



# North East and North Cumbria Radiotherapy ODN Annual Report 2019/20

South Tees Hospitals   
NHS Foundation Trust

The Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals   
NHS Foundation Trust

  
North Cumbria  
Integrated Care  
NHS Foundation Trust



## Headlines

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### 2. Key Achievements

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## Background

In December 2018, NHS England committed to national funding for radiotherapy Operational Delivery Networks (ODNs) and a service specification was produced setting out the objectives for the ODN.

The Northern Cancer Alliance's Radiotherapy Expert Advisory Group (EAG) was well-established, well-functioning and well-attended by all providers within the North East and North Cumbria and in February 2019 it was agreed that the EAG would transition into the required ODN as the group reflected the membership as stated within the service specification.

## Introduction

The Radiotherapy ODN is comprised of representation from the three radiotherapy centres in the North East and North Cumbria; The Cumberland Infirmary, Carlisle; The James Cook University Hospital, Middlesbrough and the Northern Centre for Cancer Care, Newcastle upon Tyne, with additional membership from NHS England Specialised Commissioning and the Northern Cancer Alliance Senior Team. The governance structure of the

ODN requires operational oversight by the Northern Cancer Alliance and is contractually accountable to NHS England Specialised Commissioning. The ODN and Alliance shares the same geographical footprint.

The purpose of this report is to capture the key achievements of the Radiotherapy ODN during the financial year 2019/20 and set out the priorities and goals for the next financial year.

**This report relates to the time period from 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020.**

## 1. Aim of the ODN

The Service Specification for Operational Delivery Networks for Adult External Beam Radiotherapy Services (170092S) aims to;

- improve access across the Network to modern, advanced and innovative radiotherapy techniques, enabling more Service Users to benefit from cutting-edge technology and treatments
- improve the experience of care by ensuring that Service Users will be managed by an experienced multi-professional tumour specific subspecialist team able to provide holistic care
- increase participation in research and clinical trials by an average of 15% increase over 3 years in England, aiding faster development of new treatments and help drive the development of clinical services
- reduce variation in quality by adopting standardised best practice protocols thereby improving Service User outcomes including reducing mortality and morbidity from adverse side effects; and
- reduce variation in equipment utilisation in England through changing operating arrangements, clinical practice and equipment replacement; an average 15% increase in equipment utilisation for England as a whole is expected over the next 3 year period aligned to the equipment modernisation programme

## 2. Key Achievements

We realised a number of key achievements as an ODN during 19/20;

- We worked with NHS England as an 'early adopter' of radiotherapy networks to upgrade treatment planning systems and test different approaches to information governance for treatment planning, peer review and audit, and understand the technical requirements to inform practice and learning.
- We reached agreement on the network host and chair arrangements and had the proposal approved by NHS England's Regional Medical Director and Assistant Director of Specialised Commissioning
- We drafted and agreed the MoU and ToR for the ODN and the Network Oversight Group.
- We established a group to develop a network protocol template and agreed the template for use across the network
- We reviewed all of services in the network against the Service Specification for External Beam Radiotherapy (Adults) (170091S)
- Our host organisation successfully recruited to the network manager post and the Radiotherapy ODN Project Manager commenced employment in February 2020.
- We identified a research and development lead for the ODN
- We nominated 3 people to be involved in the Quality and Improvement masterclasses
- We developed partnership arrangements between NCCC and North Cumbria with the development of the NCCC – North Cumbria Partnership and had the plans approved by NHS England.

- We piloted the use of ProKnow across the network and we are leading on the development of an information governance framework which will be rolled out nationwide.
- We benchmarked the oncology workforce establishment identifying potential shortfalls with current vacancies and expected retirement within the next 5 years
- We collated data regarding consultant and patients numbers within the rarer disease categories in the region identifying areas for further consideration.
- We reacted promptly to the COVID 19 pandemic with collaborative working across the ODN.
- We continue to have really good attendance at ODN meetings and commitment from managers, clinicians and physicists across the network

### 3. Challenges

Being in an advantageous position of having an established EAG prior to project management appointment, we have made good progress in developing formally as an ODN during the first financial year following the introduction of Radiotherapy ODNs. There were few challenges encountered during 19/20 but these are outlined below;

- The CEO of South Tees NHS FT resigned in September 2019 leaving the ODN without a formal chair although Alison Featherstone, Northern Cancer Alliance Director, has chaired the group during this time.
- The clinical oncology workforce capacity across the network continues to cause some concerns.
- We are yet to appoint a clinical lead for the ODN.
- We struggled to secure the requested budget from NHS England for the ODN resulting in a delay to Project Management appointment.
- We have experienced some delays with work in progress due to the impact of COVID-19 and the additional work that this has created for everyone involved in the delivery of radiotherapy treatment, although there has also been some useful network discussions as part of this which will aid some of the discussions as work progresses, particularly in relation to the development of agreed network protocols.

### 4. Priorities for 2020/21

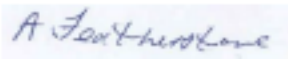


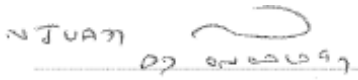
The priorities for 2020/21 and the progress that will be made against the work programme may be impacted by the recovery planning from COVID-19 but the priorities for 20/21 are as follows;

- We will work to ensure substantive and ongoing funding for the Project Manager and Clinical Lead roles within the ODN, which at present are non-recurrently funded until 31 March 2021.
- We will review the network governance arrangements, MoU and ToR and recruit to network posts.
- We will address the clinical requirements set out within the Service Specification for External Beam Radiotherapy (Adults) in relation to the treatment of rare tumour groups.

- We will develop and agree network-wide standard tumour-specific treatment protocols for all sites, commencing with urology protocols.
- We will develop a network data sharing agreement and proposals for IT infrastructure.
- We will complete a workforce gap analysis for radiotherapy to feed into the development of a network workforce sustainability strategy.
- We will develop a strategy to improve access to clinical trials across the network.
- We will establish regular performance review mechanisms, to include the identification and agreement of improvement actions, to ensure the services are effective and efficient.
- We will review brachytherapy services against the existing service specification for brachytherapy to inform future decisions in relation to these services.
- We will continue to work with NHS England as an 'early adopter' of radiotherapy networks and support the ongoing evaluation of network treatment planning systems and information governance.

## Approved by

This document has been approved by the following people:

Name	Signature	Role	Date
Alison Featherstone		Chair of North East and North Cumbria Radiotherapy Network Oversight Group	10.06.2020
Dr Gail Jones		Provider Decision Maker Newcastle upon Tyne NHS FT	06.09.20
Dr Sheila E Pearson		Provider Decision Maker North Cumbria Integrated Care NHS FT	20/08/20
Dr Nick Wadd		Provider Decision Maker South Tees NHS FT	19.08.20

Date: 08 September 2020