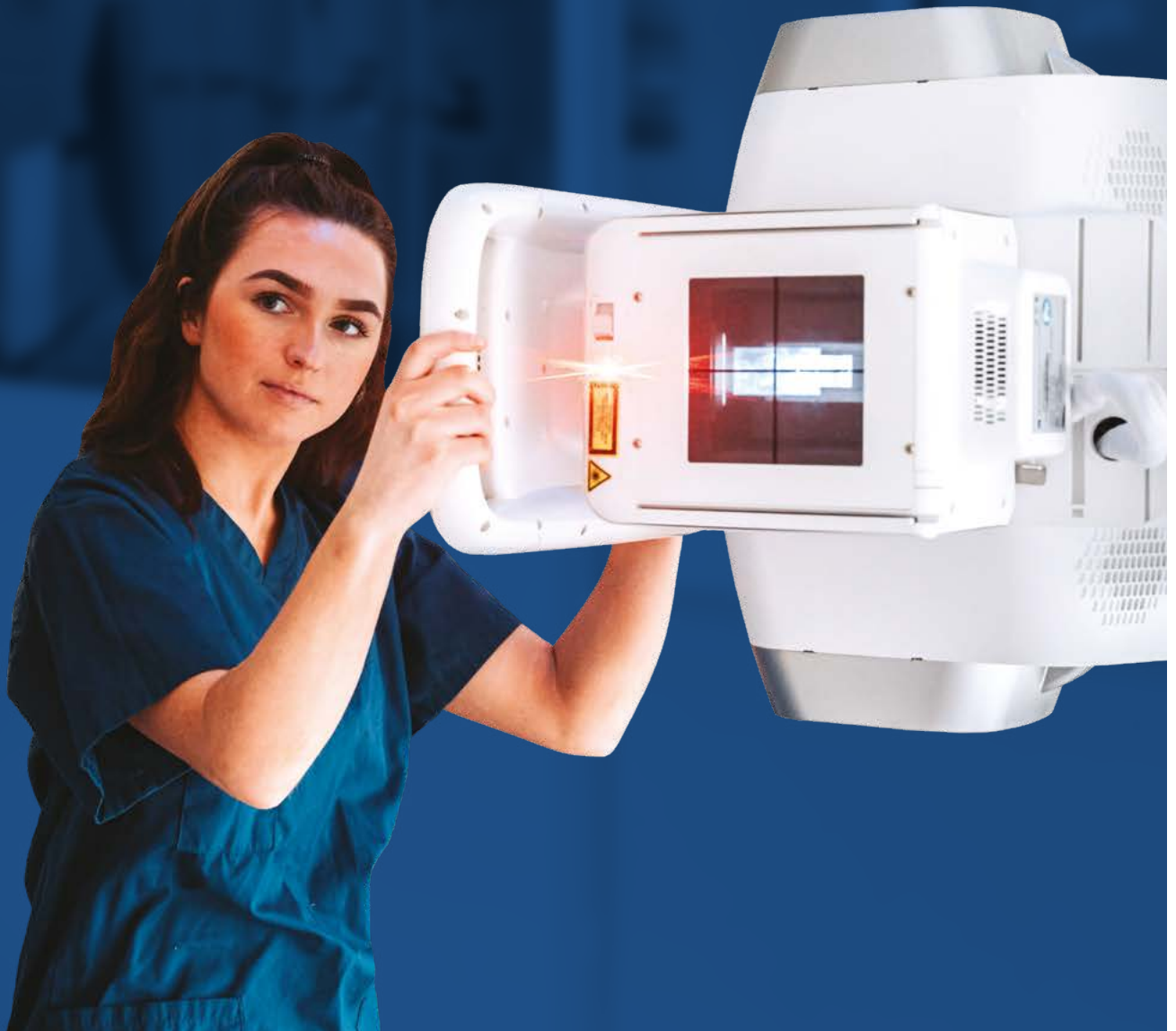




SoR **100**
YEARS
THE SOCIETY OF RADIOGRAPHERS

Radiography Manifesto



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Introduction



David Pilborough

President, Society and College of Radiographers (SoR | CoR), 2023-2024



Thomas Welton

SoR | CoR President Elect



Katie Thompson

SoR | CoR Vice-President

The Society of Radiographers' manifesto for a world-class health and social care system has been developed in consultation with our members across the four devolved nations.

This manifesto offers practical, realistic and positive solutions to the workforce crisis in our NHS – a crisis so acutely visible through the lens of radiography. It outlines the critical interventions – some of which are overdue and essential now, others which require longer-term implementation and commitment – necessary to help stabilise and then rebuild our NHS.

Many MPs and decision makers do not realise the central role radiographers play in repairing the NHS. We hope to increase their understanding of radiography – and of the workforce crisis facing radiography departments across the country.

But we also want to offer solutions, before and after a general election, to help MPs and decision makers to make better political choices. We want to work in partnership with them, in order to improve the NHS and its outcomes for patients and communities.

Representing more than 33,000 members, the Society of Radiographers is the professional body and trade union for all those working in medical imaging and radiotherapy.

Nine out of 10 patients in the NHS are supported by a radiography professional – who carry out X-rays, ultrasound, MRI and CT scans, as well as working in radiotherapy services as therapeutic radiographers, and in nuclear medicine.

Our members work in the NHS across all four nations, at all grades. This manifesto has separate versions for each of the devolved nations. However, the common thread is the need to secure enough staff with the right skill mix to meet the continuing rising demand for imaging and radiotherapy treatment. Meeting this demand will require a range of strategic policies and resources – as outlined in the manifesto.

Radiographers are central to addressing the ever-growing NHS waiting lists. More than 1 million people are waiting for scans. Over 20% are waiting more than 6 weeks, with over 70,000 waiting over 13 weeks. Early diagnosis and early treatment saves lives, time and money for the taxpayer. It's what we would all want for our family and friends.

The failure to invest sufficiently in increasing the radiography workforce capacity over the last two decades is the biggest reason why the UK's waiting lists are significantly longer than in countries such as Germany and France – and our health outcomes are worse than in most other leading economies. Our country needs our political leaders to make different and better political choices.

Our members deserve better. Our patients deserve better.



“ Five headline demands

The Society of Radiographers (SoR) is the trade union and professional body for the radiography workforce. Established in 1920, we stand as one of the oldest and most experienced radiography organisations in the world. Representing over 90% of the UK’s diagnostic and therapeutic radiography workforce, we advocate for the educational, professional and workplace interests of our members, as well as shaping the healthcare agenda for the radiography profession.

Our profession is crucial to healthcare, with 9 out of 10 patients who attend hospital being cared for by a member of the radiographic workforce.

To increase the diagnostic and therapeutic radiography workforce to meet the increasing demand on the NHS, we want action now to start

restoring the pay to appropriate levels. This must be coupled with a workforce plan that delivers the number of radiographers and associated professionals needed now and in the future.

To do this requires effective planning, delivery, and investment in the different pathways that people can choose to enter, develop and progress within the profession. All this must be aligned with steps to guarantee safe working practices in the interests of both staff and patients.

To make this sustainable, we want to see a political consensus on the level of funding and desired outcomes required for a world-class health and social care system in the UK.

Our manifesto covers five key demands:

1.

Commit to inflation-proof pay awards and pay restoration to 2008 levels

2.

Ensure increasing demand can be met now and into the future, with strategic diagnostic and therapeutic radiography workforce planning

3.

Enable people to enter, develop and progress within the radiography profession safely, from entry level support workers to advanced and consultant radiographer practitioners

4.

Ensure safe working practices, adequate staffing numbers and skills mix to maintain a safe service for patients and staff in all areas of radiography

5.

Provide adequate funding for a world-class health and social care system throughout the UK

1. Pay restoration to 2008 levels.

Committing to inflation-proof pay awards and pay restoration to 2008 levels.



"We are witnessing patients deteriorating on ever-increasing waiting lists, because we don't have enough radiographers even though I'm working excessive hours because we have so many vacancies. I see colleagues leaving the NHS, searching for better work and better pay, and I'm tempted to join them."

- Inadequate pay and reward is at the heart of the current NHS workforce crisis. Pay has been devalued by 15 years of poor awards. The next Government must commit to restoring the pay of the radiography workforce to 2008 levels, relative to total average pay.
- As pay is being restored staff also need a commitment to it never being devalued again. There should be a guaranteed underpin to all future annual pay rises for all NHS staff, of at least inflation +1%. This would signpost that NHS staff are valued and recognised, assisting recruitment and retention. Inflation-proofing future pay awards also reduces political risks and helps long-term NHS cost planning.
- Improve the starting rate of pay to make it more competitive – radiographers have among the lowest starting pay of any graduate professionals.
- Guarantee that promotion pays. Pay gaps between bands have been eroded and progression for senior leaders is too slow. Most new managers on band 8a now earn less than before promotion because they are excluded from overtime pay. This undermines retention and reward.
- Ensure no one loses money to train or take on professional development.
- Deliver pay and reward levels with career progression that enable the UK to compete globally for radiographers.

2. Workforce planning now and for the future.

Ensure increasing demand can be met now and into the future, with strategic diagnostic and therapeutic radiography workforce planning.



- Support transparent tracking and auditing of workforce numbers, measured against agreed forecast demand.
- Support joint reports to Parliament on progress to adjust NHS resourcing to meet demand.
- Use joint workforce planning in Social Partnership to identify the opportunities for more effective and efficient use of enhanced and consultant practice – e.g. facilitating more reporting radiographer positions.
- Ensure that the rollout plan for CDCs does not lead to radiographers leaving the NHS which would put even greater pressure on hospital care and increase waiting lists.
- Procure and maintain the equipment required for a world-class health system.
- Ensure effective planning to enable more flexible working to retain the radiography workforce.
- Address barriers to recruiting and retaining international radiography professionals into the UK workforce.
- Promote a positive and productive work environment and establish a culture of accountability, openness, and responsibility at all levels – with transparent complaints processes that provide an outcome.
- Ensure that all new technologies, including AI, are accompanied by good governance processes with clear accountability.

3. Effective training and development routes for all.

Enable people to enter, develop and progress within the profession safely, from entry level support workers to enhanced and consultant radiographer practitioners.



“I absolutely love being an apprentice and find the support from my colleagues is fantastic, all our radiographers are amazing and are keen to teach and clearly want me to succeed as well.

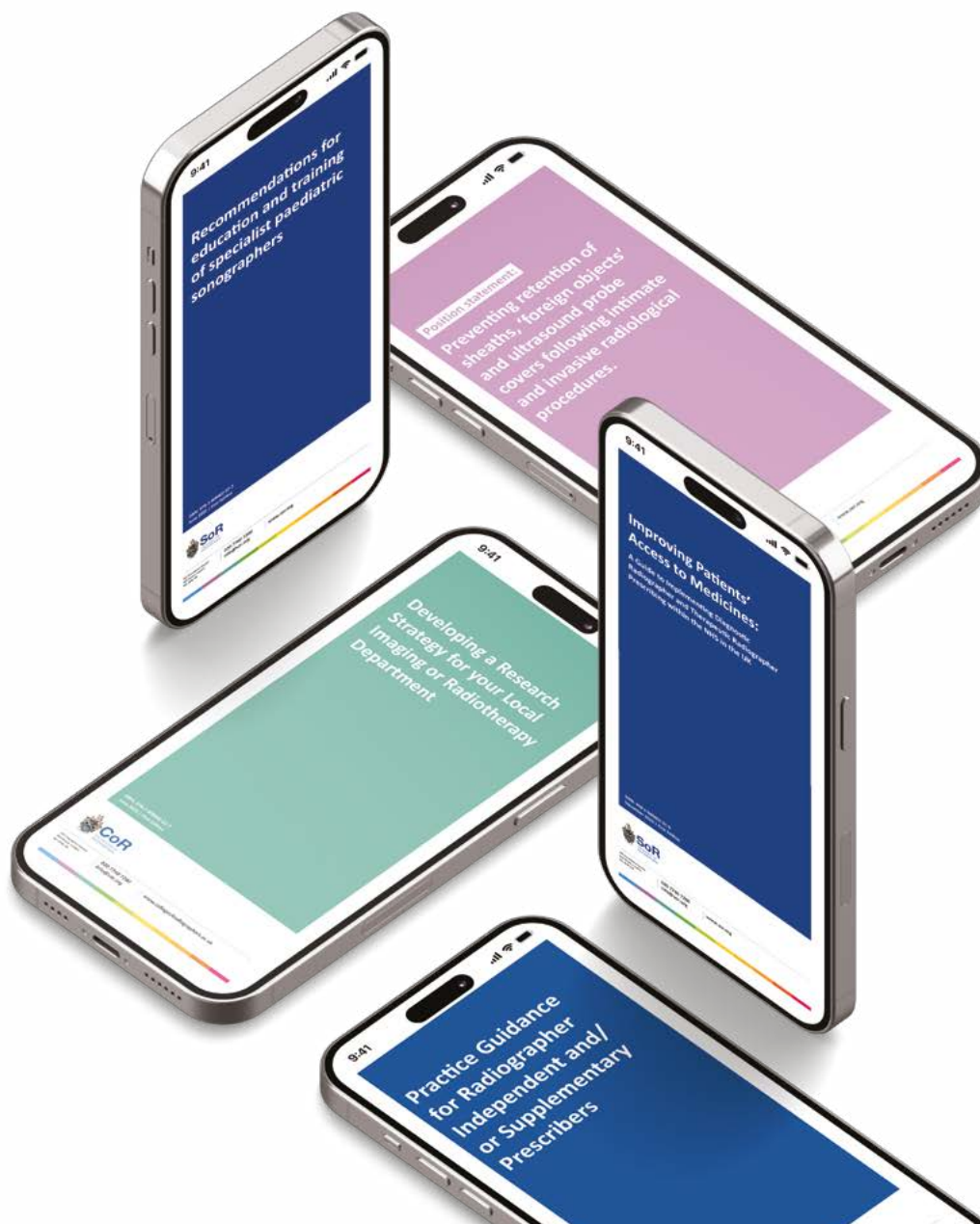
I’m so thankful for the opportunity of an apprenticeship, which is an amazing path into a career, especially if you’re classed as a mature student or if you have a family at home.”

**Lucie Armson, Radiography Apprentice
Somerset NHS Foundation Trust**

- Build additional capacity to support student and degree-level apprentice development whilst protecting time for on-going professional development at all levels through to enhanced and consultant practice.
- Promote and support apprentice pathways and other Earn to Learn Schemes in Social Partnership.
- Increase capacity for practice-based education within the NHS to offer alternative routes to entering and developing within the profession.
- Support retention with a high standard of induction for all new starters.
- Ensure high-quality, profession-specific preceptorship with mandatory national standards.
- Provide support and funding for radiographers to take senior professional leadership roles in all areas of clinical imaging and therapeutic radiography.
- Support academics, educators, and researchers to support the growth and the long-term future of the profession through growing the evidence base around professional practice.

4. Safe working practices and staffing.

Ensure safe working practices, adequate staffing numbers and skill mix to maintain a safe service for patients and staff in all areas of radiography.



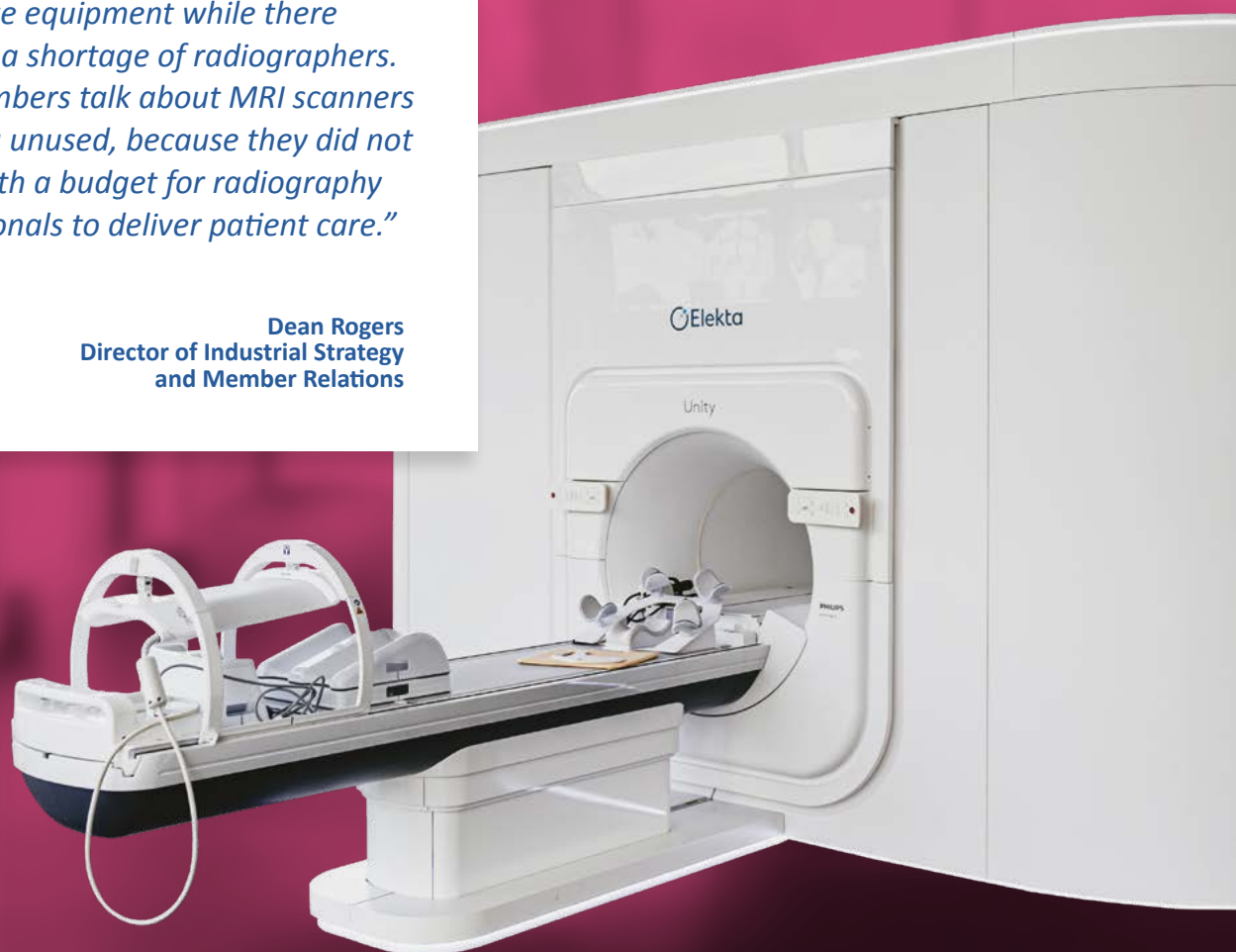
- Support Safe Staffing legislation to outlaw any excessive unsafe hours in the NHS with adequate resourcing to ensure the right skill mix at all times within radiography teams and safe working practices.
- Implement regulation of sonographers.
- Ensure staff are enabled and supported to report safety concerns with clear reporting and accountability around incident reporting.
- Increase support for international recruits to work and practice safely within the NHS.
- Review the support for the HCPC to carry out its responsibilities safely and fairly given the expanding and changing workforces.

5. A consensus on funding.

Adequate funding for a world-class health and social care system throughout the UK.

“The SoR welcomes increased investment in new technology. However, it is pointless to invest in expensive equipment while there remains a shortage of radiographers. Our members talk about MRI scanners standing unused, because they did not come with a budget for radiography professionals to deliver patient care.”

Dean Rogers
Director of Industrial Strategy
and Member Relations



- Commit to matching EU15 average spending per person on health and social care.
- Seek a political consensus on how much will be invested and how it will be shared across NHS and social care.
- Prevent the NHS from being in competition with social care. Use the need to invest more in social care as an opportunity to better sustain both.
- Recommit to equal access regardless of personal wealth or location.
- Reinforce the 'not-for-profit' delivery principle.

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