

Census of the Radiotherapy Radiographic Workforce in the UK, 2015

1. 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 2010,¹ 2011,² 2012,³ 2013⁴ and 2014.⁵ This report provides a summary of the UK radiotherapy radiographic workforce 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,⁶ Local Education and Training Boards, the Migration Advisory Committee⁷ and commissioners and providers of radiotherapy.

2. Data collection

Data collection was performed around December 2015. The SCoR contacted radiotherapy centres asking them to complete the survey to reflect the position in their department as of 1st November 2015 (the census date). Data was collected by means of a SurveyMonkey[®] online questionnaire distributed to radiotherapy service managers.

Full coverage was achieved, with all 68 NHS centres that provide radiotherapy services in the UK submitting data to the SCoR census.

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

3. 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 the Agenda for Change (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 2010¹ 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.

4. Summary

Workforce

The total whole time equivalent (WTE) radiotherapy radiographic workforce in the UK is 3217. The total WTE of APs/TAPs is 121.

Looking just at the NHS, the total WTE therapeutic radiographer workforce (radiographers and APs/TAPs) is 3105 consisting of 2985 WTE therapeutic radiographers and 120 WTE APs/TAPs.

Vacancies

The total vacancy rate for the radiotherapy radiographic workforce in the UK (NHS and non-NHS) is 6.14% (total vacancies 197.27; total workforce 3217).

Within the NHS, the vacancy rate for therapeutic radiographers is 6.43% and the vacancy rate for associated APs/TAPs is 4.39%.

5. NHS radiotherapy radiographic workforce data

NHS workforce by country

The table below shows the total NHS WTE of 3105 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	2461	2683	169	6.87%
	APs/TAPs	110	119	4	3.63%
England Total		2571	2802	173	6.72%
N Ireland	Therapeutic radiographers	100	106	10	10%
	APs/TAPs	0	0	0	n/a
N Ireland Total		100	106	10	10%
Scotland	Therapeutic radiographers	262	287	6	2.29%
	APs/TAPs	5	6	1	2.0 %
Scotland Total		267	293	7	2.62%
Wales	Therapeutic radiographers	162	174	7	2.45%
	APs/TAPs	4	5	0	0%

Wales Total		166	179	7	2.41%
UK NHS	Therapeutic radiographers	2985	3250	192	6.43%
	APs/TAPs	120	130	5	4.39%
UK NHS Total		3105	3380	197	6.34%

Note: AP/TAPs = Assistant practitioners / Trainee assistant practitioners (Band 4 and Band 3).

Respondents to the census also reported the number of posts which had been vacant for at least three months. The results show a three month vacancy rate of 3.7% 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.

Workforce	WTE by AfC band									Total
	3	4	5	6	7	8a	8b	8c	8d	
Radiotherapy radiographic workforce	30	90	795	1096	781	225	69	18	1	3105

NHS reasons for absence

The census also asked about reasons for absence. Of the 3380 radiotherapy radiographic workforce NHS posts, 18 post holders are on career break (0.5%), 47 on long term sick leave (1.4%) and 153 on maternity leave (4.5%).

Reason for absence	Posts (headcount)	Percentage of post holders
Career break	18	0.5%
Long term sick leave	47	1.4%
Maternity leave	153	4.5%

Radiotherapy radiographic workforce in non-NHS radiotherapy providers

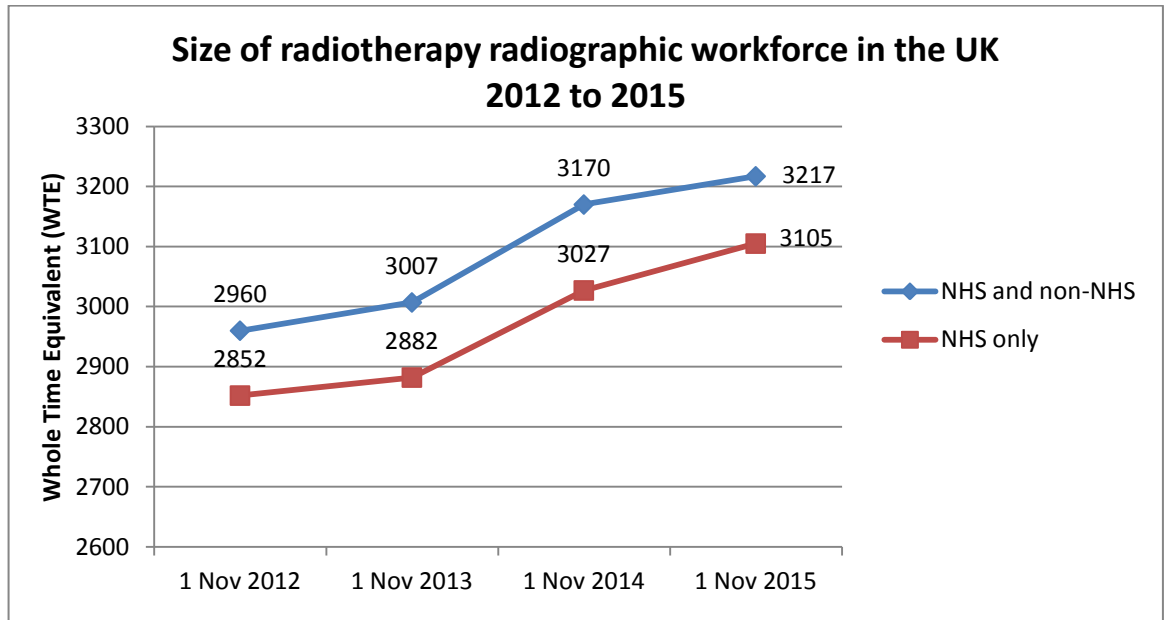
There are currently eight non-NHS providers of radiotherapy in the UK (one of which operated on 8 sites at the time the survey was conducted and in future will operate on 9 sites). All centres submitted data to the SCoR census.

Workforce	WTE	Posts	Vacant WTE	Vacancy Rate
Non-NHS Total	112	118	8	7.1%
Combined NHS & non-NHS Total	3217	3498	205	6.4%

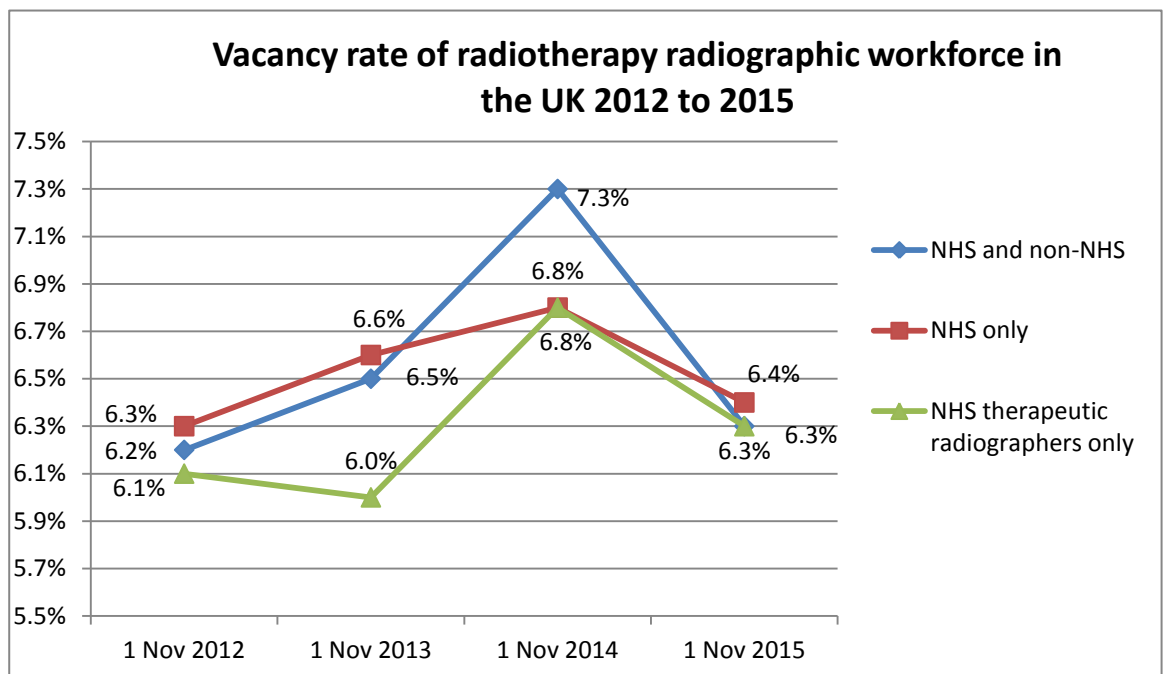
Note the figures for non-NHS providers are not reported by AfC band as providers do not necessarily use an equivalent system.

6. Trends

The graph below shows that the radiotherapy radiographic workforce in the UK grew by 8% between 2012 and 2015.



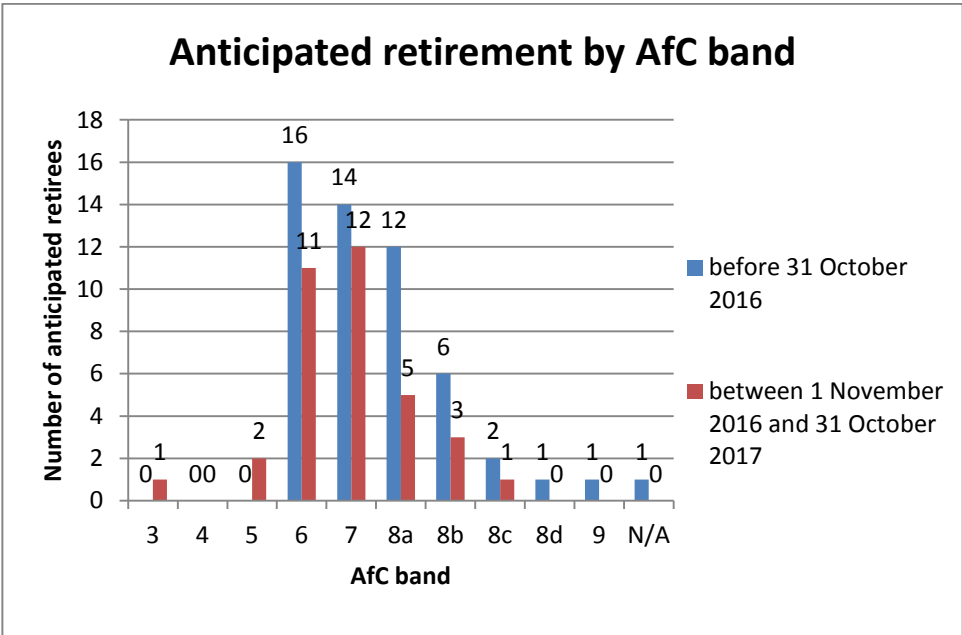
The graph below shows that the vacancy rate within the NHS radiotherapy radiographic workforce in the UK during 2015 has returned to its 2012 level of 6.3%.



7. Future expectations - retirement

Radiotherapy centres were asked approximately how many WTE radiography staff they anticipated would be retiring between 1 November 2015 and 31 October 2016. Radiotherapy centres were also asked approximately how many WTE radiography staff they anticipated would be retiring between 1 November 2016 and 31 October 2017.

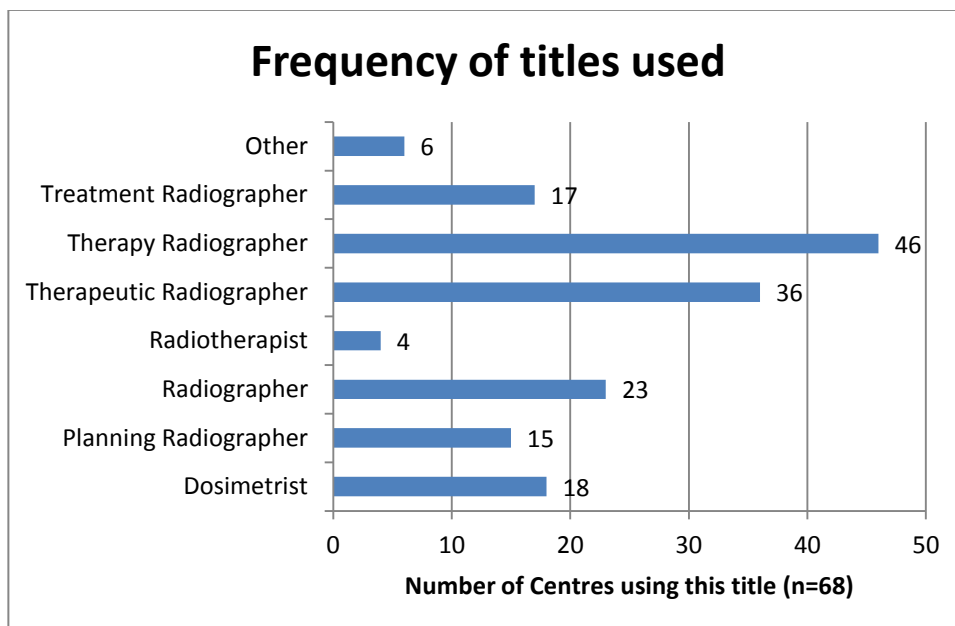
Country	AfC	Post holder to retire before 31 October 2016		Post holder to retire between 1 November 2016 and 31 October 2017	
		Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
UK NHS	3	0	0.0%	1	2.9%
	4	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
	5	0	0.0%	2	5.9%
	6	16	30.8%	10	29.4%
	7	14	26.9%	12	35.3%
	8a	11	21.2%	5	14.7%
	8b	6	11.5%	3	8.8%
	8c	2	3.8%	1	2.9%
	8d	1	1.9%	0	0.0%
	9	1	1.9%	0	0.0%
	N/A	1	1.9%	0	0.0%
	UK NHS Total		52		34
Percentage of post holders		1.5%		1.0%	



Note that the ‘Radiotherapy Services in England 2012’ report⁸ 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. This number will be increased between 2015 and 2020/21.

8. Protected titles

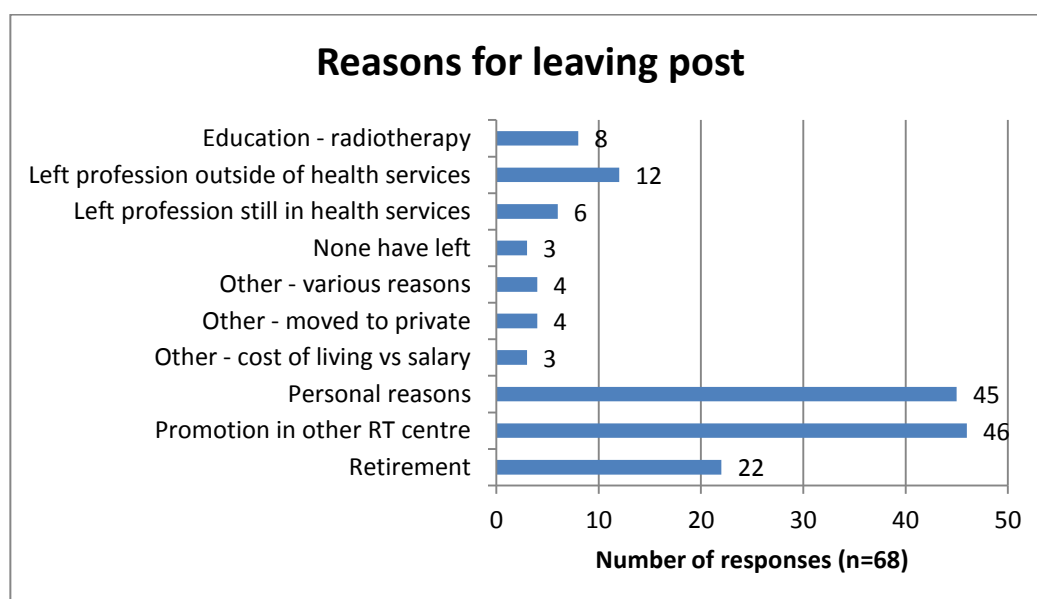
The two protected titles are “Therapeutic Radiographer” and “Radiographer”. The following chart shows which titles are currently in use.



There were other titles used which included: Specialist Practitioner, Pre-treatment Radiographer, Advanced Practitioner, Operations Manager, Clinical Coordinator, Clinical Tutor, Clinical Site Specialist. There were also combined titles, ie the specialty or level + radiographer.

9. Reasons for leaving post

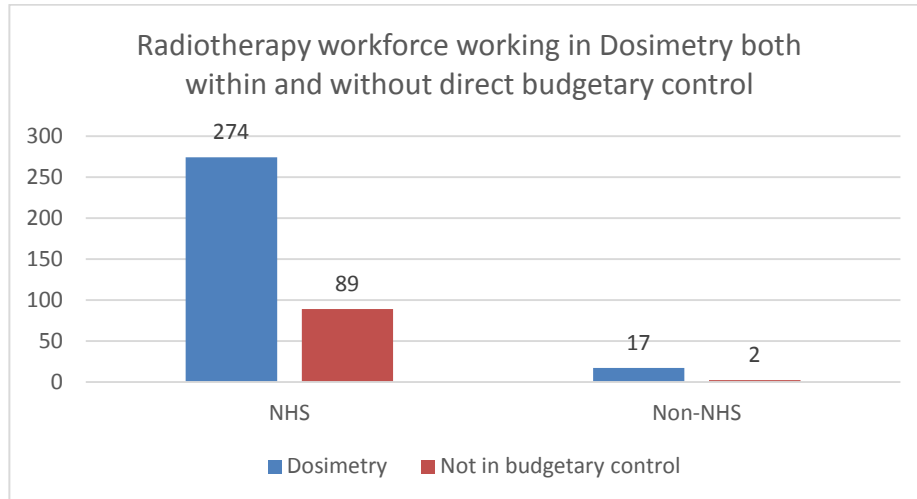
The following chart illustrates the most common reasons for leaving a radiotherapy post. This includes NHS and eight non-NHS centres:



Other reasons not mentioned above included lateral transfers (3); better reward for same role (1); moved closer to home (1).

10. Dosimetry

There are currently 274 members of the radiotherapy workforce working in the NHS and involved in dosimetry compared to 17 non-NHS members. There are others working in dosimetry but not under the direct budgetary control of the radiotherapy centre and these figures are reflected in the chart below:



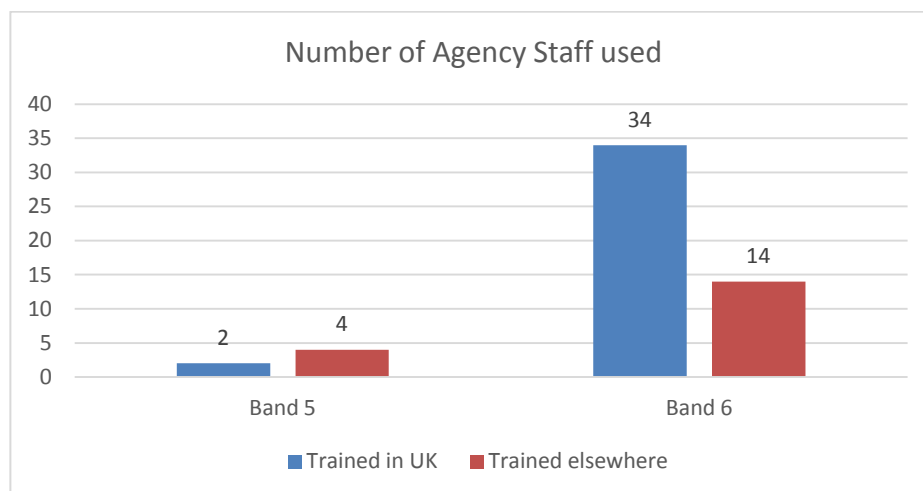
11. Use of Agency Staff

A new question to this survey asked whether agency staff were used and, if so, to what purpose.

Use of Agency Staff	Respondents
Yes	16
No	51

Reasons given for using Agency staff were reported by centres as follows:

Reasons for Use of Agency Staff	Respondents
An increase in Therapeutic Radiographer Establishment	3
Due to existing vacancies in Therapeutic Radiographer Workforce Establishment	12



References

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8. Department of Health (2012). *Radiotherapy Services in England 2012*
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(All links accessed 17/5/2016)