

BEYOND THE BEAM

Supporting Cancer Survivorship with a Radiotherapy Late Effects Service for Prostate Cancer

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What is the problem?

- Estimated that at least 500,000 people in the UK living with and beyond their cancer have a long term physical or psychosocial consequence.*
- Radiotherapy is a key modality in the treatment of cancer (Swansea Bay treated 2273 patients with radiotherapy in 1 year)**
- Radiotherapy long term side effects can develop over months to years and be permanent.
- Examples after pelvic radiotherapy : up to 50% will experience looser stools, bowel urgency, changes in urinary frequency and urgency, infertility and sexual dysfunction.***
- Under 10% have more complex issues such as bleeding from bladder or bowel, urinary stricture or rectal inflammation.***
- Currently there is lack of structured local support for patients who develop long term radiotherapy side effects

*Throwing Light on the consequences of cancer and its treatment. Available from : <https://www.macmillan.org.uk/dfsmedia/1a6f23537f7f4519bb0cf14c45b2a629/14615-10061/throwing-light-on-the-consequences-of-cancer-and-its-treatment-july-2013>

Accessed 09/11/2025

** Swansea Bay Radiotherapy MOSAIQ database April 2023- March 2024

***National Radiotherapy Consent Forms. RCR Prostate Cancer Radiotherapy Consent form. Available from: <https://www.rcr.ac.uk/our-services/management-service-delivery/national-radiotherapy-consent-forms/>. Accessed 09/11/2025



Our Patient Experiences

“Once they knew my cancer hadn’t returned, they discharged me. There was no treatment or support to help with the problems I was facing. I felt like I was bothering people—and I felt alone.”

“Post-cancer treatment is a very lonely place; trying to deal with long-term side effects, which seriously impact on your quality of life alone and without support, further heightens that feeling, I did not know where to turn.”

“There’s a high threshold before a patient will ask for help, we’re conscious that we’re lucky to be alive and so prepared to accept a lot as just being the ‘new normal’.”

“Last year I had 9 months off sick, my side effects were so unpredictable, I am off sick again now, I just can’t risk being in a school environment working when I need to use the toilet urgently.



The Vision

- Late Radiotherapy Effects service in the Southwest Wales Cancer Centre
- Led by Consultant Radiographer who is experienced at managing radiotherapy side effects
- Initially a pilot scheme for patients who received prostate radiotherapy.
- One clinic per week
- Referrals from any health care professional, or self referral via phone call, or email.



Had prostate Radiotherapy?

Over 6months post radiotherapy?

Having bowel or bladder problems?

Bowel or Bladder Urgency, frequency or poor urine flow?

Rectal bleeding?

Sexual dysfunction?

Lymphoedema?

Fatigue?

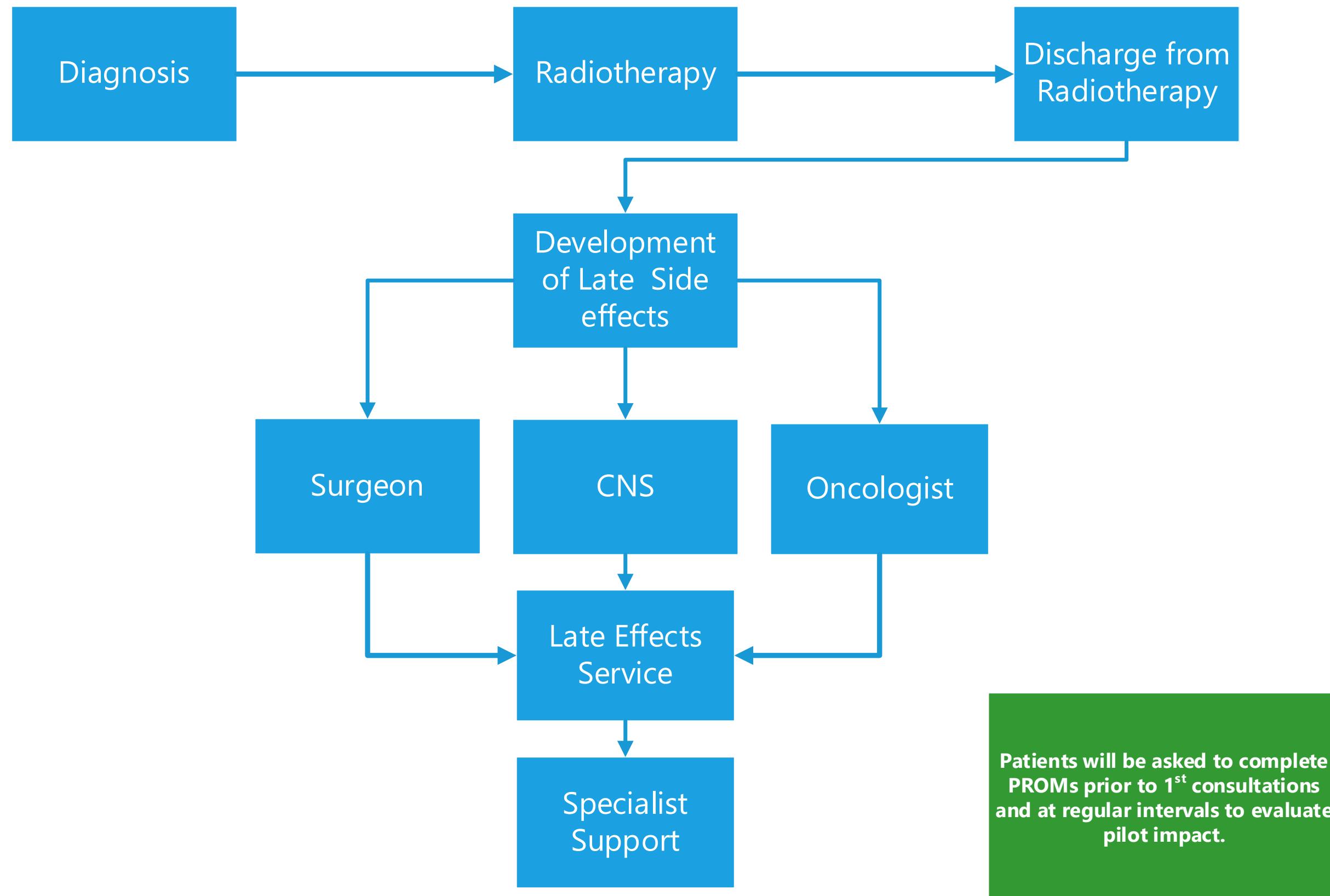
Think! – This could be late radiotherapy side effects

Refer to South West Wales Late Radiotherapy Side Effect Service

For more information contact 01792 530767

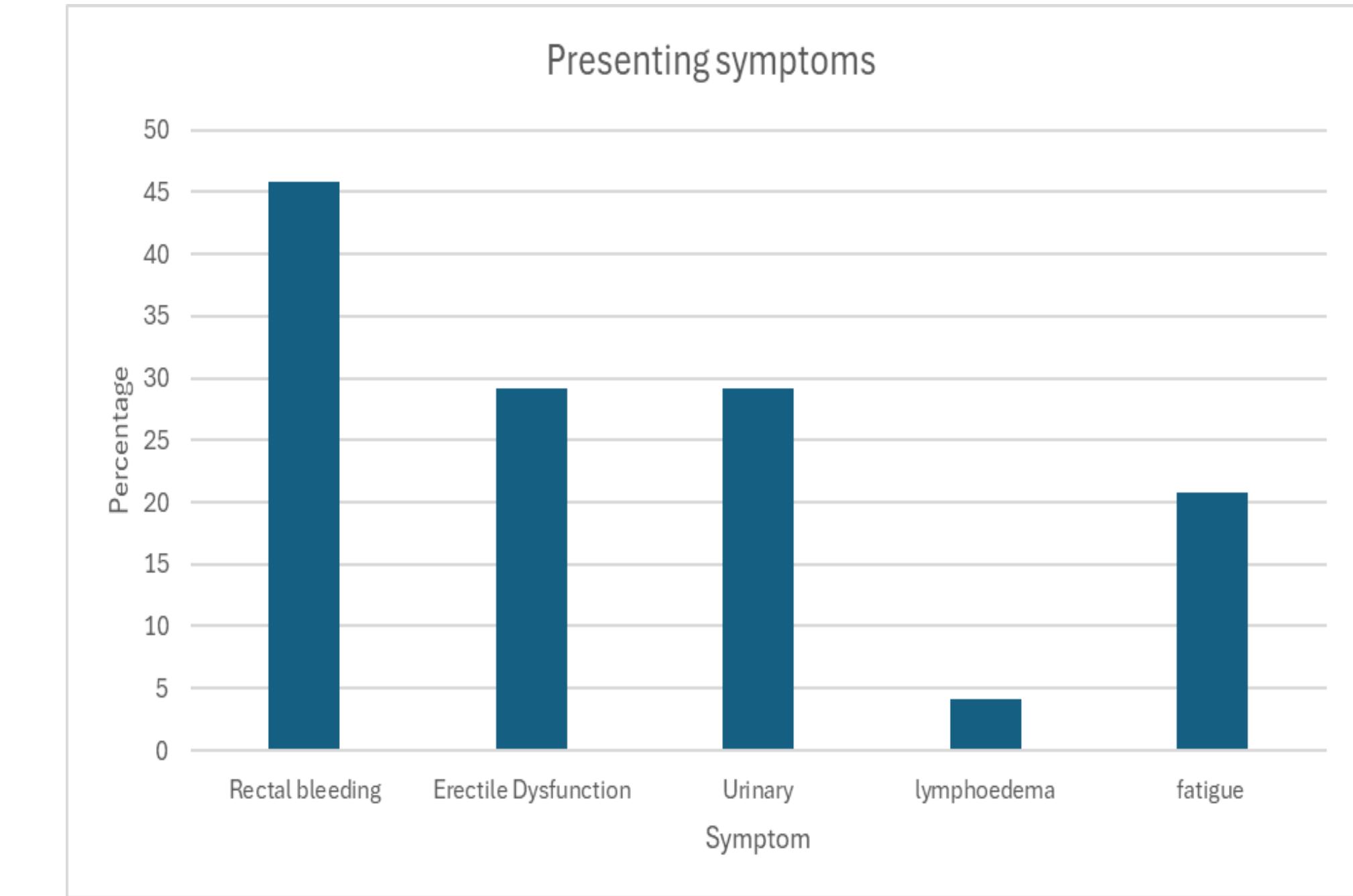
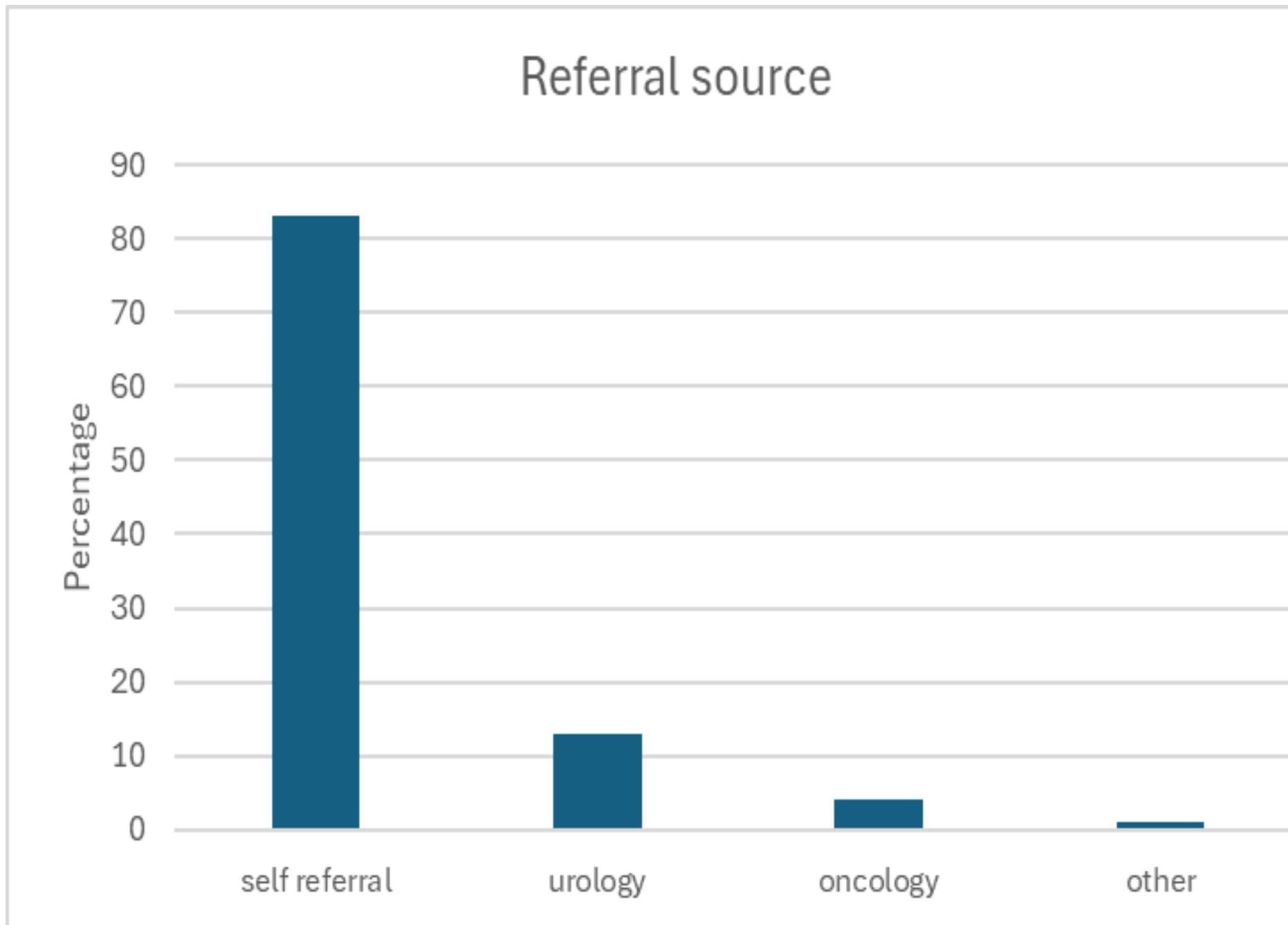


Pilot Pathway



Users of the service between March– September 2025

24 patients referred into service



Impact on health outcomes and patient experience

METRIC	PERCENTAGE
Symptom Improvement	62%
Quality of Life Improvement	70%
Patients Benefitting from Service	87.5%

- 46 telephone consultations
- 6 face to face appointments
- 14 onward referrals were made to secondary services for additional specialist input.
- 6 referrals were made for diagnostic investigations.

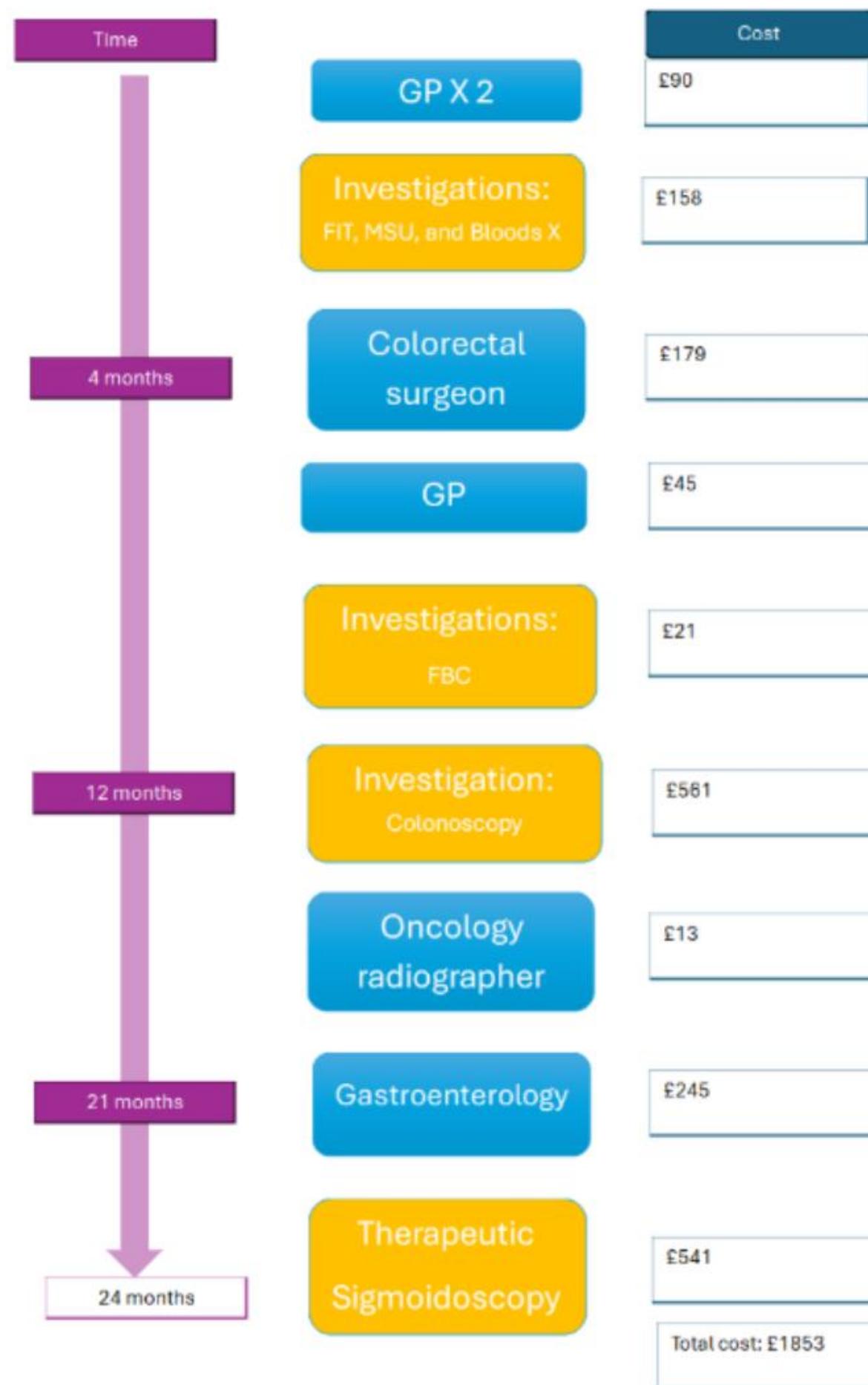
Patient Feedback

Testimonial from Peter

(voice has been changed to protect the identity of the patient)

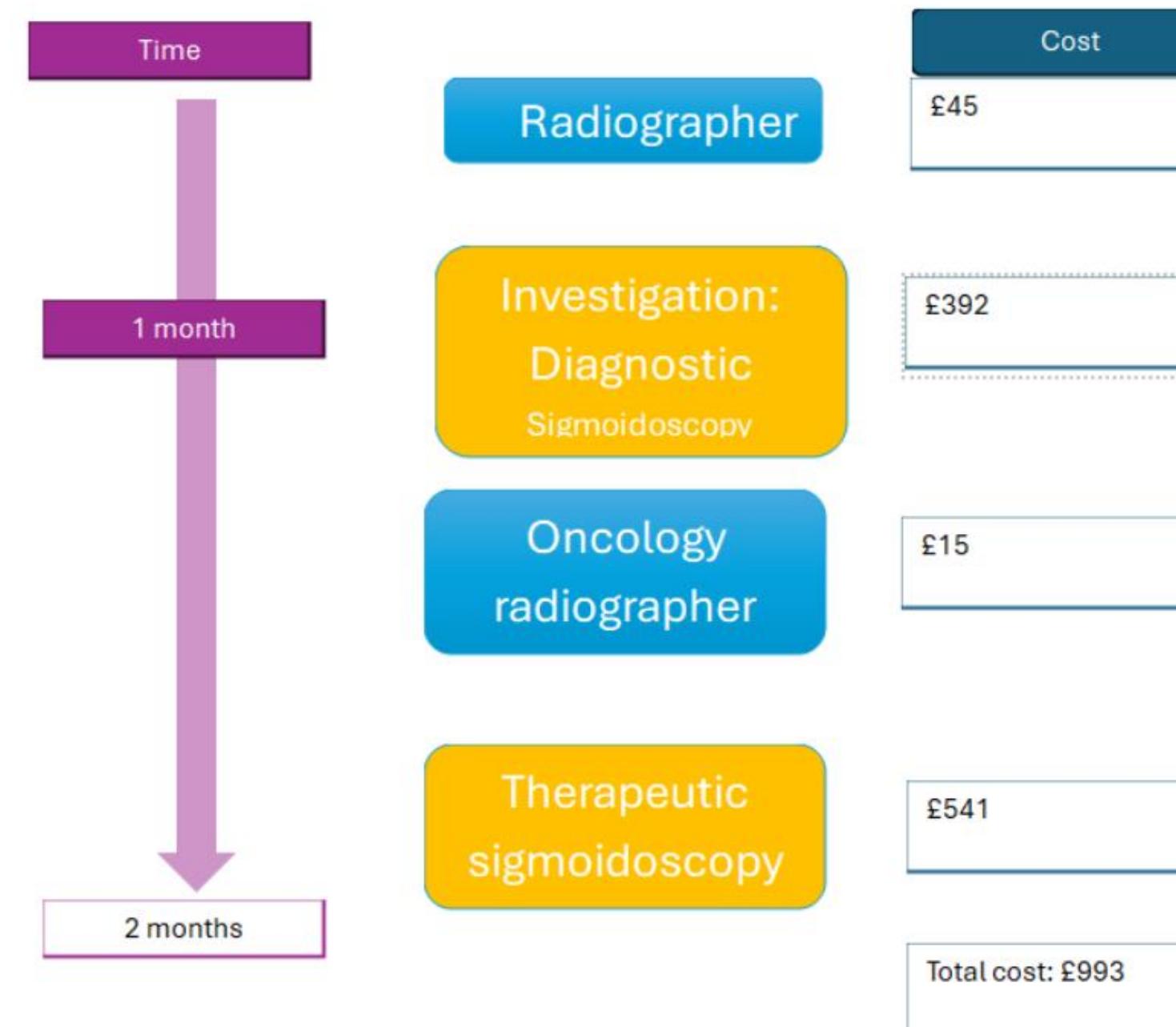


Before late effect service



Maps of 2 patient pathways with rectal bleeding

Via late effects service



Impact on service and cost savings

ASPECT	TRADITIONAL PATHWAY	LATE EFFECTS SERVICE
Average Cost per Patient	Higher	£860 Savings*
Time to Specialist Care	>1 Year	Within 2 Months

- Prompt Diagnosis
- Faster access to treatment
- New men's health service for sexual dysfunction set up
- Reduced duplicate investigations
- Fewer GP and specialist appointments
- Lower carbon footprint
- Cost savings made

* Example of cost saving based on patient management for radiotherapy induced rectal bleeding. Cost analysis undertaken with 2025/26 NHS Payment Scheme. Available from: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/2025-26-nhs-payment-scheme/#heading-2>. 25/26 pay award Prices xls document. Accessed 09/11/2025



Conclusions and Future Ambitions

- Successful establishment of pilot consultant radiographer led late radiotherapy side effects service
- Demonstration of improvement in patient care whilst improving service efficiency and financial saving
- Service has enabled data collection of patient PROMS to guide management and follow up
- All patients who have received prostate radiotherapy can now self refer
- Increase awareness of the service- hospital social media and charities
- Increasing capacity of the service to allow all patients treated with radiotherapy the ability to access
- Further upskilling radiographers and training to be able to request and interpret specialist investigations
- Collaborate with North Wales and South East Wales cancer centres to adopt and spread similar service



Thank you

