



National Institute for Health Research

EXPERIMENTAL CANCER MEDICINE CENTRES

Introduction

The vision of the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) is to improve the health and wealth of the nation through research.

This document sets out how the NIHR/ Cancer Research UK Experimental Cancer Medicine Centres contribute to this vision.

Overview

Cancer Research UK (CRUK) and the UK Health Departments are jointly funding a network of eighteen Experimental Cancer Medicine Centres (ECMCs) across the UK investing a total of £35 million in the second five-year period (2012-2017). Fourteen of these ECMCs are in England (NIHR/CRUK ECMCs). The aim is to drive the discovery and early-phase clinical testing of new anti-cancer treatments and biomarkers.

Aims

The ECMCs vision is to bring together laboratory and clinical patient-based research to speed up the development of new therapies and individualise patient treatment. The ECMCs aim to:

- Enhance the delivery of early phase trials by increasing capacity, safety and speed, to improve the success rates in developing new therapeutic modalities for patient benefit.
- Maximise therapeutic opportunities for patients by developing biomarkers, and molecular phenotyping patient samples, to identify sub-populations that differ in their susceptibility to cancer or response to treatment.
- Ensure that the UK remains at the forefront of international efforts to develop and test new treatments for cancer, built upon outstanding science and optimal trial design.
- Increase the attractiveness of the UK as a location for industry-sponsored/funded and collaborative experimental cancer medicine.
- Ensure effective joint working across the network and between Universities and Trusts.

- Promote patient and public involvement in experimental cancer medicine.

Centres

The fourteen NIHR/CRUK ECMCs are Barts and the London in partnership with Brighton; Birmingham; Cambridge; Imperial; Kings College London; Leeds; Leicester; Manchester; Newcastle; Oxford; Royal Marsden; Sheffield; Southampton; and University College London.

The ECMCs work together as a network to combine their collective strengths and collaborate to drive new discoveries more effectively.

Funding

This is a joint CRUK/UK Health Departments funding scheme for University/NHS partnerships. The purpose of funding is to meet the costs of research infrastructure (via the CRUK element of funding to the University partner) and the costs of NHS infrastructure for research including NHS Support Costs (in England via the NIHR element of funding to the NHS partner). This funding provides vital infrastructure that is not readily supported through other early phase cancer trial funding in the UK.

Funding is not intended to meet the direct research costs of individual studies; costs of research posts such as post docs and clinical fellows; or NHS Treatment Costs of research.

The Department of Health in England also funds the ECMC Secretariat, which is provided by CRUK.

ECMCs are playing a crucial role in maintaining the UK's status as one of the best locations in the world for the development of new cancer drugs and diagnostics. They have attracted additional funding from companies, equating to millions of pounds of extra research funding across the network. Over 75 per cent of ECMCs early phase studies are in partnership with industry.

In January 2016 Cancer Research UK published an open call for applications as part of the 2016 quinquennial review of ECMCs in preparation for the funding period April 2017 to March 2022.

Further Information

Full details are available at www.ecmcnetwork.org.uk

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