



The difference you make





Senior Staff Nurse, Tahmina Ali in the Outpatients Department, Chelsea

Thanks to you, during our 2019/20 financial year we raised £31.7 million from donations and legacies alone. Your generosity helped the Charity continue to support the world-leading nurses, doctors and research teams at The Royal Marsden to provide the very best care and develop life-saving treatments.

We must also recognise that we had a very challenging end to our 2019/20 financial year with the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, we continued to see an incredible amount of support when we launched our Emergency Appeal, which quickly raised £2 million. These vital funds had an immediate benefit for both staff and patients at The Royal Marsden.

Thank you so much for your support.

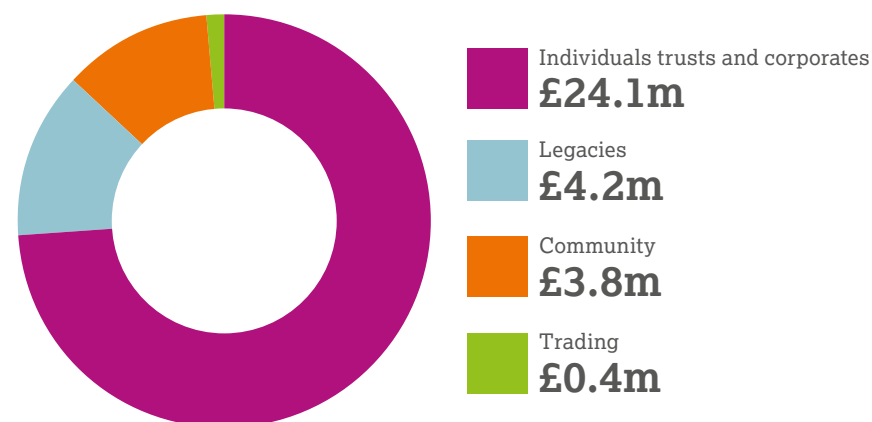
Front cover: Young patient Kareece Stone-Small (left) with her twin sister and stem cell donor Kameeka

Financial highlights

Together, we raised £32.5 million including £31.7 million from donations and legacies in 2019/20.

Thank you to all our inspirational and generous supporters who ensured we could continue to fund life-saving research and modern patient environments. We also were able to invest in the latest equipment and enable hospital teams to provide world-leading treatment and care. This all makes a vital difference to the lives of cancer patients.

What we raised:



How we spent your money:



Leading the way for young cancer patients

The world-leading Oak Paediatric and Adolescent Drug Development Unit (OPDDU) offers one of the largest portfolios of innovative treatments in Europe thanks to support from The Royal Marsden Cancer Charity. The unit's ambition is to improve survival of childhood and adolescent cancer.

The OPDDU was part of a pilot molecular profiling study developed at The Royal Marsden and The Institute of Cancer Research. The study set the foundations for the Stratified Medicine Paediatrics programme, a national paediatric tumour profiling study for patients with relapsed solid tumours.

Due to the emphasis of OPDDU's work on molecular profiling, The Royal Marsden Cancer Charity funded Dr Sally George to establish stronger links between the laboratory and the clinic.

Dr George said: *"There has never been a greater need to have someone with one foot in the laboratory and another in the clinic. It is an exciting time in translational development, seeing the science move into the clinical setting. I split my time between both worlds and believe some of the best research ideas come directly from patients."*



William's story

William Runicles, now aged eight, was diagnosed with a rare brain tumour as a baby leaving him with severe visual impairment. In 2016, after standard treatment stopped working, he was referred to The Royal Marsden's Oak Paediatric and Adolescent Drug Development Unit to take part in a three-year clinical trial.

His mum Ursula said: *"We have spent so many nights in hospital with William, but thanks to the trial we haven't been an inpatient for over a year and a half. Within months of going on the trial, scans showed significant reduction in the disease, and after the introduction of a more targeted drug last year, William continues to do well. He is a happy and content little boy."*

"There is a different mindset at The Royal Marsden. The team are always willing to try new things, always learning and making progress. They have not only been a huge support to the whole family, they give us hope."



Inside information

The Royal Marsden's Endoscopy Unit helps diagnose a range of cancers at the earliest possible stage. Different types of tests, including colonoscopies and endoscopic ultrasounds, performed by the Endoscopy team help provide further information to aid cancer diagnosis.

Dr Darina Kohoutova, a Consultant Gastroenterologist who is part-funded by The Royal Marsden Cancer Charity, says: *"As well as diagnosing cancer earlier, it's important we ensure our patients can continue to enjoy their lives after cancer treatment."*

Readers of our magazine, Progress, helped the Charity fund a new piece of equipment for the Endoscopy Unit. The Endoscopic ultrasound (EUS) combines ultrasound technology with endoscopy to produce detailed images of the inside of a patient who may have upper GI cancer. This is particularly crucial for cancers which are difficult to diagnose early and often don't cause symptoms until they have already spread.

Russell's story

Russell Davis lost his father, grandfather, great grandfather and great uncles to bowel cancer and was himself diagnosed with Lynch syndrome, which genetically predisposes him to bowel cancer. He started having regular colonoscopies at The Royal Marsden in 2009.

In August 2018, the Endoscopy Unit discovered small growths called polyps on Russell's bowel wall. Some of the polyps were cancerous. After further investigation, he underwent keyhole surgery to remove part of his bowel.

Russell says: *"Sadly, in losing my father I saved my life: finding out about the inherited condition meant I was closely monitored and was able to catch this early. I have peace of mind now that we've stopped history repeating itself, and my four year-old-son, Freddie, will be able to be much more aware and monitored as he gets older."*

Robotic Fellows

The Charity's funding for the robotic surgical programme continues to make a vital difference, with a sixth surgical robotic fellow having started at The Royal Marsden in 2020.

Traditionally, surgeons develop one area of expertise, either one organ or a small group of organs. However, cancer is not restricted by such boundaries, often spreading from its original site to nearby organs. The Robotic Surgery Fellowship provides the opportunity to learn across three specialty departments of urology, colorectal surgery and gynaecological oncology.

Consultant Urological Surgeon and lead for the Da Vinci Xi Surgical Robotic Fellowship, Mr Pardeep Kumar, said: *"Five surgeons have completed the programme and taken their skills to other hospitals, sharing best practice and expertise to benefit cancer patients everywhere."*

Graham's story

Graham, 70, was diagnosed with prostate cancer in July 2018 and referred to The Royal Marsden for treatment.

"I knew right from the start that I was in excellent hands. I was given a choice of treatment and chose robotic surgery using the Da Vinci Xi."

"I was so excited to get in and get it done. It was very quick, and because of this incredible machine the procedure is done through keyhole surgery rather than open surgery. I was home the following day with two weeks to put my feet up."

"Nearly two years down the line my PSA (prostate specific antigen, a protein that is shown more in tests when there is a cancerous growth) is now undetectable. It feels incredible, and it is all thanks to the wonderful team at The Royal Marsden. I am a lucky man!"

Above: Robotic surgery patient Graham and his horse DiNozzo.



*Dr Andy Feber, Deputy Scientific Director
at the Centre for Molecular Pathology*

All in the genes

With Charity support, work is ongoing in the NIHR Centre for Molecular Pathology (CMP) to develop and introduce new genomics methods into standard NHS practice, to benefit cancer patients across the country.

Dr Andy Feber was recently appointed as Deputy Scientific Director at the CMP in Sutton. This Charity-funded role sits within the Clinical Genomics research team and will work closely with the Clinical Genomics Diagnostics Team and the NHS England Genomics Lab Hub.

Early diagnosis is one of Dr Feber's key areas of interest within his role – diagnosing cancers earlier is vital and saves thousands of lives every year. Dr Feber will be working with teams to develop a circulating tumour DNA (ctDNA), minimally invasive blood test which could be used in a community setting, such as in GP surgeries, to help diagnose cancers earlier. These tests could also be used for patients during their standard treatment to monitor progress, reducing the need for patients to come into hospital for regular scans.

Our Emergency Appeal

In March 2020, at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, The Royal Marsden Cancer Charity launched an Emergency Appeal to raise urgently needed funds to support patients and staff at The Royal Marsden. Thanks to generous donations from supporters like you, the Appeal raised a total of £2 million. You can read below about how funding from the Emergency Appeal has made a vital difference to the hospital's patients and staff over the course of the pandemic.

Technological advances

Due to government guidelines, in March The Royal Marsden closed to visitors. However, Emergency Appeal donors made it possible for patients to stay in contact with their friends and families, when they needed it most, by providing Charity-funded iPads and virtual visiting apps for patients who couldn't use their personal devices or do not have a device of their own.

Research into COVID-19 and cancer

The funds raised are also supporting a number of critical research studies to investigate the impact of COVID-19 on cancer patients.

In May clinical and research teams at The Royal Marsden and The Francis Crick Institute launched the CAPTURE study to understand the interactions between a patient's immunity, COVID-19, the cancer, and cancer treatment.

Preliminary results from the CAPTURE study show most patients developed an immune response to the virus that is comparable with those that do not have cancer and that antibodies do not decline any faster in these patients. This will help to inform care plans for each patient and in some cases, allow clinicians to confidently resume treatment. Consultant Medical Oncologist, Dr Samra Turajlic, who is leading the study, has also identified that patients with blood cancers have specific defects that impact their immune response. These defects may make these patients more vulnerable to COVID-19 and other infectious diseases.

The OCTAPUS-AI study, led by Dr Richard Lee, Consultant Physician in Respiratory Medicine and Champion for Early Cancer Diagnosis, has used the latest technology to benefit cancer patients. The study uses artificial intelligence to analyse scans and provide clinicians with information on whether changes in the lungs are due to COVID-19, a different infection, or a side effect of treatment. This will ensure patients receive the right treatment for their condition.

Psychological Support

For the past five years The Royal Marsden Cancer Charity has funded a service that provides expert guidance and counselling to any members of staff who need support. During the pandemic, staff counsellors reported a rise in anxiety, panic attacks and compassion fatigue meaning that this service was needed more than ever. Funds raised from the Emergency Appeal have allowed us to recruit more counsellors, helping to provide more of this vital service for staff during the pandemic.



*Dr Samra Turajlic,
Consultant Medical Oncologist*

Thank you

Thank you for supporting The Royal Marsden Cancer Charity.

Your generosity helps The Royal Marsden continue to provide the best possible treatment and care for cancer patients.

Whether you have chosen to make a donation in celebration of a special occasion, given a monthly gift, donated to one of our fundraising appeals, or have left a gift in your Will - your support makes a vital difference to all those affected by cancer. Thank you.

Find out more

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