

GIRFT Imaging Networks Report

An evaluation of the current status and achievements of imaging networks

November 2025

Executive summary: [Full report available on FutureNHS](#)



Executive summary

This report presents the findings of the GIRFT imaging network reviews undertaken across all 22 imaging networks in England between June 2024 and January 2025. Key findings from the reviews include:

1. Digital connectivity remains a critical enabler for effective network function. While several networks have made significant progress in implementing shared Picture Archiving and Communication Systems (PACS) and seamless image sharing, many are constrained by legacy contracts, resource limitations, infrastructure issues, and slow supplier engagement. Approximately half of the networks either have seamless image sharing in place or have embarked on implementation programmes expected to deliver within two years, however digital delays are impeding the full benefits of network working.
2. Radiology departments within networks are increasingly collaborating through shared leadership models, Communities of Practice, and coordinated workforce initiatives. Successful networks have fostered a culture of mutual aid, cross-site support, and shared clinical pathways, often supported by funded leadership and education roles.
3. The network model is enabling a more strategic approach to managing capital assets, procurement, and workforce development. Examples include joint asset registers, regional procurement collaboratives, and innovative approaches to education and staff retention. However, national workforce shortages particularly in sonography and reporting continue to limit service capacity.
4. Networks are driving improvements in access and quality through initiatives such as shared waiting lists, standardised care pathways, regional teleradiology procurement, and modality-specific service coordination. Many are also engaging in cutting-edge technological innovation, including AI deployment and MRI acceleration.
5. Imaging networks are capable of generating a range of benefits for their systems, some of which will likely be financial. Where this is the case, it would be logical that they be permitted to retain some of those financial savings to sustain their structure and support ongoing work.

Overall, there has been encouraging progress, however some challenges persist. Cultural resistance to collaboration, inconsistent data collection practices, slow implementation of shared systems, and variation in network maturity are significant barriers.

In conclusion, the review process demonstrates the potential of imaging networks to deliver a more efficient, equitable, and patient-centred imaging service, and the network approach to imaging services continues to be the optimal strategy. This potential will be fully realised with a robust digital infrastructure, workforce development, shared leadership, and comprehensive performance oversight. The insights derived from this review form the foundation for the following recommendations which can also be found in [section 8](#):

Recommendations

Organisation of Care	1. Development of imaging networks should continue in line with the National Imaging Strategy. Sustainable funding models should be developed by networks in conjunction with regional teams and systems. 2. Imaging networks should review the recommendations contained in the GIRFT Radiology National Report and consider where further progress could be made.
Digital Transformation	3. Networks should review their progress with digital transformation and seek support where procurements of image sharing solutions have stalled or where there is no clear implementation plan in place. 4. National bodies should review coding in radiology and continue progress towards harmonisation of data collections to support networks in benchmarking and planning.
Leadership and Training	5. Networks should collaborate with relevant professional bodies and NHS leadership programmes to influence and access tailored leadership training and development, ensuring a steady pipeline of clinical and non-clinical leaders equipped to tackle future challenges in imaging networks.
Sustainability and Progress	6. The framework used for the assessment of progress of imaging networks (the “maturity matrix”) should be reviewed and refreshed in light of developments so far and future ambitions in line with the NHS 10-year Health Plan. 7. A review of imaging networks should be undertaken no sooner than two years after the publication of this report. 8. Imaging networks and their funding bodies should consider how better to publicise the objectives, achievements and benefits of the imaging networks to stakeholders including the public.



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