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Chris Joins the Banana Army

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A senior lecturer at the University of Birmingham is taking on the challenge of the Great North Run on Sunday 1st October to raise money for Leukaemia Research.

Dr Chris Bunce and post-doctoral researcher Farhat Khanim from the University's School of Biosciences will join the yellow shirted runners from Leukaemia Research's "Banana Army" to tackle the gruelling half marathon course on Tyneside.

Chris has spent more than 20 years investigating new therapies for leukaemia, with much of his work funded directly by Leukaemia Research. Chris comments: "Leukaemia Research has been a key supporter of my work for many years, and I think it is important that scientists show their commitment to the charities who fund their work.

Although there have been major developments in the treatment of leukaemias and lymphomas over the last twenty years, the possibilities offered by new treatments, gene therapy and immunotherapy are very exciting.

Although the furthest I've gone in training for the Great North Run is about 10km, I'm still looking forward to the challenge. I won't be looking for a fast time, the fundraising aspect is what matters most and I'm looking forward to being part of the Banana Army."

The group's current work funded by Leukaemia Research involves developing drugs to target a specific enzyme AKR1C3, which is present in myeloid leukaemia cells. Their work has shown that drugs which inhibit this enzyme can be effective in killing malignant cells.

Leukaemia Research is one of the many charities at the Great North Run and the bright yellow t-shirts worn by their runners are a familiar sight on the course. Last year the Leukaemia Research, Banana Army raised more than1.5 million pounds running at events across the UK.

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NOTES TO EDITORS

Leukaemia Research is the only national charity devoted exclusively to improving treatments, finding cures and learning how to prevent leukaemia, Hodgkin's lymphoma and other lymphomas, myeloma and the related blood disorders, diagnosed in 24,500 people in the UK every year.

Over the next five years, Leukaemia Research urgently needs to raise over £100million to commit to new research. From basic laboratory research to clinical trials with patients, Leukaemia Research is committed to saving lives by funding high quality, carefully selected research throughout the UK. Further information, including patient information booklets, is available from **www.lrf.org.uk (http://www.lrf.org.uk/)** or by ringing 020 7405 0101.

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