



JUNE 2008

## RETURN TO RADIOGRAPHY NEWSLETTER

This newsletter comes from the *Return to Practice Support Group* which is composed of radiographers who have successfully returned to radiography after a break. The Return to Practice Support Group was established by The Society and College of Radiographers which is the Trade Union and Professional Body for radiographers in the UK.

We are hoping that this newsletter will reach radiographers who have left the profession so that we can forge a link through which those leaving the profession can be updated and informed of changes happening and so that as and when they wish to return to radiography it would be easier to achieve.

You can join the database to receive future editions of this newsletter by e-mailing [christinaf@sor.org](mailto:christinaf@sor.org)

### Record keeping!

Make a note NOW of your Health Professions Council (HPC) registration number  
Keep your most up to date CV, CPD portfolio  
Put proof of qualifications in a safe place  
Make a note of your Society of Radiographers membership number



### Whilst you are taking a break

Even when you are not working you will have an interest in health and anything to do with diagnostic imaging or radiotherapy and oncology and there may be other ways you can contribute. For example, if you have school aged children you may find that the school would welcome you to talk either about the career of radiography or as an expert in radiation sciences! The Professional Support team at The Society of Radiographers have a limited supply of promotional material, contact Valerie Asemah on 020 7740 7224 or e-mail [valeriea@sor.org](mailto:valeriea@sor.org)

### Whilst you are busy doing other things

You will be accumulating skills and qualities that will benefit the profession should you wish to return in the future. You should maintain a record of your activities; are you a volunteer for a play group or school? Have you become involved in charities or other businesses? All these things need to be given credence and should you want to return will provide evidence of your activities to a prospective manager.

### Continuing Professional Development ....what can I do about it?

Written by Phil Edwards, member of the Return to Practice Support Group

The HPC defines CPD as 'a range of learning activities through which health professionals maintain and develop throughout their career to ensure that they retain their capacity to practice safely, effectively and legally within their evolving scope of practice'. (This definition is taken from the Allied Health Professions project, 'Demonstrating competence through CPD', 2002).

[http://www.hpc-uk.org/ssets/documents/100011A0Short\\_guide\\_to\\_CPD.doc](http://www.hpc-uk.org/ssets/documents/100011A0Short_guide_to_CPD.doc)

This document gives many ideas and methods of potential CPD activity that the returner can use prior to employment and demonstrate to the potential employer a positive attitude to broadening knowledge and skills.



The returner could consider

- Distance learning
- Department visits
- Joining a focus group
- Keep in touch group
- Structured reading and reflection
- Special interest groups
- Study days
- Developing IT skills
- Public service
- Voluntary work
- Participating on a radiography forum
- World wide web

This is not an exhaustive list but some are inexpensive ways of developing your portfolio of learning experience. The HPC expects you to have a record of your learning opportunities. This can be in various forms e.g. working diary, A4 portfolio, on your computer, on disc, memory stick. The important thing is that it can be seen to be relevant. It is helpful if some kind of personal reflection takes place and that learning points or objectives are documented.

The costs of returning can be considerable you may contact:-

[http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/EducationAndLearning/AdultLearning/FinancialHelpForAdultLearners/DG\\_10033133](http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/EducationAndLearning/AdultLearning/FinancialHelpForAdultLearners/DG_10033133) for possible financial help and contact with a learning advisor.

If you're looking to return to work after raising your children, then look at the Learn Direct podcast for the inspiration you need. Negotiating flexible hours and brushing up your IT skills are just some of the topics, see:

<http://www.learndirect-advice.co.uk/podcasts/previous/parentsreturning/>

If you want to consider further research go to:- [http://www.hero.ac.uk/uk/research/hero\\_for\\_researchers.cfm](http://www.hero.ac.uk/uk/research/hero_for_researchers.cfm) which is the 'gateway to research within the UK'.

The Society and College of Radiographers has post-graduate courses listed at <http://www.sor.org/public/pdf/postgrad.pdf>

The returner will find many helpful articles within Synergy and Radiography and Society members have access to the BIR library. Membership of the Society also entitles you to the use of CPD

Now (a web based tool) a useful way of recording experiences and learning.



Local hospitals often have a learning centre or library, which often run Clinical lectures on a weekly basis. The larger hospitals have Medical Institutes and for a reasonable fee you can join and use their resources. Often useful contacts can be made here with a view to future employment.

Radiographers now have to maintain a CPD record to fulfill HPC requirements, there will be an audit of 2.5% of registrants in 2010 (approx 600) to make sure they comply.

For those returning to the HPC register having been away between 0 and 2 years there are no immediate requirements. From 2 to 5 years you need 30 days of updating skills and knowledge. Five years and over you have to demonstrate 60 days of updating knowledge and skill.



### NOT JUST THE NHS

The NHS is obviously the biggest employer of radiographers and jobs are advertised at: <http://www.jobs.nhs.uk/>

There are many more opportunities to work part time and to job share within the NHS. There are other employment opportunities, for example, companies supplying equipment and accessories for imaging and radiotherapy like to employ radiographers as applications specialists and representatives.

Independent treatment centres, Private hospitals and clinics all employ radiographers. Also there are many agencies and some departments have their own "bank" staff

### MAMMOGRAPHY - A WAY BACK

Written by Marie Gornall, member of the Return to Practice Support Group

The present government aims to improve the detection and early treatment of breast cancer by extending the age range for screening to 47 -73 years. This will stretch an already over extended service but could provide great opportunities for returning (female) radiographers.

Many Mammography departments are currently over stretched and short staffed. They generally work social flexible shifts and may be looking to extend their working day or provide weekend sessions to accommodate the ever growing numbers. Job vacancies are not being filled by the newly qualified graduate radiographers, who prefer to work in general departments or specialise in the more glamorous modalities such as CT MRI or Vascular.

A more mature returning radiographer will also have a close empathy with the breast screening population.

A period of training will be provided in both the theoretical and practical aspects of Mammography, but the returnee may find this single modality more manageable than the wide range of modalities required to work in a general imaging department.

Many units provide combined screening and symptomatic services, making the job more varied and rewarding. There is also the opportunity for advanced practice and career progression. As a returner and Mammographer, I can recommend this route back into practice. Read about the National Breast Screening Programme at:

<http://www.cancerscreening.nhs.uk/breastscreen/>

### SPECIAL MESSAGE FOR RADIOTHERAPY RADIOGRAPHERS

Written by Pam Shuttleworth, member of the Return to Practice Support Group

The media were highlighting a shortage of therapy radiographers when I decided to consider returning to practice. I arranged three days of work shadowing at my local department, where I had worked before, to see if I could still do the job and if I still wanted to. I enjoyed these



days, the technology had advanced a lot but the basic principles were still the same.

I had been out of the profession for about ten years, before leaving I had worked for about 13 years reaching Senior I level and holding a research post for the last two years. A change in my personal circumstances meant a return was possible.

At the same time I was considering a return to practice there was a course being developed, funded by the Workforce Development Confederation for 2 year, it was a partnership between the department at Cookridge and Sheffield Hallam University (SHU) The aim was to tackle a national shortage of Radiographers.

As I had been away from the profession for some time I felt I needed some kind of structured study to underpin my return to clinical practice. I decided to undertake this new distance learning course with SHU to provide the theory behind the practice I was seeing everyday.

Returning to practice took four months during which time I worked along side the other students in the department and was paid at Radiographer assistant grade. The understanding was, once I had upgraded my skills and was eligible to re-register with the HPC (Health Professions Council) I would become a radiographer again.

I worked in the department for four and half days a week and studied for half a day a week during work time plus working at home sometimes. My biggest challenge was to produce a portfolio to submit at the end of the course, but I soon learnt the skills I needed to do this. These skills will be used again during my career for CPD (continued professional development) and its documentation.

I was able to complete the course in such a short time because of the support I received in the department, particularly from my mentor and also from my colleagues, managers and the university. I feel it also helped having worked for some time in clinical practice before leaving the profession.

I have continued the learning process during the last two years of clinical practice. I have obtained a band 6 post and I am continually learning new processes and techniques e.g. IGRT (image guided radiotherapy).

I think the maturity I bring to the profession on returning to practice helps with my work. I am



more confident in dealing with people and more reflective in what I am doing.

Recently the National Radiotherapy Advisory Group has reported to ministers "*Radiotherapy: developing a world class service for England*" and they have highlighted the urgent need to increase the number of radiotherapy radiographers needed in order to meet the demands for radiotherapy services.

#### Computer skills and medical terminology

Comment by Dianne Fox, member of the Return to Practice Support Group

The one bit of advice I held onto, when I was struggling was that so much had changed however, basic anatomy had not!

Medical terminology and computer language; these are skills worth revising and brushing up on, in today's work force, as well as having basic IT skills.



The Professional Officer Responsible for Return to Practice is Christina Freeman, who is a returner herself; contact her on 020 7740 7245 or [christinaf@sor.org](mailto:christinaf@sor.org)