

Birmingham wins £12.8m to support groundbreaking clinical research

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Birmingham has won a £12.8m share of a £100m fund to develop new treatments to benefit thousands of patients, the Government announced today. The money, provided by the National Institute for Health Research, will be spent on research nurses, technicians and facilities at 19 of the purpose-built Clinical Research Facilities labs around the UK.

A huge number of new treatments for conditions including cancer, diabetes, stroke, dementia and obesity will be developed by researchers at the labs. Some of the funding will also be used to conduct research into rare diseases.

The £12,812,956 award will support the Wellcome Trust Clinical Research Facility, which is a joint initiative between University Hospitals Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust, University of Birmingham Medical School and Birmingham Children's Hospital NHS Trust, from 1 September 2012 to 31 March 2017.

The funding will be used to conduct research into rare diseases, gene therapy, trauma, infection and ageing. The team at Birmingham will also use the Health Research Bus, which takes research into the community and allows studies to be conducted with difficult-to-reach sections of the population.

Dame Julie Moore, UHB Chief Executive, said: *"The CRF provides unrivalled facilities for experimental medicine as the main platform to deliver early-phase, cutting-edge translational research in Birmingham. To date, our combined facilities have seen over 70,000 patients in 350 clinical research studies. Importantly, the Birmingham CRF has been a flagship for many subsequent CRFs across the UK that collaborate to deliver NHS research priorities."*

Professor Lawrence Young, Head of the College of Medical and Dental Sciences, University of Birmingham added: *"This new funding will be transformational in ensuring we deliver increased quality and quantity of early phase clinical research, engaging with industry, be it early biotechnology discovery or major established Pharma to rapidly accelerate advances in medicine and to improve the health of the population of Birmingham and beyond."*

"The first ever UK consultation on Rare Diseases was published yesterday which outlines how we can build on our strengths through improved co-ordination of services, stronger research and better engagement with patients and their families. "

Secretary of State for Health, Andrew Lansley said: *"The public and patients think it's important that the NHS should support research into new treatments, and we agree. That's why we're investing over £100m in research labs, nurses and technicians to help make the NHS a world-class place to do research."*

"These researchers will push forward the boundaries of what is possible. These are the people and the labs where the very best new treatments will be developed for a huge range of conditions - from cancer to diabetes and heart disease. NHS patients are the ones who will see the benefit of their work."

Promoting and fostering this kind of medical research is one of the Government's top priorities, and through the Health and Social Care Bill the role that research plays in the health service will continue to be strengthened."

Professor Dame Sally Davies, Chief Medical Officer and Chief Scientific Advisor at the Department of Health said: *"These are very exciting times for clinical research in the UK, and this funding is a reflection of the commitment we have to supporting world-class experimental medicine."*

"The Clinical Research Facilities will play a key role in supporting advances in treatments for a wide variety of diseases and supporting collaboration with industry. Thousands of people will benefit right across the country."

Ends

Notes to editors

NHS Trusts and Foundation Trusts with clinical research facilities submitted bids for the funding, which were judged by a panel of UK experts in both medical research and in running clinical research facilities. Winning bids were selected on the basis of the quality and volume of world-class medical research they support as well as other criteria including the strength of their partnerships with universities and industry.

On the 5 December 2011 the Prime Minister launched a new Strategy for UK Life Sciences which aims to continue the country's record of world-leading innovation in life sciences. In the strategy, the Government describes how it aims to provide a better environment for life sciences, to improve the lives of patients and contribute to economic growth. The strategy highlights the important contribution NIHR research makes to innovation in life sciences, and sets out a number of key actions where NIHR is leading.

Birmingham Health Partners (BHP) is a landmark joint working agreement between the University of Birmingham and University Hospitals Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust. Established in November 2011, it enhances the longstanding working relationship between the two institutions and enables patients to benefit from new therapies delivered by expert clinicians working alongside top research scientists and world-leading clinical trials teams. Based at the new Queen Elizabeth Hospital Birmingham and under the transitional directorship of Professor Charlie Craddock, BHP will fuel collaborative projects in key research areas including cancer, immunology and infection, experimental medicine and chronic disease, and is intended to strengthen and develop the global reputations of both the University and the Trust.