

# Northern Radiotherapy Network Research and clinical trials event

*1<sup>st</sup> August 2024*

**Summary report**



	Item	Time
1.	Welcome and introductions	13:00 – 13:10
2.	Where are we currently?	13:10 – 14:00
3.1	Looking to the future I <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What should the priorities for the Network be?</li> </ul>	14:00 - 14:20
<b>BREAK (20 mins)</b>		14:20 – 14:40
3.2	Looking to the future II <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What do we need to do to deliver the vision?</li> </ul>	14:40 – 15:20
3.3	Network Clinical Trials and Research infrastructure	15:20 – 15:50
4.	Conclusions and wrap-up: actions & outputs from the meeting	15:50 – 16:00



## Objectives of the meeting:

1. Continue to develop links across teams
2. Recognise the hard work and successes of RT research teams in the region
3. Look to the future of clinical trials and research in the Northern Radiotherapy Network

## Planned outcomes of the meeting:

1. A clear set of priorities for the Network, prioritised for the next 1 and 3 years
2. Actionable steps for the Network to take forward to develop a strategy, and how we are to deliver this
3. Actions to improve the Networks research infrastructure/governance

## Session 1

### Average ranking of Network priorities



From our pre-event survey, we knew that the ranking of priorities are as above (lower ranking = higher priority)

We asked teams what the Network research priorities should be in the next 12 months. We also asked stakeholders to rank priorities via a survey that was held before the event (left). Some of the feedback included:

- Workforce & training, finance, and increasing recruitment agreed as key priorities
- Acknowledged that priorities are naturally linked – initial investment needed and increases to recruitment will follow
- Valuable to have local, specific radiotherapy research teams to provide critical infrastructure and contacts for RT trials
- How can we attract more money – and what is the role of the Network in this?
- Research teams need to be sustainable
- When staff are seconded to research, it can be challenging to back-fill their post/time. Time for research is important in the retention of existing staff
- Money for and from research should be ringfenced, to allow reinvestment

**Session 2:** In our second session, we asked teams to complete a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities & Threats) analysis to help form and analyse ideas for change. We themed the feedback into the key priorities from Session 1:

### 1. Workforce & training

#### Strengths & Opportunities

- Some MDTs are very engaged
- Trial portfolio – opportunities to increase recruitment.
- Strength with research radiographers (at JCUH).
- Staff are keen to work in research

#### Threats & Weaknesses

- Back-fill of posts is difficult
- Current research teams are small and there are increasing levels of follow-up
- Pressures of service delivery, especially in oncology, make delivering research challenging

### 2. Finance

#### Weaknesses & Threats:

- The RT tariff is complex, making it hard to dedicate money to research – possibly a UK-wide problem?
- Much research funding is short-term, making research delivery challenging
- Large teams required to deliver research, but are all funded? The skill-mix is important

#### Opportunities:

- Can the RT teams access charitable funds?
- Can the Network invest in time to allow application to CRUK or Macmillan grants?
- Should the RT teams raise money locally, via a charity in department(s) or a fundraiser?
- Should the Network focus on practice changing studies and becoming a Centre for Excellence? Reputationally important.
- Can we demonstrate the financial benefits of research via increased hypofractionation? Is Capacity and demand work required?

### 3. Increasing recruitment

#### Opportunities:

- Can ACP's and SpRs be used to recruit patients and deliver research?
- Raise awareness of videos – can volunteers share these in departments, and on screens in department?
- How do we engage with primary care to share videos and raise awareness? How and when to share video?
- Can member of research team pre-screen MDT lists for potential patients? Does a clinician have to do this?
- Network should help with sharing/identifying trials and streamlining processes

#### Barriers:

- Clinician resources, time and capacity
- Capacity of trial teams and resources/funding

Is this where the Network can have the most impact?

## Session 3

Our third session reviewed the current Network research and trials infrastructure. We wanted feedback from stakeholders about how this could be improved.

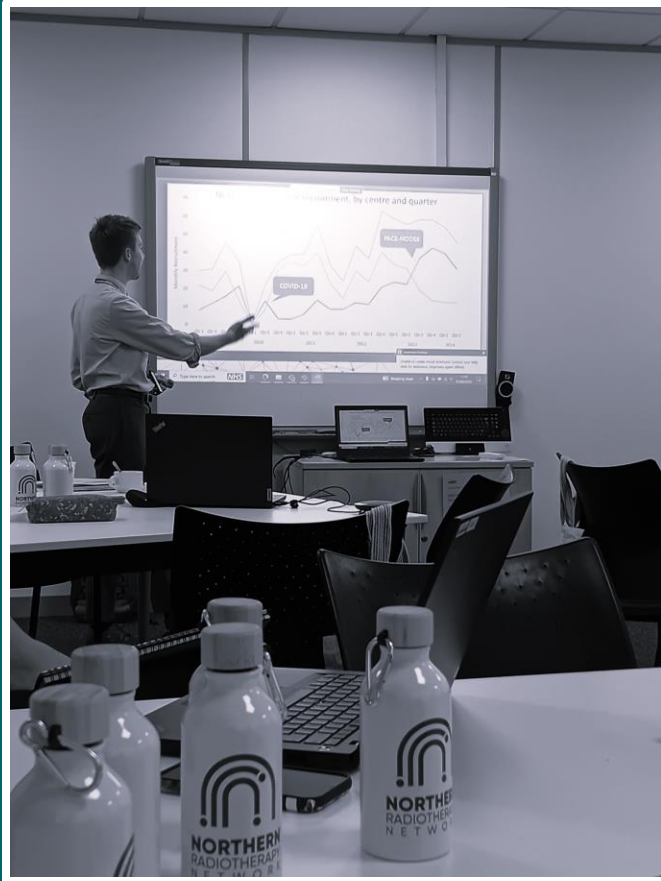
The role of the Network in radiotherapy research and clinical trials should be considered, and focussed where it can make a difference. Differences in set-up and equipment between sites make some direct comparisons redundant. Patients don't travel well, but trials on website could help promote cross-Network trials sharing.

### How should the Network improve infrastructure and communication with staff?

- Could meetings be combined to avoid duplication? Several meetings are now well established
- Smaller meetings with greater focus alongside regular/annual conference/event with a much wider invite
- Network conference/events to raise awareness and exposure of staff to Network
- Development of a template for streamlining and encouraging submissions to Network website
- Network website may be helpful as a shared staff area for protocols and presentations to share learning
- Add the Network as a standing item in certain departmental meetings, and added to local inductions
- Network Annual report and inclusion in CPD/Learning & Sharing events

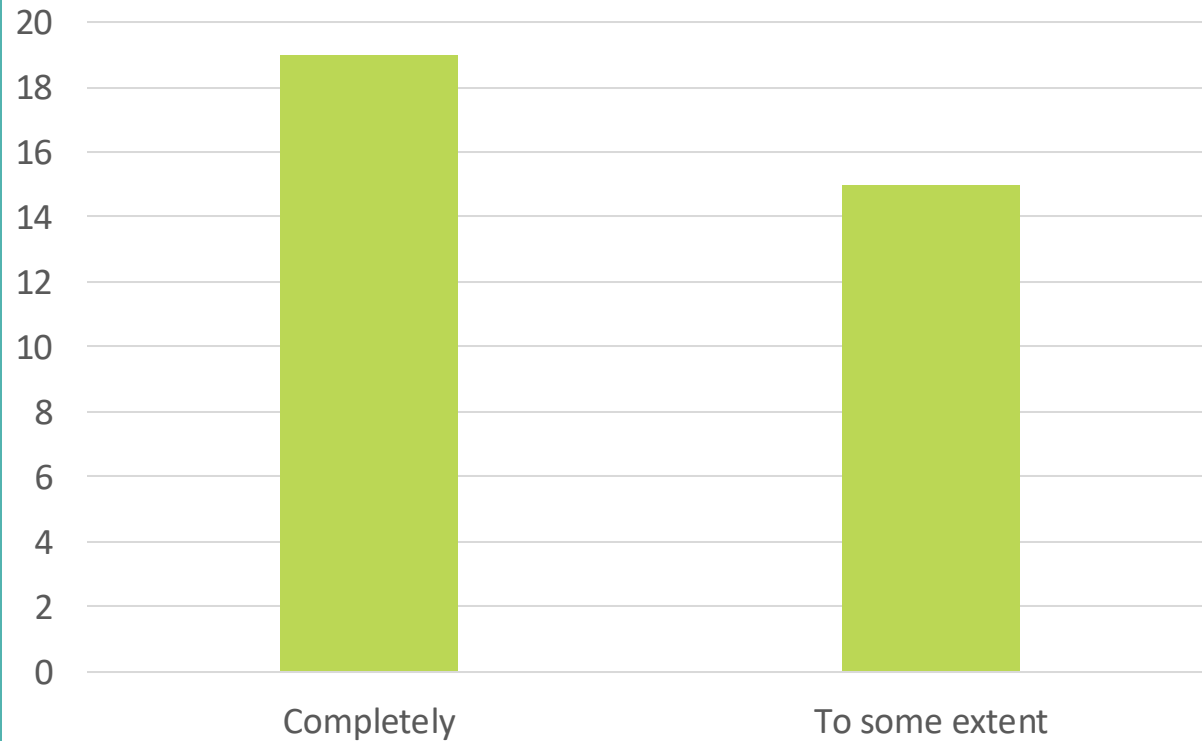
### How could the Network increase patient awareness of trials?

- Greater use of the website to share news posts and positive stories.
- A list of open trials on website
- Increase access to patient information about trials



# Network vision

Do you agree with the Network vision regarding research and radiotherapy?



We asked stakeholders whether they agreed with previous suggestions for the Network research vision:

- Changing practice through a portfolio of innovative and collaborative clinical trials
- Building the radiotherapy research workforce
- Aspiring to become one of the next cohort of emerging centres of excellence

*“Achieving local excellence with regional and national reach through compassionate and innovative radiotherapy, education and research in cancer services”*

This vision was broadly supported by Network colleagues, although one suggestion was to add a patient-centric focus

# Next steps

Thank you to everyone that contributed to the Network Research half-day event. Participation from teams made the day interactive and productive.

This event was part of the Network programme to increase recruitment to radiotherapy clinical trials. Practical steps were agreed, and there was constructive discussion regarding the most effective use of Network resources to deliver this aim.

Lots of outcomes were discussed, and key next steps were agreed to ensure the Network is continually understanding and meeting the needs of the radiotherapy centres.

To progress this work, several actions for the Network from the event were discussed:

Review and report the feedback from the event

Feedback to the Network Oversight group

Raise profile of the Network with staff and patients

Develop an action plan

Review Network trials infrastructure

Review meeting structure and frequency