

Research and Development

Joint Research Executive: The JRE which was formed in 2000 has continued to oversee the NHS/Academic Partnership between the Trust and the Faculty of Medicine of the University of Newcastle upon Tyne. The Trust is represented by the Chief Executive, the Medical Director, the Financial Director, a non Executive Director and the Faculty by the Provost, the Dean of Research, the Dean of Postgraduate Studies and the Bursar. Also sitting on the committee is the Chairman of the JRE Scientific Committee. The Chairman of the JRE is appointed by the committee. The JRE has met monthly in the last year. Considerable progress has been made in developing a strategy to maintain and enhance the excellent clinical research undertaken within the Trust.

R&D Support Funding for NHS Providers: In 2001/2002, nine programmes were submitted for priorities and needs funding. These included cancer, cardiovascular physics and engineering research, genetic approaches to disease, ageing and health, child health, demography/aetiology and therapy in multiple sclerosis, radiation physics and magnetic resonance imaging/spectroscopy, dental health in the North East and musculoskeletal research. Of these 7 were assessed as being strong and 2 moderate. Strong programmes were judged to be well established, with substantial external non-commercial grant income, a good publication output and multi-disciplinary, multi-professional teams contributing to a joint NHS/University strategy. Both strong and moderate programmes were supported by the Department of Health. In 2002/2003, twelve programmes were submitted. Of the two programmes assessed as moderate, one was incorporated into an existing programme and the other expanded to form a new programme. The new programmes submitted in 2002/2003 were diabetes and human nutrition, feto-maternal, immunobiology and transplantation, liver diseases, neurosciences and otolaryngology.

Research Governance: The Trust has made substantial progress towards compliance with the indicators for research governance required by the Department of Health. In particular, a research governance co-ordinator jointly funded by the Trust and the University will be appointed in the autumn of 2003. Consumer involvement in research has been implemented through the Trust's Community Advisory Panel who receive a

copy of the minutes of the JRE. The Chairman of the JRE also makes a quarterly presentation to the panel on R&D activity. A research governance partnership agreement between the Trust and University will be implemented in 2003. A process for honorary contracts to be awarded to all researchers working in the Trust but not employed by the Trust has been implemented. The Trust has confirmed to the Department of Health that it will take on the role of sponsor.

Clinical Research Facility: The plans for the new Clinical Research Facility on the 4th floor of the Leazes Wing of the RVI are well advanced. There will be 16 beds, a 7 chair investigation area, an exercise study room, specimen storage rooms and meeting/seminar rooms. £3 million has already been raised and the facility will open in 2004. The facility will gather together research on human subjects which is currently being undertaken in a variety of clinical settings. The facility will foster collaboration, provide efficient delivery of patient-oriented research and enable the implementation of research governance within a controlled setting. The facility is undoubtedly one of the most exciting new developments in clinical research in Newcastle.

Joint Research Executive Scientific Committee:

The JRE scientific committee has met regularly during the last year to consider grant applications for funds held by the Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals NHS Charity and the Newcastle Healthcare Charity. In addition the committee reviews all research projects which have not been previously peer reviewed and makes recommendations to the Chief Executive as to whether the Trust should act as a sponsor. The committee has 15 members who are appointed by the JRE. Tenure is 3 years and 5 members of the committee retired in 2003. Their replacements were drawn from 27 nominees who wished to be considered for membership.

Dr T H J Goodship

Chairman of the Joint Research Executive
August 2003



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