

Meet Professor Helen McNair

Professor Helen McNair is the lead clinical academic Therapeutic Radiographer at The Royal Marsden NHS Foundation Trust and Professor in Translational Therapeutic Radiography at The Institute of Cancer Research. The aim of her current HEE/NIHR senior clinical lecturer grant is to create an optimal patient pathway to deliver on-line adaptive radiotherapy. Helen joined the BIR Council in October and is also a part of the Leadership & Management SIG.

1. In your opinion, what are the key issues and challenges for the radiology and radiation oncology workforce?

The key challenges are maintaining quality of care in an under-resourced NHS, retaining staff and coping with the increasing number of patients.

2. Which radiographers (from the past or present) do you most admire and why?

I thought a lot about this and concluded that I admire the radiographers who treat patients, day in and day out, always caring for the patient and efficiently using high technology. All through my career these colleagues have been unfailing experts in what they do, have influenced research and made a difference.

3. Can you sum the BIR up in three words?

Interdisciplinary, education and vision

4. What would be your advice to a young person starting out as a radiographer today?

There are many opportunities and different paths to take in radiography. Spend time acquiring the core skills and gaining broad experience before diversifying or specialising.

5. What is the biggest challenge you have faced in your career?

Maintaining a clinical academic pathway.

6. What is your proudest achievement (in work or out)?

Seeing radiographers present their first work at a national/international conference.

7. Who has been the biggest influence in your life?

Again, difficult to say one person. I think many of my family (I come from a large family!), friends and colleagues who have walked the journey with me. I love listening to podcasts too, eg desert island discs, from women who have achieved against the odds, in science, or other careers. I find that very inspiring.

8. What might we be surprised to know about you?

I can milk a cow,

9. When you are not working, how do you like to spend your time?

I love cooking, it totally absorbs me, particularly when listening to music. I enjoy gardening too. I also get a buzz from exercising outside, which I do with an outdoor fitness community, and running with friends.

10. Which actor would play you in the film about your life?

Emma Stone