

Impact Report 2022/23



At The Royal Marsden we deal with cancer every day, so we understand how valuable life is. And when people entrust their lives to us, they deserve the very best. That's why the pursuit of excellence lies at the heart of everything we do and why The Royal Marsden Cancer Charity exists.

Thanks to our supporters we continue to be there for everyone who needs us, raising money solely to support the hospital. We ensure our nurses, doctors and research teams can provide the very best care and develop life-saving treatments, which are used across the UK and around the world.

From funding state-of-the-art equipment and ground-breaking research, to creating the very best patient environments, we will never stop looking for ways to improve the lives of people affected by cancer.

The Royal Marsden Cancer Charity
For a future beyond cancer.

Front cover: Kema Peat,
 Senior Healthcare Assistant.

Welcome to our Impact Report

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A letter from our Chairman and Managing Director

As we look back over the last year, we are incredibly indebted, once again, to our wonderful supporters for what they have helped us to achieve for people affected by cancer.

In a voluntary sector that has become ever more competitive for funding, our supporters have consistently shown their commitment to our purpose and through their generosity, the Charity has continued to find new ways to innovate and develop. We are delighted to report that in 2022/23 we raised £31.8 million from donations and gifts in Wills, a tremendous result that will allow us to embark on additional grant funding for the hospital with confidence.

During 2022/23 we completed our fundraising activities for the public phase of the Oak Cancer Centre Appeal and focused our efforts on keeping our generous supporters fully informed as to progress, sharing updates regarding the incredible amount raised and the difference the centre will make, as well as preparing for the opening of the Oak Cancer Centre in the summer of 2023.

We were pleased to see more supporters returning to mass participation events, after the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions were removed. This notably included the return of The Banham Marsden March in May with 2,650 supporters participating in the in-person event and a further 325 walkers taking part in 'The Banham Marsden March at Home', walking the five or 15 miles in their local area. Together, the events raised over £1 million.

In December, the stunning Ever After Garden lit up Grosvenor Square once again, with over 20,000 illuminated white roses dedicated in memory of treasured family and friends. Established in 2019, the 2022 Ever After Garden was financially the most successful to date, raising more than £200,000 both online and at the garden; funding which we will use to help improve the lives of cancer patients everywhere.

Our longstanding corporate partnership with Ralph Lauren continued to grow and this year included a holiday fundraiser at its flagship store on Bond Street in support of the Charity. Featuring live music, it gave people the chance to see The Ralph Lauren Giving Tree for Bond Street in aid of The Royal Marsden Cancer Charity and guests could make a donation and personalise a star for the tree. We are incredibly grateful for this ongoing support.

We continued to make grants across our four pillars: research, equipment, patient environments, and treatment and care.

Responding to and innovating in areas of national and international priority allows The Royal Marsden to continue to deliver world-leading cancer research. The Charity's contributions to its clinical research infrastructure enables the hospital to increase the scope and scale of research and development expertise deployed to support innovation. As a consequence, The Royal Marsden's research is able to impact a greater number of tumour groups and treatment modalities.

In the current year, through a £5.4 million research grant, the Charity supported key priority areas and themes, including early phase drug development and research into immunotherapeutics, early diagnosis, imaging and data science. Early phase drug development research is vital to the evolution of novel anti-cancer treatments, crucial for patients with more complex conditions. In this regard, the Oak Paediatric and Adolescent Oncology Drug Development Unit, which is funded by a £3.2 million, six-year grant, supported by Oak Foundation alongside additional funding from the Charity, made significant research advances over the last year.

Early and accurate diagnosis of cancer, as well as prompt reassurance that none has been identified, are critical to patient wellbeing. This year, through two equipment grants totalling just over £4 million, the Charity enabled the hospital to provide faster and more accurate diagnosis for patients including through the provision of a new fluoroscopy machine for the Chelsea site. This complex equipment improves the quality of the imaging, offers far greater resolution, reduces the need for repeat scans and uses far smaller doses of radiation, making it much better for patients. A new £50,000 X-ray specimen cabinet was also funded through this grant, to be used in theatres for patients having a wide local excision of the breast, providing early confirmation of a successful biopsy procedure.

The Innovation Den, a 'new ideas' transformation initiative, is an example of one of the projects funded through a £600,000 Safety, Innovation and Education grant. This grant provided support for projects to address conditions such as 'chemo brain' which is a condition of cognitive impairment sometimes associated with and caused by chemotherapy treatment. This project aims to raise awareness of the symptoms of cognitive impairment and share advice for patients on how to manage it. A three-year Quality of Services grant, awarded in 2020/21 for three years, also funds vital counselling and psychological support for patients, thereby supporting the hospital to deliver the very best levels of care.

There was a change in the leadership of the Charity during the year, with Charles Alexander CBE stepping down in November 2022 as Chairman at the expiry of his six-year term of office. Under his Chairmanship, The Royal Marsden Cancer Charity excelled in its support for cancer patients, supporting the hospital throughout the pandemic and developing and raising funding for the new Oak Cancer Centre. We thank Charles for his unwavering support. Charles was succeeded by Sir Douglas Flint CBE who took up the role of Chairman on 1 December 2022, having been a Trustee of the Charity since 2017.

It was with great sadness that we learned of the death of Brenda Trenowden CBE on 29 August 2022. Brenda had been a Trustee since October 2019 and her strength of purpose was an inspiration to us all. She was a dedicated and professional Trustee who also set an example to all who knew her, and many who did not, of resilient resistance to the disease of cancer. We shall miss the enthusiasm, wit and wisdom she brought to the Board.

Finally, we would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to our volunteers, donors, staff and everyone who has supported us over the past year. Your support has made a vital difference to the lives of people with cancer and to their loved ones and those who cared for them.



Sir Douglas Flint CBE
Chairman
The Royal Marsden Cancer Charity



Antonia Dalmahoy
Managing Director
The Royal Marsden Cancer Charity

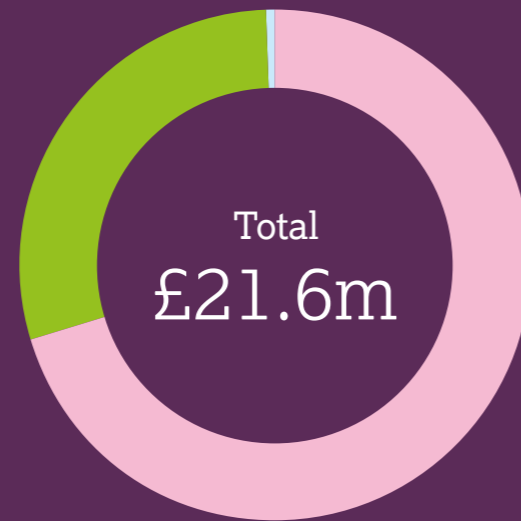
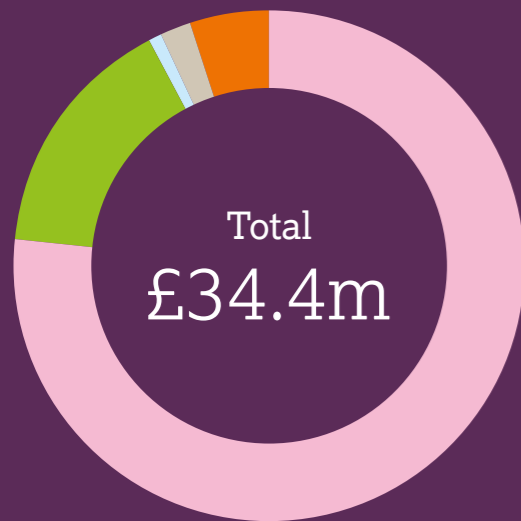
Financial highlights

Together, we raised £34.4 million, including £31.8 million from donations and gifts in Wills in 2022/23. Thank you to all our inspirational and generous supporters who made this possible and ensured we could continue to support the ground-breaking work of The Royal Marsden for the benefit of patients across the UK and around the world.

Money raised by our supporters means The Royal Marsden can make a vital difference to those affected by cancer. With this support the Charity can fund life-saving research, enable hospital teams to provide world-leading treatment and care, invest in the latest equipment, and fund modern patient environments.

What we raised

How we spent your money



- **£26.4m** Donations
- **£5.4m** Gifts in Wills
- **£0.3m** Grants and gifts in kind
- **£0.6m** Trading
- **£1.7m** Investment

- **£15.2m** Charitable activities
- **£6.3m** Raising funds
- **£0.1m** Investment and trading costs

Income received this year exceeded money spent which means we are able to invest in exciting projects coming up in the future.

Over 80p of every £1 donated was available to spend on life-saving research, the latest equipment, patient environments and treatment and care.



Equipment

We continued to fund the latest equipment, giving patients access to new technological advances and helping hospital teams to provide more effective diagnosis and treatment.



Treatment and care

Our funding helped ensure The Royal Marsden could continue to deliver the best possible, personalised treatment and supportive care for patients throughout their time at the hospital.



Research

We continued to invest in life-saving research – from clinical trials to the development of new drugs – that will transform the lives of cancer patients at The Royal Marsden, across the UK and around the world.



Patient environments

We continued to fund welcoming, dignified and peaceful environments for patients, including the construction of the state-of-the-art Oak Cancer Centre in Sutton.

Our inspirational supporters

Our generous supporters continued to inspire us with their fundraising and donations in 2022/23, ensuring we could continue transforming the lives of people with cancer.

We are extremely grateful for the incredible support of the late Dame Deborah James. A passionate supporter of The Royal Marsden Cancer Charity, Dame Deborah's tireless campaigning and positivity was a huge inspiration to many.

Following her stage 4 bowel cancer diagnosis, she used her experience and platform to break down barriers about talking about bowel cancer, to fundraise and raise awareness about the importance of early diagnosis and

research. She supported numerous events and campaigns for the Charity, including taking over our social media channels, recording a podcast from The Banham Marsden March, and driving sign-ups to our fundraisers. She was also very open about the different treatments she received, posting videos of her being treated with the Charity-funded CyberKnife and going through chemotherapy. Behind the scenes, she also helped and befriended many other cancer patients, including many at The Royal Marsden.

In her final weeks she worked tirelessly to establish the Bowelbabe Fund to promote better awareness of the symptoms of bowel cancer and fund research into new treatments; at the outset her ambition was to raise £250,000. It is a measure of the love and admiration people had for Dame Deborah that within four days, donations had already surpassed £4 million. The Fund has now raised over £11 million

for causes and projects that she was passionate about, including The Royal Marsden Cancer Charity, and the research her Fund will support will continue her incredible legacy for many years to come.

Our heartfelt sympathies go to her family, loved ones and all those affected by her loss. We will be forever grateful to Dame Deborah for spending time championing the care she received at The Royal Marsden and fundraising for The Royal Marsden Cancer Charity.

“Deborah was an inspiration to everyone at The Royal Marsden, including the Interventional Radiology team. We were blown away by how tirelessly she worked to fundraise and to raise awareness of cancer throughout her treatment.”

Dr Nicos Fotiadis,
Consultant Radiologist



Dr Nicos Fotiadis, Consultant Radiologist, with the late Dame Deborah James, patient and supporter.

In 2022, siblings Reece and Emilie Ryan each ran a marathon over their school summer holidays to support The Royal Marsden Cancer Charity after their father, Mark, began treatment for stage 4 pancreatic cancer. They finished their challenge outside The Royal Marsden in Chelsea, cheered on by their family, friends and Charity staff, having raised more than £62,000.

Mark said: “Since my diagnosis, our children have been incredibly caring and have shown great resilience. Their instinctive response to their difficult situation has been remarkable. They insisted on doing something to raise money for cancer research and began running alongside my wife, completing around half a mile every morning. The success of the fundraiser far exceeded our expectations – we’ve been overwhelmed by the support and generosity of our community.”

“*Since my diagnosis, our children have been incredibly caring and have shown great resilience. Their instinctive response to their difficult situation has been remarkable.*”

Mark, patient at The Royal Marsden.



Supporters Emilie and Reece Ryan with their dad, Mark, patient at The Royal Marsden.



Shiona Ramage, supporter and patient at The Royal Marsden.

Shiona Ramage has been treated at The Royal Marsden following her diagnosis of melanoma in June 2016. Since then, she has completed a huge number of fundraising challenges in support of the Charity, along with her friends and family who make up ‘Team Shomelanoma’. In the last few years, she has raised over £100,000 through a wide range of fundraising activities, including a 12-hour danceathon, hiking 100km along the Jurassic Coast, running the Royal Parks Half Marathon and climbing Mount Toubkal, the tallest mountain in North Africa.

She said: “It’s safe to say that the care I receive at The Royal Marsden is outstanding and is keeping me alive. Channeling my energy into fundraising is my way of saying thank you. With ongoing research and clinical trials, the outlook for melanoma patients is much brighter, but more still needs to be done to better understand the disease and how to treat it effectively – and the team at The Royal Marsden are right at the forefront of cancer research.”

We are incredibly grateful to all our inspirational supporters who go above and beyond each year for The Royal Marsden Cancer Charity.

“*To still be here six years on and doing all my fundraising challenges and living life to the full is all thanks to research and the amazing care I am still receiving from The Royal Marsden.*”

Shiona, patient at The Royal Marsden.



Equipment

Transformative technology that saves lives

This year we continued to fund state-of-the-art equipment to enable faster and more accurate diagnosis, as well as comfortable, less invasive treatment for patients. The purchase of new items will make a vital difference to patient care, including through faster recovery times and shorter stays in hospital.



Shaira Farooq, Deputy Superintendent Radiographer, in the Reuben Foundation Imaging Centre.

In 2022/23 we awarded over £4 million through two equipment grants, funding vital items such as a new fluoroscopy machine, which captures X-ray footage of the body in real time, for diagnosis and treatment purposes.

This new machine reduces the need for repeat scans by offering far greater image resolution, and allows clinicians to see vessels more clearly. The machine's flexibility means patients can be scanned either lying down or standing up.

The fluoroscopy machine operates by passing an X-ray beam through an area of the body, which is transmitted to a monitor, enabling the area and its movement to be visualised in real time. The machine can be used for diagnosis and treatment, across many areas of the hospital including in general radiology, interventional radiology and in image-guided surgery. It has multiple uses including for observing the digestive tract, image-guided therapeutic injections into joints or the spine, and cardiac catheterisation. It is also capable of 'digital subtraction' imaging, where clinicians can visualise blood vessels without any of the underlying anatomy. The quality of the imaging offers far greater resolution, reduces the need for repeat scans and uses far smaller doses of radiation, making it much better for patients.

An image intensifier was also purchased through this grant. This piece of equipment captures moving X-ray images of the inside of the body, bringing many benefits including improved image quality for clinicians to support diagnosis and a more accurate patient dose. It can be used in theatres as well as in radiology, to assist with surgical procedures. For instance, it allows clinicians to visualise the urinary system and ensure that stents are placed in a ureter safely, helping to relieve symptoms of obstruction caused by cancer. It is also used for patients who need a treatment port fitted for receiving different forms of treatment, such as chemotherapy and immunotherapy. The device ensures that a port can be inserted accurately and comfortably, giving long-term access to the patient's bloodstream.

Image caption:



Goncalo Ferreira, Senior Nuclear Medicine Technologist.



Equipment



Treatment and care



Research



Patient environments



Gian Lugtu, Staff Nurse, in theatres with the X-ray specimen cabinet

Supporting cancer surgery and imaging

A new £50,000 X-ray specimen cabinet, also funded by the Charity, was purchased for theatres to provide confirmation of a successful biopsy procedure. It will help patients having a wide local excision of the breast, where the area of cancer in the breast and some of the surrounding tissue is removed surgically for biopsy.

The X-ray specimen cabinet offers high-resolution imaging of the breast tissue sample, sending the images to multiple destinations in the hospital quickly for further examination. Large tissue samples can be checked to ensure all specified areas for removal have been covered.

The grant also funded two MRI compatible anaesthetic machines, totalling £120,000. These pieces of equipment act as ventilators and are used to deliver oxygen and air to patients who require an MRI under general anaesthetic, such as patients who suffer from anxiety, are claustrophobic, have learning difficulties or are in intensive care and specifically require ventilation. Clinicians can measure the lung capacity of the patient and adjust oxygen levels and air accurately, tailoring the breathing pattern on

the machine according to the needs of the patient. The machines are specially designed, using different metals, to enable their use in the presence of magnets in the MRI room. They have advanced safety features which allow clinicians to better monitor patients under sedation, as well as upgraded ventilating features which puts less strain on the patient's lungs.

“These pieces of equipment help to deliver anaesthesia and sedation to patients who are unable to tolerate an MRI while awake, such as patients who suffer from anxiety, are claustrophobic, have learning difficulties or are in intensive care.”

Dr Pascale Gruber, Critical Care Unit Lead and Consultant Anaesthetist.



Equipment



Treatment and care



Research



Patient environments

My story

Aneta

42-year-old Aneta Gupta was diagnosed with triple negative breast cancer in October 2022 after finding a lump and coming to The Royal Marsden's Rapid Diagnosis and Assessment Centre (RDAC).

Aneta underwent intense weekly chemotherapy and immunotherapy and is currently undergoing radiotherapy. Aneta benefitted from having a treatment port fitted as she has a severe phobia of needles. The treatment port procedure was performed using a Mobile Image Intensifier, funded by The Royal Marsden Cancer Charity.

"I really enjoy my career, and all of a sudden you wake up one day and your whole life has changed after getting a cancer diagnosis.

"Being diagnosed with cancer came completely out of the blue, it was a massive shock. I really didn't expect to get this diagnosis at such a young age. I had a four-year-old son and had just been promoted at work.

"I have a huge phobia of needles and absolutely dread having just a simple blood test, let alone anything else. Of course, having chemotherapy involves having the treatment administered via your veins so I was really dreading it. When I started my treatment, I was so anxious. I have really small veins and it was a struggle to get the cannula in, often taking quite a few attempts.

"Having a treatment port fitted was the best decision I have made. My treatment became far more pleasant, quicker and much more manageable. Not just for me as a patient but for the staff who were treating me and had to deal with my needle phobia and struggles with the cannula each week. It's so much easier to access my treatment now, it's made a huge difference to my quality of life.

"The staff who took care of me whilst I had the port fitted, everyone in Day Surgery and the recovery unit, were absolutely brilliant. They knew how anxious I was, but they were so patient with me and really put my mind at ease.

"I'm grateful to be in the best hospital for my care and to have access to all the best equipment and treatment. I really want to say thank you to everyone at The Royal Marsden for looking after me. From the admin staff to the nurses who administer my chemotherapy, the catering staff, the plastics team and the surgical team, they're all brilliant. It's so lovely to hear about The Royal Marsden Cancer Charity and how it supports the hospital. People that are donating really are supporting the best cause."

"I'm grateful to be in the best hospital for my care and to have access to all the best equipment and treatment. I really want to say thank you to everyone at The Royal Marsden for looking after me."

Aneta Gupta, patient at The Royal Marsden.

Aneta Gupta, patient at The Royal Marsden.



Equipment



Treatment and care



Research



Patient environments



Treatment and care

Providing compassionate support

The Charity's funding helps The Royal Marsden to provide exceptional treatment and care for patients, which is tailored to their needs and helps improve their emotional and physical wellbeing. By enabling the hospital to offer holistic care, we help patients to enjoy a good quality of life before, during and after cancer treatment.



Sarah-Jane Webb, Junior Sister, with Jacky Phillips, patient at The Royal Marsden.

Sonali Seddon, Oncology Psychotherapist, in The Royal Marsden's Adult Psychological Support Service.



This year our £5.9 million quality of services grant, which commenced in 2020, funded vital services such as psychological support for patients and their families and the prehabilitation team, which aims to better prepare patients to live and eat well prior to, and during, treatment.

Personalised treatment and care

The three-year quality of services grant has continued to fund vital counselling and psychological support for patients, including the Adult Psychological Support Service. This provides support to patients throughout their treatment pathway at The Royal Marsden, ensuring that the mental health of patients is addressed alongside their physical wellbeing.

Thanks to this grant, the hospital has also been able to deliver a broad range of complementary therapies at The Royal Marsden in Chelsea and Sutton, including massage therapy, aromatherapy and reflexology. The service supports inpatients and outpatients with complex symptoms including pain, anxiety and concerns around altered body image, from diagnosis to post-treatment, and is extremely well received by patients.

The grant has also helped to fund the prehabilitation team, which encompasses a range of therapies and medical support. The team works with patients to ensure they are physically and mentally ready to undergo cancer treatment, such as surgery, which helps to minimise cancelled or postponed operations as well as aiding the patient's recovery.

Through our £675,000 innovation and education grant, we funded the Pre-Doctoral Research Fellowship Programme, which is a vital first step for health professionals at the hospital looking to begin their research career and helps drive advances in treatment and care that will benefit patients not just at The Royal Marsden, but across the UK.

In addition, the Innovation Den, a forum in which staff put forward their ideas to enhance patients' experience, was funded through a previous safety, innovation &

education grant. The winners received Charity funding to drive their project forward. One of the winning projects, which had significant progress this year, was to develop resources to better support patients experiencing cancer-related cognitive impairment (CRCI). Informative videos and online learning resources were created to provide patients with tools and strategies to optimise cognition following cancer treatment, as well as understand their symptoms and how to seek help.

Through a £2.43 million grant, the Charity is also funding the digitisation of the Histopathology Department. This modernisation of the hospital's existing histopathology service, in collaboration with work undertaken at the Charity-funded Integrated Pathology Unit, will enable quicker, more accurate diagnosis for patients as well as enhanced personalised care.



Equipment



Treatment and care



Research



Patient environments

My story



Naz Kotadia, patient at The Royal Marsden, with Adrian Fautly, Cancer Exercise Specialist.

Naz

In May 2022, Naz Kotadia, 66, was diagnosed with sarcoma in his right thigh. He had surgery under the care of Mr Dirk Strauss, Consultant Surgeon, before being referred to the Rehabilitation Team to help with his recovery.

Naz credits the team's support and specifically Adrian Fautly, Cancer Exercise Specialist, whose role is funded by The Royal Marsden Cancer Charity, with giving him his confidence back. He has been able to walk again without using a stick and go back to playing badminton, his main goal following his surgery.

"At The Royal Marsden I had an MRI scan and then a biopsy, after which I was told it was sarcoma. I was shocked, but Dr Strauss was excellent," says Naz.

"I've been having the physiotherapy for just over a year now and just recently I was back on the badminton court, where I managed to play a bit – it was an emotional and proud moment. It is about having quality of life back and being able to do those small enjoyable things again. I have almost completed the gym

programme and using weight machines – I can finally do a single leg stand on the right leg, which I haven't been able to do since I had my surgery.

"Adrian has been wonderful. He provided me with a very detailed programme with a step-by-step guide to my exercises and it is so helpful for me."

"I've been having the physiotherapy for just over a year now and just recently I was back on the badminton court, where I managed to play a bit – it was an emotional and proud moment. It is about having quality of life back and being able to do those small enjoyable things again."

Naz Kotadia, patient at The Royal Marsden.



Equipment



Treatment and care



Research



Patient environments

My story

Peter

Peter Burton, 58, was diagnosed with stage 3 myeloma in 2017 and has undergone chemotherapy and a stem cell transplant at The Royal Marsden.

He has benefitted from new resources to support patients experiencing cancer-related cognitive impairment (CRCI), which have helped him manage his symptoms which include brain fog and lack of focus. Sometimes referred to as ‘chemo brain’, CRCI can be caused by cancer itself, as well as chemotherapy and other cancer treatments.

Peter, a retired headteacher, said: “I wasn’t feeling great at school, and I realised that things were taking me a lot longer to do and it was a real challenge, getting through my work. I was having difficulty concentrating, I had an inability to multitask, and I was struggling with processing information and getting distracted. I was also dealing with low mood.”

Peter joined a new programme at the hospital called Emerging from the Haze, which has been supported by funding from The Royal Marsden Cancer Charity. The online, six-week course, led by therapists at the hospital, provides tools and strategies to understand and optimise cognition after cancer treatment. The Charity also funded informative videos for patients which explain their symptoms, how to talk to clinicians about it and how to seek specialist help if needed.

“When I heard about Emerging from the Haze, I jumped at the chance to join. I heard other people who were on the programme speaking about their concerns, and I thought ‘that’s exactly me’. It was powerful to meet others with the same experiences. As a result of the programme, a group was set up between us so that we could just talk, and it was so supportive.

“I will continue to use the strategies from this programme, as they are so helpful in improving my quality of life. It has also given me reassurance that there is a reason behind why I’m doing what I’m doing.”

“When I heard about Emerging from the Haze, I jumped at the chance to join. I heard other people who were on the programme speaking about their concerns, and I thought ‘that’s exactly me’. It was powerful to meet others with the same experiences.”

Peter Burton, patient at The Royal Marsden.



Peter Burton, patient at The Royal Marsden.



Equipment



Treatment and care



Research



Patient environments

Training tomorrow's research leaders

Funded by The Royal Marsden Cancer Charity, Pre-Doctoral Research Fellowships are an opportunity for nurses, allied health professionals and pharmacists to carry out their own research, with the aim of enhancing and refining patient treatment and care.

Digital health innovations are fast becoming an integral part of modern cancer care. Tommy Brown, Lead Research Nurse in Haemato-Oncology, is undertaking a Charity funded pre-doctoral research fellowship investigating the use of fitness trackers to monitor activity levels in myeloma patients undergoing a stem cell transplant.

His two-year research project involves giving patients wearable devices which monitor patterns of physical activity before, during and after their transplant, with the aim of learning more about the connection between physical activity and treatment outcomes for this group of patients. Tommy's work will help assess the potential of wearable technology as part of the care myeloma patients receive in the future.

Tommy says: "Physical activity can improve a patient's physical and psychological ability to undergo cancer treatment, and so we hope trialling this technology will give us valuable insights that will help to improve care for myeloma patients – for example, understanding the impact of activity levels before, during and after a stem cell transplant could help predict which patients will better tolerate the treatment. We can also compare what we find with new and emerging treatments, such as CAR-T therapy, in future clinical trials.

"We also hope this could help consultants when assessing patients in clinic. By having a more accurate picture over a longer period of time of how well patients are doing, this could enable us to tailor our ongoing approach, balancing the need to make a patient's treatment as effective as possible with a good quality of life."

“Physical activity can improve a patient's physical and psychological ability to undergo cancer treatment, and so we hope trialling this technology will give us valuable insights that will help to improve care for myeloma patients.”

Tommy Brown,
Lead Research Nurse
in Haemato-Oncology.



Tommy Brown, Lead Research Nurse in Haemato-Oncology, with a patient.



Equipment



Treatment and care



Research



Patient environments



Research

Pioneering breakthroughs to change the lives of cancer patients

The Royal Marsden Cancer Charity supports life-saving research, enabling breakthroughs which will benefit cancer patients not just at the hospital, but across the UK and around the world.

Susie Riisnaes and Aanu Taylor at the microtome in the Integrated Pathology Unit laboratory.

In 2022/23, our £5.4 million research grant supported the hospital's world-leading research programme, driving the development of new and improved ways of diagnosing and treating cancer. This included key areas such as early phase drug development and research into immunotherapeutics, early diagnosis, imaging and data science.

New and improved diagnosis and treatment

The Charity supported the creation of the Integrated Pathology Unit, enabling experts to develop new tests for cancer and speed up diagnosis for patients. The Unit brings pathology into the modern era by using state-of-the-art laboratory techniques, digital imaging tools and artificial intelligence to analyse tissue samples. These new technologies will help pathologists diagnose cancer faster and more precisely than traditional laboratory methods.

The Charity has also funded immunotherapeutics research to find new targeted cancer treatments. Solid Tumour Lead Dr Andrew Furness, who is funded by the Charity, led on research investigating the use of tumour-infiltrating lymphocyte (TIL) therapy to treat patients with advanced skin cancer. More than a third of patients on the trial responded well to this innovative type of cellular immunotherapy, which uses the patient's own T cells to fight cancer.

The grant has also funded vital early phase drug development research. Dr Anna Minchom, who is funded by the Charity, led on the HYPER study, investigating the use of the drug guadecitabine and the immunotherapy drug pembrolizumab to treat patients with non-small cell lung cancer (NSCLC). Dr Minchom demonstrated that combining guadecitabine and the immunotherapy drug pembrolizumab controls the disease for more than 24 weeks in 42 per cent of patients with NSCLC.

The Oak Paediatric and Adolescent Oncology Drug Development Unit, which is funded by a £3.2 million, six-year grant, supported by Oak Foundation with additional funding from the Charity, has made significant research advances over the last year. A trial called NANT 2015-02 Lorlatinib, led by Dr Lynley Marshall, investigated using the drug lorlatinib alone, and in combination with cyclophosphamide and topotecan, to treat children and young adults with relapsed and treatment-resistant neuroblastoma. This

saw some patients achieving responses great enough to go on to receive surgery, chemotherapy and other kinds of treatment, which would have previously not been possible, providing genuine improvements in outcomes.

Finally, the International Centre for Recurrent Head and Neck Cancer (IReC) continued its world-leading work in curative treatment, palliation and supportive care of recurrent head and neck cancers. The world-first Centre was made possible thanks to Charles Wilson, Dr Rowena Olegario and Keith and Isabelle McDermott's generous support of The Royal Marsden Cancer Charity. Among the IReC trials that have opened this year is the NOMINATE study, which investigates the use of ctDNA (or liquid biopsies) in assessing the genetic composition and tumour evolution of advanced thyroid cancer. This knowledge can be used to better profile individual tumours and help further our understanding of why some patients have more aggressive disease that does not respond as well to treatment.



Dr Angela George, Consultant Medical Oncologist and Geneticist, with a patient.

Improving early diagnosis

Funding from The Royal Marsden Cancer Charity has supported the SIGNIFIED research study, which is identifying patients' cancer in its earliest stages.

Led by Dr Angela George, Clinical Director of Genomics and Consultant Medical Oncologist in Gynaecology, the trial monitors patients with Li-Fraumeni syndrome, a very rare predisposition condition where people are at higher risk of developing several cancer types due to an inherited gene. Patients on the trial receive two whole-body MRI scans annually to help detect any cancer that might be present sooner.

Angela George said: "People with Li-Fraumeni syndrome have a very high lifetime risk of cancer caused by an inherited change in a tumour suppressor gene known as TP53, and there is good evidence to suggest that MRI scans can help to detect lesions early. MRI scans are also used because CT scans would further increase these patients' cancer risk, due to the radiation involved.

"We have recruited over 50 patients across the UK with this specific gene mutation and the study is making a real difference – some patients are having further investigations for cancer, and we have also confirmed cases of cancer in patients who are asymptomatic, which otherwise would not have been detected and are fatal in later stages."

The study is also supported by the Small Business Research Initiative for Healthcare (SBRI) funding. This programme accelerates innovative technologies in the NHS and the wider health and social care system, tackling unmet health and care needs. This award was, in part, made possible by funding given by the Charity and builds on the work already done, helping to roll out The Royal Marsden's expertise in interpreting whole-body MRI scans in two other centres, to collect sufficient evidence for the NHS to fund this going forward.



Equipment



Treatment and care



Research



Patient environments

My story

Nina

After being treated for breast cancer twice, Nina Irwin, 70, underwent genetic tests and was diagnosed with Li-Fraumeni syndrome, which several members of her family have since tested positive for. She was then referred to The Royal Marsden's Cancer Genetics Unit where she underwent further testing and went on to have preventative surgery, which saved her from getting ovarian cancer.

She later joined the SIGNIFIED trial and, following her first scan, she was diagnosed with stage 1 lung cancer – an incredibly early diagnosis, which is extremely rare to receive for this tumour type. She underwent surgery and continues to be monitored on the SIGNIFIED trial.

Nina said: “The MRI full body scan I had on the trial saved my life, there is no question about it. When I was diagnosed, I didn't have any symptoms and was just going about my normal life.

“Research is the most important factor with regards to early diagnosis and improving cancer treatment. If cancer is caught early, that is what will save more lives – like mine – and give people a better outcome. I'm grateful for all the incredible staff at The Royal Marsden, their skills and expertise. I'm under the care

of quite a few different teams at the hospital and they all work so hard together, collaboratively, to look after me – it's very humbling. I'm also extremely grateful to The Royal Marsden Cancer Charity for supporting the hospital with research like the SIGNIFIED trial. I'd like to say a heartfelt thank you to the Charity, it really makes a huge difference.

“It's such a huge blow when anyone gets a cancer diagnosis – it's difficult to hear this news and the treatment can often be difficult too – but to know there is such amazing support from the Charity and to have access to such state-of-the-art facilities – it completely changes your outlook.”

“*The MRI full body scan I had on the trial saved my life, there is no question about it. When I was diagnosed, I didn't have any symptoms and was just going about my normal life.*”

Nina Irwin, patient at The Royal Marsden.



Nina Irwin, patient at The Royal Marsden.



Equipment



Treatment and care



Research



Patient environments

My story



Julia Morse, patient at The Royal Marsden.

Julia

In September 2015, Julia Morse, 59, was diagnosed with melanoma, which later spread to her lungs.

“I first noticed a new mole on my right cheek a year before my diagnosis, but initially my GP didn’t think it was anything to worry about,” she says. “It started off flat and pink then became raised and rough, sometimes bleeding too. When I was told it was melanoma, my first thought was how, as a student nurse, I had looked after a young patient with the disease. It was heartbreaking and hard to believe so much pain could be caused by a small mole. When the cancer spread, I was treated at my local hospital with pembrolizumab, a type of immunotherapy, but after six months it stopped working. I was told there were no more approved treatments for me.”

When Julia was referred to The Royal Marsden in 2019, she joined a clinical trial testing two different types of immunotherapies in combination, but unfortunately her cancer started progressing after four months. She then joined the C-144-01 trial, receiving a tumour-infiltrating lymphocyte (TIL) therapy. This ground-breaking type of cellular immunotherapy uses a patient’s own T cells to fight the cancer. Since then, the cancer in her lungs has disappeared.

She said: “Everyone at The Royal Marsden, from the receptionists and orderlies to the nurses and doctors, were amazing. I’m grateful to have been given this opportunity to receive such innovative treatment.”

Julia went on to climb Pen y Fan in the Brecon Beacons with friends, for The Royal Marsden Cancer Charity, raising vital funds for the hospital’s melanoma research.



Equipment



Treatment and care



Research



Patient environments

My story

Niamh

Niamh Hardy was diagnosed with neuroblastoma in 2012 when she was just 15 years old. It is a rare childhood cancer that develops in the nerve tissue. After a period of remission following treatment, she relapsed in 2020, which is when she was referred to The Royal Marsden.

Niamh, now 25 years old, has been receiving treatment on an ALK inhibitor trial for children, teenagers and young adults for the past three years, a Phase 1/2 research trial led by Dr Lynley Marshall through the Oak Paediatric and Adolescent Oncology Drug Development Unit. Just two months after starting the trial, Niamh's scans showed no active cancer cells and she remains stable today.

“Being on this trial at The Royal Marsden has been absolutely life-changing for me. When I was first diagnosed, I had such aggressive treatment which included a stem cell transplant, chemotherapy and radiotherapy, with lots of side effects. I always hoped that if my cancer ever came back, there would be more treatment options available to me.

“Seeing how far treatment for childhood cancers has progressed over the last 10 years is incredible. The trial drug that I've been on since 2020, lorlatinib, has barely any side effects and I'm able to live a completely normal life – working, travelling and spending time with friends and family like any other 25-year-old.

“The trial drug I'm on is a targeted treatment for the specific mutation in my cancer and I was initially taking this alongside receiving regular chemotherapy. Since January 2022, I've been able to finish chemotherapy and now just remain on the trial drug alone – taking six tablets a day.

“The care I've had on the trial is incredible, I feel so well supported and the teams at The Royal Marsden are so encouraging. This treatment has given me my life back. I have regular scans and monitoring and for as long as I'm having stable results I'll remain on the trial. Research trials like the one I'm benefitting from are so important; they give people hope, that not only can their cancer be treated, but they can also live a good quality of life whilst receiving treatment. I'm incredibly grateful to have had the opportunity to join this trial.”



Niamh Hardy, patient,
with Dr Lynley Marshall,
Oak Foundation Consultant.



Equipment



Treatment and care



Research



Patient environments



Patient environments

Creating comfortable and reassuring surroundings to aid wellbeing and recovery

The Charity helps ensure that patients are cared for in welcoming, dignified and calm environments. From the upkeep of beautiful garden areas to the construction of the Oak Cancer Centre, our funding helps create surroundings that best promote patient wellbeing and recovery.



The Oak Cancer Centre under construction, December 2022.



Equipment



Treatment and care



Research



Patient environments

Countdown to the Oak Cancer Centre opening

The construction of the Oak Cancer Centre in Sutton entered its final stages this year, with plans developed for the official opening in June 2023. Designed to enhance patient experience by providing a bright and peaceful environment, this incredible new building will also provide staff with the best facilities in which to conduct their life-saving work.

Funded by The Royal Marsden Cancer Charity's £70 million Oak Cancer Centre appeal, the state-of-the-art research and treatment facility will help accelerate the development of new treatments, offering hope for cancer patients worldwide.

The new centre will bring together more than 400 researchers under the same roof as patients and clinicians in the Kuok Research Centre. The physical proximity of the researchers to patients will support the hospital's 'bench-to-bedside' approach, developing new treatments to benefit patients not just at The Royal Marsden but around the world. Being together under one roof will also enable closer collaboration between experts specialising in different tumour groups to encourage breakthroughs that target molecular

and genetic abnormalities, with less emphasis on the tumour's location in the body.

The building has been designed to enhance patients' experience while undergoing treatment. The extensive glazing throughout the building, including the atrium skylights and floor-to-ceiling windows, will maximise natural light and provide aesthetic views of the surrounding area. The building acoustics have also been modelled to ensure patients feel comfortable within the spaces. In the Olayan Day Care Unit, patients will receive chemotherapy and other cancer treatments in a bright and peaceful environment with generous space for family members to sit with them while they undergo treatment.

The Charles Wolfson Rapid Diagnostic Centre will be on the lower ground floor, with its own separate side entrance. Waiting for results of suspected symptoms of cancer can be an anxious and highly stressful time. To reduce fear and anxiety, the layout avoids those visiting for diagnosis being amongst patients who are undergoing treatment. The Charles Wolfson Rapid Diagnostic Centre also includes dedicated consulting rooms for patients to

meet their clinical teams to discuss symptoms, undergo diagnostic testing and, if required, discuss the next steps of their cancer journey. These rooms have been purposefully designed to provide a calm environment.

Within the Goldman Sachs Centre for Urgent Care, funded by Goldman Sachs Gives, patients who become acutely unwell will have a state-of-the-art facility where they can be quickly assessed, treated and, where possible, avoid being sent to a local A&E department. Complete with personal treatment bays, it will increase the number of patients that can be seen by specialist teams on site.

Thank you to all our donors, fundraisers and partners who, through their support for the Oak Cancer Centre Appeal, made the centre possible.



Interior of the Oak Cancer Centre under construction.



Equipment



Treatment and care



Research



Patient environments



Emma Bishop, patient at The Royal Marsden.

My story

Emma

Emma Bishop was diagnosed with stage 4 EGFR lung cancer in 2022 when she was 37 years old. On being diagnosed, Emma was told her cancer had spread to both her lungs, lymph nodes, spine, pelvis and liver.

“I’d not felt well for about six months, but I have never smoked and there is no history of cancer in my family. As a mum to two young children, suddenly my world was completely shattered when I received a stage 4 cancer diagnosis. I am extremely fortunate that I was swiftly taken under the care of The Royal Marsden and started on osimertinib, a targeted treatment, the day after my first hospital appointment. Osimertinib works to block the cancer cells from multiplying, putting the cancer to sleep in varying degrees from person to person for a period of time.

“Quite miraculously at my six-month PET scan, on paper there was no sign of disease beyond the primary tumour and what was left was much reduced in size and activity. The Royal Marsden saved my life. I am currently still stable and forever grateful, but sadly this does not mean I am cured.

“The Royal Marsden will be my second home for the rest of my life, which is why the Oak Cancer Centre is such a beacon of hope. Knowing that the Olayan Day Care Unit will be open for patients to have their treatment makes such a

difference. Having more space in a beautiful new environment like this is so important, particularly for patients who are in regularly on long-term treatment.

“Like so many others, I will forever be at the mercy of research and new drugs. The Oak Cancer Centre will be able to build on the already pioneering research carried out by The Royal Marsden into cancer diagnosis and treatment. This incredible research and treatment facility will accelerate both the reliable means to diagnose cancers earlier, when they are more able to be cured, and the development of new cancer treatments to help cancer patients like me to live longer, even with cancer. By bringing researchers, patients and clinicians together, the speed with which this research can transform people’s lives means that so many cancer patients in the future may get the chance to see their children grow up and to grow old with their loved ones.

“My treatment has allowed me to host another Christmas, see my grandmother turn 90, my son turn five and my daughter turn six. I will celebrate my 10th wedding anniversary with my husband this year and there is a strong chance I will reach my 40th birthday next year. With the research conducted at the Oak Cancer Centre, I may reach many more milestones.”

My story

Miranda

Miranda Ashitey was diagnosed with breast cancer when she was just 32 years old. She was referred to The Royal Marsden, where she underwent a lumpectomy, radiotherapy and chemotherapy.

“Breast cancer runs in my family, so I’ve always been vigilant with checking myself and keeping an eye on any changes in my body. My mum’s two sisters in Ghana had breast cancer and were treated out there. One day I found a lump in my left breast, so I went to the doctors straight away and they referred me to the hospital.

“After an ultrasound, mammogram and a biopsy, I got my diagnosis: primary breast cancer. Even though cancer runs in my family, it was still a shock to hear this, especially at such a young age.”

After a period of remission following her initial treatment, Miranda fell ill again and was later diagnosed with secondary, stage 4 breast cancer that had spread to other parts of her body.

She went on to have CyberKnife radiotherapy at The Royal Marsden, which was delivered by one of two machines which were funded by the Charity. Since having this treatment, one of Miranda’s tumours is now dormant and

the other three have shrunk considerably. Chemotherapy treatment is now keeping her condition stable and has reduced the cancer in her liver so much that there is no evidence of disease there.

Miranda will be moving into the Olayan Day Care Unit in the new Oak Cancer Centre for her treatment, when the building is open. To mark her 40th birthday, she took part in a skydive to fundraise for the Charity’s Oak Cancer Centre appeal, raising over £1,300.

“The Royal Marsden has been fantastic. I signed up to take part in the skydive to say thank you to The Royal Marsden for everything they’ve done for me.

“Going to the hospital for treatment can be quite tough. To be able to have treatment in the Olayan Day Care Unit will make such a difference for patients like me. I don’t feel lucky to have cancer, but I feel lucky being a patient at The Royal Marsden.”



Miranda Ashitey, patient at The Royal Marsden.



Equipment



Treatment and care



Research



Patient environments

My story

Jennifer

Jennifer Harkins, 65, was treated twice at The Royal Marsden for breast cancer after getting her initial diagnosis in 2004. She joined the volunteering team on the day of her last hospital appointment in 2016 and since then has become the lead volunteer gardener in Sutton. Jennifer now manages a small team of volunteers, who maintain seven gardens around the hospital in Sutton.

“I owe a personal debt of gratitude to The Royal Marsden and hope that the time I spend volunteering at the hospital is helping to give back in some way. I am deeply committed to this work and knowing that the garden projects in Sutton may help to put a smile on a patient’s face is very fulfilling.

“If you’re a patient in the hospital for a long time then having gardens to enjoy is so appreciated. Patients have told us that they really appreciate the gardens in the outpatient areas while waiting for their appointments. It also makes a difference for patients who are coming into the hospital regularly for treatment and scans. Having a welcoming hospital environment when you’re spending so much time there can have a positive impact on wellbeing.

“I would like to thank The Royal Marsden Cancer Charity for supporting the upkeep of these green spaces. Funding from the Charity helps provide the team with plants, compost, gardening equipment and hand tools. Our volunteers, some of whom, like me, have a personal connection to the hospital, are very generous with their time and often come in at weekends. Knowing that we are making a difference by improving the hospital environment is hugely rewarding.”

“I owe a personal debt of gratitude to The Royal Marsden and hope that the time I spend volunteering at the hospital is helping to give back in some way. I am deeply committed to this work and knowing that the garden projects in Sutton may help put a smile on a patient’s face is very fulfilling.”

Jennifer Harkins, patient and garden volunteer at The Royal Marsden.



Jennifer Harkins, patient and garden volunteer at The Royal Marsden.

Green spaces to aid wellbeing

The Charity’s support helped to maintain and develop peaceful gardens around The Royal Marsden in Sutton. Managed by the hospital’s volunteer team, the gardens are planted with seasonal plants and flowers, chosen for their year-round colours and calming effect.

The volunteer gardening team returned to the hospital following the COVID-19 pandemic with the aim of restoring and rejuvenating the garden areas. A programme of work has been carried out, aiming to bring greenery and nature into patients’ time in hospital. The volunteer team garden organically and aim to encourage wildlife and biodiversity.

The garden projects have also enabled wider community engagement. Students with learning disabilities from a local college have volunteered their time, assisting with garden maintenance, whilst also learning new skills from the volunteer gardening team.



Equipment



Treatment and care



Research



Patient environments



Supporter taking part in RideLondon.

Thank you

All of us at The Royal Marsden Cancer Charity would like to thank everyone who has supported us over the last year.

Your unbelievable dedication and generosity enables us to support people with cancer, so they can receive the very best care, benefit from the latest research and have treatment using the most advanced equipment.

We would especially like to thank the following supporters, as well as those who have chosen to remain anonymous.



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Get in touch

Without the generosity and passion of our dedicated supporters, The Royal Marsden would simply not be able to help so many cancer patients and their loved ones. But we cannot stand still. More and more people are diagnosed with cancer every year, and we must ensure that cancer patients everywhere can receive the latest treatment.

There are so many ways you can help us continue to make a difference to the lives of those affected by cancer. Whether you choose to take part in an event, fundraise for us, make a donation, or leave a gift in your Will – your support, however big or small, has the potential to save lives.

Find out more

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