OVERVIEW

Cancer research at the University of Bristol is a vibrant cross-disciplinary community which focuses on core strengths in cancer cell biology, genetic and life-course epidemiology and health services research and trials. In partnership with the Bristol NHS Trusts and the University of West of England (UWE), we aim to accelerate the identification of novel insights and translation of research into clinical practice.

Our expertise is drawn from multiple Schools and Faculties, with strong interlinking of the Bristol Medical School (BMS), the School of Cellular and Molecular Medicine (CMM), the School of Physiology, Pharmacology and Neuroscience (PPN) and the School of Biochemistry, but also extending to Biological Sciences, Physics, Mathematics and Engineering. The Network is supported by and works closely with the Elizabeth Blackwell Institute for Health Research (EBI) to foster research across these multi-disciplinary groupings.

OBJECTIVES AND AIMS

The Cancer Network exists to enhance and facilitate research activity and strategic planning. This includes identifying and resourcing key equipment, the improvement of internal communication and collaboration, the identification of key funding priorities and opportunities, and developing better external communication of our research to scientific and healthcare professionals, schools and the general public.

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

The Elizabeth Blackwell Institute, which supports Bristol Neuroscience, has an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Champion. This role, funded by the Wellcome Trust, has a focus on identifying barriers and championing and challenging equality, diversity and inclusion within health and biomedical research communities at the University of Bristol.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

There is a strong focus on Public Engagement at the University of Bristol through both the Centre for Public Engagement and the Elizabeth Blackwell Institute. The latter has developed various mechanisms for incorporating the views of the public and patients into the health research process, including the Public Advisory Group. Information for members of the University of Bristol on how to receive input from the Public Advisory Group can be found online.

EBI also offers the following support to University of Bristol researchers:

- Advice on developing high-impact public engagement activities for University of Bristol led research;
- Advice on writing up public engagement plans for grant applications led by University of Bristol researchers;
- Identification of suitable creative and community partners for public engagement activities;
Support for recruiting external partners in health and social care;
• Support in bringing together researchers from different disciplines to collaborate on interdisciplinary public engagement projects;
• Advice on specialised public engagement activities that link researchers with patient communities and sign-posting to relevant resources and organisations;
• Sign-posting to Public and Patient Involvement and Public Engagement specific training opportunities for researchers;
• Opportunities for researchers to engage with the public through our current EBI-led Public Engagement activities.

Management
A Steering Group and website for Cancer was set up in 2013 with the combined aim of building a cross-Faculty community and showcasing research. The committee is co-led by a University of Bristol scientist and a clinical representative. The leads are supported by representatives of key research areas at different levels of academic progression and pathway drawn from different Faculties.

The Network maintains a community-wide mailing list and a website that incorporates news, upcoming seminars and events. There are weekly digests and quarterly newsletters with news, events, activities (including highlights of recent research) and funding opportunities relevant to the Cancer community. The Network is supported by the Network Facilitator (based in Research Development [RED]) and Administrator (based in both RED and EBI).

The Cancer Steering Group (SG): composition and rotation
1. The Cancer SG will be led by the Network’s co-Leads, who are supported by 6-10 academics and representatives from different areas of the community. The Cancer SG may be led temporarily by a single clinical or basic science-focused individual when circumstances demand. Appointments will be made by the Steering Group.
2. A Facilitator (RED) and an Administrator (funded by EBI) will service the Cancer SG for as long as funding allows.
3. The Cancer SG will meet approximately every two months.
4. The co-Leads will be selected from the membership of the Cancer Network. Any incoming Lead should possess the requisite skills and experience to act as a Network Lead.
5. The term of office of Cancer SG Members, including the co-Leads, will be three years, with the potential to extend for an additional two years by mutual consent. If a Lead is chosen from within the Cancer SG itself their three-year term of office will begin from the date they take over as Lead.
6. Former Members of the Cancer SG will be ineligible for re-appointment to the committee for a period of one year from the expiry of their membership.
7. When a Steering Group Member steps down, new Members will be recruited through a process of open application from the wider Cancer community. If more people wish to join the Steering Group than there are places available, then admission will be via a vote by current Steering Group Members. Issues of equality and diversity, and diversity of expertise will be taken into consideration.
8. Members of the Cancer SG who are unable to attend two or more meetings per year, or do not
nominate appropriate substitutes, may be asked to reconsider their commitment.  
9. Where it is not possible to meet in person and there are matters of interest or decisions required for specific action, such as expenditure, convening virtually through telephone conference or through specific email correspondence as a group will be permitted.  
10. The Cancer SG reports to the Director of the EBI, who will act as conduit to senior management through the Health and Life Sciences Research Strategy Committee.  
11. Changes to these terms require the agreement of at least two thirds of the Steering Group.

The Cancer Steering Group (SG): Key activities

1) We provide a regular forum for discussions about Cancer research strategy including horizon-scanning, and a mechanism to feed these outcomes to senior management
2) We contribute to business cases for key academic appointments, capital investments and wider funding bids, to maximise, maintain and create research capacity
3) We support our Early Career Researcher and Postgraduate student communities
4) We continue to forge an interface and raise the profile of Cancer Research work with both internal and external stakeholders, including funders and industrial partners

Any individual involved in Cancer-related research at the University of Bristol may consider themselves a member of the Cancer Network. Any member of the Cancer Network may ask to attend a Steering Group meeting to discuss an issue or ask for an item to be raised in their absence. Minutes of meetings can be found on the Network’s intranet site (accessible via its internet site).

In addition to Steering Group meetings, the Network organises a series of events and structures which aim to unify and co-ordinate research activity across large numbers of researchers, e.g. Show and Tell events focussed on particular aspects of Cancer research (e.g. epidemiology, engineering, cellular biology, clinical science) and supporting an Early Career Forum which hosts invited speakers.

Review of Terms of Reference

The Terms of Reference will be updated periodically as required by day-to-day changes, e.g. changes in the membership of the SG, and every 3 years.

APPENDIX 1: Current Steering Group composition (in alphabetical order)

- Dr Sabine Hauert
  Department of Engineering Mathematics, Faculty of Engineering
- Prof Kathreena Kurian
  Brian Tumour Research Centre, Bristol Medical School, Translational Health Sciences, FHS
- Prof Paul Martin (Co-Chair)
  Schools of Biochemistry / Physiology, Pharmacology & Neuroscience, FBS
- Prof Richard Martin
  Bristol Medical School, Population Health Sciences, FHS
- Prof Caroline Relton
Bristol Medical School, Population Health Sciences, FHS
- Prof Anne Ridley
  Head of School, Cellular and Molecular Medicine, FBS
- Dr Emma Vincent (Early Career Researchers’ representative)
  Bristol Medical School, Translational Health Sciences, FHS
- Dr Axel Walther (Co-Chair)
  Medical Oncologist, University Hospitals Bristol
- Prof Ann C. Williams
  School of Cellular & Molecular Medicine, FBS
- Dr Zoë Holland
  Research Development Cancer Research Network Facilitator
- Catherine Brown
  Research Development Cancer Research Network Administrator