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RADIOGRAPHERS



RADIOGRAPHY

A Strategy for Practice Development in Radiography

THE SOCIETY OF
RADIOGRAPHERS





A Strategy for Practice Development in Radiography

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Executive Summary

The term 'practice development' is used in healthcare to refer to a range of measures designed to support increased effectiveness in the delivery of patient-centred care.

In this document the Society of Radiographers defines practice development within the context of radiography and sets out a strategy to facilitate practice development to the benefit of patients, clinical services and the profession.

This document is for use by a range of stakeholders:

- Service and Education Purchasers, Commissioners and Funders;
- Service Managers;
- Education Providers;
- Clinical Practitioners;
- CPD or Practice Development Facilitators;
- Union Learning Representatives.

The Society of Radiographers' definition of practice development brings together a range of initiatives designed to ensure that clinical services and the radiography profession are properly equipped to respond to the needs of patients in the twenty-first century. These include:

- A strategic approach to service planning, taking account of learning and development needs and the opportunities offered by the career progression framework for radiography;
- The empowerment of individual practitioners to bring a fresh perspective to service delivery;
- The recognition of the core role of clinical departments in the development and delivery of education and training programmes;
- The establishing of a sound, clinical research base for the profession and the promotion of reflective, audit and research skills.

All stakeholders should recognise that the focus of this strategy is in the delivery of clinical services. Implementation of the strategy should see the establishing of:

- A creative approach to service planning realising the potential of the career progression framework for radiography (the 'four-tier' structure)
- Personal development planning and review schemes for all clinical practitioners
- A locally determined clinical supervision framework
- A better understanding and application of the principles of reflective practice by clinical practitioners
- The promotion of audit and research skills, to contribute to a growing evidence base for clinical practice

The document sets out the Society of Radiographers' expectations of stakeholders in achieving these aims. Guidance is provided regarding the establishment of practice development facilitator posts in clinical departments.

1. Introduction

1.1 The term ‘practice development’ is used in healthcare to refer to a range of measures designed to support increased effectiveness in the delivery of patient centred care. This is linked to the enabling of health care teams to develop their knowledge and skills and to improve the culture and context of healthcare delivery.

1.2 In this document the Society and College of Radiographers defines practice development within the context of radiography.

1.3 This document also sets out a strategy to facilitate practice development in radiography to the benefit of patients, clinical services and the profession.

1.4 This document complements *A Strategy for Continuing Professional Development* (SoR 2003a). It should also be considered alongside other recent publications including *Educational and Professional Development: Moving Ahead* (SoR 2003b), *The Scope of Practice 2003* (CoR 2003a) and *Role Development Revisited: the Research Evidence 2003* (CoR 2003b).

1.5 This document is for use by a range of stakeholders:

1.5.1 **Service and Education Purchasers, Commissioners and Funders.** This document, together with *A Strategy for Continuing Professional Development* (SoR 2003a) sets out the measures taken by the Society of Radiographers to support education, training and personal and professional development. The primary purpose of these measures is to ensure the provision of an appropriately trained, educated and motivated workforce to guarantee the highest standards of patient care and service delivery in radiography. *Education and Professional Development: Moving Ahead* (SoR 2003b) and the publications referred to above demonstrate the breadth of practice of radiography and the flexibility of the profession to meet current and evolving service needs – provided that appropriate learning provision is planned and resourced.

1.5.2 **Service Managers.** A fundamental role of service managers is to address organisational learning needs in the context of service requirements. These learning needs may not, of course, always match the aspirations of individual practitioners. The measures suggested in this document support service managers in their assessment of organisational learning needs and assist their establishing a culture of formalised reflection, research and learning in clinical departments. This enhances the value of the clinical department as a life-long learning environment and directs staff to an approach to learning that focuses on the changing requirements of healthcare delivery.

1.5.3 **Education Providers** have a key role in practice development. They are able to assist service managers to identify learning requirements and to develop programmes appropriate to practice development initiatives. They can provide relevant learning opportunities for staff, as well as guidance and support with research.

1.5.4 **Clinical Practitioners** can use this document to gain an understanding of the principles of practice development. They can use this knowledge to consider their own learning needs in the context of the services they currently provide, as well as their potential role in future service developments. Clinical practitioners should note that employers are better placed to support individual CPD aspirations when these coincide with existing or planned service developments.

1.5.5 **CPD or Practice Development Facilitators.** Many CPD facilitators are already charged with arranging education and training provision to support service needs. This document provides clarification about some of these processes and will set them in the broader context of the learning needs of the profession. CPD facilitators may well consider that they are fulfilling the function of a practice development facilitator (or that they have an interest in developing into this role) and should refer to sections 3 *Establishing the Key Elements of Practice Development in Clinical Services* and 5 *The Role of the Practice Development Facilitator* of this document.

1.5.6 **Union Learning Representatives** should find clarification and guidance regarding the complementary natures of, and the differences between, practice development and continuing professional development. This will help them to advise members with regard to learning needs and plans. It will also enable them to contribute to a broader understanding of the role to be played by clinical departments in the educational process.

2. A definition of practice development for radiography

2.1 The Society and College of Radiographers defines 'practice development' as follows:

For radiography, the term 'practice development' refers to a range of initiatives, planned and implemented to ensure that clinical services and the profession are properly equipped to respond to the needs of patients in the 21st century. For service providers this implies a strategic approach to capitalise fully on the benefits and potential of the career progression framework for radiography and the opportunities the clinical environment provides for learning, growth and professional development. Clinical service providers carry the responsibility to facilitate the development and delivery of education and training programmes, as well as to support the establishment of a sound research base for the profession and the acquisition of a range of reflective and learning skills by individual practitioners.

Practice development, service delivery and the career progression framework are inseparably linked. Radiography service configuration requires the development of a suitably trained and educated workforce, incorporating practitioners at all levels. Practice development derives from a careful analysis of current and future learning needs, taking account of the skills and knowledge required for the delivery of high-quality services and the setting out of a strategic plan to deliver these learning requirements. Practice development differs from continuing professional development (CPD), in that it focuses on the development of the profession as a whole, rather than on that of the individual practitioner. Of course, practice development ultimately boils down to the learning requirements of individual practitioners, but these are derived from service requirements, rather than from individual aspirations (although see item 2.2.2 below regarding *Clinical services and the profession as a whole*).

2.2 It may be helpful to consider some elements of this statement in detail.

2.2.1 'A range of initiatives, planned and implemented...a strategic approach'. This emphasises very clearly the importance of high quality leadership and management in delivering the practice development agenda. This document aims to inform service managers and professional leads in developing strategies appropriate to their local service requirements.

2.2.2 '*Clinical services and the profession as a whole...*'. Although practice development focuses on the profession as a whole, the needs and aspirations of the individual have key roles. Practice development should be a process in which individuals are empowered to develop and bring a fresh perspective to service delivery. Practice development should not be a restricting or controlling process.

2.2.3 '*To capitalise fully on the benefits and potential of the career progression framework...*' The career progression framework offers limitless scope for the configuration of effective and high quality clinical imaging, radiotherapy and oncology services. *Education and Professional Development: Moving Ahead* (SoR 2003b) provides more information about the career progression framework and its application in service delivery.

2.2.4 *'The development and delivery of education and training programmes...'* Clinical departments have traditionally played a crucial role here, both in the delivery of established programmes and, more recently, in the development of programmes to support new roles for clinical practitioners. The importance of this cannot be over-emphasised. The Society of Radiographers expects that this essential work of clinical departments should be considered carefully and adequate resources allocated when service development plans are drawn up.

2.2.5 *'A sound research base for the profession...'* Despite impressive progress in recent years much remains to be done to establish the research base the profession requires. Practice development can ensure that clinical teams engage with, and contribute to, the profession's body of research. Clinical service providers are well placed to promote and support the development of enhanced research skills and the use of evidence-based practice in the workplace.

2.2.6 *'A range of reflective and learning skills...'* Again, practice development will require the propagation and growth of a range of skills to equip clinical teams to undertake existing and new roles effectively. These include reflective, audit and research skills, as well as the skills to use channels of communication and information technology to support effective clinical practice.

3. Establishing the key elements of practice development in clinical services

3.1 The implementation of practice development in radiography implies a sizeable agenda at a time of scarce workforce and other resources. The Society of Radiographers believes that a pragmatic approach is to implement the main supporting measures in the first instance and to develop these subsequently as their benefits are recognised and more staff resources become available

Many clinical departments have at least some of these measures in place.

The Society recommends the following initial measures:

3.1.1 The adoption of an imaginative and creative approach to service planning taking account of the potential offered by the career progression framework.

This requires an analysis of existing staff knowledge and skills, together with the identification of those required to achieve the planned service configuration. This should be a continuous process of review and re-design to match evolving service requirements, translating into clearly defined and articulated education and training needs.

3.1.2 The setting up of a personal development planning and review scheme for practitioners at all levels of clinical practice.

The involvement of the individual practitioner is an essential part of the process of practice development. A properly organised and appropriately resourced personal development planning process enables practitioners to discuss their individual learning requirements and aspirations within the context of clinical service developments, as well as providing line managers with an opportunity to evaluate individual learning needs.

3.1.3 The introduction of a clinical supervision framework.

The following statements are taken from the document *Clinical Supervision Framework* (CoR, 2003d). This should be read in conjunction with the document *Clinical Supervision – A Position Statement* (CoR 2003c) to inform the setting up of an appropriate clinical supervision framework.

‘Clinical supervision describes a structured process of professional support and learning... it focuses on the reflective learning process enabling the expansion of the scope of practice through self-assessment and (the) development of enhanced analytical and reflective skills.’

‘Clinical supervision is a powerful tool... to share and to learn from... clinical practice experiences, so allowing enhanced practice development.’

'Clinical supervision... fosters a culture of openness and puts the patient's needs at its centre. It offers a structured way of ensuring that those engaged in radiography are able to meet current and future practice challenges. It is a mechanism to ensure that during prolific expansion of radiographers' roles and responsibilities...combined with... increasing service pressures... practice standards are not compromised.'

3.1.4 The promotion of reflective practice in the clinical environment.

Section 3.1.3 above shows that an effective process of clinical supervision can promote and support the development of a reflective approach to clinical practice. Line managers, CPD and practice development facilitators and union learning representatives can encourage individual practitioners to learn more about reflective practice. In-house learning provision can prove a useful starting point. The web-based SoR CPD tool (available from Spring 2005) provides guidance about the learning and reflective cycles.

3.1.5 The promotion of audit and research skills to be incorporated into clinical practice at all levels, to contribute to a growing evidence base for clinical practice.

The acquisition of audit and research skills must now be recognised as an essential part of professional development and practitioners who feel that their knowledge and skills are lacking in this area should be encouraged to address this.

*'The... vision of continuous quality improvement...rests upon a clear commitment to evidence-based practice and the use of protocols' (Clinical Supervision Framework CoR 2003d). Clearly, audit and research are important pre-requisites of these and practitioners at all levels should engage with these processes. It is important that these processes are not seen as the exclusive domain of advanced and consultant practitioners, although these have clearly defined roles with regard to audit and research. For further guidance see *Education and Professional Development: Moving Ahead* (CoR 2003) and *A Curriculum Framework for Radiography* (CoR 2003e).*

4. Key stakeholders and required actions

4.1 In order to promote a culture of practice development, the Society of Radiographers expects the following of key stakeholders:

4.1.1 **Clinical Practitioners** should refer to this document to gain an understanding of practice development. They should examine carefully their current and future learning needs in the light of service developments and should consider their requirements with regard to developing reflection, audit and research skills as necessary. The acquisition of such skills can legitimately be included in the practitioner's CPD portfolio. The SoR CPD tool provides guidance and support with this.

4.1.2 **Employers and Clinical Service Managers** should consider the implementation of the measures set out in paragraphs 3.1.1-3.1.5 of this document and the resourcing of a practice development facilitator to support this.

4.1.3 **Education Providers**, working with employers and clinical service managers, should develop education opportunities and provision to support practice development.

4.1.4 **The Society and College of Radiographers** provides guidance as the concept of practice development evolves within the profession and will support individuals through its CPD tool.

5. The role of the practice development facilitator

5.1 A number of clinical departments have already established practice development facilitator posts. The Society of Radiographers recommends that at least one of these posts should be established in each clinical department to ensure delivery of the measures listed in section 3.

5.2 The precise configuration of the practice development facilitator role should be determined in accordance with local requirements, using the list in section 3 as a basis. It is expected that local requirements will add to the core scope of the role given in section 3.

5.3 Normally, the Society of Radiographers expects these posts to be established at Band 7 of the NHS pay spine.

6. Practice development and continuing professional development

6.1 Practice development and continuing professional development (CPD) are distinct, but complementary, processes, with some areas of overlap.

6.2 Although in simple terms CPD can be considered to be a matter for the individual and practice development for the profession, practice development in any clinical service impacts on the CPD of individuals.

6.3 Individual practitioners should recognise, therefore, that the employer is more likely to support and resource CPD aspirations where these coincide with service development plans. Nevertheless, individual practitioners own their CPD and have the right to choose to undertake learning that may not directly support service development. All lifelong learning contributes to the wealth of knowledge held by the profession even when it is not immediately apparent or measurable.

References

The College of Radiographers (2003a)
The Scope of Practice 2003

The College of Radiographers (2003b)
Role Development Revisited: the Research Evidence 2003

The College of Radiographers (2003c)
Clinical Supervision – A Position Statement

The College of Radiographers (2003d)
Clinical Supervision Framework

The College of Radiographers (2003e)
A Curriculum Framework for Radiography

The Society of Radiographers (2003a)
A Strategy for Continuing Professional Development

The Society of Radiographers (2003b)
Education and Professional Development: Moving Ahead







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