

# "It's challenging but also very rewarding, and delegation and trust are vitally important!"

While medical physics is Malcolm's passion, he enjoys the management aspect of his role too. He is now director of medical physics at Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust, responsible for more than 70 staff.

## Professor Malcolm Sperrin

### Director of medical physics

#### Employer or university

Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust



### A typical day

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My day-to-day work is very varied. About two-thirds of my time involves scientific management where I ensure the provision of a scientific service is clinically relevant for patients, evidence based and properly resourced. The other third I spend on general management tasks such as finance and human resources, and on research, lecturing and other activities related to the profession of medical physics.

### How I got in

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I joined the NHS as senior physicist in an [ultrasound](#) <sup>[1]</sup> department in 1990 and have worked in various medical physics management roles over the years. I am now director of medical physics at Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust, responsible for more than 70 staff.

## **How my career has developed**

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My first position in [ultrasound](#) <sup>[1]</sup> rapidly expanded to cover non-ionising radiation, including lasers and [MRI](#) <sup>[2]</sup>, and I enjoyed assessing imaging units for their safety and quality.

I then progressed to a more senior role at a different hospital where I was deputy head of department and applied to do my PhD. With my team, I developed links to the Medical Devices Agency and we conducted early work on mobile phone safety which still forms the basis for safety advice.

I was promoted to principal physicist in 1998 and from there moved to my current role of director of medical physics at Royal Berkshire Hospital where I manage more than 70 staff. I have developed the medical physics department to include medical photography and we are heavily involved in developing and maintaining national standards for medical physics practice. My staff have very diverse backgrounds and career needs because they're a mix of state registered clinical scientists, technologists, radiographers, and administrators.

## **Challenges of the job**

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Managing a large scientific department with such a wide range of staff is a considerable challenge. There are the 'human' factors involved with managing people, and also the professional, financial and operational demands. It's challenging but also very rewarding, and delegation and trust are vitally important!

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**Links**

[1] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#Ultrasound> [2]  
<https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#MRI>