

Joint Statement from the British Society of Interventional Radiologists and The Vascular Society

Vascular surgeons and interventional radiologists frequently work together in the care of patients with vascular disease. The Vascular Society and the British Society of Interventional Radiology are committed to ensuring the highest standards of care for these patients now and in the future. The purpose of this brief statement is to highlight the importance of working together as a team to maintain and develop vascular and other co-dependent services.

This statement was prompted by difficulties in some UK vascular units and we wish to emphasise the importance of collaborative team working with mutual professional respect in delivering patient centred care for those with vascular disease. A safe and sustainable elective and emergency vascular service requires close working relationships between doctors and HCPs' in a number of relevant specialties. Procedures should be carried out by appropriately trained personnel with the necessary competencies. Clinical leadership of the team should be agreed locally, taking into account co-dependent services.

From a vascular perspective this multi-disciplinary approach to care is needed across the vascular network, hub and spoke. The Provision of Service publications in 2018 will outline how this care can be best delivered covering both open and image guided procedures.

For IR, configuration of services needs to cover the demand for other non-vascular care pathways (trauma, acute bleeding, dialysis access, sepsis). Networked 24/7 care must provide patients access to these treatments regardless of where they present. For acute conditions this may require a more devolved IR service network model rather than the vascular emergency single centre model.

Outcome data is a high priority as it provides the basis for governance and audit, and reassures patients of the quality of the service. The development of meaningful datasets and the facility to collect relevant data are essential.

Skilled clinicians are important to a service under personnel pressures, and a programme of inclusion and development is essential. Recruitment into both specialities is necessary for a sustainable future. Training and a career in both specialities needs to be made as attractive as possible.

We believe that vascular surgeons and interventional radiologists are essential to a vascular service of the future and are committed to working together to not only improve the delivery of care to our patients but enhance training, recruitment, audit and research.