



Clatterbridge
Cancer Charity

Donor Update

One Million Reasons To Be Hopeful

The Clatterbridge Cancer Centre (CCC) has been delivering a step change in its research activity – offering ever increasing numbers of patients access to the very latest clinical trials and life-saving science, and cementing its reputation as a leading research centre.

Donations to Clatterbridge Cancer Charity play a hugely important role in this progress and we are so happy to announce that in the past year we have invested an incredible £1,000,000 of your donations into research projects and equipment which will help Clatterbridge doctors and nurses to deliver accelerated progress for patients.

This remarkable figure of £1m is the highest level of research investment in the Charity's 26-year history, and one which we hope to

continue to grow, year on year.

This funding will allow our research teams to make faster progress on understanding the most complex elements of immunotherapy, it will help to advance radiotherapy treatments with fewer side-effects, to develop our knowledge of end of life care, and of course it will fund research into new types of drugs such as the cancer vaccines which CCC specialises in.

Charity investment however does not just fund the projects but also the people to conduct that research, such as a new senior nurse in our experimental cancer medicine team, a role which will be delivering trials of new drugs to patients who may be the first in the world to receive them. All of this makes such a big difference to our patients.

Scientific research and learning moves at a fantastic rate and we at CCC are so grateful that we have the support of our wonderful donors to help us not just to keep up, but to push the boundaries ourselves right here in the North West.

Thank you so much for your support, we very much look forward to keeping you updated with the progress made through this remarkable level of investment.

**Dr Sheena Khanduri,
Medical Director, The
Clatterbridge Cancer Centre
& Trustee,
Clatterbridge Cancer Charity**



Innovative "prehab" service now up and running

Clatterbridge's Dr Jessica Hale is a woman on a mission: to ensure that all cancer patients are as physically active as possible before and during their treatment.

It is well known that the fitter a patient is, the more likely they are to respond better and faster to surgery - but what about the other elements of cancer treatment such as radiotherapy, chemotherapy or immunotherapy? Could fitness play a role here in better health outcomes?

Thanks to £40,000 of donor funding, this is what Jess aims to find out.

Here is Jess with some of the details:

"Tiredness is one of the most frequent side effects reported by patients undergoing cancer treatment. We firmly believe that by increasing a patients levels of activity and fitness *before* their treatment, that we can reduce feelings of fatigue as well as improving a patient's mental health and their quality of life."

"Our funding will allow us to run a pilot project to test this theory. Over the next 12 months we will select and monitor 40 patients who are due to undergo immunotherapy



treatment at Clatterbridge and they will be offered one to one fitness coaching from a specialist digital health team at Liverpool John Moores University."

"It is fantastic that the Charity has chosen to support this project, we are very excited about how it might improve the lives of our patients."

This project grant for Jessica and her team was made available through the Bright Ideas Fund, an initiative from Clatterbridge Cancer Charity which provides funding for new and innovative ideas which are brought forward by Clatterbridge staff who wish to improve the treatment or service they give.

This year the £150,000 fund has supported a number of different projects (big and small) across the Clatterbridge service including providing a special entertainment system for patients who are undergoing spinal procedures and are unable to sit up, trialing the creation of adaptive clothing to suit patients who have semi permanent cannulas, and funding a project to better understand the circumstances which lead to cancer patients requiring unplanned emergency admission to hospital.



Boost For Patient Counselling Service

Each year 13,000 new patients are referred to Clatterbridge, and just as each cancer is unique, so is each individual's experience of treatment. The physical effects – hair loss, pain, fatigue are well known and appreciated but what can be harder to understand and predict is the psychological effects which a patient might experience.

Clatterbridge employs two consultant psychiatrists and a patient counsellor who work as a team to provide support for patients who may be struggling to cope during their treatment. Recently, the Charity has provided funding for a further part time counsellor and we would like to introduce to you the newest member of the counselling team, Helen Forbes...

Helen, you're new but you're not new...

That's right. I have worked at Clatterbridge for over 30 years, starting out as a radiographer back in 1991. Recently I decided to try a new path so I left and studied for a Masters in Psychotherapy, and here I am – back again but this time as a patient counsellor.

Our small team is responsible for supporting patients at Clatterbridge who need psychological support during their treatment. My role is part time and has been funded entirely by the Charity.

And are you enjoying the new role?

I love it, it is one of those jobs which is hugely demanding but also hugely rewarding. To be helping someone at what is often the most difficult time of their life – or sometimes at the end of their life is a real privilege.

How are patients referred for counselling?

It could be a nurse, a consultant, or anyone who notices that a patient is struggling and when that is the case, they are referred to one of our fantastic consultant psychiatrists who will devise a treatment plan which might include psychotherapy with myself or my colleague Anne-Marie. The patient will come to see us and we will work with them over the course of a number of appointments to try and understand their challenges and improve their mental health.



Without the Charity support our capacity would be much reduced and some patients simply wouldn't be able to access the service, so it really is wonderful to have my role funded by donors.

Is there any such thing as a typical patient?

No, everyone is individual. For some patients they are struggling with the uncertainty of what immediately faces them, for other patients it is a longer term challenge – the possibility that their cancer may return. Some patients also struggle with the physical toll that treatment is having on their body.

Often our discussions are not at all about cancer, a diagnosis doesn't stop you having other pressures in life – jobs, relationships, families etc. Sometimes they will share things with me which they couldn't say to their loved ones but it helps to discuss them with a counsellor like myself.

The most important thing is to treat each patient as an individual and to give them a safe and confidential space for them to explore their challenges. For some patients it might only need a few sessions, others might need twenty or more – thanks to the charity, that support is there if they need it.



Arts project offers opportunity for Young Patients

Receiving a cancer diagnosis can turn any patient's life upside down, but this disruption is perhaps felt most keenly amongst the 2,400 young people (aged 15-24 years) who are diagnosed with cancer each year in the UK.

These Teenage and Young Adult (TYA) patients can often feel isolated and like they are left behind by their peers whose social, educational and professional lives progress at an accelerated rate whilst they are left to cope with an uncertain and challenging future of cancer treatment.

When the new Clatterbridge Centre was built in Liverpool, one of its key features was the creation of a purpose built TYA ward where our young patients could be treated together, in specialist facilities by specialist teams.

But what more can be done for these patients to help them through this tough time? The Charity is proud to announce that we will this year be funding a new project which will be delivered by FACT Liverpool, one of the UK's leading digital arts organisations, designed specifically to engage our TYA patients.

This partnership project will deliver regular workshop sessions not only for current patients but also for anyone else they would like to involve including their friends, family or even the staff from the TYA ward.

The patients will have time and space to consider their feelings about their cancer as well as talking to those around them who it affects.

FACT artists will work with the patients to produce their own podcasts – giving them technical training and a space to use their own voices and creativity. These podcasts will be available to anyone across the globe to listen to who has an interest in how young people with cancer really feel. In the final stage of the project, the patients will move on to creating their own artworks – this could be visual or written, it could be developing a new app or video game – the young people will very much be given free rein to create.

Sam Wade, Clatterbridge Arts Co-ordinator, will oversee the work: "This is a really exciting project and one which will do so much to help these young patients. They will make new friends, gain confidence, learn new skills, and have a distraction from their day to day treatment."

As always we thank you for your continued support of our work – if you would like to discuss your current or future support then please contact paul.winter5@nhs.net

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