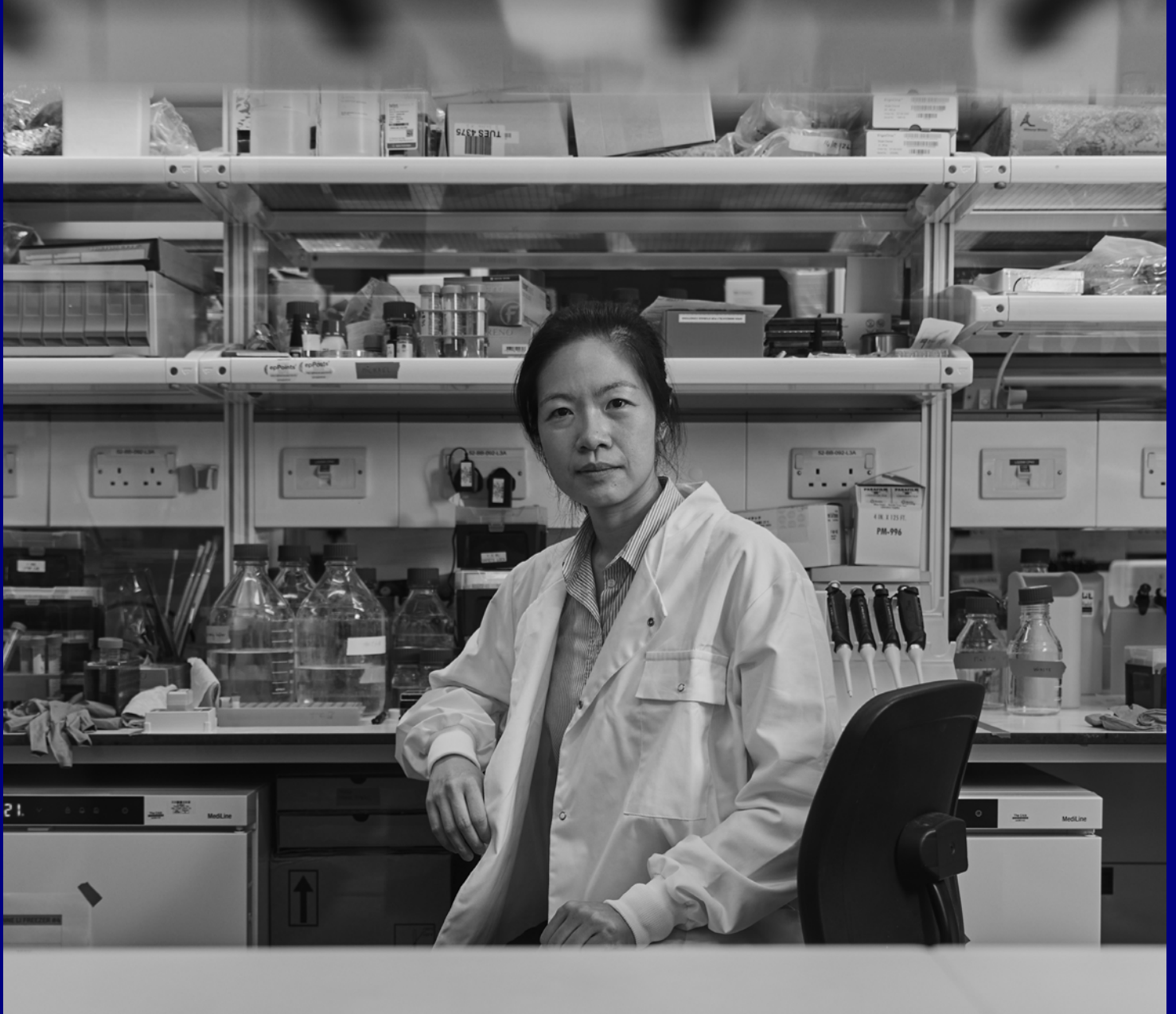


More Research Less Cancer



Future leaders

Priority summary
2024

More excellence, more opportunity

Why we're here

Research needs researchers.

For decades, we've been at the forefront of nurturing, training and championing the young minds who've gone on to make a difference to countless lives.

To keep making that kind of success long into the future, we need the researchers to make that happen.

Our scale and reputation mean we're uniquely placed to bring together researchers from across the world and drive progress in areas ranging from cancer drugs to diagnosis, radiotherapy and beyond, to create kinder and more effective treatments for people with cancer.

We need to identify, recruit, retain and support our rising stars through every stage of their careers. And we need to find people from different backgrounds and disciplines, so we have as many different perspectives on the problem as possible.

That takes long-term financial commitment. And that's where your support will make a lasting impact.



Why now?

The need for young researchers has never been greater. But the skill set they need is changing faster than ever. And the pathway to a successful career as a cancer scientist is full of difficulties and potential dead-ends.

On paper, it looks simple enough: PhD to postdoc, then faculty member, group leader and beyond. In reality, the journey is littered with funding rounds and grant battles. And in truth, shooting for a big grant with a big idea? That's a risk that's often too big to take.

So the career ladder for a promising scientist is often slippery, which might discourage the best and brightest from even reaching the first rung. Factor in equality and inclusion? The challenge gets even greater.

Cancer affects everyone, but cancer research doesn't draw on all the talent. Too often, the demands on young scientists create systemic class, race and gender inequalities, preventing people from continuing along this path, or even finding it in the first place.

For some, just as their careers are taking off, pressures arise in their personal lives, such as starting a family or being drawn towards the private sector. While others might reach mid-career and suddenly find themselves cut adrift from a funding pipeline.

In certain areas, such as clinical science, the UK lags behind. And we will only catch up if we step up our efforts to train, retain and champion the best talent. It will take funding, but this is an investment, not a cost. If we can stop the talent drain into other areas, the long-term societal benefits are incalculable.

To make that investment, we need your support.

What we've already done

So far, we've designed and refined a clear programme to identify and support the brightest science stars throughout their careers. To date, we've invested millions into the careers of young researchers.

And it's paying off. Many researchers who we funded early in their careers have gone on to become prominent names in their fields. For example, we've supported Dr Mariam Jamal-Hanjani since she took the leap into clinical research. She is now a world-renowned expert in cancer research, taking on challenges like cachexia and leading a pioneering autopsy study.



More leaders

Less cancer

And many people have benefited from our improved funding for clinical researchers, which includes a way to support people undergoing clinical training to undertake a fully funded PhD.

But we haven't stopped there. Partnering with like-minded organisations and individuals has already led to the establishment of our Black Leaders in Cancer PhD programme. And we're continuing to help address systemic inequalities in medical training.

By finding and supporting the best talent today, we will create the cancer leaders of tomorrow.

What your support will help us do next

Rising stars rely on our support. We rely on yours.



It will help us build a broader and more diverse network of future leaders.



It will help us create the structures and programmes to guide professionals through the crucial career milestones, and towards the goal of delivering life-saving cancer research.



It will help us connect rising stars to an influential network of academic, research and industry experts who will help them develop the entrepreneurial skills to get the best ideas off the bench, funded and into the world where they can save and improve lives.

To do all this while addressing inequality? It will take more than good intentions.

It will mean creating and investing in programmes that reach further and last longer. It will mean training a generation of researchers who are as diverse as their patients, resulting in a cohort with broader insights that will lead to better outcomes.

Your support will fund scientists at every stage of their career. It will help us plan with confidence for the future, which in turn will change many futures.

Years ago, we supported Charlie Swanton as he took his first steps towards a career in clinical research. Years later, he approached us with a radical research idea to change the way people look at lung cancer.

Now Charlie is a world leader in lung cancer research leading a globally admired study at the Francis Crick Institute and acting as Cancer Research UK's chief clinician.

His work has already revolutionised our understanding of lung cancer. And it could go on to benefit millions of people around the world.

To keep making these kinds of strides, we need to support more future leaders. And that's why we need your support today.

