



The Scope of Practice 2009

Responsible person: Rachel Harris

Published: Sunday, February 1, 2009

Summary

The aim of this statement is to confirm the current scope of practice for radiographers. The statement does not address the scope of practice for the support workforce, including accredited assistant practitioners, for whom other statements have been published recently. This statement defines the roles of radiographers and their particular contributions to person-centred and person-controlled health and social care.

The professional body has responsibility for leadership of the profession. In doing so, it strengthens the contributions of radiographers within existing and emerging health and social care teams, specialising and re-designing roles in line with changing service needs.

1. Purpose

1.1 The aim of this statement is to confirm the current scope of practice for radiographers. The statement does not address the scope of practice for the support workforce, including accredited assistant practitioners, for whom other statements have been published recently. [\(1\)](#)[\(2\)](#)[\(3\)](#)

This statement defines the roles of radiographers and their particular contributions to person-centred and person-controlled health and social care. [\(4\)](#)

1.2 The professional body has responsibility for leadership of the profession. In doing so, it strengthens the contributions of radiographers within existing and emerging health and social care teams, specialising and re-designing roles in line with changing service needs.

1.3 For two decades at least, The Society and College of Radiographers has encouraged, and continues to encourage, radiographers to seize opportunities for developing their roles within an ever more dynamic health care environment. [\(5\)](#) They have done this very successfully, diversifying and expanding their roles to the benefit of the service and service users. The pace of change continues to intensify and radiographers continue to rise to this challenge as evidenced in the research report *Scope of Radiographic Practice 2008*. [\(6\)](#)

2. Environments and roles

2.1 Radiographers are pivotal to delivering fast and reliable diagnoses of disease, and curative and palliative treatment and care for patients with cancer, taking responsibility for managing the complete care pathway.

2.2 Professional and legal frameworks define the way in which radiographers must practice. Of particular importance are the Code of Conduct and Ethics⁽⁷⁾ published by The Society and College of Radiographers and the Health Professions Council's Standards of Conduct, Performance and Ethics.⁽⁸⁾

2.3 The scope of practice for radiographers is defined within the following framework:

- **Occupational Role:** clinician, manager, researcher, educator.
- **Sector:** The National Health Service (NHS) across primary, secondary and tertiary care; General Practice; Independent and private health care services; Higher Education; research establishments and other fields, for example, armed forces, prisons, customs and excise, industry and commerce and veterinary practices.

The profession's education and professional development strategy⁽⁹⁾ introduced advanced and consultant practice roles for radiographers in line with healthcare policy⁽¹⁰⁾. Recent independent research has demonstrated the degree to which these roles have been adopted and suggests that growth of these roles will increase and diversify yet further.⁽⁶⁾

2.4 Diagnostic radiographers take the lead responsibility for the management and care of patients undergoing the spectrum of imaging examinations, together with associated image interpretation. Increasingly, they also lead on integrating these two processes into the patient care pathway as a member of the multidisciplinary team.⁽¹¹⁾⁽¹²⁾

2.5 Therapeutic radiographers take the lead responsibility for the management and care of patients undergoing radiotherapy during the pre-treatment, treatment delivery and immediate post-treatment phases. Working as part of the multidisciplinary cancer team, the role supports patients and their families through the entire cancer journey from health promotion to end of life care.⁽¹¹⁾⁽¹³⁾

2.6 Diagnostic and therapeutic radiographers are engaged in research and development to continue to build the knowledge necessary for evidenced based practice.

2.7 They are also responsible for educating, training and mentoring radiographers and others so that patients receive the highest quality and standard of radiography.

2.8 Managing complex and rapidly changing imaging and radiotherapy services requires the highest level of managerial skills as well as excellent radiographic skills: radiographers are essential to the provision of strong and innovative leadership and management of these services.

2.9 The profession also needs innovators and role models to take the profession forward. These radiographers will be drawn from across the occupational roles, particularly from those in advanced and consultant positions and the profession's leading managers, educators and researchers.

3. Defining individual scope of practice

3.1 Within the roles and sectors described above, a radiographer can develop his or her own scope of practice as he or she determines, provided that he or she is adequately educated and trained and competent to practice.

3.2 In identifying and communicating their individual scope of practice, radiographers must consider the roles and the environments in which they work and ensure that they are educated and competent to operate in their specific roles.

In making decisions about what is included in their individual scope of practice, radiographers must:

- work within the advice and guidance given in the Code of Conduct and Ethics(7) and within current legal and ethical frameworks
- seek authorisation from the employing authority or, if practising independently and self-employed, establish and work within appropriate governance procedures(14)
- put the interests of the patient first(7)(15)(16) at all times, including acting as an advocate(17)
- develop and maintain competence to practice through continuing professional development(18)(19)
- recognise deficiencies in knowledge, skills and competency and take appropriate action(7)
- be personally and professionally accountable for all actions, omissions and behaviour
- avoid inappropriate delegation(20)
- monitor and evidence the quality of practice.

An individual's scope of practice develops over time. This requires the individual to manage this process to ensure that their knowledge and skills are appropriate to the changes. Developments in individuals' scopes of practice need to be reflective of best practice and enhancing patient care.

4. Professional Indemnity

4.1 Membership of The Society of Radiographers provides access to a high level of professional indemnity insurance provided that members work in accordance with this scope of practice and associated policy and guidance. For the avoidance of doubt, professional indemnity does not extend to those services provided by some radiographers which are not within their radiography role. For example, a radiographer may also be a qualified acupuncturist. Where acupuncture is an integral part of the diagnostic or therapeutic radiography role, this falls within the individual's scope of practice (and so is indemnified) but where acupuncture is practised independently of the diagnostic or therapeutic radiography role it is considered to be outside of the individual's scope of radiographic practice. A second example is a radiographer undertaking obstetric ultrasound for social purposes only; such practice is not covered unless there is a clear care framework in place(21). For specific clarification contact the professional department at The Society of Radiographers.

5. Conclusion

5.1 By defining the scope of practice as 'that which the radiographer is educated and competent to perform', The Society and College of Radiographers is making it clear that it sees no boundaries to the practice of a radiographer.

5.2 The Society and College of Radiographers recognises that for radiographers to be able to deliver improvements in services to patients undergoing diagnostic imaging and/or radiotherapy, the scope of practice needs to be relevant and responsive. Radiographers need to undertake all necessary education and training and respond to this challenge, supported by their professional body.

References

1. The College of Radiographers; *The Scope of Practice of Assistant Practitioners in Clinical Imaging* - CoR 2007
2. The College of Radiographers; *The Scope of Practice of Assistant Practitioners in Radiotherapy* - CoR 2007

3. The College of Radiographers; *The Scope of Practice of Assistant Practitioners in Ultrasound* - CoR 2008
4. Department of Health High quality care for all: *NHS Next Stage Review final report (Darzi Review)* - DH 2008
5. The College of Radiographers; *Role Development in Radiography* - CoR 1996
6. University of Hertfordshire; *Scope of Radiographic Practice 2008: a report compiled by the University of Hertfordshire in collaboration with the Institute for Employment Studies for the Society and College of Radiographers* - UH 2008
7. The College of Radiographers; *Code of Conduct and Ethics* - CoR 2008
8. Health Professions Council; *Standards of Conduct, Performance and Ethics* - London: HPC 2008
9. The College of Radiographers; *A Strategy for the Education and Professional Development of Therapeutic Radiographers* - CoR 2000
10. Department of Health; *The NHS Plan: a plan for investment, a plan for reform* - DH 2000
11. The College of Radiographers; *Learning and Development Framework for Clinical Imaging and Oncology* - CoR 2008
12. The College of Radiographers; *Medical Image Interpretation and Clinical Reporting by Non-Radiologists: The Role of the Radiographer* - CoR 2006
13. The College of Radiographers; *Positioning Therapeutic Radiographers within Cancer Services: Delivering Patient-Centred Care* - CoR 2006
14. The College of Radiographers; *Professional Standards for those working as Independent Practitioners* - CoR 2008
15. The College of Radiographers; *Consent to Imaging and Radiotherapy Treatment Examinations* - CoR 2007
16. The College of Radiographers; *The Child and the Law: The Roles & Responsibilities of the Radiographer* - CoR 2005
17. The College of Radiographers; *Patient Advocacy* - CoR 2008
18. The College of Radiographers; *Continuing Professional Development: Professional and Regulatory Requirements* - CoR 2008
19. Health Professions Council; *Continuing professional development and your registration* - London: HPC 2006
20. The College of Radiographers; *Clinical Supervision Framework* - CoR 2003
21. The College of Radiographers; *Statement on ultrasound referrals and professional indemnity* - CoR 2006

Source URL: <https://www.sor.org/learning/document-library/scope-practice-2009>