

## **Radiography - Profession specific descriptor for registered professionals and support workers**

Diagnostic and Therapeutic Radiographers, and the Radiography Support Worker workforce have a significant role in Improving the public's health. They play an integral role in health protection, health improvement and population health and can contribute significantly to reducing health inequalities. Imaging and Radiotherapy professionals aspire to be at the heart of a healthier nation.

### **Wider Determinants**

The Radiography workforce can support individuals to access health care services through the introduction of community diagnostic centres or 'one stop shops'. These hubs are housed in the community, away from hospitals, so that individuals can receive lifesaving checks close to their homes. Through the introduction of the community diagnostic centres, the Radiography workforce is also supporting the contribution to the NHS's Net Zero ambitions by providing multiple tests at one visit, reducing the number of patient journeys and helping to cut carbon emissions and air pollution.

Radiographers are undertaking work to transform cancer care for the LGBTQ2+ community by improving research, resources, and support for patients, families, caregivers, and healthcare professionals.

### **Health Improvement**

Sonographers are well placed to provide very brief advice on topics such as smoking cessation when undertaking dating and anomaly scans during pregnancy. There are further opportunities for sonographers undertaking fertility assessment investigations or follicle tracking prior to In Vitro Fertilisation (IVF).

Radiographers integrate Making Every Contact Count (MECC) into their practice and have conversations with service users about areas of health that they can offer advice with, or signpost them to appropriate services e.g., smoking cessation. Where radiographers aren't in direct contact with service users, they can refer to other services or suggest areas for further support that the service user may benefit from.

Research undertaken by Radiographers with Occupational Therapists and Physiotherapists, investigates fall prevention. This leads to better support for service users particularly elderly service users who are a fall risk. Radiographers are in a good position to identify risks of falls, and if they find that they are seeing service users repeatedly for falls-related injuries, they can refer directly to the Physiotherapy and Occupational Therapy services to reduce falls in future. This supports the wider health of the service user and minimises the use of health services.

Therapeutic Radiographers work with Dietitians to make sure that service users can access suitable nutrition, this could be beneficial for people with head or neck cancers who may need an alternative diet or those with long term pelvic radiation who may have cases of severe diarrhoea which requires specific nutritional needs.

### **Population Healthcare**

The Diagnostic Radiography workforce delivers much of the imaging breast screening and aortic aneurysm screening programmes and support people in attending the screening, deliver public health messages as part of their health promotion work and support people by signposting to other services such as smoking cessation or weight management. In prenatal screening, they also have the opportunity to signpost smoking/alcohol/weight management services as well as supporting mental health. Therapeutic Radiography support workers also signpost people for health improvements during their radiotherapy cancer treatments including mental wellbeing and psychological support

Radiography projects are working to increase the numbers of early diagnoses, and access to early diagnosis, for groups who traditionally may struggle to access healthcare services, thus reducing health inequalities, for example, the homeless community, Romany community and service users with learning disabilities, to try and ensure that they are diagnosed at early stages and able to access treatment when necessary.

Radiographers can also utilise social media for example, Diagnostic Radiographers are utilising Facebook to improve uptake in Breast Screening through health adverts and promotions to raise awareness about the importance of regular screening, and to increase the uptake of appointments. Therapeutic Radiographers have also designed a podcast series (@rad\_\_chat) to educate and inform individuals on a range of oncology-based topics. The podcast is split into core themes including, people living with and beyond cancer and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.

Radiographers are involved with several screening programs. They run national screening programs for breast screening, cervical screening, bowel cancer screening, and dual-energy X-ray absorptiometry (DEXA) scans to spot osteopenia and osteoporosis, which can support service users by preventing fragility fractures. Screening can include mobile services which go out into the community to increase access to the service, e.g., for breast screening programmes, which increase access for populations who may find it difficult to access clinics or other healthcare settings. Radiographers in local areas run lung cancer screening programmes in areas with deprived communities with a high risk of lung cancer. This can be in connection with social care services in the area.

Radiographers also lead initiatives to improve the professions health and wellbeing. Through the Radiate programme a series of online seminars and workshops have been designed for Radiographers to engage with. Originally set up due to the pandemic, it has been very successful and is now ongoing.

## **Health Protection**

All radiographers are given training in radiation protection to ensure that doses of radiation are delivered safely, which protects the health of service users and staff and the environment. Radiographers incorporate safety checks into practice to check for pregnancy with everyone of childbearing age to avoid irradiating a foetus or avoiding developmental problems for the foetus. All radiographers are given training in radiation protection to ensure that doses of radiation are delivered safely, which protects the health of service users and staff.

Radiographers also have a key safeguarding role and can identify cases of non-accidental injuries on scans, which can potentially identify evidence of abuse. If there are signs leading to concern, Radiographers can liaise with social services to establish safeguarding plans.

## Radiography - Wider Reading and Case Study Examples

### Health Protection

- Patient safety in medical imaging

### Wider Determinants

- Transforming cancer care for the LGBTQ2+ community
- Social Prescribing: The Cultivation of Community Referral in Clinical Imaging and Radiotherapy

### Population Healthcare

- Rad Chat - The first therapeutic radiographer led oncology podcast.
- Utilising Facebook to improve uptake in Breast Screening

### Health Improvement

- Stopping smoking in pregnancy: A briefing for maternity care providers
- Radiography Health Improvement – Social Prescribing Active Signposting
- Therapeutic radiographers' delivery of health behaviour change advice to those living with and beyond cancer: A qualitative study