



Census of the Radiotherapy Radiographic Workforce in the UK 2013

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Summary

This report provides a summary of the radiotherapy radiographic workforce in the UK in the National Health Service (NHS) and private/independent healthcare sector.

Background

This report has been produced by the Society and College of Radiographers (SCoR) It is intended to update the UK national radiotherapy workforce surveys from 2010¹, 2011² and 2012³.

This report provides a summary of the radiotherapy radiographic workforce in the UK in the National Health Service (NHS) and private/independent healthcare sector. It is deemed to be of interest to the NHS England Radiotherapy Clinical Reference Group and similar groups in the other UK countries, the Radiotherapy Board, NHS Centre for Workforce Intelligence, Health Education England, Local Education and Training Boards, Migration Advisory Committee and commissioners and providers of radiotherapy.

Data Collection

Data collection was performed during the period November 2013 to January 2014. SCoR contacted radiotherapy centres asking them to complete the survey to reflect the position in their department as of 1st November 2013 (the census date). Data was collected by means of a Survey Monkey online questionnaire distributed radiotherapy service managers.

59 of the 60 NHS centres providing radiotherapy services in the UK submitted data to the SCoR census. Where a centre has failed to provide data, their data submitted in 2012 is used.

A breakdown of the figures in this report by NHS health board and trust can be found in the [accompanying spreadsheet](#).

Constraints

This census asked for the total numbers of therapeutic radiographers, assistant practitioners and trainee assistant practitioners (together referred to as the 'radiotherapy radiographic workforce' in this report) within the budgetary control of the radiotherapy service manager. Radiotherapy helpers and administration staff are not included in the figures.

This report assumes that numbers reported in AfC band 5 and above refer to therapeutic radiographers, and numbers reported in AfC band 4 and below refer to the associated assistant practitioners (APs) and trainee assistant practitioners (TAPs).

This survey is not directly comparable to the UK national radiotherapy workforce survey in 2010 as, unlike later surveys, the 2010 survey included radiotherapy helpers and administration staff.

This report excludes the physics and engineering radiotherapy workforce and clinical oncologists. Enquiries about the physics and engineering workforce in radiotherapy should be directed to the Institute of Physics and Engineering in Medicine. Enquiries about the clinical oncology workforce should be directed to the Royal College of Radiologists.

As a check of the accuracy of this census, the SCoR data for Agenda for Change (AfC) band 5 and above in the NHS in England (i.e. qualified therapeutic radiographers) is compared with the equivalent NHS Information Centre data. There is a 5% discrepancy between the census figure (2280.3 WTE as of Nov 2013) and the NHS IC figure (2382 WTE as of Oct 2013)⁴. The cause of this discrepancy is unknown.

Summary

Workforce

The total whole time equivalent (WTE) radiotherapy radiographic workforce in the UK is 3007.

Looking just at the NHS, the total WTE therapeutic radiographer workforce is 2740. And the total WTE of APs/TAPs is 142.

Vacancies

The vacancy rate for the radiotherapy radiographic workforce in the UK is 6.5%.

Within the NHS, the vacancy rate for therapeutic radiographers is 6.0% and the vacancy rate for associated APs/TAPs is 18.6%.

NHS Radiotherapy Radiographic Workforce Data

NHS Workforce by Country

The table below shows the total NHS WTE of 2881.8 with a breakdown for each country. The number of posts, vacancies and vacancy rate are also displayed.

Country	Workforce	WTE	Posts	Vacant WTE	Vacancy Rate
England	Therapeutic radiographers	2280.3	2473	145.8	6.4%
	APs/TAPs	135.4	150	25.9	19.1%
England Total		2415.7	2623	171.6	7.1%
N Ireland	Therapeutic radiographers	87.6	88	5	5.7%
	APs/TAPs	0	0	0	N/A

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N Ireland Total		87.6	88	5	5.7%
Scotland	Therapeutic radiographers	230.2	257	10.1	4.4%
	APs/TAPs	4.3	5	0	0.0%
Scotland Total		234.5	262	10.1	4.3%
Wales	Therapeutic radiographers	142.0	161	4.2	3.0%
	APs/TAPs	2.0	2	0.5	25.0%
Wales Total		144.0	163	4.7	3.3%
UK NHS	Therapeutic radiographers	2740.1	2979	165.1	6.0%
	APs/TAPs	141.7	157	26.4	18.6%
UK NHS Total		2881.8	3136	191.5	6.6%

Note: AP/TAPs = Assistant practitioners / Trainee assistant practitioners

Respondents to the census also reported the number of posts which had been vacant for at least 3 months. The results show a 3 month vacancy rate of 3.0% for the radiotherapy radiographic workforce in the NHS.

NHS Workforce by Agenda for Change (AfC) band

The table below illustrates that 86% of the radiotherapy radiographic workforce are employed in AfC bands 5 to 7.

WorkforWTE by AfC band										Total
ce	3	4	5	6	7	8a	8b	8c	8d	
Radiotherapy radiographic workforce	44.7	97.0	731.8	1002.3	730.8	195.6	64.1	13.5	2.0	2881.8

NHS Reasons for absence

The census also asked about reasons for absence: of the 3136 radiotherapy radiographic workforce NHS posts, 21 post holders are on career break (0.7%), 39 on long term sick leave (1.2%) and 115 on maternity leave (3.7%).

Reason for absence	Posts (headcount)	Percentage of post holders
Career break	21	0.7%
Long term sick leave	38	1.2%
Maternity leave	115	3.7%

Radiotherapy radiographic workforce in non-NHS radiotherapy providers

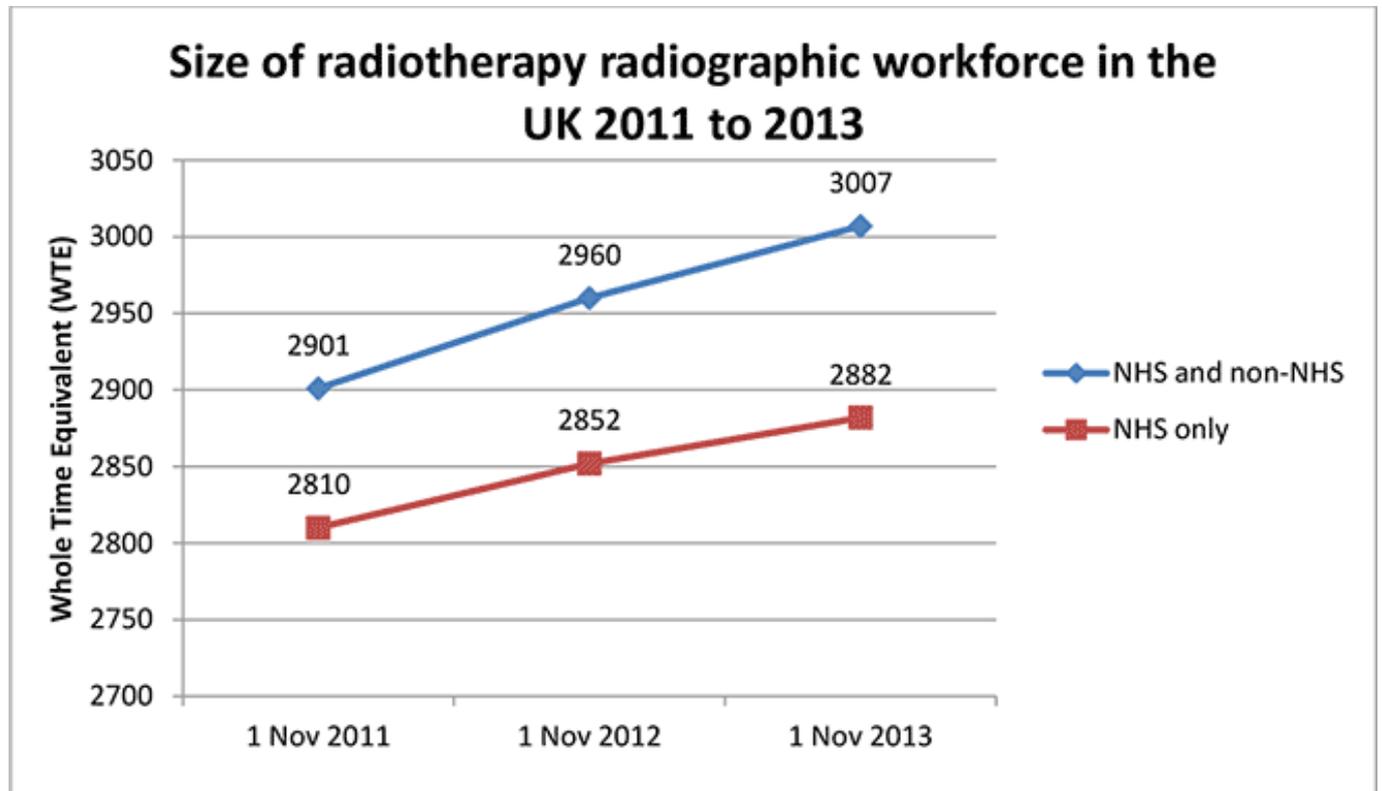
There are currently 6 non-NHS providers of radiotherapy in the UK (one of which operates on 7 sites, and one of which operates on 3 sites). 5 of the 6 centres submitted data to the SCoR census. Where a centre has failed to provide data, their data submitted in 2012 is used.

Workforce	WTE	Posts	Vacant WTE	Vacancy Rate
Non-NHS Total	125.6	133	5	4.0%
Combined NHS & non-NHS Total	3007.4	3269	196.5	6.5%

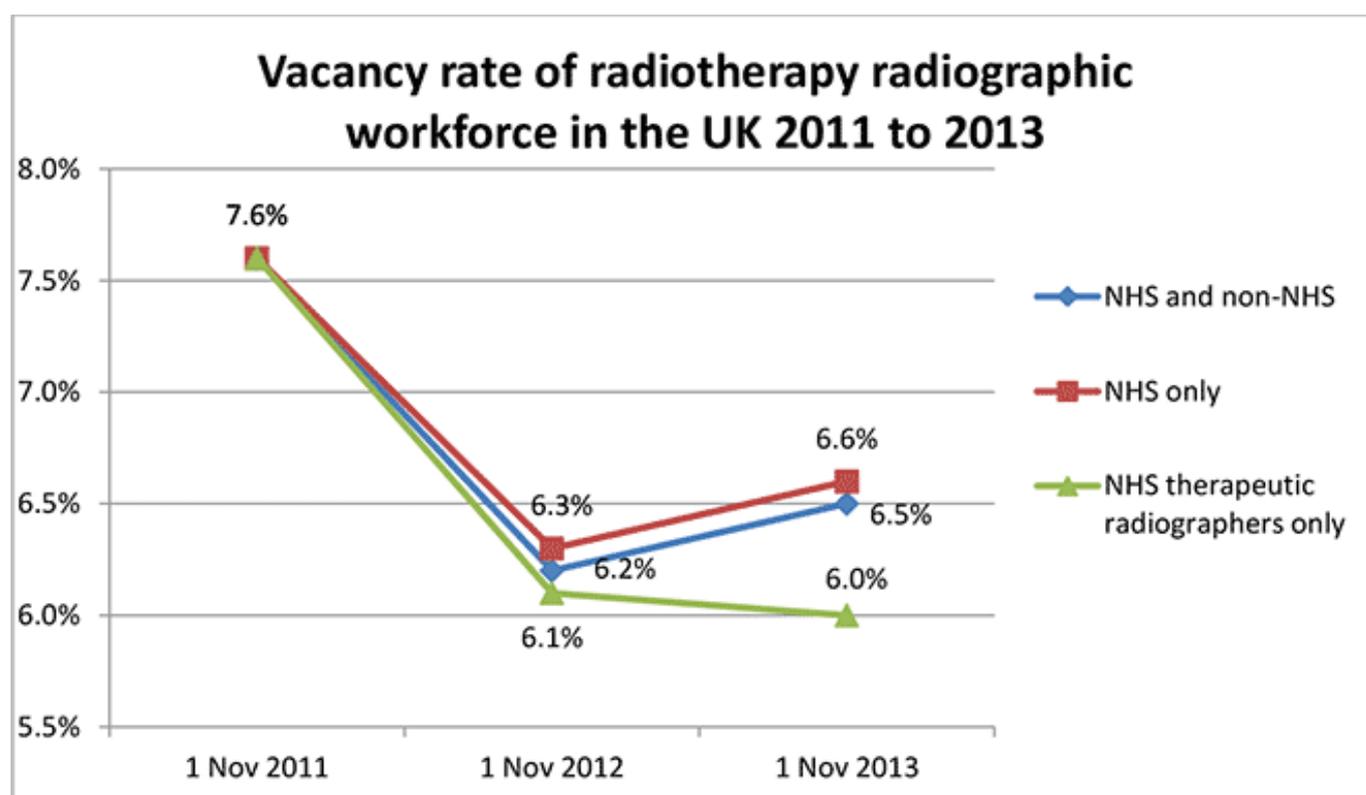
Note the figures for non-NHS providers are not reported by AfC band as providers do not necessarily use an equivalent system.

Trends

The graph below shows that the radiotherapy radiographic workforce in the UK grew by 3.7% between 2011 and 2013.



The graph below shows that the vacancy rate within the radiotherapy radiographic workforce in the UK reduced from 7.6% in 2011 to 6.5% in 2013.



Future expectations

Radiotherapy centres were asked approximately how many additional WTE radiography staff they anticipated may be needed in their service up to and including 2018. 60 centres gave a numerical response to this question, ranging from 0 to 60 additional WTE radiography staff.

Note that the 'Radiotherapy Services in England 2012' report⁵ published by the Department of Health in England states that at least 80 additional therapeutic radiographers will be required for the proton service in England. There will be a ramp up of these numbers between 2015 and 2020/21.

References

1. National Cancer Services Analysis Team (2011) *UK National Radiotherapy Workforce Survey 2010*
2. Society and College of Radiographers, Institute of Physics and Engineering in Medicine (2012) [Report on the Census of the Radiotherapy Workforce in the UK 2011](#)
3. Society and College of Radiographers, Institute of Physics and Engineering in Medicine (2013) [Report on the Census of the Radiotherapy Workforce in the UK 2012](#)
3. The NHS Information Centre (2013) [NHS Workforce Statistics – October 2013, Provisional Statistics: National tables](#)
4. Migration Advisory Committee (2013) [Tier 2 Shortage Occupation List](#)
5. Department of Health in England (2012) [Radiotherapy Services in England 2012](#) section 4.37

Downloads

[PDF version of report including census questions as an appendix](#)

[PDF of census questions only](#)

[Excel spreadsheet of background data](#)

Source URL:

<https://www.sor.org/learning/document-library/census-radiotherapy-radiographic-workforce-uk-2013>