

Statement from the Vascular Society

16th June 2016

The Vascular Society of Great Britain and Ireland firmly believes that the care of patients having endovascular intervention for vascular disease should be led and provided by vascular surgeons. These surgeons should be trained to the highest standards to provide safe and effective treatment to patients with vascular disease no matter where they reside in the UK.

There are many examples of harmonious practice within the UK where surgeons and radiologists work together to provide safe and effective patient care. POVS 2015 describes these models and we would fully endorse those centres where collaborative working practices are able to effectively provide both elective and 24/7 emergency endovascular care. However, the population, geography, degree of specialization and the workforce arrangements to meet service demands will differ across networks. In some units vascular surgeons will be required to deliver the majority of elective and emergency vascular intervention in the future.

The recent events at St George's Hospital, London have been reported in the national press and are raising concerns about the tensions that exist between radiologists and surgeons in the delivery of modern vascular intervention. An external review of the service has taken place and until that is published we are unable to comment on the local issues. We would however state our total support for vascular surgeon led endovascular units.

We are working closely with BSIR/RCR to deliver a number of service models and we believe that all major vascular centres will need to employ vascular surgeons with an endovascular skill set capable of delivering this modern care. We are also working with the vascular SAC to ensure that the modern vascular curriculum reflects the training required to continue this natural evolution in UK vascular surgery in keeping with international vascular surgical practice.

All of our vascular trainees need to be trained in endovascular surgery and collaboration with our interventional radiologists is required in order to deliver the best possible safe care to our patients. Vascular surgeons lead the clinical service and this leadership must continue.

Mike Wyatt, President
Rob Sayers, President Elect
Kevin Varty, Honorary Secretary

(On behalf of the Council of the Vascular Society of Great Britain and Ireland)