



2021 ANNUAL CHAIR'S REPORT **THE SOCIETY OF RADIOGRAPHERS (SoR)**

1. Introduction

The ultrasound advisory group (UAG) is composed of a wide range of ultrasound members providing expert advice covering a variety of areas of ultrasound practice, both NHS and private or independent practice. The group meet twice per year and undertake work between meetings, mostly via e-mail. As the Covid-19 pandemic continued this brought new challenges for sonographers, particularly in obstetrics ultrasound services.

In February 2021 the public voluntary register of sonographers (PVRS) closed and registrants were able to transition to the Professional Standards Authority (PSA) accredited Register of Clinical Technologists (RCT). Some UAG members were involved in the PVRS and will continue to support the transition to the RCT.

Ultrasound Advisory Group Objectives:

The remit of the UAG is to provide the Society of Radiographers with advice regarding the various ultrasound applications and the strategic direction for the profession. The UAG will offer appropriate support to deliver service improvements within the intra and inter-professional environment of ultrasound practice.

- To promote SCoR's policies, strategies and publications within the context of ultrasound to the benefit of patients, practitioners and services.
- To promote membership of the SCoR by ultrasound practitioners enabling practitioners and services to benefit from the SCoR's established leadership in medical imaging, radiation therapy and oncology.
- To provide information to support SCoR policy and strategy development.
- To develop and maintain strong links with relevant ultrasound societies or bodies with legitimate interests in the practice of ultrasound.
- To respond and comment on documents as requested by the organisation and its officers.
- To debate policy and evaluate its impact on the profession making representation as necessary.

2. Update on actions and objectives

Summary of 2020 objectives	How the objectives were achieved	Status
I: Promote the role of sonographers		
Review the format of #MUAM, provide or source material from members	Material was sourced from UAG members, SoR membership and the wider community, enabling a number of articles to be published for the month of October for medical ultrasound awareness month (#MUAM) on the SoR website. Some articles were also published in Synergy News (SN). The resources are available on the ‘Ultrasound’ page of the website.	Complete
Engage with writing news updates for Synergy News and/or SCoR social media (SoMe) platforms	SN article post UAG meeting in June	Ongoing
II: Support professional and educational standards		
Engage with consultations e.g. NICE, RCOG, RCR, FASP, NSC	UAG members have provided feedback on a wide range of consultations (see table)	Complete
Input into a major review of SoR and BMUS guidelines [<i>due Sept 2021</i>]	Member involvement in providing expert advice on new draft of guidelines.	Ongoing
Suggest and input into on-line webinars for members' CPD	Successful webinar on well-being for sonographers by Dr. Judith Johnson	Complete
III: Engage with stakeholders and patient groups		
Participate in meetings or review documentation related to patient advocacy groups and safer patient care	Members of UAG have represented the SoR on working parties looking into transducer decontamination (NHS Supply chain) and ultrasound gel (Public Health England). Input into NHSE/I documentation relating to support people in pregnancy.	On-going
Represent the SCoR vision and values when engaging with stakeholders and patient groups	Members have represented SoR values in meetings with stakeholders and in the work with the RCT.	On-going

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IV: Ensure a safe place to work for members		
Assist the Professional Officer (Ultrasound) in providing advice to members and UK council	Members involved in providing expert advice to the Professional Officer on a range of topics that were relevant to patients and other stakeholders.	Ongoing
Input into PVRS discussions as relevant and proactively engage in supporting the transition to a PSA accredited register (if approved) <i>[early 2021]</i>	A small number of UAG members have been involved in supporting the transition to the RCT register, and will continue to provide specialist input.	On-going
V: Influence future delivery of ultrasound		
Continue to input into the HEE sonography workforce developments work streams	This has stalled due to the pandemic and re-start programme of work. The work will continue in 2021-22.	Ongoing
Provide advice to UK council on future documents in development	Advice provided on the NHS obstetric ultrasound scan document, which was withdrawn, pending review.	Complete
Review pandemic learning and provide advice on restarting services and changing practice.	Input into the restart documentation and discussions.	Complete

Additional outcomes achieved in 2020-2021:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Changes to group membership: A large number of group members (8) reached the end of their tenure in 2021, and there were high interest levels in joining the group. Offers have been made for 4 new members for a 3 year tenure, and 4 on a 4 year tenure. Representation from England, Wales & N. Ireland is included in the new group. There is currently no Scottish representative, but a previous group member (previous Vice chair), or other suitable alternative has agreed to be co-opted in if representation is required in any of the work plans. An extension to the tenure of the group Chair was considered and has been accepted.

Summary

It has been a challenging year for the UAG, who have been dealing with the Covid-19 pandemic and the backlog of examinations. Online meetings have been successful, although the long duration between meetings, and the personal and professional pressures resulting from the pandemic has meant that there has been varied levels of engagement from all group members. A reciprocal arrangement with the British Medical Ultrasound Society (BMUS) to attend meetings helps to maintain strong links and ensure collaboration, where appropriate.

An informal interim meeting to introduce new group members has been arranged for **6th October 2021**. The Head of Professional Practice and Education will attend the meeting to give an overview of the role of the advisory group and explain the remit & the expectations. This should inform the work plan, and help to identify group members to lead on various work streams going forward.

The UAG have agreed objectives for the coming year, to build on these achievements and help push forward the national agenda for safe sonographer development and practice. The chair of the UAG also attends the Diagnostic Imaging Advisory Group (DIAG) to maintain links between both groups.

The number of consultations increased after a hiatus in the early stages of the pandemic, and a summary of consultations is provided in the appendix. Almost half of these consultations were related to obstetric ultrasound (8/17), which reflects the issues experienced in obstetric practice by sonographers during the year.

Appendix:

UAG input into Consultations

Date closed	Consultation
September 2020	NHSE&I guidance on partners returning to ultrasound v.1.0
6.11.2020	Optimising the contribution of the Allied Health Professions support workforce
November 2020	Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy - The Recognition of Professional Qualifications and Regulation of Professions HCPC standards of Proficiency for radiographers
November 2020	CQC Choosing a baby scanning service
18.12.2020	NICE Venous thromboembolic diseases (QS update)
18.02.21	Professional Standards Authority. Consultation on the future shape of the Accredited Registers programme
26.2.21	UK Government Home use of both pills for early medical abortion
4.03.21	FASP consultation on the new handbook
16.3.21	NICE Antenatal Care
30.3.21	SoR Survey – partners and pregnancy
9.4.21	QSI standards
12.4.21	SoR Poster for obstetric departments (Covid-19)
19.4.21	FASP standards
13.5.21	NHSE/I Solutions to the covid-19 cancer backlog
31.5.21	NHS Supply chain – AHP uniforms
1.6.21	UK Government Regulating HCPs, protecting the public
8.6.21	Workforce Toolkit to support the implementation of Diagnostic Imaging Networks in England