Altnagelvin Hospital’s new £50+million Radiotherapy Unit, which is due to open in 2016, will increase Radiotherapy capacity in Northern Ireland. The unique cross border project will be a hospital within a hospital providing treatments to people with cancer both North and South of the Border. It will provide more locally accessible and timely services and improve travelling for thousands of people for generations to come.

The Service will be managed by the Western Health and Social Care Trust working closely with colleagues from the Cancer Centre, Belfast, the Northern Health & Social Care Trust and Letterkenny General Hospital.

It will be funded by the Department of Health Social Services and Public Safety in Northern Ireland and the Department of Health in the Republic of Ireland.

It will be commissioned by the Health & Social Care Board (NI) and the Health Services Executive (ROI).

The Radiotherapy Unit will provide a patient centred, holistic service for cancer patients at Altnagelvin Hospital. Cancer treatment will be provided in accordance with the existing Northern Ireland Cancer Network (NIcAn) patient pathways. Radiotherapy treatment, including combination radio/chemotherapy for curative and palliative purposes, for all but the most complex of tumours, will be delivered at Altnagelvin Hospital.
The Radiotherapy Unit at Altnagelvin is envisaged, not as a single building, but as interconnected clinical areas which are designed along the continuum of the “garden” that incorporates both the external existing landscape and the internal path of the patient’s journey.

The intention is to create interior circulation spaces which have a “semi-external” feel. Patients will be connected visually to the outside as they move from one area of the building to the other along their treatment path.
The Radiotherapy Unit will provide access to Radiotherapy Services to over a half million people. In the region of 417,000 people living in the Derry, Strabane, Limavady, Omagh, Fermanagh, Coleraine, Moyle and Ballymoney local council areas and 110,000 people from North to Mid Donegal will have access to radiotherapy treatments at the new Unit from 2016. About 10% of these people will continue to receive more specialist treatment at treatment centres in Belfast, Galway and Dublin.

The new Unit will be located beside and connected to the existing Cancer Unit (Sperrin Suite) at Altnagelvin Hospital.

The facility will initially contain:

- Three linear accelerators in three treatment suites and associated treatment recording and planning systems.
- One spare treatment suite;
- One superficial X-ray treatment unit;
- One CT simulator for treatment planning;
- One CT scanner for diagnostic imaging;
- One MRI scanner for diagnostic imaging and treatment planning;
- Inpatient ward;
- Remodel of existing chemotherapy facilities.
Radiotherapy Unit
Altnagelvin Hospital

Design Objectives

• To optimise the relationship between the existing Chemotherapy Service, the new Radiotherapy Service and the main hospital tower block.

• To create a building that complements and enhances the existing hospital site.

Linkages from Radiotherapy Unit to the existing Chemotherapy Unit and to the main hospital.
Radiotherapy Unit
Altnagelvin Hospital

Design Objectives

• To create an efficient and pleasant environment for the delivery of cancer treatment for the benefit of patients and staff.

• To design a building which helps allay fears of patients and relatives who are attending for cancer treatments, through the integration of landscapes with the internal design of the building.

The careful selection of materials to create a warm, aesthetically pleasing environment which meet infection control standards.
Radiotherapy Unit
Altnagelvin Hospital

Staffing
Staff training and recruitment across a range of specialities has already commenced. This will ensure a competent and experienced workforce is in place at the Unit for its opening in 2016. Some staff will be placed at the Belfast Cancer Centre for further training and development before the Unit opens.

Approximately 220 new posts across a range of specialities and disciplines will be created through the development of the new Unit including:

- Consultant Oncologists and supporting junior medical staff;
- Nursing staff (Ward, Outpatients and Day Case);
- Medical Physics Scientists and Technologists;
- Therapeutic Radiographers;
- Pharmacy, Pathology and Allied Health Professionals;
- Diagnostic Radiologists and Radiographers;
- Administrative and Facilities Management staff.

Construction of the Radiotherapy Unit is expected to be completed by the end of 2015. Commissioning of the equipment will follow shortly after and it is planned to have the Unit operational by the mid 2016.
Radiotherapy Unit
Altnagelvin Hospital

The ground floor is where the Radiotherapy Treatment Service, Outpatient Department and the Chemotherapy Treatment Service will be located.

The first floor is where the Inpatient Ward will be located.

On the second floor the Treatment Planning Department, the Essential Support Systems and Services for the Radiotherapy Unit at Altnagelvin will be located.