

Learnings from the HSJ Provider Summit 2019 Interactive Discussion Groups

Session Theme: Optimising Cancer Screening & Early Diagnosis

Session Leader: Peter Harrison, Managing Director, Siemens Healthineers

Key Questions Posed

1. How can the NHS shift the focus and collaborate with partners to deliver the national strategic ambitions for screening, earlier diagnosis and improved cancer outcomes, in practice?
2. Earlier diagnosis requires more diagnostic capacity. How can the challenges of ageing scanners, capital constraint and diagnostic workforce vacancies, highlighted by Sir Mike Richards, HSJ and other stakeholders, be addressed?
3. £70m is being invested in Lung Cancer Health Check & Low Dose CT Screening Projects based on the pioneering schemes in Manchester and Liverpool. What will ensure their success?

Outcomes and Learnings

- NHS Radiological reporting services are under significant pressure. AI will clearly play a role in delivering future state capacity and quality and in addressing the gaps in the radiological and radiographic workforce. A shared radiological opinion as to how AI should routinely be employed is actively formulating, but AI on its own cannot solve the escalating demand and workforce challenge in diagnostics services.
- Social determinants play a big role in individual decisions to make early access to healthcare. This has also been highlighted in the Manchester and Leeds Lung Health Check schemes, with patient engagement improved by placing screening access opportunity in accessible, non-hospital community locations. However, funding cuts in public health (e.g. stop smoking services) must also be addressed to truly support a radical upgrade in cancer prevention.
- The current Oct 2019 implementation timescale for the 10 Lung Health Check projects is recognised to be challenging and whilst an added benefit will be picking up other health conditions such as COPD as well as more cancers, some NHS Providers are concerned about the impact of managing incidental findings. Cancer Alliances, CCGs and operational

delivery partners providing the required supporting radiological and surgical capacity might benefit from additional guidance and a standardised commissioning approach to maximise project success.

- The Cancer Alliances play an important role in moving the national strategy for screening and early diagnosis forward as will wider rollout of Rapid Diagnostic & Assessment Centres. However, empowered system leadership at STP and ICS level is needed to truly overcome traditional organisational boundaries and improve cancer pathways, meet current access targets, promote best practice sharing in partnership with the cancer alliances, effectively commission community diagnostics, meet the 28-day cancer diagnosis standard by 2020 and achieve diagnosis of 3 in 4 cancers at an early stage by 2028.
- The impact of capital restraint and capital to revenue transfers on the state of scanning equipment in the NHS (particularly MRI and CT based on OECD data) is widely recognised and has been called out by Sir Mike Richards. NHS Providers are increasingly engaging with Multi-Vendor Managed Equipment Service solutions to provide equipment refresh and sustainable replacement programmes. Some are now moving to the next stage seeking asset management partnerships that support a long-term diagnostic strategy with the added value of transformation and education.

For further information:

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