Position statement:

The use of virtual support technology (VST) in Computed Tomography (CT) and Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI)

November 2025

SoR
THE SOCIETY OF RADIOGRAPHERS

207 Providence Square
Mill Street, London
SE1 2EW, UK

020 7740 7200
info@sor.org

www.sor.org

Disclaimer

The Society of Radiographers (SoR) and the College of Radiographers (CoR) are separate companies (CoR is also a registered charity) but work together as the Society and College of Radiographers ('SoR' and the 'CoR') and as part of their roles prepare and publish guidance. All guidance published by the SoR and/or the CoR is for the purpose of assisting members, professionals, patients and the general public and sets out what the SoR and the CoR consider to be recommended practice. While the intention of the guidance published is to set out best practice and to influence practices across the sector, any local procedures implemented by local NHS trusts, health boards and independent providers (or other employing authorities) will always take precedence. The SoR and the CoR have no role in enforcing the application of any guidance. The rights and benefits of members of the SoR are set out in the SoR Handbook.

The Society of Radiographers (SoR) recognises the growing interest in the application of virtual support technology (VST), also known as remote operation, within diagnostic Computed Tomography (CT) and Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI).

This position statement aims to champion the positive roles that such technology, in its current state, can play in enhancing imaging services.

A separate document[1] provides guiding principles for thoughtful planning and implementation into practice. It outlines the SoR's position on the use of such technology and provides essential guiding principles applicable to CT and MRI.

The use of virtual support technology in imaging services within the United Kingdom is evolving. In 2022/23 it was piloted within the Independent sector[2] and within an NHSE funded project. Learning and recommendations from the trial in CT and MRI across nine NHS organisations can be downloaded from **National Imaging Transformation Programme's future NHS platform**.

SoR will continue to review this position annually as the body of evidence around the benefits and risks of using this technology grows.

When considering implementation, the use of virtual support tools or remote operation technology should enhance staff training, patient safety, patient experience, image quality, and radiation dose management.

The SoR does not support using this technology as a replacement for employing sufficient adequately trained and experienced radiography staff.

1. Guiding principles for the implementation and use of VST in CT and MRI. The Society of Radiographers, 2025
2. Imaging Virtual support tools (VST) Pilot programme final report. NHS England, 2024

Background

Virtual Support Technology (VST) offers potential for access and operation of CT and MRI by a remote operator from a hub site.

The hub may be situated in another location at the same site, at an alternative site within the same employer, at a third-party employer's site, or at the remote operator's home.

Vendor software varies, but the technology allows experienced and adequately trained radiographers to:

1. Provide remote support and direction to adequately trained on-site operators during complex or uncommon scans
2. Enhance trainee experience by providing additional remote training at the hub site
3. Undertake protocol management across multiple sites from the hub
4. Take full control of the scan set up and initiate the exposure from the hub

Potential Applications

The Society of Radiographers supports the potential application of the technology in the education, training and ongoing support of the CT and MRI workforce as follows:

1. Pre- registration training and education (at the hub site)

- Providing a window into busy clinical environments for groups of learners to observe and interact with trained professionals
- Allowing learners and trainees to observe complex procedures without impacting on operational performance or patient experience

2. Post registration enhanced and advanced practice development and development of specialist services

- Training provided using this technology is in addition to adequate training required to operate the equipment.
- Enhancing the availability of specialist advice and direction to on-site operators in the case of uncommon and complex procedures
- Providing specialist advice to multiple sites from the remote hub without the need to travel between departments and sites

3. More effective standardisation across a network

- Standardisation of existing protocols and the addition of new protocols across a site/network by an expert hub radiographer
- Remote optimisation of exposures across geographically remote sites by an expert hub radiographer

Conclusion

The SoR supports training, education, and service transformation using VST, where there are demonstrable benefits to patients.

The SoR does not support using this technology as a replacement for employing sufficient adequately trained and experienced radiography staff.

SoR

THE SOCIETY OF RADIOGRAPHERS