



Principles for issuing a public statement

For use by elected Officers and Trustee Board

Purpose of document

This document sets out principles for issuing public statements in response to developments in public policy or notable events. The aim of the principles is to support decision-making when considering public comments and ensure a consistent and informed approach. If issuing a public comment meets all principles outlined in this document, then the Royal College of Radiologists (RCR) will issue a public comment. By doing so, we will maintain the RCR as a credible and trusted voice in public discourse and provide elected Officers with support for navigating the decision-making process.

Background

As a leading organisation representing expert doctors, we are sought after for our perspectives or stances on various matters. Often, these will be clearly linked to the direct delivery of radiology, interventional radiology and oncology services, both presently and in the future, in which our members and Fellows are involved. To this end, we have established positioning and agreed 'lines to take.' However, as a prominent and global organisation, we may be approached for views or invited to comment on developments in healthcare, wider public and social policy, and world events.

Trustees should be mindful of the limitation that RCR's charitable status imposes on campaigning and political activity. While campaigning and political activity can be legitimate and valuable activities for charities to undertake it must be undertaken only in the context of supporting the delivery of its charitable purposes. The Charity Commission advises that it is a legal requirement when considering campaigning and political activity that charity trustees must carefully weigh up the possible benefits against the costs and risks in deciding whether the campaign is likely to be an effective way of furthering or supporting the charity's purposes.

Principles

The following are the principles which we will follow:

We are confident that we can adequately represent/reflect the views of our Fellows/members.

We are clear that it makes clear sense for us to be issuing a statement (as different from supporting another body's statement); that we are right to be taking a leadership role on the issue and that we are confident that we can reflect/represent our wider membership/Fellowship on the issue, including our global Fellows and members.

Issuing a public statement aligns with our organisational strategy.

The RCR exists to lead, educate, and support doctors who are training and working in the specialties of clinical oncology and clinical radiology. Any public comment should seek to directly contribute to at least one of our strategic priorities:

- **Workforce:** Support excellent, safe patient care by working collaboratively on team-wide standards across imaging and oncology. Define our doctors' professional needs for the future and shape sustainable workforce models for our patients and our specialties to realise them.
- **Be the experts:** Highlight to the public and stakeholders the contribution our specialties make to safe, evidence-based and cost-effective patient care. Contribute meaningfully to the debate on the future of healthcare both in the UK and overseas.
- **Professional learning:** Develop our educational offer to support our doctors to meet the challenges of practice, working with others where appropriate, sharing ideas where possible. Adopt new educational models rapidly to ensure continuing equity of access to high-quality products.
- **Membership value:** Support all Fellows and members to deliver the best care for patients, for their entire career regardless of where or how they practice.
- **Our College:** Shape a College that is demonstrably agile and responsive, accountable and open, supporting our specialties and the patients we treat.

The subject of the statement is directly relevant to our medical specialties and/or our college.

As a professional body representing clinical radiologists, interventional radiologists and clinical oncologists, our focus is to ensure the highest standards of medical practice and patient care. Therefore, we limit our public comments to issues directly pertinent to our organisation's mission and the well-being of our members and the public they treat. This approach allows us to maintain our credibility and effectiveness in addressing matters that directly impact the medical profession and healthcare landscape we work in.

We have the relevant expertise needed to issue a statement.

We are the experts in our specialist fields and can provide insights and value to public and political conversation on issues relating to medical imaging, minimally-invasive treatments, and cancer knowledge, treatment, and care. Our work allows us to contribute to discussions relating to broader trends in healthcare, and the delivery and future of health systems. However, there will be limits to our knowledge and where we do not feel we are the appropriate experts to comment we should defer to those better placed to do so. This approach will best protect our reputation as a credible expert commentator.

We are basing our statement on facts and not views (including political or ideological views) which may not be shared by all our Fellows and members.

We are evidence based and specialists, and any statement we issue must be predicated on fact and evidence and not stray into viewpoint and/or politics.

We are confident that any risk to our reputation or standing is offset by the benefits to the organization and membership.

The RCR prioritises maintaining a strong reputation and standing within the medical community and the public sphere. Therefore, we will only issue a public statement after careful consideration, ensuring that any potential risks to our reputation are outweighed by the benefits to the organisation and its stakeholders. This approach ensures that our communications are strategic, responsible, and in the best interests of our members and the broader healthcare community. Prior to releasing a statement, it's essential to consult with the appropriate staff teams at the RCR to ensure expertise is incorporated.

Approved by Trustee Board May 2024

