

Applications invited for BIR/Bayer “Make it Better” Award

The BIR, in partnership with Bayer, invites applications for the BIR/Bayer “Make it Better” service award 2017.

The award will be given to the group of people who have demonstrated the best improvement in an aspect of service delivery by making it more effective, or have improved patient experience. This might be an innovative design of a piece of kit or changes to a patient pathway that has improved patient comfort or made the pathway less invasive, reduced delays or improved the environment for the patient.

The award is open to individuals or groups of people from either an imaging department, radiotherapy, medical physics or from a multi-disciplinary team who may be either BIR members or non-members.

BIR President, Andy Rogers, said “This award is a great opportunity for teams to showcase their innovative work and share their experience across the UK and beyond. Dissemination of improvements is one way the NHS will cope with increasing demand and this award is a fantastic way of doing just that.”

Andreas Ackermann, Country Head Radiology UK from Bayer said

“We are delighted to be supporting this award for the third year running – we saw some outstanding examples of innovation so far. We feel privileged to support the NHS by sharing wonderful best practice examples and inspiring innovative patient care.”



Applications **MUST** demonstrate that the delivery of a particular service or patient experience has improved. This may be, for example, by reducing cost, increasing throughput, improving diagnostic quality leading to better outcomes, improving infection control, increasing staff or patient satisfaction, improving comfort or reducing motion of the patient. This list is not exhaustive but is given as examples.

The award is in the form of a plaque and funding to attend UKRC (where the award will be presented) of up to £1,000. The deadline for applications is 28 February 2017.

The funding and sponsorship for this award is provided by Bayer. To apply, visit www.bir.org.uk/makeitbeterserviceaward

Dr Alison Tree recognised at awards ceremony

Dr Alison Tree, Consultant Clinical Oncologist in The Royal Marsden's Urology Unit, has been recognised for her work in improving radiotherapy treatment for prostate cancer patients.

Dr Tree received the Driving Transformation and Innovation Award at the Trust's annual staff achievement awards. She was recognised for being instrumental in delivering the gold grain fiducial programme for prostate cancer patients at the Trust, and for setting up a specialist radiographer-led care programme for patients having prostate radiotherapy.

"This award recognises the innovations we have implemented to improve care for prostate cancer patients," says Dr Tree. "It is a privilege to work in a team, and a hospital, that strives for excellence in all we do."

The gold grain fiducial programme is offered to prostate cancer patients who are receiving radiotherapy treatment.

"To help us see the position of the prostate during treatment, we implant inert gold marker seeds – also called fiducials – into the patient's prostate," says Dr Tree. "These seeds can be seen on x-rays and confirm the position of the prostate, which improves treatment accuracy and may reduce radiotherapy side effects."

"This procedure is very similar to a prostate biopsy, although quicker to carry out. The seeds are very small - smaller than a pin-head."

The specialist radiographers have been trained to provide care and to treat side effects during prostate radiotherapy. They can see patients regularly during treatment and provide a point of contact and advice for men undergoing radiotherapy. This new service has received excellent feedback from patients.



Left to right: Chairman Ian Molson, Dr Alison Tree and Cally Palmer – Driving transformation and innovation. Photo © The Royal Marsden NHS Foundation Trust.

Dr Tree was appointed as a consultant clinical oncologist at The Royal Marsden in 2014. Prior to this she spent most of the previous 12 years at The Royal Marsden, training in state-of-the-art chemotherapy and radiotherapy techniques.

Her current research interests include technical radiotherapy improvements in prostate cancer, the development of the MR Linac for urological cancers and the use of ablative radiotherapy for oligometastatic disease.

Brain Tumour Research chief executive awarded MBE in New Year's Honours

Sue Farrington Smith who lost her niece, Alison Phelan, to a brain tumour in 2001, three weeks before her eighth birthday, is being awarded an MBE in the New Year's Honours for services to brain tumour research and awareness-raising.

Shocked to discover the lack of awareness and chronic under-funding of research into brain tumours, Sue, 59, co-founded the charity "Ali's Dream" with her sister, Julie Phelan, and others of Ali's family and friends to raise funds for childhood brain tumour research.

As a trustee of Ali's Dream and having campaigned to raise awareness and funds since 2001, Sue led the coming together of multiple brain tumour charities and with the support of her local MP John Bercow, now Speaker of the House of Commons, established the All Party Parliamentary Group on brain tumours in July 2005.

In April 2009, Ali's Dream and other founding brain tumour charities launched Brain Tumour Research. This pioneering national charity has rapidly matured into a multi-million-pound organisation under Sue's leadership, with the establishment of four Research Centres of Excellence across the country. Sue has also co-authored three reports into national research funding, produced the Invest in a Cure manifesto and launched the charity's annual Wear A Hat Day, held at the end of March – brain tumour awareness month.

Sue said: "I cried when I heard the news. It is such a great honour. It made me realise the enormity of what has been



achieved in the last 15 years.

"Like so many others in the brain tumour community, my passion for this cause is driven by loss. I still remember our complete shock and disbelief when we discovered that brain tumours kill more children and adults under the age of 40 than any other cancer, yet just 1% of the national spend on cancer research was being allocated to this devastating disease. We found this unacceptable.

"With a background in the corporate world, I pledged the rest of my life's work to finding a cure. Alongside Professor Geoff Pilkington at the University of Portsmouth, we created a vision of how brain tumour research could be transformed in the UK, with Research Centres of Excellence driving progress.

"Today, the charity Brain Tumour Research supports one of the UK's largest collaborations of laboratory-based brain tumour scientists, working across a network of four Research Centres

of Excellence. Our campaigning at Westminster has driven the formation of a Government Task and Finish Working Group, raising awareness at the highest levels.

"Every day I hear stories of families who have been devastated by brain tumours. I feel blessed that so many patients, families and supporters choose to fundraise and campaign alongside us. They keep me motivated and we couldn't have achieved what we have without them."

Sue concluded: "There are so many people who have been with me and Ali's family and friends on this journey, including my hugely supportive husband and children. I am particularly humbled by the bravery and dedication of Wendy Fulcher, Sandy Saunders and Nigel Boutwood, trustees of Brain Tumour Research. It was our shared vision from the start. We have always been so completely focused on finding a cure for brain tumours and now, more than ever before, we have such hope for the future. I know that, together with our supporters, we will find a cure."

Brain Tumour Research is campaigning to see the national spend on brain tumour research increased to £30 million – £35 million a year, in line with breast cancer and leukaemia, in order to advance treatments and ultimately find a cure.

www.braintumourresearch.org
www.alisdream.org.uk

KU Leuven awards joint honorary doctorate

As part of its Patron Saint's Day celebrations on 15 February 2017, KU Leuven (University of Leuven, Belgium) will confer a joint honorary doctorate on James P. Allison (University of Texas) and Carl H. June (University of Pennsylvania).

The future of cancer patients may be considerably brighter thanks to James P Allison and Carl H June. The two immunologists – affiliated with the University of Texas and the University of Pennsylvania, respectively – revolutionised the treatment of cancer by using the patient's immune system as a powerful weapon. June's team was the first to genetically modify T cells – the 'conductors' of the immune system – in such a way as to make them identify and attack the malignant disease in



James P Allison



Carl H June

the patient with accuracy. Allison unravelled the built-in inhibitory mechanisms of T cells and developed ways to block them. This makes the immune system more active in terms of – again – identifying and attacking cancer cells. In 2013, Science called their achievements in cancer immunology the Breakthrough of the Year. Allison emphasised that their insights have to lead to results in the hospital. "It is important to not just use your knowledge for the joy of

learning and knowing something," he says, "but to help people too."

The nominator of this honorary doctorate is Professor Peter Vandenbergh, the co-nominator is Professor Peter Carmeliet.