

Press Release

John Healey Member for Wentworth and Dearne visits The Thornbury Centre, Sheffield

John Healey, MP for Wentworth and Dearne today visited the Thornbury Centre in Sheffield.

Mr Healey met with patients and staff to discuss the world leading cancer treatment provided to patients at the Sheffield Centre, and the impact of the uncertainty of the NHS reforms of patient services and patient care.

““We have one of the most advanced cancer treatments available in the UK, located right here in South Yorkshire, yet it is currently being underused”. Mr Healey MP said today.

“The centre is currently operating at only 45% capacity- we could treat an additional 200 patients per year” says Ms Lynne Brooks, the centre director.

This statistic is particularly alarming given the recently released Government report showing the extreme North South divide in access to cancer treatment for patients. The North of England has the seventh highest number of cancer patients but is bottom of the league table for radiotherapy treatments, one of the main weapons for fighting a range of tumours.

“David Cameron promised to ‘protect the NHS’ but since he’s been Prime Minister patients have seen services cutback and longer waits for treatment.

“There’s a postcode lottery in access to cancer treatment and the Government’s long-term plans for the NHS will lead to more not less local variation in services. People are missing out on vital cancer care simply because of where they live.” Mr Healey MP said.

The centre at BMI Thornbury Hospital in Sheffield is one of only five units in the UK to offer Gamma Knife surgery and is equipped with the most up to date equipment in the country. Led by Mr Andras Kemeny, a Consultant Neurosurgeon at the Royal Hallamshire Hospital, the Thornbury Centre performs the most complicated and advanced brain cancer surgeries, undertaking more complex cases than its counterparts.

“Gamma Knife surgery is one of the most advanced forms of cancer treatment available today, and is the most effective treatment for many forms of brain cancer. It is highly cost effective as the procedure is so efficient and there are fewer complications than the conventional alternative of whole brain radiotherapy, such as long term dementia, and faster recovery than open surgery for patients” Mr Andras Kemeny, lead consultant neurosurgeon said today.

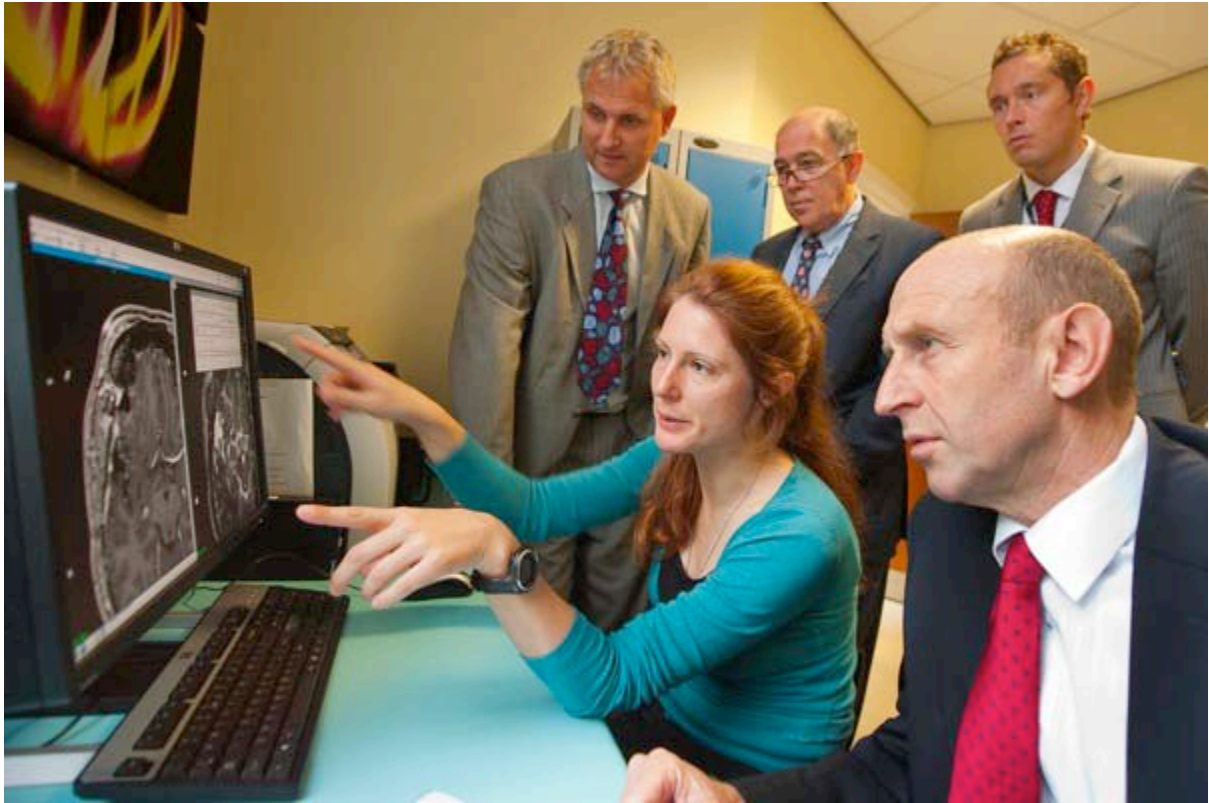
Gamma Knife surgery is a non-invasive, safe and effective radiotherapy treatment using beams of gamma radiation to treat brain tumours. Benign and malignant tumours are destroyed with minimal damage to surrounding tissue and the technique has a recovery period of only a few days.

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John Healey MP Member for Wentworth Dearne with left to right- Robert Ward Lead Radiographer, Neurosurgeons Matt Radatz and lead Consultant Neurosurgeon Andras Kemeny (in foreground) inspecting the frame that is fitted to the patients' head during the Gamma Knife treatment. Gamma Knife Radio Therapy system. 17th October 2011.



John Healey MP is shown how radiographers target the tumours within the brain. Radioactive beams are then focused on the target in the brain with extremely high precision and without damaging healthy tissue.



The Gamma Knife Radiotherapy treatment system