

# ACCELERATING THE RATE OF PROGRESS IN BRAIN TUMOUR RESEARCH

Help us  
**FUND THE  
FIGHT.**  
Together  
we will  
find a cure

We welcome the **Task and Finish Working Group** on brain tumour research and seek parliamentarians support in holding the Government to account in reversing the historic underfunding for brain tumour research.

*Brain Tumour Research's* national campaign supporting the Realf family's e-petition on brain tumour research funding was backed by over 120,000 people across the UK.

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 has been allocated to this devastating disease. Together we called on the UK Government and larger cancer charities to work with brain tumour charities to raise the national investment for brain tumour research to £30 to £35 million per year in line with breast cancer and leukaemia research.

The e-petition prompted the House of Commons Petitions Committee to conduct an inquiry and in their subsequent report the Committee concluded that brain tumour research funding had been "neglected by successive Governments for decades". Their Westminster Hall debate in April 2016 saw over 70 MPs back their recommendations.

A major outcome of the debate was the creation of a Government Task and Finish Working Group. The Group comprises experts who have been tasked with addressing the need to increase the level and impact of brain tumour research. It is an invaluable opportunity for cancer charities, researchers, clinicians and the Government to collaborate in developing a pathway to a cure. The Group is co-chaired by Professor Chris Whitty, Chief Scientific Advisor at the Department of Health and Nicola Blackwood, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Public Health & Innovation.

In October 2016, the inaugural meeting of the Working Group was held in Richmond House, the Department of Health's headquarters. Members identified the barriers that are preventing researchers finding a cure and the opportunities to accelerate progress.

The **Government's Task and Finish Working Group** will meet again in January 2017. A new cross-sector plan will then be developed by Group members that takes

*Brain Tumour Research* believes action needs to be taken in three key areas:

- **Develop a national network of brain tumour research centres.** Scientific research is crucial in finding a cure for brain tumours. The UK needs to reach a 'critical mass' of researchers and a track record of successful studies. This will allow brain tumour research to become more financially self-sustainable and such a network would halt the brain drain of researchers moving to other disciplines. *Brain Tumour Research* has already established four such Centres.
- **Tissue banking.** Accessible, properly categorised brain tumour tissue is an essential resource for any brain tumour researcher. Tissue samples are currently collected by local NHS pathology departments, with no national co-ordination. We identified this barrier and have backed *brainstrust* (a member charity) in funding the establishment of the Brain UK tissue banking registry at the University of Southampton. The Government needs to work with brain tumour charities to extend this initiative across the UK, investing in the infrastructure and regulation required for brain tumour tissue samples.
- **Drug development.** Breast cancer and leukaemia have around 40 drugs that can be used in treatment, brain tumours have only two site specific drugs (Avastin and Temozolomide). Clinical pathways need to be developed to ensure that drugs can pass from the laboratory bench to the patients' bedside. The UK Government needs to ring-fence budgets for clinical trials and research. New drug compounds need to be developed and existing drugs must be tested for repurposing. Some of our centres are working on this.

advantage of all the opportunities within the life sciences industry and academia. A third meeting will take place in the summer to finalise the report for the Minister.



## FACTS & STATS

- **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 has been allocated to this devastating disease
- **16,000 people each year** are diagnosed with a primary or secondary brain tumour
- **Less than 20%** of those diagnosed with a brain tumour survive beyond five years compared with an average of 50% across all cancers
- **Brain tumours** represent 1% of cancers diagnosed, yet 3% of cancer deaths
- **Up to 40%** of cancers spread to the brain
- **3,600 people a year** die from a brain tumour
- **1 in 50 of all people** who die under the age of 60 die from a brain tumour
- **71% of those that die** of a brain tumour are under the age of 75 (compared to 47% for all cancers)
- **Brain tumours** are responsible for over 20 years of life lost – more lethal than any other cancer
- **Unlike most other cancers**, incidences and deaths from brain tumours are increasing
- **At the current rate** of spend, it could take 100 years for brain cancer to catch up with developments in other diseases and find a cure

Source: Brain Tumour Research – Invest in a Cure Manifesto – 17th March 2015

Brain Tumour Research is striving to fund a network of seven dedicated research centres in the UK whilst challenging the government and larger cancer charities to invest more in brain tumour research.

Help us **FUND THE FIGHT.**  
Together we will find a cure



**Brain Tumour Research**

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