CANCER RESEARCH UK INVESTS £45M IN MANCHESTER

The following press release was sent out on February 8th 2005 and was featured in the local media.

Cancer Research UK has announced plans to invest £45 million to boost scientific research in Manchester over the next five years. The money will fund scientists at the Paterson Institute for Cancer Research and is likely to promote Manchester into the prime centres in Europe for cancer research. This can only happen by taking an integrated approach with the Christie and developing new approaches to its treatment.

It has recently been highly praised by a group of international inspectors who have completed a five-year review of the Institute's work.

The Paterson Institute, which is largely supported by Cancer Research UK, has won global acclaim for its research into understanding the disease which kills more than 155,000 people each year in the UK.

The Paterson Institute, which is part of the Christie Hospital NHS Trust, is one of the prime centres in Europe for cancer research. This can only happen by taking an integrated approach with the Christie and developing new approaches to its treatment.

The Paterson Institute is part of the Christie Hospital NHS Trust. The Institute's scientists and clinicians at the hospital work closely together on vital developments such as the testing of potential new anti-cancer drugs and vaccines to prevent and treat cancer caused by viruses. Joanna Wallace, Chief Executive of the Christie Hospital NHS Trust, said: "We're delighted that Cancer Research UK has given the Paterson Institute such a glowing report and continues to support it so generously. Research is the first vital step in developing better treatments for cancer patients. "It ultimately improves the quality of cancer treatment, which at the end of the day, is what all our efforts are about."

Cancer Research UK has an annual scientific spend of more than £15m in Manchester and Liverpool and boasts a team of 3000 dedicated scientists, doctors and nurses working out of Britain's leading universities, hospitals and research institutes. The findings of the five-year review into the Paterson Institute have been released at the same time as the charity launches its latest campaign - "Being Here". The campaign, which will feature TV and radio adverts, focuses on the improved survival rates for cancer sufferers and their personal experiences.

Alicia Custis is responsible for managing communications for the Christie Hospital. This includes staff communications (eg: the staff newsletter, monthly team briefing, Intranet, urgent e-mail cascades); dealing with the media; organising VIP visits and official openings; working with partner organisations on joint publicity initiatives and announcements; looking after the Trust's corporate identity; and producing publications such as the annual report.

We keep you up-to-date with key Christie news by cascading any relevant information from the team briefings, distributing Chinwag the quarterly newsletter and circulating urgent e-mails. You can also directly access the news section on the Intranet which holds a lot of the Christie's 'staff communications' material. This includes copies of the team briefings, Chinwag, press releases, national health stories and a summary of the latest media stories about both the hospital and PICR - titled 'Christie in the media'.

New Partnership Announced

A statement has been released that describes a new partnership between the University of Manchester, the Christie and themselves. The Centrepiece of this development is the creation of the Manchester Cancer Research Centre (MCRC) which will incorporate and integrate the basic, translational and clinical research of the Paterson and the University Faculties of Life Sciences and Medical and Human Sciences. The MCRC will provide the basis for a multidisciplinary approach that will foster world-class basic research and translation towards clinical application. The MCRC will work very closely with the Christie Trust with proposed joint research and recruitment committees and some joint research positions. The MCRC and the Christie together will form a comprehensive cancer centre.

Over the next 5 years there will be considerable expansion of cancer research activities, with the main hub being at the Christie site. The goal is to double the level of activity and therefore this requires considerable investment in new buildings and people.

Discussions are currently taking place to formalise agreements between the parties involved with Cancer Research UK also playing a prominent role. It is very likely that as a result of these discussions the Paterson will become a formal Institute of the University. This clearly will necessitate considerable negotiations but I wanted to reassure all staff that there will be no adverse consequences to the Institute if this was to occur. This would not result in any member of staff being worse-off with respect to pay and conditions. I anticipate that the Institute would continue to be run with the same degree of autonomy that it does now and therefore on a day-to-day basis very little would change.

The benefits come from recognising the 'big' picture and the potential for the increased investment in cancer research over the next few years. The Paterson will be at the heart of this development and the goal is to make Manchester one of the prime centres in Europe for cancer research. This can only happen by taking an integrated approach with the University and the Christie. I hope you will agree that the potential is very exciting and will provide a scientific environment that is even better than it is now. I realise that there may be individual concerns that arise from such change, but I am sure we can alleviate these. I will keep you informed of the discussions as they progress, but felt it was necessary to communicate with you at this early stage.

Nic Jones
Director
Paterson Institute for Cancer Research

Tel: 0161 446 3156
www.paterson.man.ac.uk
Recent months have seen three major activities in Education around the Paterson. The first has been a major expansion of the membership of the Cancer Studies Education Committee to include many of our clinical colleagues and so ensure that all areas of Cancer Studies are represented. In its first meeting, the expanded committee revisited many old chestnuts that have haunted Education Committee meetings of old, from mechanisms to ensure that students get meaningful feedback to how to monitor the quality of projects on offer without micro-managing project design. After a final debate in the March meeting a set of rules and guidelines will be agreed that will safeguard the welfare and education of students within our programme.

The second major activity has been the introduction of “Master Classes in Cancer Studies”. After many years in which invitations to teach in institutes around the globe has seen the foundation of knowledge within the Paterson, several invitations to teach in institutes have been turned to spread the word to our own students. The only rule of the series is that it is not a seminar. This “no guidelines” approach allows Group Leaders to communicate the approach and excite interest within their particular field. Clearly this is a terrifyingly broad brief for all of us who are used to hiding behind our data slides, however the feedback so far is that this has been a resounding success and our students can now get to see the How? Why? and To what end? across the entire remit of Cancer Studies. The scheme will shortly be opened up to include students enrolled on the new M Res in Clinical Sciences.

Finally, the 8th and 9th February saw the first round of the “how many people can you get in the conference room?” competition to mark this year’s graduate recruitment round. The increased number of places that have arisen from the success of the institute review last summer meant that a record number of students were invited for interview. This increase in scale meant that the leisurely pace of previous years had to be sacrificed to cram two groups onto different days. Not only this but the TRF building worked diligently the pace of previous years had to be sacrificed to cram two groups onto different days. Not only this but the TRF building made it possible to hide behind our data slides, however the feedback so far is that this has been a resounding success and our students can now get to see the How? Why? and To what end? across the entire remit of Cancer Studies. The scheme will shortly be opened up to include students enrolled on the new M Res in Clinical Sciences.

The past 12 months has seen the an exciting new initiative come to fruition in the Paterson. We now have state of the art mass spectrometry capability up and running. This has been achieved via a joint venture involving the Paterson and the Faculty of Medicine at the university that brings Tony Whetton’s Stem Cell and Leukaemia Proteomics Laboratory (SCALPEL) to the Christie. After a period of instrument purchase and staff training, basic mass spectrometry/proteomics can now be accessed via the Molecular Biology Core Facility. This new mass spectrometry facility is situated in what used to be the Laser PDT room (near the coffee room) and houses two mass spectrometers: a Q Star XL Hybrid tandem mass spectrometer and a 4000 Q Trap triple quadrupole instrument with ion trapping capabilities. The Q Star offers excellent mass accuracy and resolution, and is well suited to routine identification of proteins from gel spots; the Q Trap is particularly useful for studying post-translational modifications such as phosphorylation. We also have two LC Packings Ultimate Nano LC systems, one of which is able to perform 2 dimensional chromatography (2D LC). These are an essential element in our electrospray-isonization based workflows as they separate ions so the mass spectrometer can gain us sequence information on as many peptides as possible. 2D LC holds considerable promise to offer an alternative to running 2D gels as a way of resolving complex protein/peptide mixtures prior to mass spec analysis.

The equipment described above provides a tremendous degree of flexibility for identifying proteins, whether from spots on gels or from mixtures in solution. So far our pilot studies in the core facility have included:

+ Evaluating a clean up method to allow the use of protein samples in the LC/MS standard work flows for protein ID.
+ Identifying known proteins ranging in weight between 200kD and 20kD, from either Coomassie or Silver stained gels.
+ Using ProQ Diamond phosphoprotein stain to identify potentially phosphorylated proteins in whole cell lysates on 1D gels. Clearly we are fortunate in having a partnership with a group that has experience in the non-trivial pursuit of setting up a proteomics lab. The SCALPEL group are developing new techniques all the time and are happy to discuss specific issues with Paterson staff. For example, working with Iain Hagan’s group they have developed a highly sensitive technique for mapping phosphorylation sites using material excised from SDS PAGE gels.

We are now in a position to offer protein identification as a routine service to PICR groups. Anyone interested in using this service, or learning more about the techniques available should contact either Stuart Pepper or Yvonne Connolly.
Improving Working Lives

The Improving Working Lives (IWL) initiative is a range of standards designed to help staff feel valued and supported in the workplace. Following the successful assessment in October 2002, the Trust was awarded “Practice” status. We are now working towards “Practice Plus” status and will be assessed in October 2005.

We have a range of policies and practices aimed at improving the quality of your working lives. These include the Employee Assistance Programme, Flexible Working, Parental and Carer Leave and the Respect at Work Policy. We also offer a wide range of staff benefits including a 10% discount at Happy Days Childminders in Chorlton, £2 tickets for the price of 1 for shows at the Opera House and The Lowry Theatre, a 10% discount at UGC Cinema in Parnslow, Oldsby, a 10% discount at AJM Hairdressing and many more.

Our aim is to promote these policies and benefits to ensure that all staff are aware of them and therefore have the opportunity to use them.

In a few weeks’ time, there will be a new intranet site with an HR section detailing all of these policies and benefits which will be updated regularly. In the meantime, please either ask me for more information or look at the IWL page of the Christie Intranet. There is also an HR/IWL noticeboard on the ground floor opposite the lift near the porters with a list of current staff benefits.

Group Leader Spotlight

REGULATION OF BLOOD DEVELOPMENT AND ALTERATIONS LEADING TO LEUKEMIA

Stem Cell Biology & Stem Cell Research

Anna Pearson
HR Advisor

To be frugal with money
3. What is your favourite book?
Blue Blood (The Mike Doyle Story)
4. What is your favourite film?
The Green Mile (The mouse was brilliant!)
5. Do you believe in love at first sight?
No
6. What three things would you save from your burning house?
My wallet, my season ticket - and ‘Oh, the wife’
7. What is your greatest fear?
Manchester United winning all four trophies
8. How would you like to be remembered?
For being honest, respectful and cheerful
9. What is your greatest regret?
Not seeing Manchester City win all four trophies
10. With which well known figure (past or present) do you most identify?
Tom Cruise (with my stunning looks) ‘ha ha’
11. What trait do you most deplore in others?
Being a Manchester United fan - those other’s! (Remember ‘No’ and ‘There You Go’!)
12. If you could swap places with anybody for 24 hrs, who would it be and why?
Alex Ferguson and make Manchester United on a par with City.
13. Which words or phrases do you most overuse?
‘No’ and ‘There You Go’!
14. What is your idea of perfect happiness?
A hot sunny beach and a long, cold drink
15. What keeps you awake at night?
The wife (snoring!)

Chromosomal translocations are frequently found in human leukemias. These genetic alterations take place in early blood stem cells with multilineage and self-renewal capacity. The most frequent targets of these translocations are transcription factors which act as master regulatory proteins in the control of blood cell development (haematopoiesis). The chimeric proteins created by the fusion interfere with the normal proliferation and differentiation of these precursors in blood cells. In most cases, the normal function of the genes affected and the mechanisms altered by the translocations remain poorly defined. Recent studies in mice have begun to unravel critical functions of some of these leukemia-associated transcription factors, such as Tal1, Runx1 or CBF, at the onset of blood development. We are now further defining the normal function of these two genes in the maintenance of bone marrow haematopoiesis and investigating how their alterations eventually lead to the development of leukaemia.

Altogether discovery of the molecular program leading to blood cell development and elucidation of the function of leukemia-associated transcription factors should lead to a further understanding of the physiologic and pathologic processes regulating blood stem cell maintenance and translate into more effective therapies for blood disorders. With the recent advance in human ES cell research, this new understanding could lead to the ability to generate blood cells from ES cells for cell replacement and transplantation therapy.

Anna Pearson
HR Advisor

1. What is your favourite part of Manchester?
The City of Manchester Stadium - Row K, Seat 11026
2. What is the most important lesson that you have learnt from life?
I’m Katie, some of you might know me…those of you that don’t, think 80’s bar rally photo, pink top, huge hair and some dodgy dancing…because that wasn’t me.

My time at the Paterson…well, it’s been an experience, I’ll say that. Some good bits and some bad, but on the whole, positive and ‘character building’ just as these things should be! I started here in October 2001 in Peter Stern’s Immunology group to characterise the expression of 5T4 during mouse embryogenesis. It sounds fairly straightforward but wasn’t. It’s tricky when you’ve no idea where to start planning an experiment, let alone understanding the finer points of method development. Throw in a temperamental antibody, no-one else studying embryology in the lab and you’ve got a recipe for a sad lost PhD student who despairs of ever getting anything right. Fortunately, the story ends happily and after many, many, many hours spent in the lab, I managed to submit my thesis just 2 weeks over my 3 years.

I’m really, really glad! I had no idea what I thought. I was so wrong! PhDs are a funny old game. It’s all a bit anti-climactic when you finally do finish and part of you wonders whether it was worth it. And you’re almost certainly going to take some time to recover from the experience (don’t let this put you off!). But then you look back to where you were when you started and you realise just what a long way you’ve come. It’s all good. I still haven’t quite dared to change the name on my cards to Doctor - but I have booked tickets in that name. It’s still hard to believe. Perhaps that’s because I haven’t done my corrections yet.

Now I’m heading to pastures new, all the way to the Stopford lab. So no doubt I’ll be back! But I will miss this place and the people. I’ve made some good friends here. Plus, I’m going to have to do my own sectioning up there. So no doubt I’ll be back.

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WELCOME to new members of staff who have recently joined us:

Jennifer Loconto, Medical Oncology.
Ben Minogue, Gene Therapy.
Kai Ren Ong, Clinical Research.
Eun-Ang Raiber, Medical Oncology.
Jo-An Roulson, Kay Kendall Lab.
Kathryn Taylor, Drug Development.
Barbara Verbeek, Gene Therapy.
Cecile Villemant, Clinical Research.

CONGRATULATIONS to:

Anna Pearson
For passing her People Resourcing elective with a merit, for the CIPD Professional Development Scheme.

Martin Chadwick
Who and is half way through the second year of his MSc in Management at Manchester Metropolitan University (part-time study) and has passed all his modules to date.

Amanda Russell
(Medical Oncology) on the birth of baby Callum (weighing in at a healthy 9lb) on Friday, 7th January!

FAREWELL (OR SHOULD THAT BE ADIEU) to:

Ben Bridgeman who left us on February 24th to move to France to undergo an intensive language course in order to perfect his French speech and vocabulary. He may then stay in France for a while depending on the job situation. We wish him all the very best for the future. Bon Chance!

In order to commemorate Ben’s departure from the Institute, a long-lost Paterson tradition was revived - The Golden Mile. This was a simple 1 mile race around Fog Lane Park, for competitors of all abilities (wearing disposable paper lab coats), followed by a trip to The Golden Lion for much-needed refreshments, where prizes were awarded for speed and style! The winner was Andy Sims, followed by runner-up Jon Chung and then in third position, Ben himself! Well done to all who participated and as you can see from the photos below, fun was had by all.

This year’s Dexter Young Investigator Award winner, Mick Milsom will be leaving the Institute in April for a new post-doc position in the USA.
Pay Reviews in 2005

The 2005 pay reviews for Cancer Research UK staff, the Beatson Institute and the Paterson Institute will proceed as in the previous two years, and at the normal dates. The size of the pay award is under consideration by the Cancer Research UK Executive Board, whilst changes relating to employees at the Beatson and Paterson Institutes will be subject to agreement by the Charity’s Executive Board, and staff will be notified in due course. Other progression will be assessed as in previous years via the normal routes.

The Project Administration Team and the Institutes Committee will ensure that the process used in the review will involve consultation with the staff. Consultation will be effected through both the established formal routes of employee consultation, and employee focus groups which will be organized at each of the sites involved and which will be divided into various staff groups. Full details of the local arrangements for these focus groups will be circulated shortly and we seek your active support for this process.

Consultation
The Project Administration Team and the Institutes Committee will ensure that the process used in the review will involve consultation with the staff. Consultation will be effected through both the established formal routes of employee consultation, and employee focus groups which will be organized at each of the sites involved and which will be divided into various staff groups. Full details of the local arrangements for these focus groups will be circulated shortly and we seek your active support for this process.

What is the timetable for the Review?
The project will involve three phases. Phase 1 will involve a review of current Cancer Research UK practice and that of the associated institutes, and comparisons with other similar institutes and organizations. Phase 2 will involve detailed design of a new pay and grading system based on the outcome of phase 1. Phase 3 will be to introduce the new system.

We are working towards an implementation date of 1 June 2006.

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CRUK Pay & Grading Review

Why have a Review?
As a result of the merger (CRC and ICRF) Cancer Research UK inherited a wide variety of different funding situations and different pay models. The review provides an opportunity to establish a system where staff are graded and rewarded in a readily comparable ways across different CRUK funded institutions.

Patron Institute for Cancer Research, Beatson Institute for Cancer Research
Staff at the Patron Institute for Cancer Research in Manchester (PICR) and the Beatson Institute for Cancer Research in Glasgow (BICR) are funded by a large grant to the Institute Directors. Although these grants provide their salaries, staff at these Institutes remain the employees of their respective host institutions. Until 2003 the pay model used in the PICR and BICR was that of the Medical Research Council (MRC). Following the implementation by the MRC of major changes to this pay model, the Directors of both Institutes decided that it was no longer suitable nor supported the needs of these Institutes. In discussion with the Cancer Research UK Research Management and Planning Directorate (RMP) the Directors discussed the possibility of moving to a pay model giving them, and Cancer Research UK, more control over pay and grading.

Review of pay and grading for PICR and BICR staff will restore an effective pay grading system to these Institutes. Undertaking this review alongside that of directly employed Cancer Research UK staff will ensure comparability of pay and grading across Cancer Research UK Institutes.

The Process
The CR-UK Institutes Committee, which includes the Directors of the LRI, BICR, PICR and Research Services, will oversee the project. Any changes relating to Cancer Research UK employees will be subject to agreement by the Charity’s Executive Board, whilst changes relating to employees at the Beatson and Paterson Institutes will be subject to agreement by the Beatson Institute Board of Governors and the Christie Hospital Trust respectively.

Day-to-day operational issues concerning the project will be the responsibility of a Project Administration Team representing the different employers’ administrative teams (for members see below). To develop different options, a national Steering/Design Team will be established, which will include two members from each of a number of local Pay and Grading Teams. Towers Perrin, a firm of external employment consultants, will advise and support the project. A Paterson Pay and Grading Team (chaired by Pippa McNichol) will be established. If you would like to get involved in this please contact Pippa. Prior to this Towers Perrin will be running focus groups representing each category of staff within the institute, to enable them to achieve a full and deep understanding of the current situation. It is anticipated these will take place the week commencing 4 April.

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MCRC Questions & Answers

1. Joint Questions
If we are moving to the University, why do we need to have the CRUK Pay & Grading review?
The Paterson will remain a Cancer Research UK Institute and as such will need to have a CRUK pay & grading system. Currently there are 2 pay systems - the NHS for support staff and MRC for scientists. It makes sense to have one cohesive system. We will not be moving onto the University’s pay system.

2. MCRC / University Relationship
Are we being taken over by the University?
No, the Paterson will remain a Cancer Research UK Institute.

Will the Paterson’s policy on recruiting postdocs for 3 years change?
No

Will we have to teach?
Absolutely not, unless this is already part of your contract.

Why are we doing this?
Our partnership with the University will enable us to access additional funds (via research monies) for cancer research that we can’t access whilst we are part of the NHS.

Will we have to physically move to the University?
No

Who will my employment contract be with?
The finer detail hasn’t been worked out yet but Nic Jones and Pippa McNichol are meeting with the University’s Director of HR in a fortnight to start to discuss issues such as this.

How will this affect my terms and conditions?
Again the detail hasn’t been worked out yet, but NO-ONE will be disadvantaged as a result of this.

What about my pension?
The detail is still to be discussed but it is likely that current staff will be able to keep their NHS pension, whilst new staff will probably have University pensions. As soon as Nic and Pippa have more information on these important issues they will let you know.

Can I still use the car park/nursery/subsidised canteen/complementary therapies and other Christie services?
The details of the financial arrangements between the University and Christie have not yet been discussed, but there are no plans for change.

When will this happen?
We will be working hard to have the details sorted out by the end of this year.

How long have discussions going on about this?
In December 2004 Cancer Research UK published their 5-year review on the Paterson Institute. The report made recommendations about closer links with the University. Discussions developed from there.

Who will head up the MCRC?
This has not been agreed yet, but it is expected that the MCRC will have a management board which will include Nic Jones, Joanna Wallace, Chief Executive Christie Hospital and other senior CRUK and University of Manchester stakeholders.

Will we be able to access University services like the leisure facilities?
No
How will our relationship with the Christie Hospital change?

On a day-to-day basis no-one should notice any change. However the finer details for the Paterson around finance and HR (human resources) are yet to be negotiated.

We already work closely with the University - why can’t we move forward with the MCRC plans and remain as part of the Hospital?

Currently there are many entities across the University and the Christie (including people in the University’s Life Sciences Faculty and Medical School, Wolfson Molecular Imaging Centre, Paterson and the hospital) all pursuing cancer research activities. Our goal in establishing the Manchester Cancer Research Centre is to bring all those core research activities together and to co-ordinate them so the strategy and output for Manchester is more coherent.

If we become part of the University a lot more funding via the academic route can be accessed - which can’t be accessed whilst we are part of the NHS.

We will still remain a Cancer Research UK Institute within the University, just as we have been a Cancer Research UK Institute whilst part of the Christie.

Will the organisational structure in the Paterson change?

Scientific groups will remain as they are.

Who will pay for the administrative costs of this change?

New funding will be secured for this. This will not come out of our existing budgets.

How do I find out more information about this?

Nic and Pippa will be holding Staff Briefing sessions on Monday 14 March, Tuesday 15 March and Wednesday 16 March in the Conference Room from 1.00pm-2.00pm. In the meantime, Pippa is happy to answer any queries or concerns you may have. Information will be posted on the Paterson’s intranet as and when details are firmed up.

3. CRUK Pay & Grading Process

Will my job change?

No

When will it happen?

It should be implemented by June 2006

What’s wrong with the system we’ve got?

Currently we have 2 systems - the NHS and MRC. All the CRUK funded Institutes (LRI, Beatson, Paterson) decided to move away from the MRC a year ago following major changes to this pay model that were not thought to be appropriate for CRUK funded staff. Also, it will be fairer for staff at the Paterson to all have one pay model rather than 2 very different ones.

What are the benefits?

Although the details of the new system have not been worked out yet, it should provide a transparent model that will generate equality across all 3 Institutes, which should help with the recruitment and retention of world-class quality staff. Current staff have the opportunity to help shape the new model by attending the focus groups (being held week commencing 4 April) and volunteering for the Paterson’s local Pay & Grading Team.

How do I get involved?

Volunteers will be sought for the Paterson’s local Pay & Grading Team (2 of who will sit on the National Pay & Grading Design Team) and staff will be invited to the focus groups. More details about these will be sent out shortly.

Why is this happening at the same time as the University partnership?

The timing of the two projects is unfortunate but the University partnership should be finished by the end of 2005, whereas the Pay & Grading review will not be implemented until June 2006.

My job is currently being evaluated under the NHS’s Agenda for Change, will it have to be re-evaluated under this system?

Yes, it will. The Whitley Council gradings within the NHS have been abolished and so all NHS staff have to have their jobs evaluated and be on the new Agenda for Change bandings by October 2005. Although initially it may seem a pain that your job will be evaluated twice, it does give us an opportunity to assess the robustness of the new CRUK system.

How will I find out more information about this?

CRUK are going to set up an intranet site, which Paterson staff will be able to access. This will have all minutes of meetings discussing the Pay & Grading review on it and will include all the information gathered about the review. Your local reps on the National Project Administration Team are Margaret Lowe and Pippa McNichol.

As the project develops, and more information becomes available Pippa and Margaret will be running regular briefing sessions for staff. Information will also be posted on the Paterson’s intranet.