

# **Radiotherapy UK**

Summary of Our Charity





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# Introduction from Chair

## Professor Pat Price



The past two years have dramatically changed the landscape of cancer and cancer treatments.

As a clinical oncologist, specialising in advanced radiotherapy techniques, I have seen first-hand the benefits of improving and expanding radiotherapy treatments and the positive impact on cancer survival rates.

Unfortunately, the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic has had serious consequences on cancer treatments, causing severe backlogs, missed cancer diagnoses, and sadly, unnecessary deaths.

Action Radiotherapy, the UK's only charity dedicated to improving radiotherapy treatment, was founded in 2010. Our key aim was to improve radiotherapy services across the UK. We have had incredible achievements and successes, including raised political support and engagement, increased awareness, provided support and information to professionals and patients and conducted landmark surveys and inquiries.

The conversation around cancer is different now compared to when we first launched. We have continued to grow and succeed and have risen to the challenges caused by the Covid-19 pandemic – including spearheading two award-winning campaigns.

As a result of this rapidly changing world, we feel that now is a good time to raise the profile of the charity even more. We want to make our aims and work more visible, so we can continue to fight for better radiotherapy across the UK.

I am therefore delighted to announce the re-launch of Action Radiotherapy as **Radiotherapy UK**.

We are the UK's only charity dedicated to improving radiotherapy treatment, and our key aim is still to improve radiotherapy services across the UK. The charity is run and guided by radiotherapy professionals and patients, giving it unique real time insight and drive. The charity intends to stay nimble, responsive and inclusive for everyone dealing with or touched by radiotherapy; professionals, patients, families, industry, cancer charity partners, professional organisations and the public. Working together as one voice we can continue to punch above our weight and make a difference to the lives of professionals and patients.

Our mission is still the same: to save lives by ensuring everyone in the UK has access to high-quality radiotherapy treatment and support. We are immeasurably proud of what we have achieved so far, and greatly excited for what the future holds for us.

We are **Radiotherapy UK**, the UK's only charity dedicated to improving radiotherapy treatment.

**Professor Pat Price**

**Chair of Radiotherapy UK, previously Action Radiotherapy**

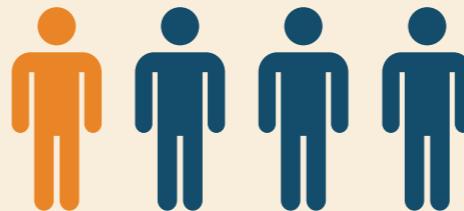
**Founder of Radiotherapy4Life and the #CatchUpWithCancer Campaign**

 **Radiotherapy  
UK**

# Overview of the charity

**1 in 2 people in the UK will now develop cancer at some point in their lives.** Cancer incidence is set to increase by 76% over the next 20 years. Despite the fact that radiotherapy is a highly effective treatment in improving survival rates, **just 5% of the NHS cancer budget is spent on radiotherapy.**

**1 in 4 people** in the UK will need radiotherapy at some point in their lives.



Radiotherapy is a Covid secure, safe, and highly-effective cancer treatment that is cost effective in comparison to other cancer treatments. The money saved can then benefit cancer patients further.

Radiotherapy is **needed in 50%** of cancer patients and is involved in **40% of cancer cures.**

There have been rapid technical developments in the last ten years, making radiotherapy one of the most precise and effective cancer treatments.

Radiotherapy is a solution to the cancer backlog, but we do not currently use it enough in the UK.

We are lagging behind our European counterparts, in both cancer survival rates, and funding and access to radiotherapy. Cancer patients deserve better. In the UK, only 27% of cancer patients have radiotherapy, which is significantly lower than the international standard of 50%.

We believe that everyone has the right to the best cancer treatment for their diagnosis, but unfortunately access to the most appropriate radiotherapy treatment is a postcode lottery. **This is something we believe needs to change.**

**Urgent investment in radiotherapy services is needed to change this.**



There have been major developments in radiotherapy over the last ten years, with modern radiotherapy equipment being highly computerised, precise and effective – resulting in more effective care for patients.

However, the most advanced precision radiotherapy is only available in the NHS to some people in the UK. More funding and better organisation of radiotherapy services in the UK are needed so that everyone can receive modern world-class radiotherapy as close to home as possible, to save more lives.

**There is also a radiotherapy workforce crisis.** This is a highly specialised discipline, and more investment is needed for multidisciplinary specialist staff, therapeutic radiographers, medical physicists, engineers, clinical oncologists, and other people working in the radiotherapy profession.

There is a disparity in what technology is available across the UK, with many treatment machines being older than their recommended lifespan. Therefore, there is urgent need for investment in replacing and updating radiotherapy equipment, improved IT and connectivity, with a long-term plan to ensure the service is future proof and available to everyone who needs it.

We were founded to ensure that these issues are rectified and that people in the UK have better access to radiotherapy treatment. We raise awareness of the effectiveness of radiotherapy in cancer treatments. Alongside improving radiotherapy access for cancer patients, Radiotherapy UK also supports front-line staff and professionals working in radiotherapy. We advocate for research and development into radiotherapy, and provide a range of services, information, forums and resources for professionals, including radiotherapy jobs and events.

Since 2010, we have grown significantly, gathering support from politicians across the spectrum, professional organisations, charities, the media and the public.

Our successes include launching a cross-party group on radiotherapy, building two award-winning campaigns, and raising overall awareness and engagement of the issue through fundraising and investigative research.

In May 2018, the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Radiotherapy (APPGRT) was founded, bringing together MPs and Peers in the first cross-party group advocating for radiotherapy. Radiotherapy UK, previously as Action Radiotherapy, provided the secretariat for this APPG.



## Mission:

To save lives by ensuring everyone in the UK has access to high quality radiotherapy treatment and support.

## Strapline:

Vital cancer treatment.

Everyone in the UK deserves access to the best cancer treatment and support. So, we are working to ensure that the best radiotherapy treatment is available no matter where you are in the UK and that patients and professionals get all the information and support they need.



In 2019 the Radiotherapy4Life campaign was launched, and then over the past two years, the focus on cancer – and health issues generally – has been dominated by Covid-19. Our charity and our work have adapted to this changing landscape.

In July 2020, the #CatchUpWithCancer campaign was launched with Craig and Mandy Russell, who sadly lost their daughter Kelly at just age 31 to bowel cancer. Her life expectancy was cut short after her cancer treatment was stopped as a direct result of the Covid-19 response.

#CatchUpWithCancer was founded to highlight the effect of the Covid-19 pandemic on cancer services, in particular

radiotherapy, and to urge the Government to catch up with the cancer backlog to prevent any more unnecessary deaths. Politicians, the public and media have been extremely supportive of this brilliant campaign.

We are now at an exciting moment in our charity growth. The relaunch of the charity will allow us to spread our message further, raise awareness and engagement, and save people's lives.

#### Patrons



Tim Farron MP



Bryan Robson OBE



David Smith MBE



Lord Turnberg

#### Founding patrons



The late Lord Wade of Chorlton



The late Lord Thomas of Macclesfield

## Relaunching the charity

The world is a different place compared to when we first launched Action Radiotherapy. We have successfully and efficiently adapted to the challenges posed by Covid-19. This includes building campaigns, adapting our targeting and messaging in relation to the cancer backlog, and expanding our knowledge hub for patients and professionals in line with Covid-19 advice and updates.

As a charity, we are constantly growing and rapidly evolving to meet the needs and address the current challenges that the radiotherapy community faces. In order to position ourselves as a nimble and responsive organisation which best supports the radiotherapy profession and patients, in a constantly ever-changing world, we understand that we also need to evolve into the next phase of our work.

Now is the optimum time to raise the profile of the charity and to better clarify and strengthen our messaging. We are delighted that our Radiotherapy4Life and #CatchUpWith Cancer campaigns have made noise in Parliament and public consciousness. But we want to be louder.

We have consolidated all our work, including our campaigns and APPG, into one, user-friendly [website](#). The new website will provide clearer and expanded support and information to patients, professionals and anyone interested in knowing more about radiotherapy.

We will continue to grow and expand, achieving political and public engagement, raising awareness and making a tangible difference to the lives of those affected by cancer, and those working in radiotherapy.

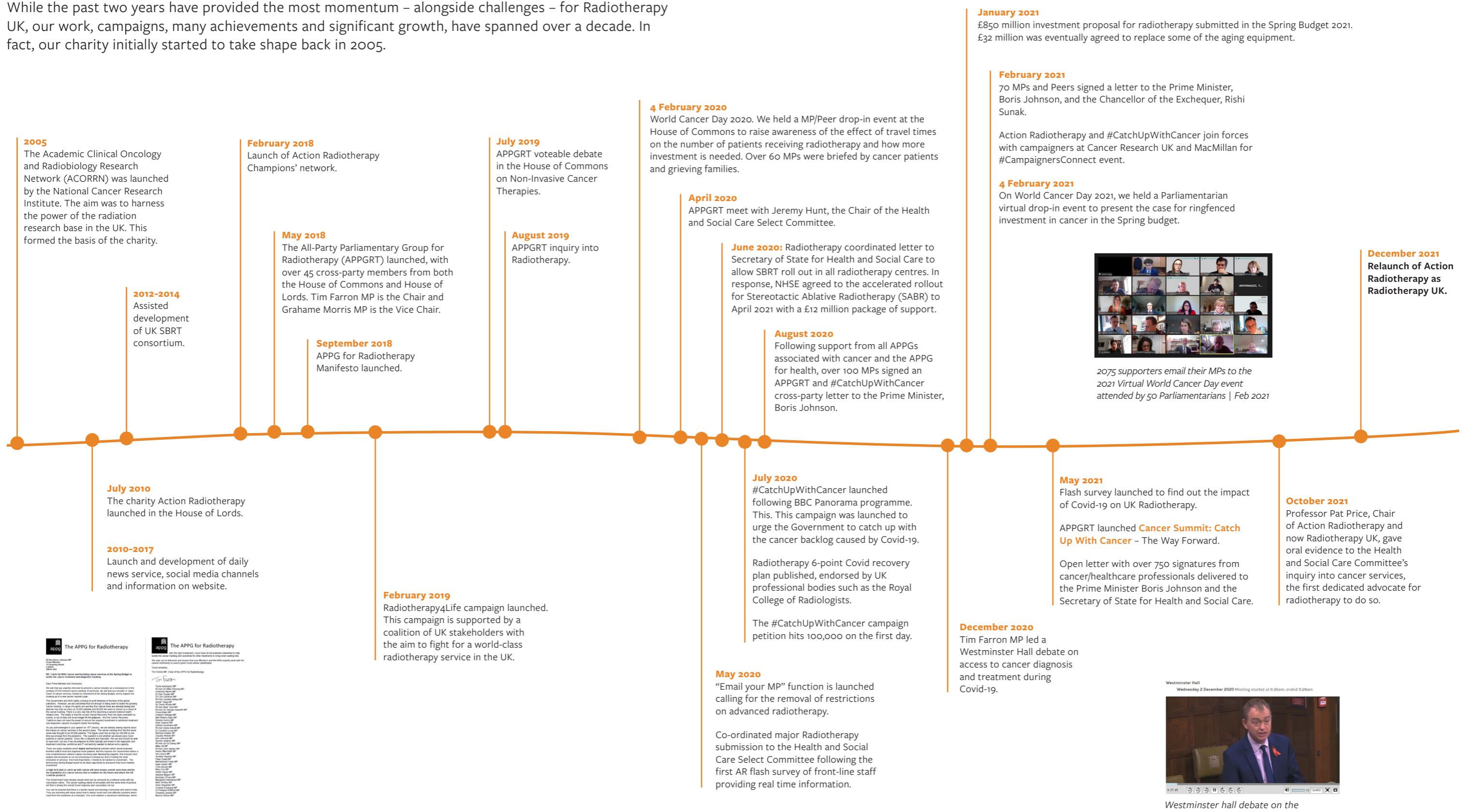
Our mission statement and key aims will be the same.

**But we will be louder, and more visible, to ensure more lives are saved.**



# History and timeline

While the past two years have provided the most momentum – alongside challenges – for Radiotherapy UK, our work, campaigns, many achievements and significant growth, have spanned over a decade. In fact, our charity initially started to take shape back in 2005.



# Key achievements: Political

**Due to our prolonged political campaigning and engagement, we have achieved significant successes in Parliament. This includes the creation of an All-Party Parliamentary Group on Radiotherapy, hundreds of written and oral parliamentary questions, letters to and meetings with Ministers, and general increased awareness and knowledge in Parliament about the need to increase radiotherapy treatments.**

In May 2018, we launched the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Radiotherapy (APPGRT). The APPGRT aims to be the voice in Parliament of cancer patients, their families, and those who work within the radiotherapy field. The APPG holds regular meetings and campaigns on a number of vital issues, including improving patient access to better radiotherapy.

Tim Farron MP serves as the Chair, and Grahame Morris MP and Derek Thomas MP are the Vice Chairs. The membership has increased to 45 MPs and Peers.

As Action Radiotherapy, and now as Radiotherapy UK, we provide the secretariat for the APPGRT.

APPGRT's original **Manifesto** was launched in September 2018. The latest **Manifesto** was published in September 2021.

APPGRT is proud to partner with other key APPGs in a similar field, including the APPGs on Cancer; Blood Cancer; Breast Cancer; Children, Teenagers and Young Adults with Cancer; Ovarian Cancer; Pancreatic Cancer; and Stem Cell Transplantation.

## APPGRT Political activity

- Over 130 parliamentary questions on Radiotherapy in the House of Commons, and 5 in the House of Lords
- Over 140 oral parliamentary questions in the House of Commons and House of Lords
- 15 letters to the Prime Minister and Ministers
- Over 100 MPs signed the APPGRT and #CatchUpWithCancer cross-party letter to the Prime Minister on the urgent cancer backlog crisis
- Over 80 parliamentarians signed an open letter to the Prime Minister and Chancellor calling for investment in radiotherapy services
- A letter to the Prime Minister, signed by over 600 NHS professionals, calling for urgent investment in cancer care and radiotherapy cancer treatments
- Sent a letter, from the Chair Tim Farron MP, to the Chief Executives of the 52 NHS Trusts which provide radiotherapy across England. We received responses from nearly half of the trusts
- 7 Early Day Motions on Radiotherapy
- The Chair of the APPGRT, Tim Farron MP has led a Westminster Hall Debate on the access to cancer diagnoses and treatments during Covid-19
- APPGRT members have contributed on radiotherapy to 4 Westminster Hall Debates
- Meetings with the Chairman of the NHS, Lord Prior, and 7 Ministerial meetings with the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care as well as other senior NHS leaders

## Key achievements of the APPGRT:

- Helped to make the £850 million case for investment into radiotherapy for the 2020 Budget
- Holding an inquiry, and publishing a report which made 22 recommendations and called for a formal select committee inquiry into the current NHS England (NHSE) radiotherapy strategy and lack of investment
- Co-ordinated a major Radiotherapy submission to the Health and Social Care select committee
- The APPGRT ensured the Secure File Transfer System was kept in use for radiotherapy until new system was brought online
- The APPGRT also campaigned successfully for the return and increase in funding for bursaries for Therapeutic Radiographer training
- NHS formally announced the accelerated rollout for Stereotactic Ablative Radiotherapy (SABR), after the APPGRT authored an open letter from radiotherapy professionals to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, signed by over 240 radiotherapy professionals
- Published a 6-point Covid recovery plan which was endorsed by UK professional bodies
- Creation of a UK industry taskforce between the APPGRT and AdvaMed
- Held a Parliamentary Cancer Summit which brought together the Chairs of three cancer and health focused APPGs, attended by medical colleges, charities, and frontline clinicians. This included evidence contributions from the 47 One Cancer Voice charities, Cancer Research UK, the Royal College of Radiologists and the Royal College of Pathologists.



## Supporters and backing:

- Several leading charities agreed to publicly support the Manifesto, including The Marie Curie Legacy, The Eve Appeal and Future Dreams
- APPGRT also has support from Macmillan Cancer Support, Breast Cancer Now, The Institute of Cancer Research and Young Lives vs Cancer
- The work has been backed by leading established professional bodies, including the Royal College of Radiologists, The Society and College of Radiographers, and the Institute of Physics and Engineering in Medicine, alongside organisations from the industry and private sector, such as AdvaMed, Varian and Elektra
- Well-known celebrities have also endorsed the APPGRT, including Stephen Fry and TV Doctor Hilary Jones

## Radiotherapy4Life

- Started in 2020 to raise awareness of the need to invest more in radiotherapy

## #CatchUpWithCancer

- Founded in response to the cancer backlog as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic



APPGRT meeting with Edward Argar and Jo Churchill | Feb 2020

# Key achievements:

## Raising awareness

Alongside making noise in Parliament, we have gained an impressive amount of media coverage. Especially during Covid-19, our media engagement reached almost weekly press coverage, with over 100 articles or appearances, in both print, digital and broadcast media.

Action Radiotherapy has participated in over 50 media, print and broadcast items advocating for awareness and the need



for increased investment in cancer services, particularly radiotherapy. As Radiotherapy UK, we hope to gain even more media coverage.

This includes *The Sunday Times*, *The Daily Express*, *Mail Online* and *The Times*.

Professor Pat Price, Chair of Action Radiotherapy and now Radiotherapy UK, has been interviewed on BBC News, Sky News, ITV and BBC Panorama.

Active social media presence and communications platforms:

- Over **28,000 users** on website
- Blogposts reaching up to **8,000 hits**
- Daily news from Action Radiotherapy, and now Radiotherapy UK, with **over 1,500 subscribers**, which collates the latest research and media information relating to radiotherapy to keep the community informed
- Successful Twitter, Facebook and Instagram accounts with 1000s of followers
- Regular and hard-hitting social media videos including our "**All I Want for Christmas**" message, which was retweeted by several celebrities, including Rio Ferdinand and Gary Lineker



**Miles4Radiotherapy** running event from 1 July 2021 to 3 October 2021, with nearly **800 participants** from **50 teams**

- Raised **£14,000** for the charity
- Over **371,000km** covered
- Brings the radiotherapy community together
- Raised the profile of radiotherapy services
- A fantastic way to have fun and keep fit, and raise awareness about a brilliant cause
- After the success of this year, we hope to run this event again next year and for it to be bigger and better.



### Key engagement achievements

Petition to ask for world-class radiotherapy service which gained over **10,000 signatures** from **99.5% of the UK's 650 constituencies**

**"Email your MP"** appeal which called for the removal of restrictions on advanced radiotherapy that would allow patients to be treated more safely and more quickly. **Over 3,500 emails** were sent to MPs as a result of this.

#CatchUpWithCancer petition to ensure access to treatment and screening for all cancer patients during Covid-19 received 100,000 signatures in just one day

In just 6 months, #CUWC received over **375,000 signatures** on a public petition to urge the Government to invest in radiotherapy

The campaigns and charity also secured celebrity support from sports personalities such as Gary Lineker, Rio Ferdinand, Bryan Robson OBE and David Smith MBE; and TV personalities such as Victoria Derbyshire, Frankie Bridge and Deborah James.



## Key achievements: Research

Alongside gaining support in Parliament and in media, we have also conducted important and necessary inquiries and investigative research pieces. These studies, which include surveys, detailed analysis and eye-opening reports, show why we do the work we do. Our research has highlighted the

impact of Covid-19 on the radiotherapy community, shown the true extent of the cancer backlog and uncovered the shocking nature of travel times to radiotherapy centres. Our research validates our work and shows why we need to campaign for greater access to radiotherapy treatment.

- Action Radiotherapy conducted three flash surveys which aimed to understand the disruption that Covid-19 caused to the front-line radiotherapy workforce. These surveys received over **340 responses** in April 2020, over **200** in May 2021 and over **270** in October 2021.
- Action Radiotherapy calculated the actual cumulative cancer backlog which has built up during the Covid-19 pandemic from March to August 2020. This raised awareness of the need to prioritise radiotherapy during Covid-19.
- Action Radiotherapy conducted a report on UK travel times to radiotherapy centres which we presented at an MP drop-in session in the House of Commons in February 2020. Our report found that almost **3.5 million people** lived further than the 45-minute travel time recommended by the Department of Health.
- Action Radiotherapy commissioned a report on the number of out-of-date radiotherapy machines that were in clinical use. This report found that **50% of NHS trusts are using out-of-date equipment**, and analysed the likely number of people not getting the access they need to radiotherapy.

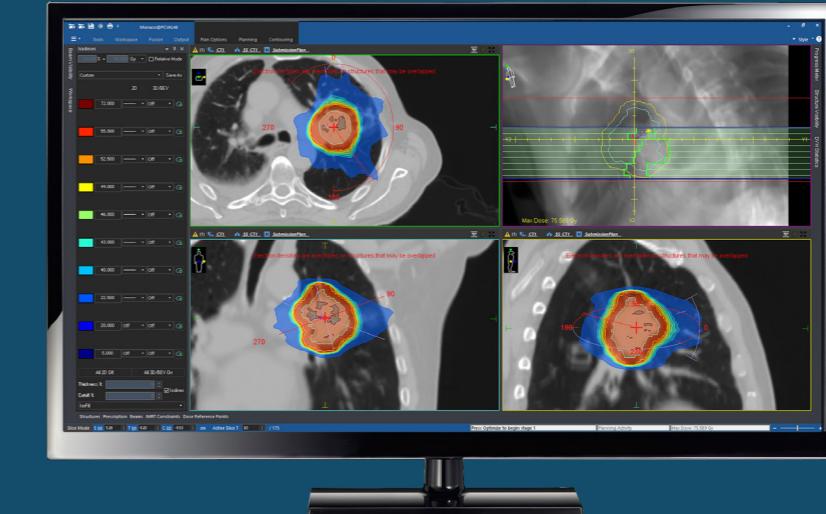


## Key achievements: Covid

**Before Covid-19 hit, Action Radiotherapy had already made substantial progress in engaging politicians, achieving media coverage, orchestrating and conducting investigative research and driving awareness for the need to increase radiotherapy treatment.**

Covid-19 posed new challenges to healthcare, especially to cancer treatment. The pandemic also affected the radiotherapy taskforce, due to the risk of Covid-19 transmission, increased possibility of stress and mental health problems, and the decreased awareness and attention paid to cancer and radiotherapy treatments. But we adapted efficiently and eagerly. We regularly advocate for radiotherapy as a Covid secure cancer treatment needed during and after the pandemic, and the use of radiotherapy in place of other cancer treatments to reduce surgical waiting lists.

The **Action Radiotherapy Champions Network** devised online tools and information to assist radiographers in dealing with their changing roles at the height of the Covid-19 pandemic. We provided a wide variety of **online resources** to help safeguard people's wellbeing. These resources included tips for selfcare, including a number of positive coping strategies that individuals could adopt within their radiotherapy department and at home.



The APPGRT acted quickly: writing to the Health Minister in the first weeks of the pandemic to ask for more PPE for front-line radiotherapy staff, and conducting a meeting with Jeremy Hunt, the Chair of the Health and Social Care Select Committee. The APPGRT also met with Jo Churchill, the previous Health Minister, several times. We have met weekly with an **Industry Task Force** who formed to help develop technical and digital solutions in radiotherapy to respond to the challenges of Covid-19.

During, and as a result of, Covid-19, we cofounded the award-winning campaign #CatchUpWithCancer with Craig and Mandy Russell who sadly lost their daughter Kelly at just the age of 31 to bowel cancer. We campaign for the Government and the NHS to boost cancer services to tackle the cancer diagnosis and treatment caused by Covid-19.

**Experts predict that as many as 35,000 patients could be lost unnecessarily to cancer due to the backlog and disruptions – unless there is urgent action to tackle the problem.**

We are urging the Government to increase investment in technologies, such as radiotherapy, with the same sense of urgency and focus as was applied to gearing up the NHS to tackle the virus itself.

With international colleagues, we founded the **Global Coalition for Radiotherapy**. Radiotherapy professionals across the world regularly meet and discuss the impact of Covid-19 and what strategies there are to manage the issues we now face.

# Summary

## The cancer backlog and Covid-19 are currently two of the biggest challenges in health and social care.

Covid-19 presented new challenges to the radiotherapy community, and we are proud of how we adapted and grew the charity, campaigns and APPGRT. It is now time to grow the charity even further as Radiotherapy UK, to spread our message and gain even more support.

Believe it or not this is just some of what Action Radiotherapy have been doing since we launched. For a very small organisation we believe we pack a significant punch. We have achieved so much with so little.

We campaign to improve radiotherapy and cancer services as a whole. We campaign for the professionals and for the patients. We campaign to raise awareness to help people.

We strive to fill the gap in providing a voice for radiotherapy and its community to help patients and frontline staff.

For us to be most effective in our work and communications we need the continued support of the radiotherapy community

to ensure we have first-hand, up-to-date information on what is actually happening on the frontline. We have an amazing network of Champions who are professionals volunteering for the charity, we want to grow this community to include a Champion in each department across the UK. If you don't already have a Champion in your department and are interested in getting involved, please get in touch with us [info@radiotherapy.org.uk](mailto:info@radiotherapy.org.uk).

We have the support of our industry partners that have gone above and beyond providing vendor neutral information and sponsorship, without this we would not be able to continue.

**Radiotherapy UK salutes all of you who continue to support us and thank you. We are excited for the future, and what more we can achieve.**

If you would like any more information please get in touch with us at [info@radiotherapy.org.uk](mailto:info@radiotherapy.org.uk). If you want to support the Miles4Radiotherapy campaign and help us to continue the work we do please donate [here](#).



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