

## NCRI newsletter

Greetings!

We are coming to the end of a busy year and we'd like to wish you all well for 2017.

In our final newsletter of the year, NCRI Director Karen Kennedy gives us a flavour of what we have achieved in 2016. We hope you enjoy reading her highlights.

Best wishes,

The NCRI team



## Looking back and moving forward : The NCRI in 2016

It's been another eventful year for the NCRI Partnership. During the year we have strengthened existing collaborations and established new ones. We also welcomed an additional Partner charity, expanded our Board of Trustees, and most exciting of all, we have developed a new strategy for the Partnership.

Together we are making a real difference to the research landscape, bringing about positive changes that will help accelerate translation of cancer related research into benefits for people affected by cancer and the wider public.

Our new strategy for the NCRI Partnership 'Accelerating cancer research: A strategy for collaboration between cancer research funders in the UK (2017-22)' was developed through an extensive consultation process, and we look forward to launching it in Spring 2017. We now have our sights clearly set on our purpose which is to **improve health and quality of life by accelerating progress in cancer related research, through collaboration.**

As 2016 draws to a close, I would like to highlight some of our achievements from the year that will help support us in moving forward to achieve our ambitious new goals.

# Welcoming a new Partner - Pancreatic Cancer Research Fund (PCRF)



It is through collaboration and coordination that NCRI's activities help maximise the value and benefits of cancer research for patients and the public. I am delighted that this year we welcomed Maggie Blanks, founder and CEO of PCRF, and her team, to our Partnership. It is the breadth of expertise and perspectives that our Partners contribute to our activities that is one of our unique strengths, and we look forward to working with PCRF and all our Partners, to maximise the impact that research can have on improving health and quality of life.



## Accessing and analysing cancer data

Valuable data is being collected from every cancer patient in England through the National Cancer Registration and Analysis Service (NCRAS) and through similar cancer registries in the other UK nations. We are keen to ensure the research community has appropriate access and engages fully with opportunities these data can offer. This year, amongst other new staff appointments, we welcomed Rupesh Robinson-Vyas who took up a newly created role between the NCRI and Public Health England (PHE) to provide greater awareness and informed access to PHE's globally unique cancer data assets collected from the NHS. He is joined by Dominic Dwyer who moved from another role within the NCRI. In addition, we welcomed Sam Gibbons-Frendo as a Research Analyst, responsible for managing the Cancer Research Database (CaRD). Sam is continuing to develop our work to analyse research funding data from our Partner organisations.

## Coordinating clinical studies and trials at a national level

One of our major core activities here at NCRI, is to coordinate 19 Clinical Studies Groups and a series of advisory groups that span all cancer types, and several with cross-cutting themes. In addition, we coordinate a national network of Clinical Trials Units that meets regularly to share information and develop trials, act as an expert voice in the community and develop guidelines. In 2016 our Clinical Research Group (CRG) team organised and facilitated over 70 meetings, each involving between 20 and 200 participants, and bringing together clinicians, statisticians, research nurses, consumers, trials managers and other key stakeholders to share ideas and information, develop new clinical trials, and ensure best practice. We also ran workshops to peer review funding proposals and I am particularly pleased with our progress this year in developing capacity in the area of screening, prevention and early diagnosis. Twenty proposals were received during the year and 14 reviewed by the Screening, Prevention & Early Diagnosis (SPED) Advisory Group, our expert peer panel, ahead of submission to funding bodies. The SPED Advisory Group have further workshops planned, and we look forward to sharing further developments from all our CRGs in 2017.



## Showcasing the best of cancer research

Our Conference, held in November, is always a highlight, and this year's event was no exception; we welcomed speakers from as far afield as Malaysia, Australia and North America as well as Europe and the UK, and they shared their cutting-edge research with more than 1500 delegates through presentations, debates, workshops and posters.

During the Conference, and as part of our commitment to supporting the next generation of cancer researchers, we held a parallel event for 60 local Sixth Form students who joined researchers, clinicians and consumers to find out more about what it's like to be a cancer researcher.

We value contributions from patients and carers in our activities, and it was a particular pleasure to be able to offer 40 NCRI bursaries to consumers to attend our Conference, where they contributed in so many ways, including speaking in sessions, presenting posters and asking pointed and patient-focused questions in Conference sessions.

# Engaging with patients and carers

Richard Stevens became the NCRI Consumer Lead in April 2016, after being involved with NCRI activities for several years. During this time Richard has galvanized patient involvement in research on behalf of NCRI and others. As a former myeloma patient, he has first-hand experience of participating in clinical trials and has also served on the NCRI Board and a number of NCRI groups and we are very grateful to him for the work he does to lead the NCRI Consumer Forum.



Vee Mapunde also joined the Consumer Forum this year as NCRI's Associate Consumer Lead, and brings with her some valuable insights and perspectives that are new to the Forum. Vee has worked in the clinical research environment for the last 12 years, currently as Industry Manager for the NIHR Yorkshire and Humber Clinical Research Network, and cared for her father during his cancer journey.



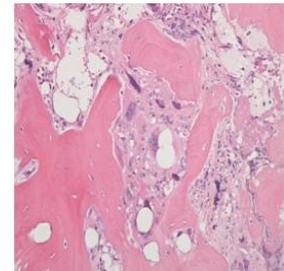
## Publishing a landmark consensus paper from the NCRI CT-Rad Working Group

At NCRI we are committed to making an impact and accelerating research progress. In June this year, the NCRI CTRad Working Group published a landmark paper in *Nature Reviews Clinical Oncology* setting out consensus recommendations to increase the number of novel medicines being successfully used in combination with radiotherapy to improve clinical outcomes for people with cancer.

The consensus paper represents the opinion of over 30 experts in the fields of radiotherapy, drug development and cancer research and outlines how barriers to clinical research using novel drug-radiotherapy combinations can be overcome.

This is an important step forward for future research and development in this area and represents the power of collaboration across a diverse set of stakeholders.

## Launching the Cellular and Molecular Pathology initiative (CM-Path)



We were delighted to see the Cellular Molecular Pathology (CM-Path) Initiative launch in June this year with four work streams focused on skills and capacity building, clinical trials, discovery, and technology and informatics.

We have recruited over 60 members to the initiative including pathologists, oncologists, clinical scientists, translational scientists, health care professionals involved in medical education and consumers. CM-Path activities include developing training for a new generation of molecular pathologists, engaging pathologists with research and clinical trials, and enhancing the uptake of new technologies, such as digital pathology, into the pathology workflow.

CM-Path has also been building strong links with industry via its industry engagement day that took place in October, as well as developing links with the wider pathology community by running workshops focussed around biobanking and clinical trials. We have also been working to scope the current situation on subjects such as the number of pathologists that are involved in research, attitudes towards academic or molecular pathology and tissue access practice across the UK. In 2017, CM-Path will be publishing these results to inform the pathology community as well as the wider environment.



## Identifying future research priorities in surgery research and 'living with and beyond cancer'

NCRI prides itself on providing strategic oversight of the research landscape to identify areas where collaborative working adds value. Two areas where we have identified challenges to research progress are in surgery research and in the area of living with and beyond cancer.

In 2016 we launched a series of workshops to identify the needs of the cancer surgery workforce to facilitate improvements and overcome barriers to surgery research. Three of the five 'Future of Surgery' workshops have now taken place, with a further two scheduled for the beginning of 2017.

As cancer treatments improve and more people are living with and beyond cancer, we have, in consultation with Partners, researchers, funders and consumers, recognised the need to identify research priorities in the field of 'living with and beyond cancer'. This year we, established an 18 month initiative that will include a James Lind Alliance, priority setting partnership scheduled to take place early in 2017.

## Strengthening our Board of Trustees

Our Board of Trustees is chaired by Baroness Delyth Morgan and in 2016 we welcomed four new trustees to NCRI. They are Mary Basterfield, Chief Financial Officer at Dentsu Aegis Network UK, who brings a wealth of experience in strategy, marketing and business financial management and Alan Chant, also a business expert, who sits as a lay member on several cancer and research bodies including the MRC-hosted UK Clinical Research Collaboration Board and Oxford Biomedical Research Centre Patients Active in Research Group. We also welcomed Angus McNair, an NIHR Academic Clinical Lecturer, specialist registrar and colorectal surgeon, who is particularly interested in patient and public involvement in research prioritisation and Cathy Scivier, a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development who has many years' experience working in health care management and worked at the Institute of Cancer Research, most recently as Chief Operating Officer.

I would like to thank all our Trustees for their hard work and the valuable contributions they have made to NCRI during the year.



## Looking forward with a new strategy for the NCRI Partnership

Our success to date comes from our ability to identify where collaborative working adds value. We capitalise on opportunities, address challenges and strengthen the excellent work that our Partners and others do to improve the lives of people affected by cancer. The NCRI Partners know that underpinning our past and future success is a culture of collaboration, information sharing and trust.

Our new strategy provides clarity on our purpose, goals, high level activities and ways of working for the Partnership and was developed through an extensive process involving a wide range of stakeholders. The resulting five year strategy has helped us to refresh our purpose, identify four underlying goals and objectives and clarify our values. The strategy will be launched in April 2017 and I would like to take the opportunity to thank everybody who was involved in our strategy development process over the past year. Without your contributions we could not call this a Partnership Strategy.

As we embrace this opportunity to reflect on our activities and achievements and look forward to the next five years, I would like to thank all of you for your invaluable contributions to our work in 2016 and I look forward to working with you again in 2017.

I wish you all an enjoyable festive season.

Karen

## Partner and research news

### Improving access to end of life care for LGBT people

Marie Curie-funded research on end of life care for LGBT people with cancer and other terminal illnesses led to a parliamentary talk at Portcullis House on 5th December.

The talk, delivered by Dr Richard Harding on behalf of the ACCESSCare team in partnership with Marie Curie, highlighted the need for more resources to help medical professionals deliver high quality end of life care for LGBT people. The research, which fed in to the recent report by Marie Curie '[Hiding Who I am: The reality of end of life care for LGBT people](#)' revealed that too many people feel end of life care services are not accessible to them due to their sexuality and have concerns over the support available to them and their loved ones during dying and bereavement. The ACCESSCare research team at Kings College London are working to develop resources which can be used by professionals to support them to deliver better end of life care for LGBT people.



For any further information email [kate.diver@mariecurie.org.uk](mailto:kate.diver@mariecurie.org.uk)

## Events and opportunities

### Leeds RCS Surgical Trials Centre Launch Meeting

Leeds Institute for Clinical Trials Research will be hosting the Leeds RCS Surgical Trials Centre Launch Meeting at the University of Leeds, LS16 5PS on Thursday 5 January from 09:30-16:00

For more information visit: [https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/leeds-rcs-surgical-trials-centre-launch-meeting-tickets-28417863595?utm\\_term=eventurl\\_text](https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/leeds-rcs-surgical-trials-centre-launch-meeting-tickets-28417863595?utm_term=eventurl_text)

### NCRI Future of Surgery workshop - Extent of surgery & peri-surgical trials

Royal College of Surgeons of England will be hosting the NCRI Future of Surgery Workshop 4 at The Royal College of Surgeons of England, 35-43 Lincoln's Inn Fields, London, WC2A 3PE on Tuesday 17 January 2017 from 10:00-16:15

For more information please visit: <http://www.ncri.org.uk/events/ncri-future-of-surgery-workshop-extent-of-surgery/>

### BMA foundation for medical research - 2017 grant details now available

The BMA foundation for medical research awards research grants each year (totalling approximately £500,000) to encourage and further medical research in a variety of areas. One of these grants, the TP Gunton grant, is to assist research into public health relating to cancer. Applications are invited from UK-registered medical practitioners or research scientists and can be for either research in progress or prospective research.

In 2017, the TP Gunton grant will be awarded for an amount up to £50,000. This grant, and other BMA foundation grants will be available to apply for online on the BMA website from mid-December this year. The application deadline is 3 March 2017. For more information on the TP Gunton grant, other BMA foundation grants and to apply, please see: [www.bma.org.uk/advice/career/research-grants](http://www.bma.org.uk/advice/career/research-grants)



If you have any queries please contact [researchgrants@bma.org.uk](mailto:researchgrants@bma.org.uk) or telephone 020 7383 6341.

### Pancreatic Cancer UK Inspiring Innovation Summit 2017

Pancreatic Cancer UK's 2017 Summit will be taking place on 15th February 2017 at the Royal College of GPs in London. The Summit will be focused on inspiring innovation in pancreatic cancer to help drive improvements in diagnosis and treatment and transform the research landscape. It's an opportunity for the pancreatic cancer community to come together - health professional, researchers, policy makers, charities and those affected by pancreatic cancer - to take on pancreatic cancer.

Pancreatic Cancer UK have secured a fantastic line up of speakers including:

- Dr Malcolm Moore, President, BC Cancer Agency, Canada
- Professor Chris Harrison - NHS England National Clinical Director - Cancer
- Thomas Balkizas, Executive Lead UK & Ireland, IBM Watson Health
- Professor Steve Pereira, Professor of Hepatology & Gastroenterology, UCL

- Professor Andrew Biankin, Regius Chair of Surgery/Director of Translational Research Centre, University of Glasgow
- Dr John Maher, Clinical Senior Lecturer/Honorary Consultant in Immunology, Kings College London
- Professor Gary Middleton, Professor of Immunology and Immunotherapy, University of Birmingham

Read and download the full programme and line-up of speakers [here](#). The summit is a full day event, free of charge to attend. If you haven't already registered you can secure your place by completing the [online registration form](#).

If you have any questions contact the Services Team on 020 3535 7090 or by [email](#).

#### STAY CONNECTED

Follow us on 

View our profile on 

National Cancer Research Institute (NCRI) [www.ncri.org.uk](http://www.ncri.org.uk)