

Aims and Objectives

Aims

The Grand Challenge Network+ in Proton Therapy aims to build a new multidisciplinary community bringing together clinicians, hospital physicists and radiographers, industry, patient representatives and policy makers with scientists and engineers from the EPS community. Through this Network+ they will work together to establish a research base and national infrastructure surrounding the government investment in proton therapy.

The Network+ will work in partnership with existing successful networks such as NCRI Clinical and Translational Radiotherapy Working Group and Proton Physics Research and Implementation Group in the UK and ENLIGHT in Europe. It seeks to establish a national infrastructure to allow the community to undertake develop a series of activities, secondments, mini-projects, and events to promote collaboration in this field, across disciplines and institutions.

It also seeks to train the next generation of researchers, working closely with NHS England to link into the existing NHS training provision and establish equivalencies and a fast track route into the NHS.

Objectives

The Network will have the following objectives with metrics to provide a measure of the Network's success in achieving them. The objectives are:

1. Develop a national research infrastructure for proton research and contribute to the development of a national strategy for research across the UK, in partnership with CTRad and other bodies;
2. Create a wide multidisciplinary network including clinicians, scientists and engineers, from the EPS community, and stakeholders from the consumer groups, policy makers and the public sector private sector, which will increase its membership and engagement with the community year on year;
3. Engage with national and international Stakeholders and leverage additional funds to support Network activities;
4. Create a national sustainable infrastructure for proton research drawing in existing providers of proton beams and establishing a route to make this virtual national infrastructure sustainable
5. Provide opportunities for researchers to undertake experiments at international laboratories and PBT centres
6. Provide researchers with the opportunity to "Discipline Hop" into an industrial or clinical environment, within the UK or internationally
7. Work with NHS England on a national training scheme to provide a skilled workforce for PBT
8. Provide travel grants for early career researchers to develop their research in this multidisciplinary field;
9. Provide a forum and focus to ensure that researchers across the UK are aware of each other's activities, allowing them to work together rather than in isolation, thus ensuring the maximum benefit for every £1 of tax payers' and other research money spent;
10. Provide Factsheets on different types of advanced radiotherapy aimed at policy makers and journalists