BEATING CANCER SOONER
OUR STRATEGY HIGHLIGHTS

Let’s beat cancer sooner
cruk.org
OUR VISION

Cancer Research UK’s vision is to bring forward the day when all cancers are cured.

In the 1970s, less than a quarter of people with cancer survived. But over the last 40 years, survival has doubled – today half will survive.

Our ambition is to accelerate progress and see three-quarters of people surviving the disease within the next 20 years.
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FOREWORD

‘THE NEXT SEVERAL YEARS CAN, AND WILL, TRANSFORM THE OUTLOOK FOR CANCER PATIENTS.’
The burden of cancer continues to rise nationally and globally. In the UK over 330,000 patients are diagnosed with cancer each year, and this is forecast to rise by 40% by 2030.

Through our research, we’ve helped double UK cancer survival rates in the last 40 years. But many people still do not survive, and there remain groups for whom outcomes are particularly poor, including pancreatic, oesophageal, lung cancers and brain tumours, and many rarer cancers.

In recent years our understanding of cancer has significantly improved, and together with impressive technological advances this has created exciting opportunities to develop new ways to prevent, diagnose and treat this complex set of diseases.

Our supporters give generously in the expectation that we will take advantage of these opportunities and that our research will lead to benefits for patients and the public in the short and long term.

We will drive progress by supporting excellent research, as well as by influencing policy and empowering the public to ensure that the outputs of research are adopted.

The UK research environment provides an ideal platform for making progress against cancer. Internationally outstanding researchers are based in a network of world-leading universities, working in partnership with a single health system.

In the last five years, we have funded over £1.5 billion in research. Looking forward, we expect our investment in research to grow substantially, giving us the opportunity to increase our funding in existing areas, and to establish important new areas of research. The highlights of our new strategy are outlined in this document.

Through developing our strategy, I have been struck by the sense of excitement and optimism from those directly involved in research and those who use the outputs of that research to deliver better care for patients. While no one underestimates the challenges we have yet to overcome, there is an overriding belief that the next several years can, and will, transform the outlook for cancer patients.

Cancer Research UK is dependent on the outstanding individuals and teams who conduct research across the country. It is their curiosity and passion that will ultimately lead us to the answers we need to beat this disease.

At the same time, we could not achieve anything without the generosity of our supporters and the dedication of cancer patients who selflessly participate in our research. They make the extraordinary possible and enable us to have belief in our vision of bringing forward the day when all cancers are cured.

Harpal S Kumar
Chief Executive
May 2014
STRATEGY HIGHLIGHTS

DIAGNOSING CANCER EARLIER
Diagnosing cancer early can radically improve the chances of survival. We will substantially increase our investment to support the earlier diagnosis of cancer.

TACKLING CANCERS OF UNMET NEED
Lung, pancreatic, oesophageal cancers and brain tumours have extremely poor survival rates. We will dramatically increase our research effort into these cancers to accelerate progress.

UNDERSTANDING CANCER
We will continue to support crucial research to improve our understanding of what causes and drives cancer.

DEVELOPING NEW TREATMENTS
We will discover and develop new drugs, diagnostics, surgery and radiotherapy techniques – quickening the pace at which research is translated into benefit for patients.

PERSONALISING CANCER TREATMENT
We will optimise every individual’s chance of beating cancer by developing personalised approaches to prevention, screening and treatment.

TACKLING TOBACCO TO SAVE LIVES
We will work towards the day when the UK is tobacco-free, in particular by protecting children and by finding more effective ways to help people quit smoking.

CAMPAIGNING FOR THE BEST CANCER SERVICES
We want the UK’s survival rates to be among the best in the world. We will campaign for the best public health and cancer services, in all areas of the UK.

ENGAGING PATIENTS IN THE FIGHT AGAINST CANCER
We will give every cancer patient and those close to them the opportunity to join the fight against cancer.
No one should be diagnosed too late to have treatment that might save their life.

The chances of survival are increased significantly for almost all cancer types if the disease can be detected at an early stage. By finding new methods for detecting cancer, and improving the use of those we already have, we can create transformational improvements in patient outcomes.

WE WILL

Invest in research to understand more about the biology of early stage cancers

Invest in developing new methods of cancer detection and screening programmes for more cancers

Work with partners to enhance the uptake and targeting of the existing bowel, breast and cervical cancer screening programmes

Work with the NHS to pilot and evaluate tools and system improvements to reduce the time from appearance of a symptom to diagnosis

Raise symptom awareness among the public and health professionals to help more people get diagnosed earlier

“Early diagnosis remains the most promising approach to help more people survive cancer. New technology to develop tests for the disease is revitalising research in this area. The challenge now is to harness the potential of these tests to develop new ways to spot cancer."

Professor Rebecca Fitzgerald
MRC Cancer Cell Unit
University of Cambridge
TACKLING CANCERS OF UNMET NEED

Over the last 40 years cancer survival rates in the UK have doubled. However, progress has not advanced as quickly for all forms of the disease.

Cancers of substantial unmet need such as lung, pancreatic, oesophageal cancers and brain tumours share poor survival rates, and have realised only limited improvement in the last decade. We also need to make faster progress in treating rare cancers and those affecting children and young adults. And we need to understand why, in cancers where survival rates have improved significantly, some patients do not respond to current treatments.

WE WILL

Increase the focus on cancers of unmet need within our Institutes and Centres

Prioritise these cancers within our existing research funding streams and initiatives

Collaborate with cancer-specific charities to support research, particularly in brain and pancreatic cancers

Create multidisciplinary working groups and focus new initiatives on these cancer types, including broader international collaborations

Increase our focus on rare cancers and those affecting children and young adults
We need to deepen our understanding of cancer to continue to make progress in tackling the disease.

Research into cancer biology is an area of strength in the UK, allowing us to discover and develop new treatments, diagnostics and prevention strategies. We are planning to grow our investment in this important field of research to underpin the breakthroughs of the future.

Establish the Francis Crick Institute with partners – a world-leading biomedical research institute

Continue to develop our four other core-funded Institutes

Invest more in our existing funding schemes

Launch a series of grand challenges to support large-scale, collaborative research into the important questions in cancer

Encourage greater collaboration with non-traditional cancer disciplines, particularly engineering and physical sciences

Establish a new award to provide support for the best mid-career researchers and increase our investment in the training of clinician scientists
DEVELOPING NEW TREATMENTS

The challenge of delivering more effective treatments requires sophisticated new approaches, grounded in an ever more detailed understanding of cancer biology.

We want to remove the traditional barriers between laboratory and clinical research, facilitating a more collaborative approach. We will invest to further establish the UK as a world-leading environment for the translation of research, ensuring access to cutting-edge capabilities and technologies and building partnerships with academic, government and commercial partners. At the heart of our strategy is the ambition to quicken the pace at which research outputs and new discoveries are translated into benefit for patients.

“Cancer drug development has brought about major improvements in the past decade. However, many of the new drugs only work in some types of cancer. We need to understand and then target weaknesses found in many different types of cancer, to develop better drugs that will benefit more patients.”

Professor Ruth Plummer
Clinical Professor of Experimental Cancer Medicine, Newcastle University

WE WILL

Continue to invest in innovations in radiotherapy and surgery

Discover and develop new therapeutics, forming partnerships with industry to ensure the new treatments are able to benefit patients as rapidly as possible

Invest in our Centres, building a world-leading network for translating cutting-edge discoveries from the lab to the clinic

Continue to play an influential role in public policy to ensure research findings are appropriately championed by the Government and quickly adopted throughout the NHS

Increase our investment in biological therapies
PERSONALISING CANCER TREATMENT

Advances in technology mean there is now a wealth of information available to help researchers and doctors understand the nature of an individual’s specific cancer. However, the complexity of human biology presents a real challenge. Every tumour is different, and each one adapts and changes over time. It is likely that combinations of treatments or sequential changes in treatment, tailored to the individual, will ultimately prove most effective in combating cancer. At the same time, we are learning more about the links between lifestyle, genetic and environmental factors, making it possible to identify groups of people who have the highest risk of developing cancer.

"Over the past few years, we have begun to understand how each person’s cancer is unique to them. Our task now is to shape the way we treat each patient – using innovative research to develop truly bespoke treatments that combine novel drugs, less invasive surgery and very precise radiotherapy."

Professor Gillies McKenna
CRUK/MRC Oxford Institute for Radiation Oncology

WE WILL

Develop more personalised approaches to prevention and screening to help identify those at greatest risk of cancer

Develop new combination treatment approaches

Support research to understand which patients will respond to which treatments and to intervene earlier where there is a high risk of relapse

Influence government policy and support the NHS in driving rapid adoption of precision medicine approaches
TACKLING TOBACCO TO SAVE LIVES

Smoking is the biggest preventable cause of cancer. Reducing the number of people smoking by just 1% could save 3,000 lives per year in the UK from cancer alone.

However, large-scale behaviour change is a huge challenge requiring extensive research, policy interventions, awareness campaigns and broader societal will. We have a strong track record in this area, campaigning for major shifts in public health policy, including smoke-free legislation and standardised packaging, and contributing to the decline in young people becoming addicted to tobacco. Our ambition is to see a tobacco-free UK, with an adult smoking rate below 5%.

WE WILL

Support research to provide a robust evidence base for tobacco control policy
Continue to raise public awareness of the risks of tobacco use and of evidence-based approaches to quitting
Work with governments to develop strategies to sustainably reduce tobacco prevalence
Support research into the potential benefits and harms of e-cigarettes
Work with international partners to influence tobacco control on the global stage
CAMPAIGNING FOR THE BEST CANCER SERVICES

The UK lags behind other developed countries in terms of cancer survival. Many lives can be saved from cancer through improvements to services at national and local levels and through policy change.

Our deep understanding of cancer and evidence-based approach make us ideally placed to campaign for changes in public health and cancer policy that will bring improvements in prevention, diagnosis and treatment.

WE WILL

- Develop expert, evidence-based positions to support recommendations for improvements to cancer and public health services
- Develop our networks with health professionals and policy makers, including politicians across the UK and Europe
- Provide reliable and actionable information on the quality of cancer services and variations in outcomes across the UK
- Recruit additional volunteers across the UK to support our campaigning activities locally and nationally
ENGAGING PATIENTS IN THE FIGHT AGAINST CANCER

Nearly all of us will be affected by cancer at some point in our lives. We are committed to working alongside our supporters and the public, making sure that every person who wants to join the fight can get involved.

Our ambition is for every cancer patient in the UK to be given the opportunity to participate in research, for instance by joining a clinical trial. We will work with the NHS and other partners to help achieve this goal and do more to recognise the critical role that trial participants play in our progress.

WE WILL

Continue to support a wide range of clinical trials across all parts of the UK

Create new opportunities for those close to cancer to contribute to our work

Continue to provide clear and comprehensive information about cancer

Provide more personalised information to cancer patients, the public and key stakeholders
We have committed to a series of social and environmental goals. You can find out more about these at [cruk.org/corporate-responsibility](http://cruk.org/corporate-responsibility).

A great deal of cancer research is carried out without using animals, but in certain areas animal research remains essential if we are to understand, prevent and cure cancer. We only use animals when there is no alternative.

Cancer patients and their families are at the heart of everything we do. We believe that all our research is vital if we are to save the lives of more patients in the future.

Registered charity number
England and Wales: 1089464
Scotland: SC041666
Isle of Man: 1103

Registered company number
England and Wales: 4325234
Isle of Man: 5713F

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