

# 5 Year Strategy

2022 - 2027

Dedicated to being a World Class Leader in  
Cancer Treatment, Patient Care, Research  
Education and Prevention.





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# 2020 at a glance

St Luke's Radiation Oncology Network (SLRON) is the largest provider of radiation oncology services nationally.

**132**

Radiation Therapists  
Whole Time  
Equivalent (WTE)

**574**

Total number of staff  
across SLRON

**20**

Radiation  
Oncologists  
(WTE)

**4,925**

Patients treated in  
2020

**74,518**

Number of Radiotherapy  
fractions in 2020

**3**

First opened in 1954, the network now operates from three locations – St Luke's Hospital Rathgar, and St Luke's Radiation Oncology Centres at St James's & Beaumont Hospitals which opened in 2011

**100%**

Demand for our radiation oncology  
services is projected to increase by up  
to 100% over the next 20 years

**80**

SLRON has access to 80  
beds across the network

**14**

SLRON have access to 14 linear accelerators (LINACs),  
6 CT simulators and 2 MRI machines across our sites

# Welcome



**Prof Clare Faul**  
Clinical Network Director

**As Network Director and Clinical Director of St Luke's Radiation Oncology Network (SLRON), I am delighted to present our strategic plan and road map for the provision of an optimised cancer service for our patient population.**

Having introduced modern techniques such as intensity-modulated radiation therapy, stereotactic body radiation therapy and image-guided radiation therapy, SLRON has ambitious plans for further development, ensuring SLRON remains at the forefront of radiation delivery, education and research in Ireland.

This is SLRON's first published strategy which will importantly help us prepare for and lead during a time of rapid innovation within the specialty of radiation oncology. Our fundamental aim is to provide the best quality in cancer care. Our strategic priorities and the roadmap will assist SLRON in strengthening our position as a leader in radiation oncology and cancer care. SLRON consulted with a wide variety of stakeholders including our patients, staff and funders as well as the wider cancer community, cancer foundations and government bodies in building this strategy.

This strategic plan is ambitious and builds on our experience in innovation, research, education and quality cancer service.

**We have identified 3 pillars of optimised cancer care:**

- Our people - finest cancer workforce
- Research and advanced technical innovation
- Strategic partnerships and impact on cancer strategy

**All underpinned by 2 enablers as follows:**

- Governance
- Business intelligence and data

**"How we will get there"** will include a focus on enhanced governance, education and training, quality improvement initiatives and improved data capture.

I look forward to the implementation of this strategy which will help us to guide our future development in order to provide the very best treatment and care to our patients.

A handwritten signature in purple ink, reading 'Clare Faul'.

Prof Clare Faul  
MB, FRCPI, FFRRCSI  
Consultant Radiation Oncologist  
Honorary Clinical Associate Professor  
RCSI University of Medicine and Health Science  
Clinical and Network Director  
St Luke's Radiation Oncology Network

# Who we are

**At SLRON, we are dedicated to being a leader in cancer treatment, patient care, research and education. In striving for this excellence, the holistic needs of our patients and their families is our greatest priority.**

It is over 65 years since St Luke's first opened its doors to care for cancer patients in Ireland, and over a decade since the network of SLRON was established. During that time, we have developed a world-class cancer network, with a proven record of implementing new treatments, technologies and methodologies – identifying and converting the latest innovations into clinical practice. SLRON expanded its service in 2010 and opened two new radiation centres on the campus of Beaumont and St James's Hospital. These two centres along with St Luke's Hospital, Rathgar, operate as a single network with a single executive management team directly reporting to Dublin Midland's Hospital Group CEO. This governance structure has facilitated the rapid introduction of new techniques and protocols. It has allowed economies of scale with designation and support of different specialist treatments across the network. Over the past ten years, St Luke's Radiation Oncology Network has invested significantly in its radiotherapy technology.

We are privileged to have very high specification linear accelerators available to us in SLRON. Six Clinac iX Linear Accelerators with integrated 3D IGRT capability, 120-Leaf High resolution Multi Leaf Collimators and RapidArc, Two Trilogy™ Multi-purpose linear accelerators with Stereotactic Radiosurgery capability in the Beaumont centre and two trueBEAM Varian machines. SLRON currently provides public radiotherapy cancer services for Dublin along with a range of specialist national radiotherapy services. Approximately 55% of Irish radiotherapy patients are treated in Dublin and 75% of these are treated in SLRON. We treat 5,000 new cases per year (80,000 linac radiation fractions) on 14 linear accelerators making SLRON one of the largest radiation centres in Europe. Patients also benefit from access to clinical trials across multiple tumour types.

The National Cancer Control Programme (NCCP) has designated SLRON as the reference centre for SABR/SRS for the country. The only centre offering a public stereotactic service in Ireland.

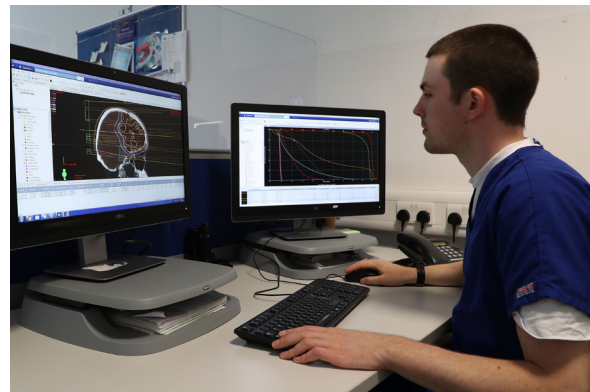
## SLRON provides the following national radiation services:

- Stereotactic Ablative Radiotherapy (SABR) also known as Stereotactic Body Radiation Therapy (SBRT) introduced in 2015.
- Stereotactic Radiosurgery (SRS) for intracranial tumours and spine. This service is delivered at SLRON Beaumont Centre, aligned with the Neurosurgery department in Beaumont Hospital.
- Paediatric Radiotherapy, this demand led national service is delivered at SLRON, St Luke's Hospital Rathgar, supported by CHI at Crumlin providing specialist anaesthetic services providing specialist anaesthetic services on the Rathgar site for very young children undergoing radiotherapy.
- Ocular Brachytherapy national service provided with the Eye and Ear Hospital, Dublin.
- Total Body Radiation (TBI) this national service is now predominantly delivered at SLRON, St James's Centre, aligned with the Bone Marrow Transplant Unit at St James's Hospital.
- Intraoperative radiotherapy for Breast Cancer with Beaumont Surgical Department.

## We are proud of our history and our impact, including:

- Our partnership with St Luke's Institute of Clinical Research (SLICR), Cancer Trials Ireland, and our clinical trials unit (CTU) to ensure our patients benefit from the latest clinical trials.
- Our alignment to the HSE's values and partnership with the National Cancer Control Programme (NCCP) to deliver high quality patient care.
- Our excellent facilities, including 14 linear accelerators, a specially equipped physiotherapy gym, patient gardens, art rooms and accommodation.
- Our collaboration with the Friend's of St Luke's - a vital source of support in the development of SLRON - established to raise funds to enhance the care, comfort and management of cancer patients attending St Luke's.
- The care, advances, and impact of SLRON to date is only possible because of the commitment of our dynamic multi-disciplinary team (MDT). Our MDT is dedicated to advancing best practices in radiation medicine through cutting-edge radiation practices and technologies.
- As we enter our second decade as a network, this document details our strategic priorities for the coming 5 years. These strategic priorities build upon our experience and expertise, and will continue to be informed and guided by our ambition to provide the very best treatment and care to our patients.







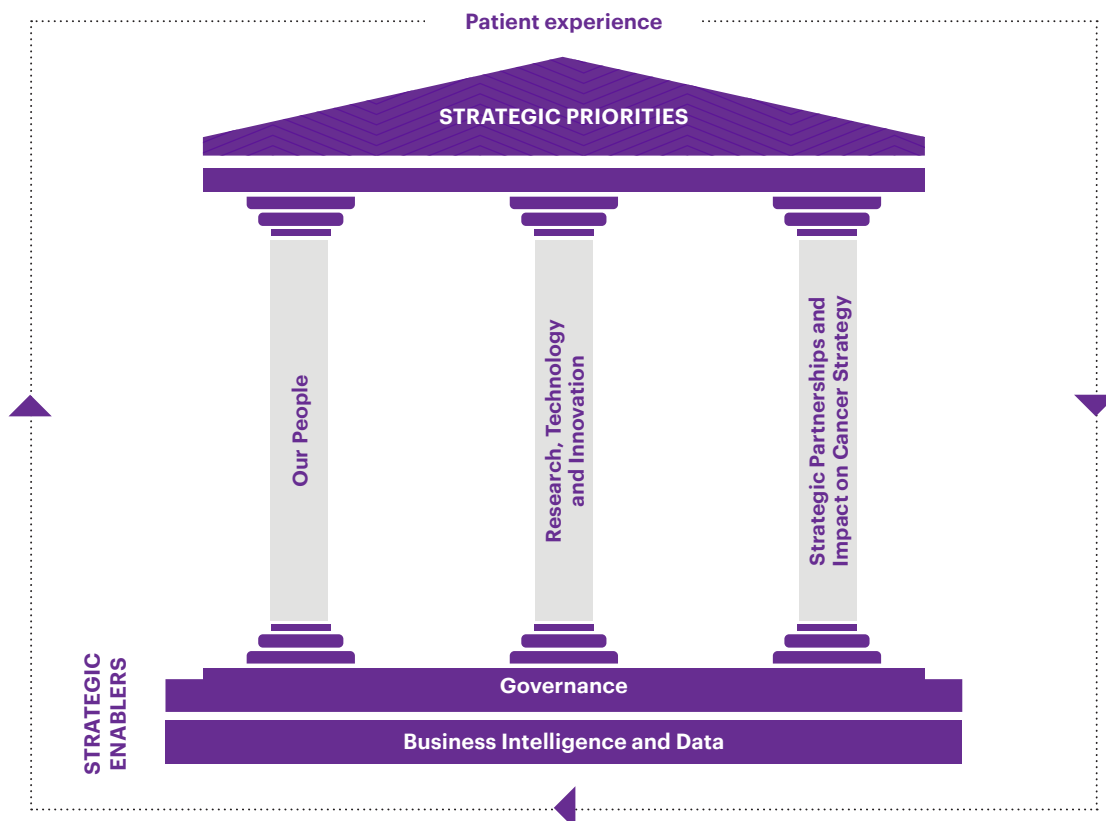
# Key milestones

1954	St Luke's Hospital formally opened
1962	First Cobalt Machine opened
1981	The Friends of St Luke's Charity was established
1982	The School of Therapeutic Radiography was established
1985	First Linear Accelerator opened
1988	St Luke's and St Anne's Hospitals amalgamated
1988	A4 Megavoltage linacs installed at St Luke's Hospital
1992	St. Luke's Institute of Cancer Research was established
1995	Two additional linacs and one CT scanner opened
1996	Oaklands Lodge opened
1999	Two additional linacs opened
2003	The Hollywood Report was published – "Development of Radiation Oncology Services in Ireland"
2005	National Network for Radiation Oncology, Intracranial and IMRT Services announced
2007	National Cancer Control Programme established
2008	Two new and two replacement Linear Accelerators installed at St Luke's Hospital
2010	St Luke's Hospital became part of the HSE
2011	SLRON opened centres in St James's and Beaumont Hospitals
2017	Two new linacs installed at St. Luke's Hospital
2017	Indoor play area for children and an adolescent room opened at St Luke's Hospital

# SLRON Strategic priorities

This 5-year strategy was developed in collaboration with staff from across SLRON. Three key priorities were identified in the process, and they are supported by two key enablers. Optimal patient experience is central to all that we do.

“The care, advances, and impact of SLRON to date is only possible because of the commitment of our dynamic multi-disciplinary team (MDT), comprising of Radiation Oncologists, Radiation Therapists, Dosimetrists/RT Planners, Medical Physicists and Oncology Nurses, as well as a wide range of Health Care Social Professionals and operations support.”



SLRON has identified 3 core strategic priority areas for the next 5 years. We have also recognised the requirement for 2 strategic enablers to support the delivery of our strategic priorities.

# Our people

## Context

**Radiotherapy is a multi-disciplinary service which includes a dynamic team of Radiation Oncologists, Radiation Therapists, Dosimetrists / RT Planners, Medical Physicists and Oncology Nurses.**

There is also a wide range of Health & Social Care Professionals; Clinical Nutrition & Dietetics, Laboratory, Medical Social Work, Pharmacy, Phlebotomy, Physiotherapy, Psych-oncology, Radiology and Speech & Language Therapy. This team is supported by our operations team, who work in partnership to achieve the best possible outcomes for our patients.

Our people are our greatest asset, and we are committed to strengthening a culture in which they feel engaged, empowered, and connected to their work.

It is imperative that our people feel supported and valued while delivering high-quality patient care in a service. We will strengthen our ability to attract, develop and retain the finest cancer workforce in Ireland and internationally.



## Employee development

Enhance the development of employees skills to optimally position the network as the employer of choice nationally.

### How we will get there

- Build a centralised education and training hub for internal and national staff to enhance skill-set in order to undertake cutting-edge research and implement innovative methodologies that will improve patient outcomes and patient experience.
- Align research, education and clinical care.
- Agree practice change and provide staff with education and training on research and innovation priorities.
- Develop a performance achievement process to provide staff with a two-way performance appraisal mechanism.
- Explore opportunities to introduce flexible working arrangements (for staff and technologies) in appropriate roles to improve work life balance and staff satisfaction and retention.
- Implement a wellness and development programme for staff.

## Leadership capacity building

Provide leadership and development opportunities for our people while enhancing integration across the network.

### How we will get there

- Develop multi-disciplinary education programmes with structured modules to promote interdisciplinary learning.
- Establish a Leadership Academy to roll-out mentoring, coaching and educational programmes to provide roles with increased responsibility and ensure we are nurturing leadership capacity and engaging in succession planning.
- Provide career progression and leadership opportunities with enhanced responsibilities within disciplines.
- Recognise the talents and knowledge of experienced staff and their potential as mentors.

## Training

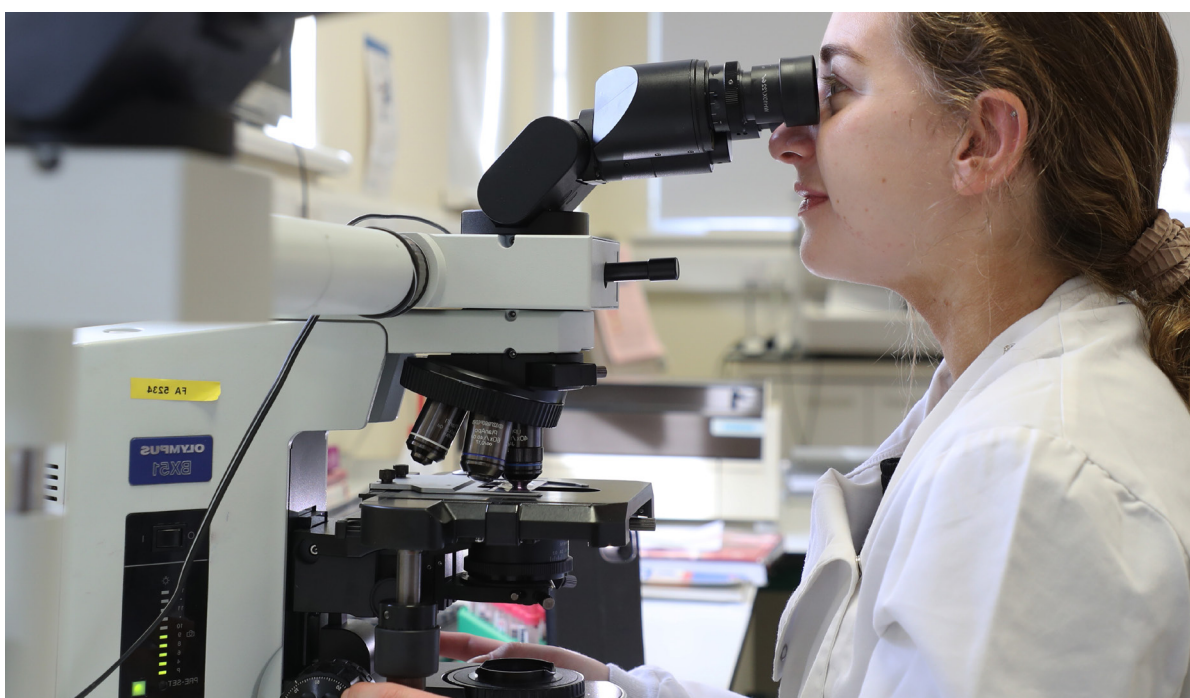
Build our staff's skill-set to undertake cutting-edge research and to implement innovative methodologies and technologies that will improve patient outcomes and patient experience.

### How we will get there

- Train primary project leads in continuous quality improvement.
- Review our processes with the goal of creating a more lean approach by eliminating “work-arounds” and reducing re-work.
- Enable staff to continue to build expertise in relevant areas of research and innovation in respective disciplines by implementing a timely and robust training plan when commissioning new equipment.
- Agree practice change and provide education and training to staff on research and innovation priorities.
- Empower staff to work efficiently by streamlining routine tasks and implementing automation where possible.

### Impact for SLRON

- Improved attraction and retention of staff to SLRON.
- Increased staff satisfaction and engagement including an improved work / life balance.
- Improved utilisation of staff skills, leading to an ability to focus on new innovations and capitalise on the full capacity of new technologies.





# Research, technology and innovation

## Context

**The National Cancer Strategy recommends that research should be a core clinical activity. Clinical trials provide an obvious route to both drive the specifications for any new equipment in the network and to rapidly implement new treatment approaches. As it has been shown that all patients involved in clinical trials have an improved outcome, it is important we maximise the number of trials and the number of patients on trials.**

This approach will allow us to further participate in existing and upcoming trials and to develop more of our own trials i.e., Investigator Initiated Trials (IITs). SLRON is committed to keeping abreast of developments in radiotherapy and the direction of future trials will also help us predict the specifications for required future treatment or imaging technology. The aim of cancer centres in Europe is to have 10% of their patients be offered participation in a relevant clinical trial, although ambitious this will be the aim for SLRON starting with potential 5% enrolment in 5 years.

Research, advances in technology and innovation has been, and will remain, at the centre of what we do - key enablers for the delivery of evidence-based high-quality patient-centred care. To continue to improve patient outcomes, we will leverage our research, clinical and technical capabilities to tailor the delivery of therapy to each patient in our care.

It is imperative that we remain at the forefront of radiation oncology innovation and we will, therefore, foster development to enable us to maximise our technical capabilities. We will continue to support a culture of research and innovation in the pursuit of new methodologies and approaches to deliver the best possible outcomes for our patients. We will strengthen our internal capabilities to ensure that we continue to develop the skills of our multi-disciplinary workforce.

We will foster our workforce to ensure they have the capacity to undertake invaluable research and implement the latest approaches and technologies, in our clinical and translational research programmes. With radiation oncology treatments advancing at a rapid pace, we must also ensure that we engage in open communication and capitalise on research and education opportunities with international centres.

## Innovation

Efficiently convert the latest innovations into clinical impact – caring for our patients with the latest and most advanced treatments.

Ensuring SLRON is at the cutting edge of radiation oncology research and technology developments.

### How we will get there

- Develop a Research & Innovation programme, aligned with SLRON's clinical priorities.
- Build on our experience and reputation in research and the adoption of innovation methodologies.
- Strengthen our research collaborations and platforms with our stakeholders including academic institutions and industry partners.
- Improve access to clinical trials for our patients and enhance the infrastructure to enable clinical and translational research via collaboration with institutes such as Cancer Trials Ireland and St Luke's Institute for Cancer Research (SLICR).
- Enhance the engagement with HSE/DOH and international bodies to enable optimum technical innovation for radiation oncology be identified and provided for patients.
- Support and expand the ongoing development of our on-site radiobiology laboratory.
- Encourage and support research and innovation across all disciplines to enable the development of services for patients.
- Strengthen clinical audit structures and processes to improve both patient and safety outcomes.
- We will need support in the intellectual / academic area, support in the development and approval of the relevant clinical trials, and support for each of the disciplines involved in the implementation of a technology to ensure we have dedicated staff time to see that the protocol is adhered to.

### Impact for SLRON

- Our expert workforce will be empowered as decision makers and leaders in their field. They will have the ability to challenge and implement innovative change in their given area of care.
- We will market our experience and our highly skilled staff, who are adept at identifying, implementing and managing the latest technology, to educate other clinical institutions.
- We will have the ability to streamline and automate routine tasks to enable staff to focus time and expertise on high impact activities including research, clinical trials and patient care.

# Strategic partnerships and impact on cancer strategy

## Context

**Over 65 years, we have established a proud reputation as a leading provider of cancer care. Today, as in 1954, our primary commitment is to improve outcomes for the patients we serve.**

SLRON has undergone significant change over recent decades and, in particular, during the last 10 years. SLRON has evolved from a single stand-alone hospital in Rathgar to a network - with the opening of treatment centres in St James's and Beaumont Hospitals. Our aim is to actively promote cancer and radiotherapy awareness and ensure patient advocacy is central to all decisions.

The National Cancer Strategy 2017-2026 highlights a marked increase in the demand for radiation oncology services nationally in line with increasing cancer incidence, and it is anticipated that the demand will grow significantly in the coming decades.

The National Cancer Control Programme expects that up to 60% of patients will require radiation oncology for primary treatment and palliative care.

Given this context, and our ambitious plans for the next 5 years, we have recognised the requirement to reflect on SLRON's impact. In collaboration with our multidisciplinary team and patient advocacy groups we will now develop a plan for how we will effectively communicate the impact of our work and the importance of radiation therapy in the treatment of cancer.

We will foster academic links both Nationally and Internationally. SLRON will partner with International bodies recommending and overseeing Cancer Policy and guidelines such as The European Society for Radiation Oncology, The American Society for Radiation Oncology and The Organisation of European Cancer Institutes.

We will strive to ensure that radiation oncology has a strong voice in future national cancer strategies to enhance patient care. We will foster and develop strategic cancer partnerships to facilitate this goal.



## Communicating our impact

Building on our history and impact, develop a plan to strengthen, nationally and internationally, the network's position as a world-class centre for innovative and quality patient-centred care.

### How we will get there

- In collaboration with staff and patient advocacy representatives, improve our recognition as the premier national radiation oncology centre.
- Develop a strategic communication and engagement plan to disseminate our brand.
- Optimise the use of social media and e-health to communicate our message.
- Continue to align to the HSE's values and partner with the National Cancer Control Programme (NCCP) to deliver high quality patient care.

## Radiotherapy profile

Improve public awareness and understanding of the impact of radiotherapy in the treatment of cancer.

### How we will get there

- In collaboration with relevant partners, disseminate the stories from SLRON to increase public knowledge of the impact of radiotherapy in the treatment of cancer.
- Be patient advocates for enhanced cancer care.
- Foster and develop academic partnerships.

### Impact for SLRON

- Internationally recognised name with a strong reputation for high-quality patient care and innovation.
- Enhanced opportunities for funding of SLRON's invaluable work.
- Involvement at highest level in strategic oncology service planning and development.

# Governance

## Context

**We are committed to strong governance and stewardship to ensure efficiency, fairness and transparency and to provide a unified voice across SLRON.**

We will continue to encourage ownership, engagement and contribution to governance and stewardship in our multi-disciplinary team at all levels across SLRON.

In order to achieve this, it is necessary to revise our current structures to ensure we continue to operate with clear accountability and streamlined decision making.

This will mitigate against duplication of work and provide staff with transparency on projects and initiatives, including the decision making and review processes. We will continue to create and promote a culture of collaboration and innovation, and an environment in which all voices are heard and valued.

Developing and enhancing links between clinical and non-clinical services is essential in order to ensure safe and effective decision making. We will strive to strengthen relationships across SLRON within multi-disciplinary teams.





## Governance review

Streamline decision making and ensure clarity on accountability.

### How we will get there

- Review structures and mandates of SLRON's committees to ensure they will remain aligned with our future strategic priorities.
- Provide clarity around committee decision making, priorities and action-tracking / reviews to increase efficiencies and effectiveness.

## Governance refinement

- Ensure clear responsibility to avoid duplication of work.
- Promote MDT / multi-centre team working.

### How we will get there

- Facilitate access to committee work to improve communication and transparency to all staff.
- Review reporting lines and requirements for each SLRON committee.
- Standardise documentation for SLRON committees.

## Impact for SLRON

- Optimised governance structure within the organisation.
- Enhanced collaborative working and mentorship.
- Integrated communication platforms across SLRON.

# Business intelligence and data

## Context

**Reviewing and strengthening our approach to the collection, extraction and interpretation of data is a key enabler in achieving our strategic priorities – recognising the importance and value of data-driven decision making.**

Live access to timely and accurate data will ensure continuous quality improvement and innovation are embedded in our way of working.

This will ensure that we are delivering care to our patients that is informed by information and data that is relevant, reliable and readily available to our multi-disciplinary team where and when they need it.

An effective business intelligence function will allow us to gather, aggregate and interpret SLRON data and communicate digestible insights to staff and, where appropriate, other stakeholders. Our aim is to turn the data into an asset which can also be utilised to improve our education of patients on healthcare decisions and allow staff to monitor progress effectively.



## Data standardisation

Establish a streamlined process for the collection and extraction of data in a timely manner to enable decision making and inform strategy.

### How we will get there

- Undertake consultation with staff on what we want to measure and report on and continue to revise our approach at appropriate intervals.
- Agree and communicate standard Key Performance Indicators and related metrics to staff and external stakeholders to ensure appropriate and accurate data is being collected and effectively communicated.

## Quality dashboard

Establish an optimised project dashboard that supports integrated decision making.

### How we will get there

- Continue to strengthen links with external partners, including National Cancer Registry Ireland, to enhance data sources and ensure we are contributing to and informing the national cancer data repository.
- Invest in dedicated Business Intelligence unit resources to support a Business Intelligence hub as well as the technology and systems to support the data collection.
- Train staff on how to effectively collect data using the current systems while undertaking review of appropriate requirements for optimising business intelligence.
- Apply appropriate quality and project management standards to all key quality improvement initiatives.
- Communicate key performance indicators, milestones and related metrics across SLRON to promote awareness and shared ownership and evidence continued alignment to SLRON's strategy.

## Impact for SLRON

- Up to date data will be available and located in one source to inform decision making.
- Increased data literacy among staff with on demand access to information to aid in efficient decision making.
- A single source of SLRON information, contributing to our internal departments and to the national knowledge base on cancer care.

# Strategy Implementation

The leadership team in SLRON will implement this strategic plan over the next 5 years. Each department will develop a workforce plan to support strategy implementation. In order to achieve successful implementation of the strategy, we will agree key milestones and assignment of accountability for their delivery against defined timelines.

We will establish a structured process for monitoring and evaluating progress towards meeting our strategic priorities. The implementation plan will be reviewed at regular intervals to ensure it is still relevant. As policy or funding available changes the implementation plan will be adjusted to mirror these changes.



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