

# SCoR

THE SOCIETY & COLLEGE  
OF RADIOGRAPHERS

# Your society, Your career

Getting the most from your membership

# Welcome

## Welcome to the Society and College of Radiographers

This handbook is invaluable as a tool informing you of a wide range of member benefits. Our Industrial Relations Team are there to represent and promote member's interests and our fantastic Education and Professional team are there to support you in your professional and career development. They are just a phone call or email away. It's up to you whether you use them....I hope you do.

We as a Society exist and thrive on membership involvement. As a student I was actively involved in the Society and this continued on through my working life to where I am now writing to you as your President. Please think about becoming involved with your Society, as a rep or on your national/regional council. There are many ways to be involved in promoting our profession and in defending your rights.

There are exciting times ahead, no one is sure what the future holds for the NHS we love. I am confident that the Society of Radiographers and your nominated representatives on UK Council will continue to deliver for you, our members, by engaging with relevant bodies, developing guidance documents, encouraging members to enable change and be the leaders of the future.

As radiographers we can and will rise to any challenge, as we always have, with evidence and considered responses. We will continue to be highly qualified professionals and experts in our field. We will continue to put the patients first and patient care will continue to be at the core of our practice.

I am and always have been proud to call myself a radiographer. I am proud of my profession and of our Society. Please join me in promoting our profession, in defending and improving the working conditions of our members and in continuing to deliver the best possible care to patients

### **Gill Hodges, President 2019-20**



"There is no doubt that we face challenging times"

“

I have been a member of SOR for some years now and recently became the industrial relations representative (IR 'rep') for my clinical department at the request of the staff when I was nominated and elected into the role in 2017.

My time in the IR role has been exciting, and interesting. I have had the opportunity to attend training and to represent staff members in minor and major departmental issues. I attended the TUC Women's and Black Workers conferences and the SoR Annual Delegates Conference where I spoke and the motion I put forward on behalf of my region was voted in by the attending delegates. What a proud moment.

What does the future hold for me? I'm not sure but after thirty years in the NHS already you never know, a full time union role may be just the ticket. I certainly feel inspired with all the behind the scenes insight I have had over the past two years. If you put yourself forward positively, with the Society of Radiographers all things are possible!

”

**Antoinette French, Sonographer**



“

I believe that SOR membership has opened a wealth of learning and networking opportunities for me. I have been able to access a fantastic archive of information and meet other experienced Society members and this has assisted my studies and given me an enhanced professional insight on clinical placement.

I have attended two student conferences with great speakers and workshops. This has all helped me to develop into a better student radiographer who will be more equipped for the work place when I qualify next year. Not only that but I also achieved a lifelong dream and managed to experience something not many people will when I worked last summer in Peru, thanks to my winning the SoR Work the World partnership prize, this really was the opportunity of a lifetime!

”

**Jason Brook, Former Student Radiographer**



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# Who are we?





# FAQ's

## What is the Society of Radiographers?

Founded in 1920 the Society of Radiographers is the UK's professional body and trade union for practitioners working in the fields of clinical imaging, radiation therapy and oncology. With in excess of 30,000 members **we are able to provide advice, support and a range of tangible benefits** from when you start your training until you retire and beyond. Whether you are looking for help with employment problems, opportunities for continuing education, advice on career development or the opportunity to attend events and network with colleagues, we are here to help.

The Society operates as an independent, not-for-profit association. It is not part of the National Health Service or any government agency. As a trade union it is not affiliated to, nor makes any contribution to, any political party. **Our sole purpose is to focus on the interests of our members and their patients.**

The Society is a democratic organisation. It is governed by an elected UK Council, made up of members, who determine the overall strategy and priorities for the Society. Through a network of regional committees (in England) and national councils (in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales) it is able to exert local, regional and national influence.

## What is the College of Radiographers?

The College of Radiographers was incorporated in 1976 and operates as a charitable subsidiary of the Society. Its aims are concerned with the development of the science and practice of radiography for the public good. To learn more about the College and the work of its trustees please visit [rsor.org/college-of-radiographers](http://rsor.org/college-of-radiographers).

## Do I have to be a radiographer to join?

No. The majority of our members are registered radiographers practicing in the UK, but we have a range of membership options for people working as assistant practitioners and support staff, as well as associated professionals in areas such as ultrasound and nuclear medicine. Please visit the website or contact the membership department for further advice.

## How can I join?

The majority of our members join on line and pay their membership fees by monthly direct debit. Membership is free for first year undergraduates. Please visit [rsor.org/being-member/join-us](http://rsor.org/being-member/join-us) for more information.



## What are the benefits of membership?

This booklet provides an overview of the main areas of member benefit, but to summarise you could say that membership links you with your fellow students and professionals across the UK and provides opportunities to continue to learn and develop your career. You will also enjoy the security of knowing that you are represented by experts if anything goes wrong in the workplace and that, for the majority of members, you will enjoy the reassurance of professional indemnity insurance within the cost of your membership.



## How should I contact you if I need help?

During office hours of 9am-5pm please telephone **0207 740 7200** for advice. You can also contact people directly; the second page of your monthly magazine contains up to date e-mail contacts for the Society's staff and UK Council members.

“the Society of Radiographers is the UK’s professional body and trade union for practitioners working in the fields of clinical imaging, radiation therapy and oncology.”

# The Society and College in Practice



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# Your career

Career options are normally governed by two sets of circumstances, your personal life and your professional and educational opportunities.

This section of the booklet is not meant to give prescriptive advice, but rather to help you think about what your best career options might be. Many professionals fall into the trap of waiting for career opportunities to present themselves, rather than being proactive in searching them out. Of course, there is nothing wrong with settling on a career choice or post and sticking with it for your entire career, if that is what you want. It really is a question of what is right for you and your personal circumstances. So, here are a few things to think about.

## Where do I want to work?

Personal circumstances may dictate that you stay within a particular geographical area, so if you're looking for a move from an existing post your choices may be more limited. However, **don't simply wait for job advertisements to appear**. You can find out more about what is going on locally (or what might be coming up) by engaging with the Society through local and regional events. These may enable you to network and get yourself known and if other people are aware of your interests and any special skills you have they may be able to advise you of new opportunities.

If you are relatively free to move it might be as well to consider the environment in which you'd like to work. Large city with big university hospital, or smaller town with a local general hospital or clinical services? Don't forget to do your homework with regard to housing

and accommodation, costs can vary massively across the UK. Remember too that there is generally a worldwide demand for radiographers and working overseas can be a fantastic way of developing your professional and life skills. If you do work overseas for a while, remember that you can maintain your Society membership at a much reduced rate to keep in touch with developments back home.

## What do I want to do?

Career options for radiographers are better than they have ever been. If you wish to focus on clinical practice you may at some point wish to specialise. It is important to get your thinking straight, though. You cannot reasonably expect things to happen overnight but equally do not sit around waiting for opportunities to present themselves on a plate or waiting to step into dead men's shoes. If you wish to specialise make an honest appraisal of whether it might be doable where you currently work, or whether you will need to move. Again, a good knowledge of what is coming up regionally may be useful here. **Think about your personal strengths and interests**. If you enjoy teaching and training students in clinic, for example, you might initially work towards developing your role to include some formal mentoring or assessment. This in turn could lead to a clinical educator post and later into academia, if that's what you'd like.

All of that said, many a career has changed direction by chance. If you are offered a new task, say helping

with clinical audit or working on departmental protocols, say yes! You wouldn't be asked if the person offering didn't think you were capable and it can be surprising how one thing can lead to another. Remember too, that there is absolutely nothing wrong with remaining in a post you are happy with as long as you want.

### **Making things happen**

All regulated healthcare professionals in the UK are required to undertake continuing professional development (CPD) as a condition of registration. Do not view this as a burden. Remember, your CPD is the one area of your professional life where you are in sole charge and where you call the shots.

The CPD section of this booklet (pages 14 and 15) set out the massive range of resources the Society provides to help you with this, but in career terms it can be helpful to look at your CPD from three perspectives:

**Immediate learning needs.** This is the learning you need to do in your current job to stay afloat. New technology, changing protocols, revising your science or anything you need to settle into a new or changing role. This tends to form a large part of most people's CPD.

**What's happening next.** There can be some overlap with immediate learning needs, but this may have a focus on your development in your existing role and may have been agreed during an appraisal or development review with your supervisor or manager. It may even be related to your transition into a more responsible or senior role.

**Aspirational CPD.** This is all about you. It may be that you have a secret career aim and that you are

unlikely to be able to fulfil this in your current post or with your current employer. This is where you metaphorically stash a bit away for the time when the opportunity arises. Say for example, you wish to move into a specialist area of practice but you know that it is not going to happen where you are now. It is perfectly legitimate to undertake some CPD (keep it in proportion though!) so that if that training post comes up and you get an interview you will then be well placed to demonstrate from your CPD portfolio that you have a genuine interest in and commitment to a new area of practice. Again, don't forget the Society's networking opportunities.

Remember too that taking on the role of a Society representative ('rep') in your workplace presents excellent opportunities for personal and professional development. **Contrary to popular belief, these roles do not have an adverse effect on your career** and promotion prospects, quite the reverse. The skills you learn (the Society provides high quality residential induction courses for new reps) and the work you undertake will bring you into new areas with new opportunities. Please look at pages 12, 13 and 31 of this booklet for more information about the roles of the rep.

# Your Workplace

Eagerly looking for your first post on qualification or an old hand at moving around? NHS or other public, or independent sector? Wherever you are planning to work SoR will be of value to you. This section outlines some of the things you may wish to consider and describes how SoR can support you in the workplace.

## First pitfalls

You've had the interview and been offered the job you wanted. Congratulations! Before you go any further look at your contract of employment before you sign. In the flurry of excitement it is easy to make assumptions, especially if you are to be employed on NHS terms and conditions, or by an independent sector employer who broadly mirrors them. **Be careful!** Check the starting salary and any incremental dates, as well as any contractual requirements for shift or out-of-hours work and the rates of pay and/or time off in lieu arrangements. Check the sickness policy and the way in which this is managed, including any penalties or sanctions for sickness absence. Check your entitlement to annual leave and whether this will increase with your years of service. Check your contracted hours and whether these may be flexible, bearing in mind that 'flexibility' for your employer may be seriously disruptive to you.

**If your new post comes with a training package check the terms of this carefully.** It is a great enhancement to your practice and career if your employer puts resources into your attending a course of education or training but this will often come with 'strings'. Not unreasonably your new employer will want a return on their investment and may well include clauses holding you to a minimum length of

service and possibly financial penalties if you break this, so do be fully aware of what you are signing up to.

## In the Workplace

The Society of Radiographers is a trade union and is recognised as such by the NHS and some of the larger independent sector employers. This gives the Society and its members certain rights in organisations where such a 'recognition agreement' is in place. Among these is the right to have workplace representatives ('reps') who advise and support Society members in the workplace, particularly in times of difficulty. This may be the case of an individual member, who may perhaps be subject to bullying or harassment or a disciplinary procedure, or it may be for a larger group of members if for example the employer wishes to make changes to shift and working patterns. There are three types of rep:

**Industrial relations representative ('IR rep')** – these deal generally with employment matters, especially pertaining to terms and conditions of employment and any disciplinary procedures or sanctions.

**Health and safety representative ('HR rep')** – these work with the employer to provide a safe working

environment. Their role does not only apply to environmental or equipment safety, but can also include threats to wellbeing such as bullying and harassment.

**Union learning representative ('learning rep' or 'ULR')** – these work with the employer to maximise and develop learning opportunities for their members.

Not all departments have a full quota of reps. When you start a new post find out who your rep/s is/are. If you are interested may feel you are able to offer them some help with their work. See page 31 for advice regarding becoming a rep yourself.

### If things go wrong

Most members who are directly employed benefit from the Society's professional indemnity insurance (PII). This is a secondary policy which can help you if things go badly wrong in the workplace and you find yourself potentially subject to a process of litigation. You can read more about PII on the Society's website at [rcsorsor.org/being-member/professional-indemnity-insurance/pii-guidance-members](https://www.rcsorsor.org/being-member/professional-indemnity-insurance/pii-guidance-members) but it is important to remember that PII is only a small part of the help that the Society can call on if you have difficulties in the workplace. Our trained reps, our regional officers, our student officer, the SoR industrial relations team, the professional and education department are all well versed and very experienced in dealing with the whole range of workplace problems and we can usually intervene to resolve matters speedily and effectively. **Even if your employer does not have a recognition agreement with us we are able to advise you.**

If you are having problems please speak to your local rep in the first instance. If you don't have a rep please contact the Society directly for advice. If you

are accused of malpractice or any misdemeanour that may have serious consequences i.e. lead to disciplinary action against you contact us immediately for advice. **Do not, in any circumstances, make any statements or sign anything in relation to the matter until you have spoken with us.** Similarly, you must come to us first if we are to help you. If you engage your own solicitor we will be unable to take up your case with them.

### Rights and responsibilities

As an employee you are governed by a range of requirements. In the workplace you are subject to general employment legislation, as well as to profession specific requirements such as ionising radiation regulations or statutory regulation by organisations like the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC), where applicable. It is important that you have a good understanding of these and how they relate to your practice and compliance is clearly essential. **Your employer too has obligations.** They must provide you with a safe working environment, for instance, and employment law covers the number of hours you can work and the breaks you should have while at work and in between shifts. They are obliged to take measures to protect you from harassment or discrimination on a range of grounds, including gender, age, race, disability and sexual orientation. If you feel that your employer is failing you in any regard please discuss in the first instance with your rep.

If things go very badly wrong and you are unable to work because of injury or serious illness and this has serious financial consequences you may be eligible for help from the Society's benevolent fund [rcsorsor.org/being-member/benevolent-fund-0](https://www.rcsorsor.org/being-member/benevolent-fund-0)

# Continuing Professional Development

It is unthinkable today that any professional should not be undertaking continuing professional development (CPD), sometimes known as continuing education or continuing learning.

CPD is the process by which you review your practice on a regular basis, identify any learning needs, schedule and undertake such learning and record your activities and the impact of the learning on your practice. This is most commonly done using a portfolio, the advantage being that you see and revisit what you have done. The Society of Radiographers has developed an online portfolio, CPD Now, to enable you to plan, undertake, document and review your CPD activities. [You can access your portfolio through the Society's website](#) and you can be assured that the information you record there is completely confidential.

CPD Now, however, is more than just a portfolio. It is also used for the accreditation of practice by the College of Radiographers. For instance, if you are an assistant or advanced practitioner seeking accreditation, CPD Now is the vehicle you use to submit your record of learning activities for evaluation by the College's assessors. [This process is fully electronic](#), so there is no need for files of paperwork to be sent backward and forward. The electronic processes also guarantee that your work is only shared with your appointed referees and the College's assessors.

Another feature of CPD Now is that it is designed to enable radiographers to meet the regulatory requirement for CPD set by the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC). You can learn more about the HCPC's CPD Standards from their website at <https://www.hcpc-uk.co.uk/registrants/cpd/>

Although CPD has been mandatory for radiographers registered to practice in the UK for over a decade, misconceptions and myths abound, so here are the key points you need to keep in mind:

- 1.** The Society of Radiographers and the Health and Care Professions Council both favour an outcomes based approach to CPD. This means that you do not measure your CPD in terms of hours spent, or points or credits earned. These concepts are meaningless in our profession.
- 2.** An outcomes based approach means that you assess your CPD by its impact on your practice, your service and the benefits to your patients. The HCPC specifically asks you to evidence this if you are selected for its CPD audit <https://www.hcpc-uk.co.uk/registrants/cpd/audit/>. CPD Now asks you to log this information every time you record a CPD activity in your personal online portfolio.

“The Society of Radiographers has developed an online portfolio, **CPD Now**, to enable you to plan, undertake, document and review your CPD activities.”

This is one of the many ways in which CPD Now is designed to help you meet the HCPC’s requirements with the minimum of fuss and in a time effective way.

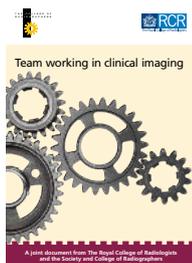
**3.** CPD is a professional, not an educational or academic activity. This may sound strange, but the basis of CPD is that you as a professional take charge of what you identify as the learning you need to maintain, development and improve your practice. **This is a professional activity.** Of course, some of the learning you might need will, at various stages of your career, probably involve taught courses or programmes with or without an academic qualification.

**4.** But, following on from point 3, much of it will not. The bulk of most professionals’ CPD takes place on the job, or is self-directed. Learning to use new technology or new procedures and protocols, discussion with a clinical supervisor about a case you found difficult, undertaking a new task and extending your role all count as excellent CPD.

**5.** Outside the immediate clinical environment **a lot of your CPD may come from self-directed learning**, such as reading an article in a professional journal or undertaking an e-learning programme. Please see below for the large range of resources the Society and College of Radiographers provide to help you with your CPD

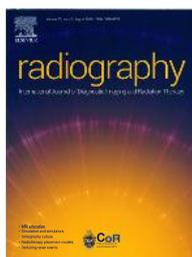


## Library and Publications



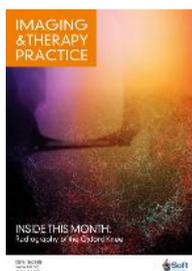
### Policy And Guidance Document Library.

All policy, guidance and advice published by the Society and College of radiographers can be found here, including the Code of Professional Conduct. You can access the library through the member section of the website. This is a fantastic resource to support your studies, whether at undergraduate or post-registration level, or simply as part of your CPD. Many of the documents are fully referenced to help you research your chosen subject further. There is a briefcase facility too, so that you can save relevant material until you are ready to write up your work.



### Radiography.

This is an international, English language peer reviewed journal of clinical imaging and radiation therapy. Most categories of members receive the journal quarterly in hard copy, although it is available electronically through the website. Occasionally extra articles are published in electronic format only.



### Imaging and Therapy Practice.

ITP is published monthly and contains a range of articles about clinical practice, education and research. Again, most members receive hard copy as well as access to the electronic version.



## Synergy News

Another monthly publication, SN is a lively news digest of what is happening in radiography and the wider healthcare arena, including politics and employment. Whether it's the latest pay campaign, changes affecting members in the NHS or independent sector, what's happening in government that may impact on our members, SN has it covered!



## Imaging and Oncology

I&O is an annual title published to be launched at the UK Imaging and Oncology Congress (UKIO), normally held in June or July. It provides a range of expert articles considering current and likely future trends in technology, education, politics and wider society impacting on our members and their work.

## E-Learning for Healthcare (e-LfH)

e-LfH is a huge resource containing thousands of high quality short e-learning programmes designed to address the learning needs of healthcare practitioners. Many of the programmes focused towards radiographers and their associates are authored by, or developed in partnership with, the College of Radiographers. All programmes are free for the majority of UK practitioners, as well as students and educators.

[e-lfh.org.uk/](http://e-lfh.org.uk/)

## Conferences and Events

The Society and College put on a range of conferences and events to support our members with their educational and professional networking needs. Many events are attendance based and we aim to host throughout the UK to give members a chance to access. Local and regional events are put on by our regional committees and national councils and these are designed to meet local members' needs as well as to provide social and networking opportunities.

Increasingly we are providing electronic and video conferencing opportunities and this provision is set to grow in the coming years.

To see what is coming up visit the homepage of our website or [sor.org/events](http://sor.org/events). You can book our events on line.

# Research

This section is designed to give you an overview of what the Society and College are doing to support members' research.

Consider the following statements:

*Evidence based practice in health care means that all clinical decisions should be based on research studies and that these research studies are selected and interpreted according to some specific norms characteristic.*

*Radiographers need to gather accurate information or evidence to support their professional practice so they can understand, get involved in using and determine what is best practice so that the highest quality service can be delivered.*

There are a number of important points raised here. First, research is integral to clinical practice. Research is about what you do with your patients and is not something that sits in some semi-mythical remote towers of academia. Secondly, **radiographers need to engage with research in an informed, intelligent and discriminating way**. This is a professional responsibility and one which all radiographers have.

There is no question that radiography produces world class research and that we are privileged to count a number of internationally recognised researchers among our members. There are also perhaps less well-known but equally important practitioners

undertaking a range of research at various levels. The reality is, though, that measure for measure we lag behind fellow healthcare professional in the amount of research we undertake and integrate into our practice. We have made great strides in recent years but much more can be done. To learn more about the Society and College's research strategy look at [sor.org/learning/document-library/research-strategy-2016-2021](https://www.sor.org/learning/document-library/research-strategy-2016-2021) and [sor.org/learning/document-library/college-radiographers-research-priorities-radiographic-profession](https://www.sor.org/learning/document-library/college-radiographers-research-priorities-radiographic-profession) which considers current research priorities for the profession.

## Support on our website

The 'Researchers' section of the website [sor.org/career-progression/researchers](https://www.sor.org/career-progression/researchers) contains a large number of resources to support your research, irrespective of whether you are a relative novice or have research experience. If you are starting out you might consider critiquing a research article, perhaps chosen from the Society and College's quarterly per review journal Radiography on a subject that interests you. This could be an activity you undertake with a colleague (or group of colleagues) and it will also be an excellent addition to your CPD portfolio. Visit [sor.org/career-progression/researchers/undertaking-research](https://www.sor.org/career-progression/researchers/undertaking-research) for a range of articles and

guidance sheets to help the novice researcher. There is also a researcher's starter pack at [the-society-of-radiographers.org/career-progression/researchers/getting-started](https://www.the-society-of-radiographers.org.uk/career-progression/researchers/getting-started).

As you progress as a researcher it will soon become apparent that **research needs to be resourced**. The Society and College offer a range of awards and grants and are able to direct you to other organisations where funding may be available. Our own awards include those made by the College of Radiographers Industry Partnership Scheme (CoRIPS) [the-society-of-radiographers.org/career-progression/researchers/corips-research-grants](https://www.the-society-of-radiographers.org.uk/career-progression/researchers/corips-research-grants) and the College of Radiographers Doctoral Fellowship Grants [the-society-of-radiographers.org/about-us/awards/college-radiographers-doctoral-fellowship-grant](https://www.the-society-of-radiographers.org.uk/about-us/awards/college-radiographers-doctoral-fellowship-grant).

## **Council for Allied Health Professions Research**

The Society is one of twelve allied health professional bodies forming the Council for Allied Health Professions Research (CAHPR) [the-society-of-radiographers.org/career-progression/researchers/council-allied-health-professions-research-cahpr](https://www.the-society-of-radiographers.org.uk/career-progression/researchers/council-allied-health-professions-research-cahpr). The Council provides excellent opportunities for learning, sharing, networking, collaborations and access to advice and support. It strengthens the professions' research activities and outputs, helping to move research findings into practice and education. CAHPR provides regional hubs to support radiographers and other AHPs locally and you can search for local contacts via the link on the webpage.

We are keen to encourage research from the very earliest stages of members' careers and through CoRIPS offer undergraduate research grants to support undergraduates typically undertaking a short piece of research over a period of 6-8 weeks [the-society-of-radiographers.org/about-us/awards/corips-undergraduate-research-grants-0](https://www.the-society-of-radiographers.org.uk/about-us/awards/corips-undergraduate-research-grants-0)

Of course, research that is unpublished or unavailable to a wide audience is of little value, so a small number of awards are available to enable members to travel to a conference to present their research. These include the College of Radiographers legacy fund and the UKIO (formerly UKRICO) attendance grant.

**New sources of funding can arise at any time** so please keep an eye on the website, magazines and other publications for opportunities.



# Financial Matters

It isn't in the scope of this booklet to give you financial advice, but there are some things you can do to maximise your assets.

No-one pretends that managing finances is easy and the Society continues to press for redress for the loss of real terms pay our members have experienced since the 2007 crash. That said, there are some **steps you can take to ensure at least that you are getting everything you are entitled to**. Additionally, your future years and retirement may seem a long way off but careful planning now may help you in the future.

## Maximising your assets

It isn't in the scope of this booklet to give you financial advice, but there are some things you can do to maximise your assets. First, check that you are getting what you are entitled to. If employed check your payslip carefully each month. Are you being paid correctly for your basic rate, as well as for any overtime, shift or out of hours payments. Payments for these vary locally and may be complex, so keep a note of what you work and make sure your payslip tallies. Keep an eye too on your tax code, if you feel there are any discrepancies your employer can advise which tax office deals with your pay. Use the form you can download from the Society website to claim tax relief for your Society and HCPC subscriptions static. [sor.org/being-member/my-profile/tax-relief](https://www.sor.org/being-member/my-profile/tax-relief); you can claim for several years retrospectively and your Society subscriptions are fully tax deductible, unlike subscriptions to some other associations or trade unions.

Finances and savings are very much a personal matter and it's probably fair to say that one person's decent income is another person's pittance. Similarly, one person's extravagance is another person's austerity. It can be helpful, though, to focus on financial objectives and if you are planning to save look at the range of options, including tax-free savings, that may be available. There are a number of popular websites that can provide information about current savings schemes and best rates.

## Planning for your future

It may seem a long way off, but don't forget about retirement. If you work in the NHS their pensions website provides information about the scheme(s) they operate [nhsbsa.nhs.uk/nhs-pensions](https://nhsbsa.nhs.uk/nhs-pensions). Depending when you joined the NHS scheme arrangements can vary significantly. If you are employed in the independent sector you should check your employer's pension arrangements. In either case it's important that you understand what you are paying in and what you are likely to get out. You may well move between sectors and employers in your career, so again make sure you **understand fully the implications for your pension** as you make each move. For instance, if you move to an NHS post graded at a higher pay band your increased earnings may take you into a higher pension contributions rate, as well as a higher income tax band, so check carefully.



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# Family Matters

Becoming a parent and having a career in healthcare are both incredibly rewarding experiences, but the combination doesn't come without its challenges! The Society is here to help you work through the financial side of things, which can seem complex and daunting.

## Your maternity entitlements

If you are a salaried employee, working full or part-time, you are entitled to **paid and unpaid maternity leave of up to 52 weeks, if you meet the qualifying criteria**. It can be complex but if you work in the NHS you'll need to have 12 months of continuous service by the beginning of the eleventh week before your due date. This is provided you undertake to return to work for at least three months following your maternity leave.

It is important that you speak with your employer to clarify the terms of your maternity leave. If you feel unhappy or uncertain about the arrangements you can discuss with your Society rep, who will be happy to advise or seek further information for you.

## Your paternity entitlements

Paternity leave is available, regardless of how many hours you work, as long as you have worked for 26 weeks by the 15th week before your baby is due. You cannot start paternity leave until your baby is born and you need to advise your employer of your intention to take paternity leave by the end of the 15th week before your baby is due.

To qualify for statutory paternity pay (SPP) you need to earn the average weekly earnings for National Insurance by the end of the 15th week before your baby is due and you need to give your employer 28 days' notice before your baby is born to qualify for SPP.

You may take one week, or two consecutive weeks, of paternity leave.

With regard to **adoption or surrogacy** you may be eligible for statutory adoption leave and pay, as well as any additional benefits your employer provides, so it's important to check with as much notice as possible. Your employment rights, including rights to any pay rises, holiday accrual and return to work are similarly protected as with maternity leave. Arrangements generally mirror those of maternity leave.

You may also wish to consider **shared parental leave**. You may be entitled to shared parental leave and statutory shared parental pay if you and your partner are having a baby or adopting a child. You can share up to 50 weeks of leave and 37 weeks of pay between you. This must be done within the first year of your child being born or placed with your family. This can be a very flexible arrangement but, again, you should discuss with your employer/s as soon as you are able.

## How the Society Can Help

The leave and pay issues can seem bewildering so the Society's reps and officers are available to give you information and to guide you through.

In addition, a major member benefit is the **suspension of your membership payments during maternity, paternity, adoption or shared parental leave**. You are eligible for up to 12 months suspension of payments provided you have been in continuing membership for the 12 months preceding the suspension and that you have resumed paying for membership for a further 12 months before any subsequent suspension. During the suspension period you continue to receive all benefits of membership in line with your normal membership package.

## Next steps

Please contact us as soon as you are able to advise us of your plans and dates. We will require you to complete a written application and written evidence of pregnancy or planned adoption. This will normally be your MAT B1 form or correspondence regarding your adoption.

You should note that these suspensions of payments are effectively subsidised at the time by your fellow members and that they **cannot be applied retrospectively**. Once your leave is completed payment of your membership fees will normally resume by direct debit.



# The Political Fund

The term 'political fund' probably raises a range of issues and questions. This brief summary explains why the fund exists, what it is and perhaps more importantly what it isn't.

Please take time to read this carefully.

## Is the fund to provide donations to the Labour party?

Emphatically not, nor to any other political party. The Society's representatives voted overwhelmingly against any political party affiliation several years ago and that remains unchanged.

## So what then is the political fund?

It is a pot of money that the Society has been obliged to set aside by law. You will understand that an important part of the Society's work is to campaign for better healthcare services, better funding for health and education, a better deal for our members and, most importantly, a better deal for our patients. The law now says that to do that, during certain periods such as the run-up to an election, we can only use money that the members have contributed for that specific purpose. Without the fund we would be unable to campaign, or if we did so we would be breaking the law, with potentially serious consequences.

## Is it compulsory?

No, you can opt in or out any time you wish. We appreciate that times are hard for many of our

members, but if you could manage to contribute we'd be very grateful.

## How do members contribute and how much?

We ask everyone to contribute 60p every four months, £2.40 a year in total.

## How is the money collected?

Most members pay their monthly subscription by direct debit. Using the same direct debit we collect an extra 60p four times a year.

## What if I chose not to join or to leave the political fund?

You can withdraw from the fund at any time. You should understand that any decisions you make at any time regarding joining or withdrawing from the fund will not prejudice your standing with, or receipt of services from, the Society of Radiographers.

## How Can I Find Out More?

Visit the Society website at [sor.org/sor-political-fund](https://sor.org/sor-political-fund)

# Wellbeing, Health and Safety

Health and Safety is frequently caricatured as the domain of rather dull busybodies walking around with clipboards, but this is far from the truth.

Imaging and radiotherapy departments are potentially dangerous places and safety is paramount. The Society considers that health and safety goes well beyond risks of workplace accidents and wellbeing is also considered in this section.

## Health and Safety

As with so many workplace issues, health and safety covers responsibilities that are incumbent on both employer and employee. **Health and Safety is supported by a range of laws and codes of practice** and you can learn more about these at [sor.org/trade-union-support/health-safety](https://www.the-society.org.uk/sor.org/trade-union-support/health-safety), where you can also find contact details for the health and safety officer and your nearest health and safety rep.

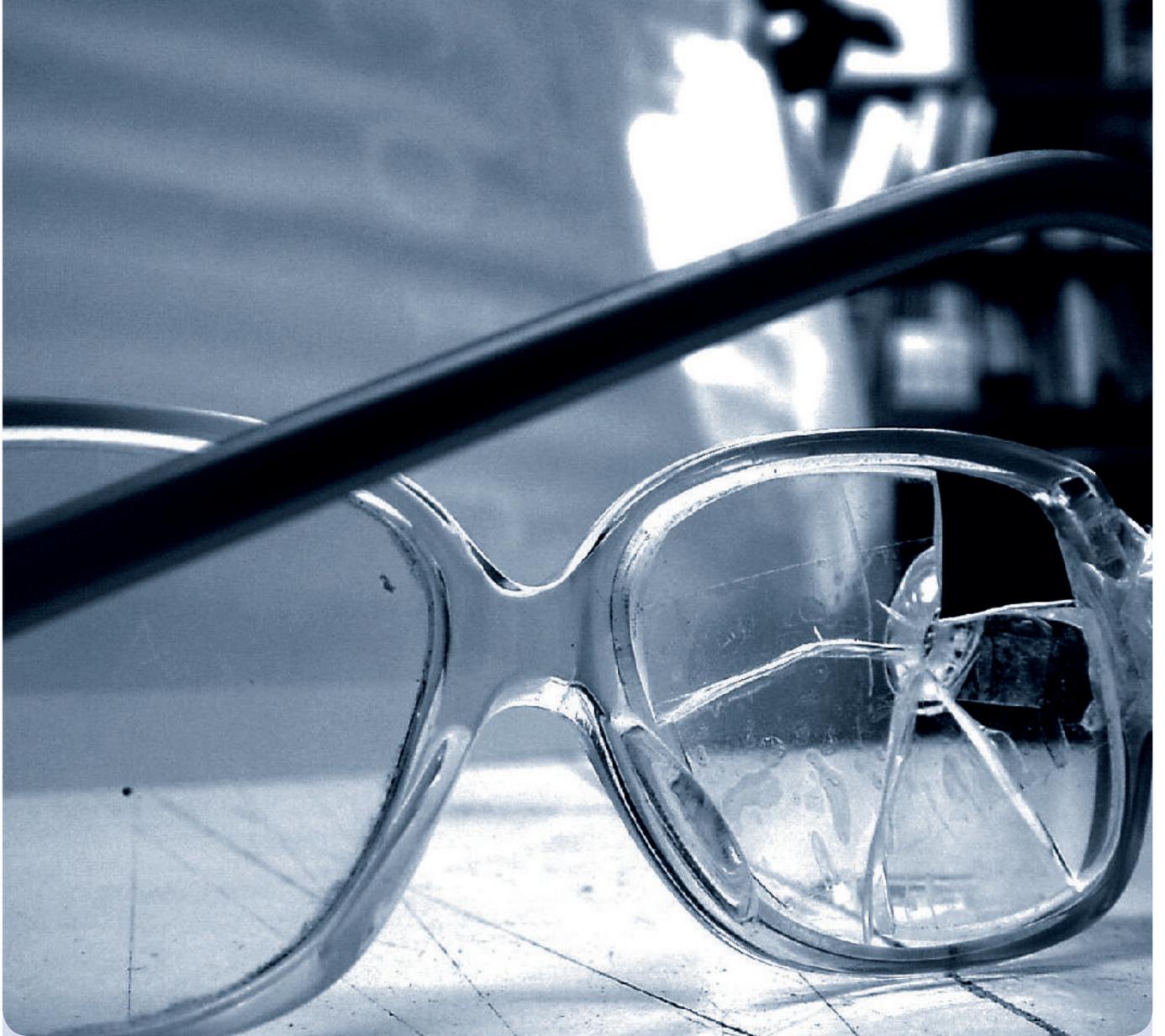
It is important that you should understand your obligations to maintain a safe working environment and to act to reduce any risks or dangers you see. This starts from the first day of clinical training; a student who washes their hands and leaves a soapy trail on the floor for a colleague or patient to slip on could well be deemed liable. The radiographer who injures themselves by failing to use correct lifting procedures runs the risk that the employer will consider it is the radiographer's fault. Of course, potential risks should be reported appropriately and the necessary actions taken. Again, failure to deal appropriately with any serious risk could result in either side - employer or employee - being held to account.

The Society supports a network of health and safety representatives. These are trained and updates are provided regularly by the Society's full-time health and safety officer. The health and safety representative ('H&S rep') works with the employer (usually the departmental manager but other parties may be involved) to reduce risks to staff, patients and visitors. As with all rep roles, health and safety work brings great opportunities for personal and professional development.

## Wellbeing

A safe working environment isn't just about reducing the risk of physical injury or damage to physical health. Bullying and harassment, for example, can have a **catastrophic effect on a worker's wellbeing**, leading to lack of confidence, potential physical ill-health as well as affecting mental health [sor.org/trade-union-support/health-safety/bullying](https://www.the-society.org.uk/sor.org/trade-union-support/health-safety/bullying). Please look at this section of the website if you feel you are being bullied. Bullying - which is not the same thing as constructive criticism or being reprimanded for poor performance - is taken very seriously by the Society and advice and support are available.

Remember too that bullying can take place at a distance - for instance by malicious gossip or rumour spreading, or by social media. Your employer is legally bound to deal with bullying and should take steps to protect you, so if you are being bullied please don't simply put up with it.



**Mental health is a growing concern** and is becoming more widely recognised and discussed, although there is much work to be done. Please visit [sor.org/trade-union-support/health-safety/time-change](https://www.sor.org/trade-union-support/health-safety/time-change) for more information about the Society's work

in this area and how we can help. If you feel you are being treated unfairly because of illness or disability please speak to your local rep in the first instance, or if you don't have a rep contact the Society's trade union and industrial relations (TUIR) department.

# International work

UK radiography and radiographers are well regarded internationally and the Society engages in a number of international collaborations and initiatives.

The Society is a member of two major international organisations, the European Federation of Radiography Societies (EFRS) [@efrs.eu/](https://efrs.eu/) and the International Society of Radiographers and Radiological Technologists (ISRRT) [@isrrt.org](https://isrrt.org/). These bodies have different, but complementary, roles and support much international work in developing professional standards, research and education.

The World Radiography Educational Trust Foundation (WRETF) [@wretf.org/index.html](https://wretf.org/index.html) provides educational materials to departments in developing countries and

the Society is proud to be associated with this UK based charity.

The College of Radiographers offers fellowships in partnership with RAD-AID International, a US based charity which promotes improved access to high quality imaging and radiotherapy services in the developing world. Fellows typically spend two to four weeks abroad and the intention is that they will teach local radiographers and support service development. To learn more please visit [@rad-aid.org/programs/rad-aid-scor-radiographer-fellowship](https://rad-aid.org/programs/rad-aid-scor-radiographer-fellowship)



# The Society and College and You



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# Getting Involved

The Society is a broad and many-faceted organisation and the degree to which you get involved is entirely up to you.

You may simply wish to enjoy the benefit of professional indemnity insurance, access the monthly and quarterly publications and use some of the on line CPD resources. Many thousands of loyal members do just this. However, depending on your personal life and career stage, you may feel you wish to do more. It's probably fair to say that the more you put in, the more you will get out!

## Opportunities

The Society offers many opportunities for direct engagement. You may wish to come along to an event or study day, where you will certainly meet members from a range of locations and from all levels of the profession. If you are interested in employment and related matters you may wish to become a Society representative or 'rep' and this opens the door to massive opportunities (see page 31). Each English region and the three home countries has its own regional committee or national

council, **providing a crucial link** between local members and UK Council and they are always welcoming of interest and offers of help. They are also the mechanism by which you might attend the Annual Delegates Conference (page 32).

## Publication

And please don't forget publication. Whether you simply wish to write a letter to one of our monthly magazines, or perhaps you and colleagues are doing something you would like to share with the profession, we welcome material from new writers and can offer help and advice.

You may wish to publish for peer review, or submit a paper or poster to one of our conferences.

Whatever you do, know that the Society is here for you and to support your development through whatever career path you take.

"Whatever you do, know that the Society is here for you and to support your development"

# Being a rep

Help us to help our members and your colleagues

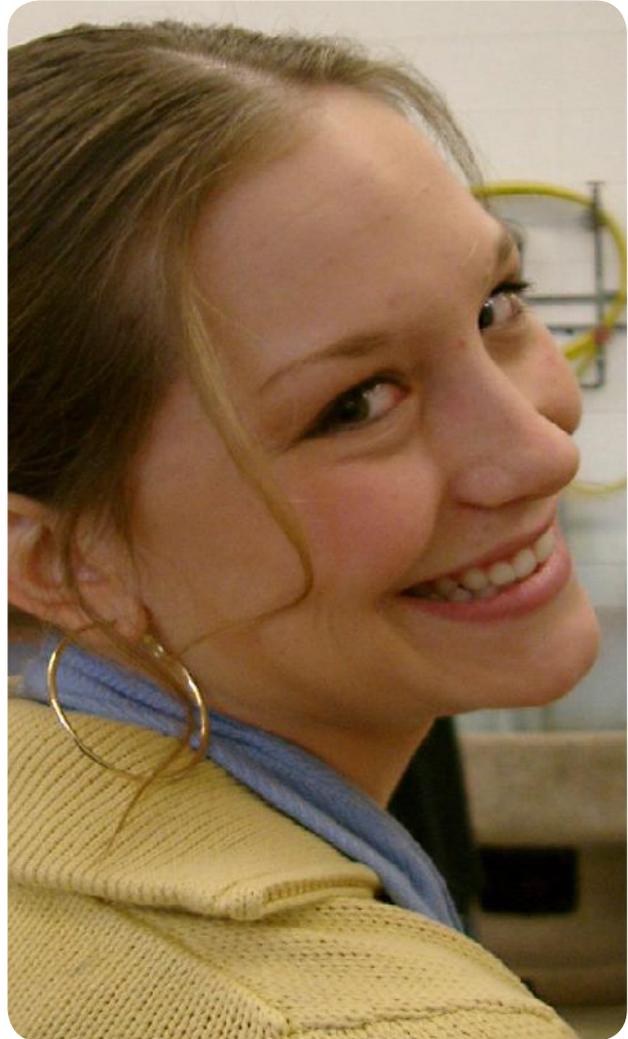
Society representatives ('reps') have already been referred to on pages 11, 12 and 13 of this booklet where the roles are described and some of the potential benefits outlined. The Society has over 1,000 reps and all are trained and supported to carry out their work.

Being a rep isn't just about dealing with problems. Reps make a massive contribution to the wellbeing of their members and are valued and respected members of their teams and departments.

Being a rep isn't detrimental to your job and career prospects. Many senior members of the Society and of the profession attribute at least some of their success to the range of new skills and attributes they were able to develop as reps.

Being a rep can be fascinating, exhilarating, nerve-racking, frustrating, satisfying and above all fun. Give it a go!

[sor.org/trade-union-support/reps](https://www.sor.org/trade-union-support/reps)



# Annual Delegates Conference

The Annual Delegates Conference (ADC) brings together over 200 members

The Annual Delegates Conference (ADC) brings together over 200 members, including regional representatives, regional and national officers and UK Council members. Its purpose is to debate current issues impacting on the Society and its members with a view to shaping the Society's policies. This is done by proposing motions which are debated and voted on. You can learn more about the range of subjects debated in previous years and the changes they have brought to the Society's work at [rcr.org.uk/trade-union-support/annual-delegates-conference](https://www.rcr.org.uk/trade-union-support/annual-delegates-conference).

ADC is a fantastic networking opportunity has a good social side as it runs over three days and is residential.

Even if you do not wish to attend you can still put your views forward by contacting your regional committee or national council and asking them whether they would consider the issue you wish to raise for a motion at ADC.

ADC is the Society and democracy in action.



# Awards and fellowships

The Society and College make numerous awards and grants.

The Society and College's awards and grants are designed to encourage, promote and recognise achievement in numerous fields. Some, such as Radiographer of the Year, Rep of the Year, Team of the Year and Student of the Year celebrate the work of members nominated by their peers and colleagues and supported by their elected regional committee or national council. Others, such as grants awarded by the Reps' Learning Fund, the Overseas Placement Fund (see page 28), prestigious awards such as the

Gold and Silver medals and Fellowship are decided by an impartial committee.

For a complete list of awards and grants please visit [sor.org/about-us/awards](http://sor.org/about-us/awards)

You can read more about awards and grants for research on pages 18-19 of this booklet.





[southmeadhospitalcharity.org.uk](http://southmeadhospitalcharity.org.uk)

# Retirement

## Retirement doesn't have to mean cutting ties with your profession

When you reach retirement you can continue your membership at a vastly reduced cost. If your membership has included professional indemnity insurance (PII) we advise that you **maintain membership for at least three years after retirement**, as our underwriters will not accept any claims arising from your working life if you are no longer in membership.

### Stay in touch

Retired membership enables you to stay in touch with the profession. You may wish to consider involvement with the Society by working with your regional committee or national council. The Society's

retired Members Steering Group meets three or four times a year and exists to advise the Society on policy regarding retired members and retirement issues, including pensions and membership fees. It organises an **annual get together for retired members**, usually based around a daytime social event at the annual UKIO congress [www.sor.org/being-member/retired-members](http://www.sor.org/being-member/retired-members)

Fancy some overseas travel to support fellow radiographers in developing countries? Retired members are welcome to share their experience and knowledge through the College of Radiographers RAD-AID International fellowships, please see page 28 of this booklet for more information.



## **The Society and College of Radiographers**

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