

Autumn 2019



WCB newsletter

Clinical Director: Prof Richard Adams Manager: Dr Alison Parry-Jones
Scientific Director: Dr Richard Clarkson

An Exciting New Partnership

Cancer Research Wales (CRW) and the Wales Cancer Bank (WCB) are excited to announce a new partnership designed to support cancer researchers in Wales by extending the highly successful ASTRA programme. The **Access to patient Samples for Translational Research Awards (ASTRA)** are intended to build capacity in research that uses biological samples.

CRW has pledged £100,000 to continue the innovative funding stream first started in 2018 by the Wales Cancer Research Centre. Nine groups were awarded ASTRAs in the first iteration of the programme and work is ongoing in a variety of areas.



All cancer researchers in Wales, irrespective of field of study, seniority and geographical location will be able to apply for funding of up to £25,000, funded by Cancer Research Wales in this new round of funding. Funds will be awarded to support sample and data collection via the Wales Cancer Bank and for the associated downstream analysis costs. Applications are especially encouraged from collaborative projects, activity which makes the best use of individual samples and/or the collections as a whole.

Applications will be judged by an independent, expert panel on scientific merit, feasibility of sample access, and potential future patient impact. Successful projects will be expected to start by March 2020.

Dr Richard Clarkson, (Scientific Director of WCB) commented, 'We are so pleased to be working with CRW to help benefit the patients of Wales. The ASTRAs give a fantastic opportunity for groups in Wales and hopefully the work done under this programme will lead to breakthroughs to greater knowledge of how cancer starts, progresses and how it can be treated'.

Watch this space for updates on the progress of the successful ASTRA2 projects over the next two years!



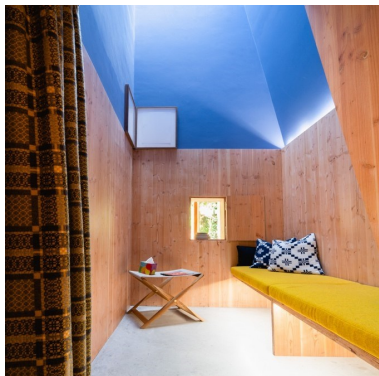
Maggie's Centre, Cardiff – A brief introduction

People should not “lose the joy of living in the fear dying” was the belief of the founder of Maggie's. Maggie Keswick Jencks was diagnosed with breast cancer in May 1993 and throughout her cancer experience, she and her husband Charles Jencks believed that in order to live more positively with cancer there was much more than solely medical treatment required. Maggie and Charles believed you needed information that would allow you to be an informed participant in your medical treatment and should have access to stress-reducing strategies, psychological support and the opportunity to meet other people in similar circumstances in a relaxed and non-clinical atmosphere.



Maggie died in June 1995 and the following year the first Maggie's Centre opened its doors in Edinburgh – Maggie's dream had become reality. Fast forward to the present day and there are now 22 centres across the UK, with two centres in Wales.

The newest addition to the Maggie's family in Wales is the new centre in Cardiff. Situated in the grounds of Velindre Cancer centre in Whitchurch it provides a safe, calming and welcoming environment in close proximity to the hospital but without being able to see it from our centre – fully removed from the clinical setting with the idea of being a “home from home” for cancer patients and their friends and family.



Maggie's offers a unique programme of support for cancer patients and their loved ones. They provide emotional, practical and psychological support with support and information given by a team of professionals. Examples of the support provided includes; nutrition workshops, fatigue workshops, relaxation classes, exercise sessions, look good feel better sessions, bereavement support and managing stress courses.

As well as this programme of support, a team of professionals including; cancer support specialists are available daily to provide support and information in relation to any stage of the cancer journey. A benefits advisor is on hand to assist with any financial queries and aid visitors to explore any benefits they may be entitled to as a result of their cancer diagnosis. A psychologist will soon be in post to provide deeper psychological support, through group workshops and one-to-one sessions.

The beauty of Maggie's is that they are open to all affected by cancer, family and friends included, and there is no appointment necessary. They are open Monday-Friday from 9am-5pm so please drop in and be assured of a welcome with a friendly face, warm smile and a nice cuppa! For further information on the centre and programme of support on offer please look at the website:

<https://www.maggiescentres.org>.



All photos by llwyd.co.uk.



WCB Team



Hi, my name is Grace Uruski.

I have recently been appointed by Wales Cancer Bank as a Research Nurse.

Following my training as a Registered General Nurse in Co. Galway Ireland, I moved to Cardiff and worked in medicine and surgery at UHW. For the last 25 years I have worked as a Specialist Nurse in Cardiff and Vale Breast Centre. I have gained a wealth of knowledge and expertise in oncology, screening and surgical management for breast patients. I have been fortunate to work at Breast Test Wales and Velindre Cancer Centre which has enriched my experience in the management of breast disease and knowledge of ongoing research available to patients.

I have seen many changes in treatments over this time which would not have been possible without research.

I am excited now to be involved with the vital role Wales Cancer Bank has and is continuing to provide towards the advancement of research and more personalised treatments for patients.

Hi, my name is Rebecca Jones.

I joined Wales Cancer Bank in August 2019 as a Technician.

I gained my BSc in Genetics from Cardiff University in 2016, followed by my Masters degree, also in Cardiff University. The course vastly improved my knowledge of and deepened my interest in cancer biology and oncology, and I knew then that it was the field I most wanted to develop a career in. I finished the MSc Cancer Biology and Therapeutics course in 2018, during which time I completed my project in Dr Richard Clarkson's lab investigating biomarkers for a novel drug currently in development. After graduation I was fortunate to be able to return to Dr Clarkson's lab and gain more experience in the laboratory environment carrying out further work for the same project.

Shortly afterwards, I joined the Wales Cancer Bank team in Velindre, and I am delighted to be able to contribute to vital research in developing cancer treatments and improving patients' lives.



Congratulations to Dr Alison Parry-Jones

Dr Alison Parry-Jones was presented with a Special Service Award at the ISBER annual conference held in Shanghai in May this year. The award recognises Alison's tireless contribution to the world of international biobanking. In addition to her demanding role as manager of the Wales Cancer Bank, in 2017 Alison was elected as the ISBER Director-at-Large for Europe, Middle East and Africa (EMEA) for a three-year term. This role helps to set the strategic direction of the society and leads and directs the organisation's advancement of biobanking science and management.

Friends and colleagues at Wales Cancer Bank and members of the WCB Lay Liaison and Ethics Group are enormously proud of her achievements, and Mrs Susan Campbell, Chair of the WCB Lay Liaison and Ethics Group (pictured bottom right) presented Alison with a bouquet of flowers to congratulate her on her award.



Dr Zisis Kozlakidis (ISBER Past President) presenting Dr Alison Parry-Jones with a Special Service award



A fond farewell to a very dear friend

We are deeply saddened to report that Keith Cass MBE lost his long battle with prostate cancer in April this year. Keith was a long-time supporter of the Wales Cancer Bank, he was a member of the WCB lay Liaison and Ethics Group and served as its Vice Chair, although Keith, with his unique and cheeky sense of humour, much preferred the title 'Chair of Vice'.



Keith was a truly special person and his passing will be felt by a great many people. Our sincere and heartfelt condolences go to his family.

GDPR

As part of GDPR (EU General Data Protection Regulation) compliance, WCB will regularly feature a reminder of the impact of GDPR to those patients who may have previously donated samples and data to the Wales Cancer Bank.

In line with guidance from the HRA to universities and the NHS, WCB relies on 'task in the public interest' as the legal basis for processing data under the GDPR. This does not affect WCB's routine processes. However, if patients choose to withdraw consent, data will now be kept and continued to be used in research.

If you have already donated samples and want to find out more, there is a data privacy notice on the WCB website:

<https://www.walescancerbank.com/data-privacy-notice.htm>

Funding Update



WCB are happy to announce a further five years funding has been secured from Health and Care Research Wales. The funding (April 2020—March 2025) will take the biobank into the next exciting phase of development whilst ensuring the cancer researchers in Wales and beyond continue to have access to both the high quality, well-annotated biosamples necessary for their research, as well as the huge amount of expertise and knowledge of the excellent staff.

Dr Richard Clarkson led the funding bid submission and commented that he was 'very pleased that HCRW continued to recognise the value and utility of WCB by providing core infrastructure support for the next five years'.

Get in Touch.....

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