



# National Nurse Authority to Refer for Radiological Procedures Guideline (2025)

Presented by:

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Oifig an Stiúirthóra Seirbhísí  
Altranais & Cnáimhseachais

Office of Nursing &  
Midwifery Services Director

# HSE General Information

[Nurse Referral for Radiological Procedures \(ONMSD\) - healthservice.ie](https://healthservice.ie)

## Sponsorship for the Nurse Referral for Radiological Procedures Education Programme

Funding is available for registered nurses who wish to apply to undertake the standalone education programme to expand their scope of practice. This funding is available to registered nurses employed by the Health Service Executive (HSE) and HSE funded agencies (Section 38) who meet the Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) entry criteria.

Nurse referral for radiological procedures education programmes are provided by a number of HEIs. The education programme meets the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland (NMBI) requirements and standards for [Nurse Authority to Refer for Radiological Procedures \(Standards and Requirements for Education Programmes\) \(nmbi.ie, 2020\)](#)

This standalone education programme is currently available in:

- University College Dublin (UCD)
- Trinity College Dublin (TCD)
- University College Cork (UCC)

You can see start dates for Autumn 2025 and January 2026 education programmes on the following information sheet:

[Nurse Referral for Radiological Procedures Education Programme Information Sheet \(PDF, size 623 KB, 1 page\)](#)

## Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

The ONMSD in collaboration with the National Nurse Referral Advisory Committee plans and provides an annual CPD event.

Date for your diary the CPD event for 2025 will be held on Thursday 22 May 9am to 1pm.

You can pre-register now: [Date for the Diary CPD Radiological Referral May 2025 \(PDF, size 759 KB, 1 page\)](#)

You can see the 2024 programme below and the speaker presentations and recordings at the link below.

[CPD Event Programme for Radiological Referrers \(PDF, size 202 KB, 3 pages\)](#)

Date for your diary the CPD event for 2025 will be held on Thursday 30 May 9am to 1pm.



## Registration on the National Database of Nurse Referrers for Radiological Procedures

All registered nurses employed by the HSE and HSE funded agencies (Section 38) who have successfully completed a nurse referrers for radiological procedures education programme must register on the "HSE National Database of Nurse Referrers for Radiological Procedures". The National Database tracks referral activity across HSE facilities.

The Director of Nursing/Director of Services on behalf of the health service provider requests the nurse referrer to be entered onto the HSE National Database (see related documents below) and then give written authorisation to the registered nurse to commence referring for radiological procedures.

### Related Documents

- [Local Governance Checklist for Referrers \(sample\) \(PDF, size 743 KB, 3 pages\)](#)
- [How to Register on the HSE National Database for Nurse Referrers of Radiological Procedures \(Word, size 19 KB\)](#)
- [Registration Template HSE National Database of Nurse Referrers for Radiological Procedures \(Excel, size 12 KB\)](#)
- [Sample Template for Referrers of Radiological Procedures Local Health Service Provider \(PDF, 756 KB, 3 pages\)](#)

## Clinical Audit

Clinical audit of nurse referral for radiological procedures aims to evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of the radiological referral process. Using the audit toolkit below will provide valuable insights into the workflow and provide evidence of patient safety and quality of care. The outcome of the audit can identify areas for improvement to enhance patient care and outcomes.

### Toolkits to support Clinical Audit

- [Clinical Audit Toolkit for Nurse Referral for Radiological Procedures \(Excel, size 302 KB\) / Instructional Video for Clinical Audit Toolkit \(video\)](#)
- [National Centre for Clinical Audit \(NCCA\) Clinical Audit Practical Guide \(2023\) \(PDF, 4.9 MB, 64 pages\)](#)
- [National Centre for Clinical Audit Resources training and resources](#)
- [National procedures for clinical audit of radiological procedures involving medical exposure to ionising radiation - Updated August 2024 \(PDF, 1.73 MB, 78 pages\), \(hqa.ie\)](#)



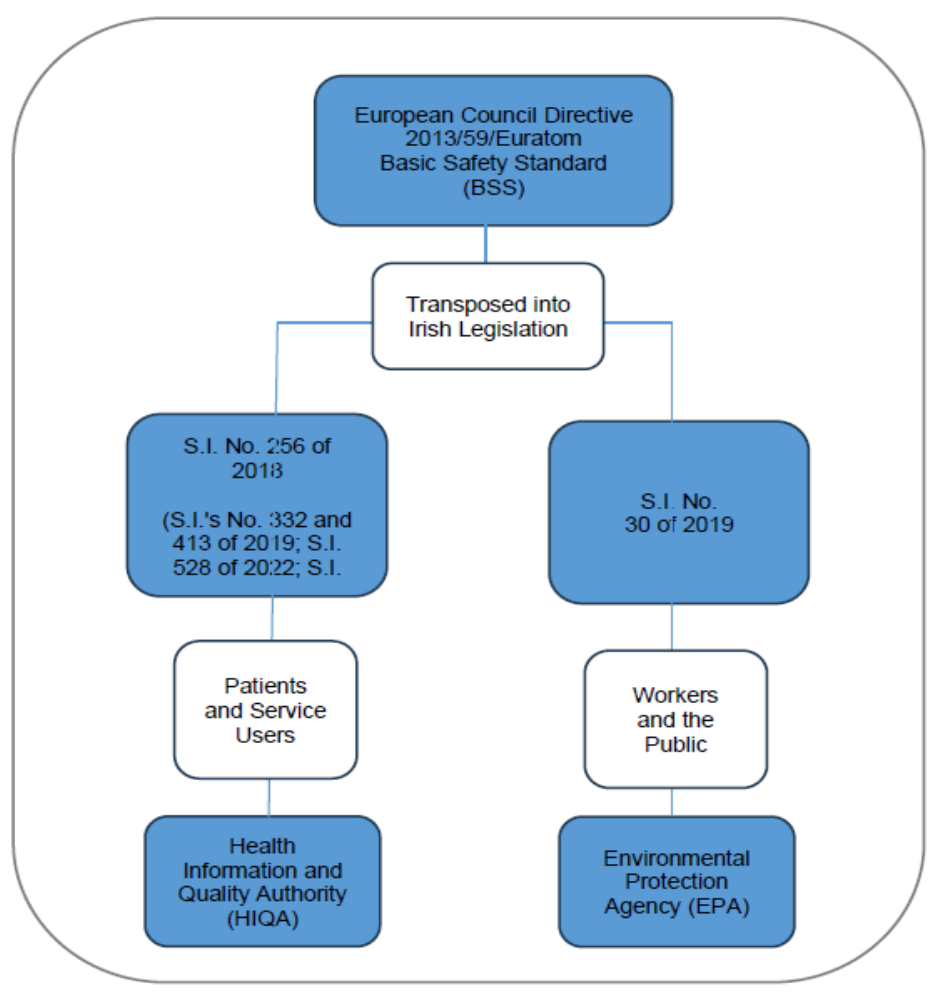
## VERSION CONTROL UPDATE <sup>3</sup>

Version No. (most recent version first)	Date reviewed (most recent date first)	Comments (1 sentence max, if required)
3	March 2025	<i>National Nurse Authority to Refer for Radiological Procedures Guideline</i> . This update to the document (title and content) reflects, clarifications, changes in legislative and regulatory requirements and guidance for clinical audit and the establishment of ethics committees.
2	October 2021	<i>National Nurse and Midwife Authority to Refer for Radiological Procedures Guideline</i> . This national guideline replaces the <i>Guiding Framework for the Implementation of Nurse Prescribing of Medical Ionising Radiation (X-Ray)</i> in Ireland (Office of the Nursing and Midwifery Services Director, Health Service Executive, 2009) to reflect new legislative, regulatory and professional regulation changes.
1	May 2009	The first HSE publication. <i>Guiding Framework for the Implementation of Nurse Prescribing of Medical Ionising Radiation (X-Ray)</i> .
<b>Document management notes: changes to the document title in 2025</b>		

# HF Legislation

- **EU Directive 2013/59/EURATOM**  
Transposed into Irish law via **S.I. No. 256 of 2018**
- **S.I. No. 256 of 2018**, the term “Prescriber” was changed to “Referrer”
- Section 4 (1) (a) to refer a patient/service user for “medical radiological procedures” to a practitioner
- **HIQA (S.I No. 256 ) (S.I No. 528 of 2022)**
  - Monitors compliance and conducts inspections
  - Oversees clinical audit (S.I. 528 of 2022) & justification of procedures
- **EPA (S.I 30 No. of 2019)**
  - Authorises facilities and issues licences
  - Ensures public and worker radiation protection
- **Additional Amendments**
  - **S.I. No 332 & S.I. No. 413 2019, S.I. 29 No. 2023**

Appendices 2 & 3 of the guideline



# Radiological Modalities

## Appendix 2: Radiological modalities

Modality	Description
Computed tomography (CT)	used to obtain detailed cross-sectional images of the body. Contrast media may be utilised to highlight certain organs etc. The X-ray sources and detectors rotate inside the scanner and produce 3-D images. Uses higher doses of ionising radiation than other radiological modalities.
Dual-energy X-ray absorptiometry (DXA)	used to measure bone mineral density and total body composition. Involves a low ionising radiation dose.
Fluoroscopy	uses ionising radiation to produce a dynamic image live on a monitor. It produces a functional image of the gastrointestinal tract, urinary tract etc. C-arms used in operating theatre for orthopaedic procedures. Contrast media may be utilised to highlight certain organs etc. This may involve low or higher doses of radiation, depending on the procedure and the time involved.
Interventional radiology and cardiology	a minimally invasive technique using ionising radiation undertaken in radiology departments and cardiac catheterisation labs. Contrast media may be utilised to highlight certain organs etc. The X-ray beam is transmitted to a monitor so the body part being imaged can be viewed in detail, e.g. angiography, angioplasty, embolisation, foreign body removal etc. Involves higher doses of ionising radiation.
Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI)	does not use ionising radiation.. MRI uses magnetic fields and radio waves to produce detailed images of bones, muscles, soft tissues, blood vessels etc. Magnetic Resonance Angiography (MRA) can be used to evaluate blood flow and detect aneurysms in the brain and abnormalities of blood vessels in other parts of the body. Contrast media may be used in some MRI/MRA procedures. Specific assessment and detailed information are required prior to the procedure to ensure the safety of patients and staff.
Mammography	uses low energy X-rays to image breast tissue.
Nuclear medicine imaging	a functional organ imaging diagnostic procedure in which a radionuclide is administered to the patient either by intravenous injection or orally. The distribution of the

Modality	Description
	radioactivity in the body is measured by an external radiation detector (Gamma Camera). It also has therapeutic applications for example treatment of thyroid conditions. The patient is the source of the radiation for a period, for example after a bone scan the patient is radioactive for up to 24 hours after the procedure. Uses relatively high doses of ionising radiation.
Positron Emission Tomography (PET) and Computed Tomography (CT)  (known as PET / CT)	uses a combination to two imaging modalities PET and CT. PET is a nuclear medicine technique. The procedure involves both a PET scanner and an X-ray CT scanner combined to acquire sequential images in the same session, which produce a single super imposed image. The PET produces functional images and CT produces anatomical images. PET/CT delivers a very high dose of ionising radiation to the patient. The patient is radioactive for a short time following the procedure.
Radiography (General X-Ray)	a beam of ionising radiation is passed through the body and creates an image on a detector. General X-ray is used to image chest, extremities etc. A low ionising radiation dose is generally delivered.
Positron emission tomography (PET)	a nuclear medicine modality which has been mainly replaced by PET/CT.
Ultrasound including biopsies	uses low power sound waves to create images of certain parts of the body. Ultrasound gel is applied to the skin to assist the sound waves that create the images. Ultrasound can also be performed inside the body. A transducer is attached to a probe that is inserted into an opening in the body. Biopsies can be undertaken using ultrasound control, for example thyroid, breast or liver tissue biopsies. Ultrasound is a safe procedure which does not use ionising radiation.

The radiological modalities that the nurse referrer has authority to refer for are based on their scope of practice and local PPPGs. The nurse referrers scope of practice changes over time in response to service requirements and technology advances.



# Summary of Evidence

## Appendix 6

Literature search from 2020-2024 HSE Library



Zotero Report : 22 documents

As nurses take on new roles & responsibilities the authority & ability to refer for radiological procedures **has improved both access and the timeliness of interventions** for those seeking treatment (Kearns, 2023, Unac et al., 2010)

**Increased accuracy & appropriateness** in requesting radiographic procedures (Considine et al., 2013).

**Clarity about the extended scope** is central to organisational readiness (Elliott et al., 2024)

Use no more resources, are **safe & acceptable** Considine et al. (2019)

The HSE NRPC (2024) launched **two eLearning programmes** “an introduction to radiation safety awareness” & “ionising radiation protecting our patients in healthcare”

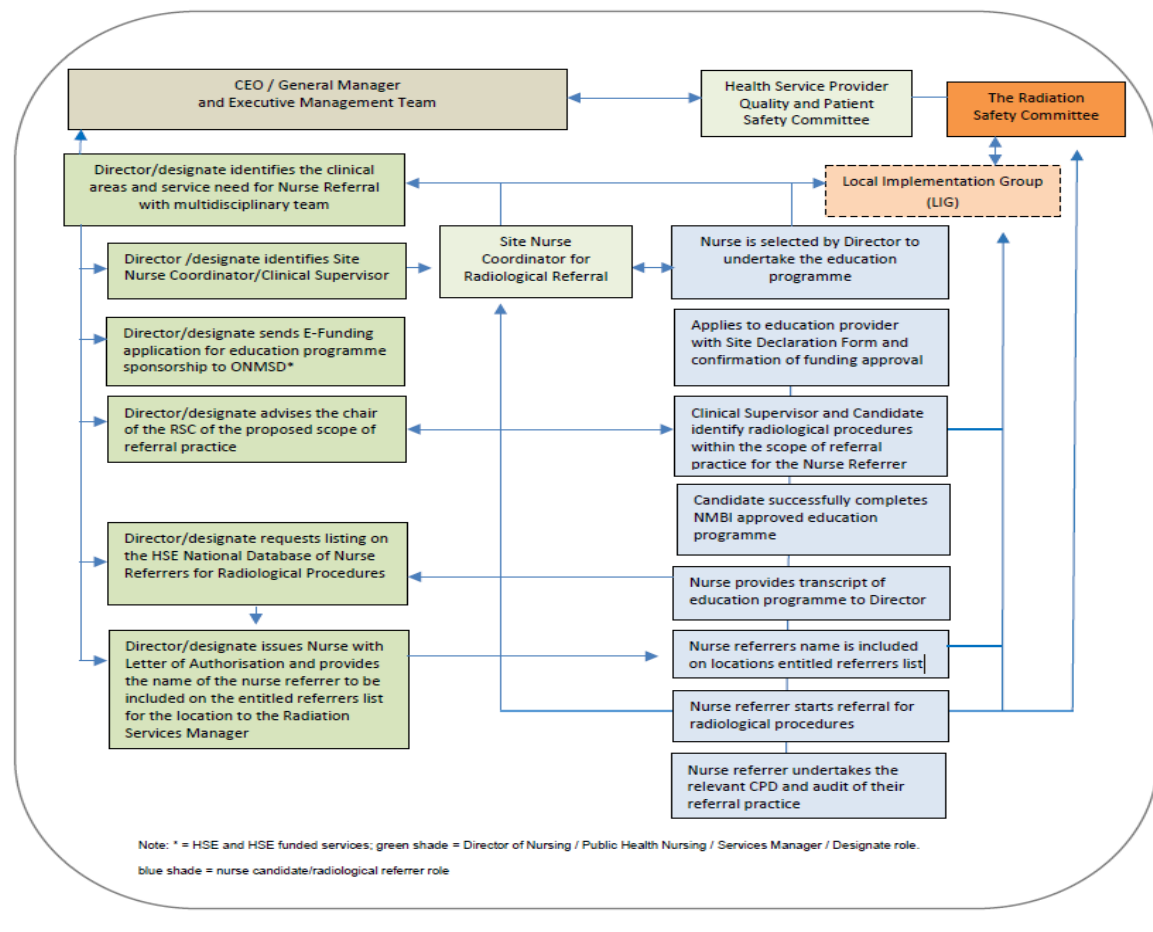
HSE NRPC (2024) identified that:

- Nurse referrers were **referring for a wide range of diagnostic imaging procedures**.
- Increasing need for nurses/,midwives to **take on extended role of referrer to meet service demand**

Participate in appropriate **CPD** to maintain & develop professional competence (NMBI 2021,2025)



**Figure 3: Nurse Referral for Radiological Procedures Flow Diagram**



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- [National procedures for clinical audit of radiological procedures involving medical exposure to ionising radiation - Updated August 2024 \(PDF, 1.73 MB, 78 pages\) \(hiqa.ie\)](#)

## Audit Data Collection Tool for Nurse/Midwife Referral for Radiological Procedures

Audit of nurse/midwife referral for radiological procedures is essential to support best practice in the delivery and evaluation of practice. It is a requirement of the Legislation (S.I. 256 and S.I. 528), regulatory requirements, Health Information and Regulatory Authority (HIQA) and the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland (NMBI) that each health service provider has a mechanism in place to review and audit referral practice.

Evaluation of the impact of nurse/midwife referral for radiological procedures is the responsibility of the Local Implementation Group/ Radiation Safety Committee. Audit and evaluation of nurse/midwife referral for radiological procedures systems should be in place. The audit data should identify compliance with the requirements/ policies/ protocols of the employing organisation including reporting referral errors/incidents, risk occurrences and near misses.

Audit outcomes in conjunction with evidence based practice are used to improve patient safety, service provision and develop good practice in relation to referral for radiological procedures.

[Watch a tutorial video here](#)



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Document Title In Here

Patient Assessment

Yes	60
No	0



For Handwritten Referrals

Yes	0
No	0
N/A	40



For Handwritten and Electronic Referrals

Yes	90
No	0
N/A	20



80% Achieved ?

Patient Assessment	100.00%
For Handwritten Referrals	#DIV/0!
For Handwritten and Electronic Referrals	100.00%





# References

Government of Ireland (2022). Statutory Instrument No. 528 of 2022 European Union (Basic Safety Standards for Protection Against Dangers Arising from Medical Exposure to Ionising Radiation) (Amendment) Regulations 2022. Stationary Office, Dublin.

Government of Ireland (2019). Statutory Instrument No. 30 of 2019 Radiological Protection Act 1991 (Ionising Radiation) Regulations 2019. Stationary Office, Dublin.

Government of Ireland (2018). Statutory Instrument No. 256 of 2018 European Communities (Medical Ionising Radiation Protection) (Amendment) Regulations 2007. Stationary Office, Dublin.

Health Service Executive (2025). Nurse National Nurse Authority to Refer for Radiological Procedures Guideline. Office of Nursing & Midwifery Services, HSE, Dublin

Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland (2025). Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics (incorporating scope of practice). Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland, Dublin