

## £50 MILLION BOOST FOR UK CANCER IMAGING

CANCER IMAGING is set to benefit from a £50 million investment over the next five years in a nationwide initiative that will see the development and introduction of the latest imaging technologies to help advances in basic and clinical cancer research, it will be announced at the National Cancer Research Institute (NCRI) Cancer Conference in Birmingham tomorrow (Sunday).

Cancer Research UK and the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC) are leading on this exciting new strategic initiative that will establish the UK as a world leader in cancer imaging research. Cancer Research UK will invest up to £30 million and the EPSRC will contribute £15 million towards the initiative.

In addition, the Medical Research Council (MRC) will invest £3 million and at least £1.3 million will come from the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) to help improve the detection, diagnosis and treatment of cancer.

An international panel of experts have awarded up to £2 million a year to establish four large cancer imaging centres - Imperial College London, The Institute of Cancer Research, a joint centre between King's College London and University College London and The University of Oxford. They will serve as focal points of world-class research using a variety of imaging techniques, such as magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) and PET (Positron Emission Tomography).

Experts at the centres will develop new imaging techniques and uses for existing advanced imaging technologies, including imaging equipment that allow scientists to watch cells in action by tracing radioactive markers injected into the patient's body. These techniques will enable doctors to see therapies at work, identifying earlier which treatments work best for individual patients.

Some scanning techniques can provide whole-body images so clinicians can see where cancers have spread and decide how useful surgery will be, or if radiotherapy and drugs will be more effective.

In addition, five cancer imaging research programmes will be set up at the following locations: The Childhood Cancer and Leukaemia Group (CCLG) at The University of Birmingham, The Royal Surrey County Hospital, The University of St Andrews, Newcastle University and The University of Sheffield. They will each concentrate on a specific area of imaging research and receive an annual sum of up to £500,000 a year for the programmes.

The MRC will also contribute £2 million towards a new cyclotron - a particle accelerator used to produce radioactive tracers for cancer studies - at the University of Oxford, which will complement this initiative.

The NIHR will contribute over £1.3 million to support cancer imaging equipment in the NHS partners of the centres and programmes.

Professor David Delpy, chief executive of the EPSRC, said: "Such a large investment in this exciting and extremely important area of research is great news. These centres will bring together scientists, en-

gineers and clinicians interested in all aspects of imaging research, speeding up advances in new technologies and benefiting patients too."

Traditional imaging techniques, such as X-ray, CT and ultrasound, will also be developed and refined at the new centres.

Professor Herbie Newell, director of translational research at Cancer Research UK, said: "Imaging is an invaluable tool in the fight against cancer. Being able to see what's happening inside patients is vitally important in understanding how treatments are currently working and the best ways to improve them."

Dr Jane Cope, director of the National Cancer Research Institute, said: "This investment is a great boost for UK imaging research, and complements NCRI's initiative to develop a collaborative network for PET research. Co-ordinating research like this is essential for making progress in the field."

Harpal Kumar, chief executive of Cancer Research UK, said: "Imaging is fast becoming one of the most effective means of detecting cancer early and of determining which treatment works for which patient. Cancer Research UK has identified imaging research as a priority and we believe this substantial investment over the next five years will reap many benefits. Our partnership with the EPSRC, MRC and NIHR will help us achieve our aim of improving the detection and diagnosis of cancer."

Discoveries made through the initiative will be protected by Cancer Research Technology (CRT) - the business arm of Cancer Research UK. A CRT business manager will be assigned to each centre or programme to work with the pharmaceutical industry, establishing the best commercial model to ensure new discoveries become available to cancer patients.

**For media enquiries please contact Rachel Gonzaga in the Cancer Research UK press office on 020 7061 8252 or, out-of-hours, the duty press officer on 07050 264 059.**

### Notes to editors:

#### About the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC)

The Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC) is the UK's main agency for funding research in engineering and the physical sciences. The EPSRC invests around £740 million a year in research and postgraduate training, to help the nation handle the next generation of technological change. The areas covered range from information technology to structural engineering, and mathematics to materials science. This research forms the basis for future economic development in the UK and improvements for everyone's health, lifestyle and culture. EPSRC also actively promotes public awareness

of science and engineering. Further information about EPSRC can be found at [www.epsrc.ac.uk](http://www.epsrc.ac.uk). EPSRC works alongside other Research Councils with responsibility for other areas of research. The Research Councils work collectively on issues of common concern via Research Councils UK.

#### **About the Medical Research Council (MRC)**

The Medical Research Council supports the best scientific research to improve human health. Its work ranges from molecular level science to public health medicine and has led to pioneering discoveries in our understanding of the human body and the diseases which affect us all. [www.mrc.ac.uk](http://www.mrc.ac.uk)

#### **About the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR)**

The National Institute for Health Research provides the framework through which the research staff and research infrastructure of the NHS in England is positioned, maintained and managed as a national research facility. The NIHR provides the NHS with the support and infrastructure it needs to conduct first-class research funded by the Government and its partners alongside high-quality patient care, education and training. Its aim is to support outstanding individuals (both leaders and collaborators), working in world class facilities (both NHS and university), conducting leading edge research focused on the needs of patients. <http://www.nihr.ac.uk/>

#### **About Cancer Research UK**

- \* Together with its partners and supporters, Cancer Research UK's vision is to beat cancer.
- \* Cancer Research UK carries out world-class research to improve understanding of the disease and find out how to prevent, diagnose and treat different kinds of cancer.
- \* Cancer Research UK ensures that its findings are used to improve the lives of all cancer patients.
- \* Cancer Research UK helps people to understand cancer, the progress

that is being made and the choices each person can make.

- \* Cancer Research UK works in partnership with others to achieve the greatest impact in the global fight against cancer.
- \* For further information about Cancer Research UK's work or to find out how to support the charity, please call 020 7121 6699 or visit [www.cancer-researchuk.org](http://www.cancer-researchuk.org).

#### **About the NCRI Cancer Conference**

The National Cancer Research Institute (NCRI) Cancer Conference is the UK's premier forum for disseminating advances across all aspects of cancer research.

#### **About the NCRI**

The National Cancer Research Institute (NCRI) was established in April 2001. It is a UK-wide partnership between the government, charity and industry which promotes co-operation in cancer research among the 21 member organisations for the benefit of patients, the public and the scientific community. [www.ncri.org.uk](http://www.ncri.org.uk)

NCRI members are: the Association of British Pharmaceutical Industry (ABPI); Association for International Cancer Research; Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council; Breakthrough Breast Cancer; Breast Cancer Campaign; Cancer Research UK; Children with Leukaemia, Department of Health; Economic and Social Research Council; Leukaemia Research Fund; Ludwig Institute for Cancer Research; Macmillan Cancer Support; Marie Curie Cancer Care; Medical Research Council; Northern Ireland Health and Social Care (Research & Development Office); Roy Castle Lung Cancer Foundation; Scottish Government Health Directorates (Chief Scientist Office); Tenovus; Welsh Assembly Government (Wales Office of Research and Development for Health & Social Care); The Wellcome Trust; and Yorkshire Cancer Research.