Statement from the British Society of Interventional Radiologists and Royal College of Radiologists.

In the light of the well-publicised difficulties at St George’s Hospital, the BSIR and RCR would like to emphasise the importance of collaborative team working and shared care in delivering optimal treatments for patients with vascular disease. Interventional radiologists are the specialists in all aspects of imaging and image-guided intervention, vascular and non-vascular. Safe provision of endovascular services requires input from interventional radiologists as well as vascular surgeons.

A safe and sustainable vascular service relies on shared responsibility, mutual respect and close working relationships between all specialists including interventional radiologists, vascular surgeons, diabetologists, anaesthetists, radiographers, sonographers, vascular technicians and nurses. Clinical leadership of the endovascular team will depend on the technical, interpersonal and motivational skills of the individual members of the team, and should therefore be agreed locally with no one professional group assuming primacy.

The skill-set required for complex interventional radiology (IR) treatments is built on experience with endovascular procedures. The loss of such procedures from Interventional Radiology practice would severely compromise IR training. The impact of this would be to reduce the number of centres with the critical numbers of appropriately trained staff to support a 24/7 Interventional Radiology Service for the management of patients requiring a much wider range of IR services including those with vascular emergencies, acute haemorrhage, acute stroke and sepsis.