

Professor Ian Finlay  
Chair, UK Shape of Training Steering Group

Cc: Professor David Black, Chair JRCPTB  
Professor Jane Dacre, President of Royal College of Physicians (London)  
Miss Cally Palmer, National Cancer Director (NHS England)

12<sup>th</sup> May 2017

Dear Professor Finlay

### ***Medical Oncology and Shape of Training***

As the future workforce in medical oncology, we would like to respond to the decision taken by the Shape of Training Steering Group to recommend that medical oncology dual accredit with general internal medicine and be 'dealt with in the same or similar way to those in group 1'.

The United Kingdom has one of the lowest survival rates for cancer in Europe [1] and Cancer Research UK predicts that by 2030 four million people will be living with cancer in the UK [2]. The decision of the Shape of Training Group regarding medical oncology has been taken out of context to the wider picture, without any specialist input and therefore is short sighted and does not equip the country with a workforce adequately trained in the skills required to tackle the formidable challenge our patients and this country faces. It is *inconceivable* that this proposal will improve the outcomes of cancer patients.

While as a specialty we understand the pressures upon the acute unselected take, it would be a dis-service to our cancer patients to sacrifice the care they receive. Acute oncology has been developing at pace across the country in response to the NCEPOD report into cancer deaths and carries with it sound evidence of its improved outcomes and effectiveness. Acute oncology services (AOS) reduces admissions, length of stay and relieves pressures on the acute unselected take. *AOS ultimately equips trainee medical oncologists with the medical skills and experience they will need as a consultant while improving outcomes.* Training in 'Medical and Acute Oncology' provides invaluable support to our medical colleagues and specialised care to our patients. Dual accreditation with internal medicine would threaten the good progress that has been made to improve cancer outcomes through acute oncology. There is simply not the capacity to provide *both* an acute oncology service *and* acute unselected take – at trainee and consultant level. ***Shape of Training disproportionately affects Medical Oncology and it is inconceivable to achieve a satisfactory level of knowledge and experience to become a consultant in medical oncology while also training in internal medicine.***

The treatment of many cancers is unrecognisable compared to only five years ago and will be completely different in another five. Medical Oncologists, as a research predominant specialty, are instrumental in research and trials for new treatments to improve the outcomes of cancer patients in the UK. Over 90% of medical oncologists take time to complete a higher degree, 82% of trials into systemic treatments in the UK are led by medical oncologists and 39% of medical oncologists have an academic or joint academic/NHS contract. Diversification of the medical oncology workforce to include general internal medicine will see a reduction in research and trials that medical oncologists have the capacity to perform. There simply is *no capacity* in the medical oncology workforce to drive forward research and trials in new treatments while becoming dual accredited with internal medicine.

As the future of the medical oncology workforce who will be caring for cancer patients we feel obliged to warn you of the unintended consequences that this decision will have upon cancer care:

1. Detrimental outcomes for cancer patients in the UK
2. Failure of the implementation of comprehensive acute oncology services across the country
3. An oncology workforce overstretched and inadequately trained
4. Reduced trial and research activity in oncology and subsequent impact on patient care/outcomes
5. Threat to the long-term viability of medical oncology as a specialty as trainees may decide to opt for clinical oncology – which entails a different skill set and experience

We urge the Group to seriously reconsider this short-sighted decision that would be detrimental to the care of cancer patients. The care of our cancer patients remains our top priority and we will pursue every avenue to avoid the deterioration of care as described above that this policy would result in.

Further to our request for you to reconsider this decision we would like clarification on the following points:

- a. What assessment has been made regarding the impact these changes will have on the care of patients with cancer and who have you sought advice from?*
- b. What reasoning did you use to arrive at this decision, who are the members of the Steering Committee and are the minutes from this meeting available for scrutiny by the cancer community?*
- c. What further evidence do you need to demonstrate that this decision will be detrimental for cancer patients and detrimental to the oncology workforce?*

We wait to hear from you and would be happy to meet to discuss the issues raised.

Yours sincerely

Dr Adam P Januszewski  
Association of Cancer Physicians  
Trainee Representative  
Dr Sam Turnbull

Dr Ruhe Chowdhury  
SAC Trainee Representative  
ST6 in Medical Oncology  
Dr Mark Openshaw

Association of Cancer Physicians  
Trainee Representative  
ST5 in Medical Oncology

Association of Cancer Physicians  
Trainee Representative  
ST5 in Medical Oncology

And 94 Medical Oncology Trainees:

Dr Gehan Soosaipillai	Medical Oncology Registrar
Dr Eileen Parkes	Medical Oncology ST5
Dr Sebastian Trainor	Specialist Registrar in Medical Oncology
Dr Ailsa Sita-Lumsden	ST5 Medical Oncology
Dr Donna Graham	Clinical Research Fellow in Medical Oncology
Dr Kathryn Hawkesford	Medical Oncology ST6/Clinical Research Fellow
Dr Carey MacDonald-Smith	Associate Specialist Medical Oncology
Dr Matthew Howell	Medical Oncology Trainee
Dr Joanne Evans	NIHR ACF, ST5 Medical Oncology
Dr Anna Olsson-Brown	Medical Oncology ST4
Katy Herring	CRUK Clinical Trials Fellow
Dr Sarah Benafif	Medical Oncology ST6
Dr Lara Gibbs	ST5 Medical Oncology Trainee
Dr Tim Robinson	StR Medical Oncology
Ricky Frazer	Acute Oncology Fellow
Dr Amit Samani	Specialist Registrar, Medical Oncology
Dr Meera Chauhan	Medical Oncology SpR
Dr Constantinos Savva	ACF ST4 Medical Oncology
Dr Shivan Sivakumar	Clinical Lecturer in Medical Oncology
Dr Nicola Thompson	Academic Clinical Fellow/SpR
Dr Lucy Gossage	St7 Medical Oncology
Dr Leila khoja	Honorary Consultant Medical Oncology
Dr Vinton Cheng	Medical Oncology Specialty Registrar
Dr Alex Lee	Specialist Trainee in Medical Oncology
Dr Jason Adhikaree	Medical Oncology SpR
Dr Noor-Ul-Ain Tariq	St5 Medical Oncology
Dr Elaine Dunwoodie	ST6 Medical Oncology
Dr Alexandros Georgiou	Medical Oncology Clinical Research Fellow
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Dr Elisavet Theodoulou	Medical Oncology SpR
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Dr Zena Salih	ST5 Medical Oncology
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Dr Jennifer Harrington	ST6 Medical Oncology
Dr Shobha Silva	Clinical Research Fellow/Medical Oncology Registrar
Dr Emma Winn	St3 Medical Oncology
Dr Debra Josephs	Academic clinical lecturer and ST6 medical oncology
Dr Magdalene Joseph	ST3 Medical Oncology
Dr Debashis Sarker	Senior Lecturer and Consultant in Medical Oncology
Dr Su Li	Medical Oncology fellow
Dr Joanna Connor	ST5 Medical Oncology Registrar
Dr Nicola Flaum	ST4 Medical Oncology
Dr Jemma Longley	Academic Medical Oncology SpR
Dr Michael Flynn	Specialist Registrar
Dr Sally Hall	Clinical Research Fellow in Medical Oncology
Dr Helen Hockings	SpR Medical Oncology
Dr Lucy Jones	ST3 Medical Oncology
Dr Nicola Hughes	ACF Medical Oncology
Dr Jennet Williams	Medical Oncology ST5
Dr Catherine Handforth	SpR medical oncology
Dr Nick Maisey	Consultant Medical Oncologist
Dr Lucy Dumas	Specialist Trainee in Medical Oncology
Dr Bryony Eccles	Medical Oncology Consultant
Dr Okezie Ofor	Specialist Registrar
Dr Jane Margetts	Consultant Medical Oncologist
Dr Shalini Fernando	ST3 Medical Oncology
Dr Elena Dickens	ST3 Medical Oncology
Dr Hannah Taylor	ST5 Medical Oncology
Dr Kate Young	Clinical Research Fellow in Medical Oncology
Dr Claire Dyke	ST3 Medical Oncology
Dr Sumsur Chowdhury	ST5 Medical Oncology
Dr Avani Athauda	Medical Oncology SpR ST5
Dr Sarah Briggs	Medical Oncology Registrar
Dr Shanthini Crusz	ST5 Medical Oncology
Dr David J Pinato	Academic Clinical Lecturer and SpR in Medical Oncology
Dr Stephen Kihara	ST6 Medical Oncology

Dr Peter Gallagher	ST4 Medical Oncology
Dr Anna Minchom	Medical Oncology Trainee
Dr Saira Khaliq	ST4 (OOPR) Medical Oncology
Dr Miranda Payne	Consultant Medical Oncologist
Dr Kirsty Taylor	ST4 Medical Oncology
Dr C Cafferkey	Oncology SpR
Dr Thubeena Manickavasagar	SpR Medical Oncology
Dr Sarah Welsh	Academic Clinical Lecturer in Medical Oncology
Dr Chris Abbosh	SpR Oncology UCL
Dr Therese McCartney	St3 Medical Oncology
Dr Hamzeh Kayhanian	st4 Medical Oncology
Dr Emma Beddowes	ST8 Academic Clinical Lecturer
Dr Emma Kipps	Medical Oncology Registrar
Dr Rebecca Lee	Registrar Medical Oncology
Dr Samantha Turnbull	Medical Oncology SpR and Clinical Research Fellow
Dr Daniel J. Hughes	Specialty Registrar
Dr Shairoz Merchant	SpR Medical Oncology
Dr Jenny Seligmann	Clinical lecturer in Medical Oncology
Dr Caroline Forde	Clinical research fellow, Medical Oncology
Dr Elizabeth Liniker	Medical Oncology Registrar
Dr Marcus Remer BSc MB ChB MRCP (Medical Oncology)	Medical Oncology ST5, Cancer Research UK Clinical Research Training Fellow
Dr Fatima El-Khouly	ST5 Medical Oncology (OOPR)
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Dr Belinda Kingston	St3 Medical Oncology
Dr Michael Davidson	Clinical Research Fellow, Royal Marsden Hospital
Dr Myria Galazi	ST3 Medical Oncology
Dr Chara Stavraka	CRUK Clinical Fellow in Medical Oncology
Dr Nalinie Joharatnam	ST4 Medical Oncology
Dr Andrew Furness	SpR Medical Oncology
Dr Bhavna Oza	St3 Medical Oncology
Dr Zoe Hudson	ST5 in Medical Oncology

1. <http://www.ihe.se/access-to-cancer-medicines-in-europe.aspx>
2. <http://www.macmillan.org.uk/documents/aboutus/research/keystats/statisticsfactsheet.pdf>