



UK Chemotherapy Board

STATEMENT ON THE NON-SURGICAL CANCER TREATMENT WORKFORCE

The Chemotherapy Board¹ welcomes the publication of the Cancer Research UK (CRUK) report *Full Team Ahead: understanding the UK non-surgical cancer treatments workforce*² and the work being undertaken by Health Education England (HEE) to develop both a short-term and longer-term Cancer Workforce Plan in England³, across all professional groups.

These initiatives have raised awareness of the need for a fully-staffed and fully-resourced multi-professional systemic anti-cancer therapy (SACT) workforce if the UK is to continue to provide cancer patients with high quality treatment and care. They have also highlighted very clearly that the current SACT workforce is already under-staffed and under pressure.

The well-documented increase in cancer incidence in the UK will place additional strain on all members of the non-surgical cancer care team including medical and clinical oncologists, nurses and pharmacists who increasingly deliver SACT in complex multiprofessional teams. This is especially true as much of the increased cancer incidence will occur in the most elderly of the population, who often have multiple comorbidities, increasing the resources required to safely support patients throughout their therapy.

The impact of SACT expansion cannot be underestimated. The majority of SACT drugs projected to come to the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence for approval over the next few years are “first in class”. New drug classes cause novel side effects for patients. Providing a comprehensive service not only requires education of the SACT delivery workforce but also support for physicians managing toxicities presenting acutely as well as patients themselves.

The six professional bodies that comprise the UK Chemotherapy Board – the British Oncology Pharmacy Association (BOPA), the United Kingdom Oncology Nursing Society (UKONS), the Royal College of Pathologists (RCPath), the Association of Cancer Physicians (ACP), the Royal College of Physicians of London (RCPL) and The Royal College of Radiologists (RCR) – stand ready to work with HEE to share their experience and expertise to help address the concerns around future provision of the UK SACT workforce - and the infrastructure that is needed to support that workforce - in delivering the service our patients deserve.

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¹ The UK Chemotherapy Board was established in 2013 by The Royal College of Radiologists (RCR), the Royal College of Physicians (RCP), the Association of Cancer Physicians (ACP), the Royal College of Pathologists (RCPath), the British Oncology Pharmacy Association (BOPA) and the UK Oncology Nursing Society (UKONS) to provide guidance, oversight and support for the continuing development of high-quality SACT delivery services for cancer patients in the UK. It has representation from across the four UK nations and from other organisations closely involved in SACT provision.

² Available on the [CRUK website](#).

³ Phase 1 of the Cancer Workforce Plan is available on the [HEE website](#).