

Cutting-edge cancer services launched under new partnership between CancerPartners UK and Spire Healthcare

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CancerPartners UK and leading private hospital (<http://www.spirehealthcare.com/locate-a-hospital/>) provider Spire Healthcare this week announced a partnership that will see the organisation provide cutting edge cancer treatments on three Spire Healthcare private hospital sites - the first private radiotherapy services outside London.

Expanded cancer centres will be built on the Spire Healthcare private hospital sites in Leeds, Birmingham and Portsmouth to deliver state of the art private radiotherapy services using the latest generation technologies, including Intensity-Modulated Radiation Therapy (IMRT) and Image Guided Radiation Therapy (IGRT). These are shown to have significant benefits in treating some of the UK's most common cancers including breast cancer and prostate cancer.

Professor Karol Sikora, leading cancer specialist and Medical Director of CancerPartners UK, said:

"It is our philosophy to bring high quality cancer care closer to patients. This deal marks an important milestone for us, as we look to roll out cancer services across the country, and make cutting edge treatments and services available to increasing numbers of patients.

"This partnership will enable more patients to access the best in modern treatment, including much needed radiotherapy services – an area acknowledged in the Government's Cancer Reform Strategy as being under-developed in the UK."

Richard Jones, Commercial Director of Spire Healthcare, said: "The new centres will offer the first fully-integrated private cancer treatment facilities in the UK outside London, bringing together the skills, technology and clinical ability to radically improve care and deliver world class treatment. They will let people access diagnostics, surgery, chemotherapy and radiotherapy all on one site in a comfortable, clean environment, giving patients rapid access to leading oncologists in the area."

The first patient is expected be treated in the new cancer centres by July 2009.

At the same time, CancerPartners UK announced an agreement with Bupa, the UK's largest health insurer and biggest funder of cancer care outside of the NHS. Bupa will continue to support CancerPartners UK to deliver greater access to services and develop high-quality, affordable care for cancer patients.

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Notes for editors

* CancerPartnersUK is an independent organisation offering a refreshingly new approach to cancer care. Led by a specialist management team, CancerPartners UK's strategy is to build and operate a network of high quality, innovative cancer centres addressing the significant under-provision of cancer services in the UK, particularly in radiotherapy. Working with commissioners and providers, it offers a new strategic approach to re-engineering cancer services, reducing waiting and travel times for patients and providing services in convenient locations closer to where patients live and work. CancerPartners UK was founded by Apposite Capital, a leading investment firm exclusively focused on Healthcare.

* Spire Healthcare is the second largest private hospital provider in the UK with 36 hospitals and a total of 1,983 beds. It was formed in 2007 from the sale of Bupa Hospitals to leading private equity company Cinven. Spire Healthcare provides services for private and insured patients as well as NHS funded patients under the government's Free Choice. It also offers cosmetic and weight-loss surgery. It now treats 930,000 patients a year and works with over 3,000 consultant (<http://www.spirehealthcare.com/locate-a-consultant/>) surgeons and physicians. www.spirehealthcare.com

* Bupa is the UK market leader in health and care with a strong international presence. Established in 1947, it has around 8 million customers in 190 countries and more than 48,000 employees. Its main interests are health insurance, care homes for older people and young disabled, health assessments, workplace health and childcare services. Bupa Travel offers a bespoke travel insurance service. Sanitas in Spain, HBA, Mutual Community and DCA Agedcare in Australia and New Zealand, IHI in Denmark and Health Dialog in the US and the Bupa Cromwell Hospital in London are all part of the Bupa Group, which also has centres in Hong-Kong, Thailand and Saudi Arabia. Bupa is a company limited by guarantee and does not have a share capital. As a result, it can focus on its customers, helping them to live longer, healthier lives and can reinvest all of its profits to do this – this is the dividend that Bupa provides.

* The UK has high levels of unmet need in cancer care, as identified in the National Cancer Strategy, the National Radiotherapy Advisory Group (NRAG) and supported by data from the Swedish Karolinska Institute. Amongst the UK's ageing population, it is anticipated that 1 in 3 of the population will require treatment at some point in their lives. The UK currently has a shortfall of about 150 linear accelerators, which would require £500 million of capital investment and significant increases in staffing as well as related services such as training.