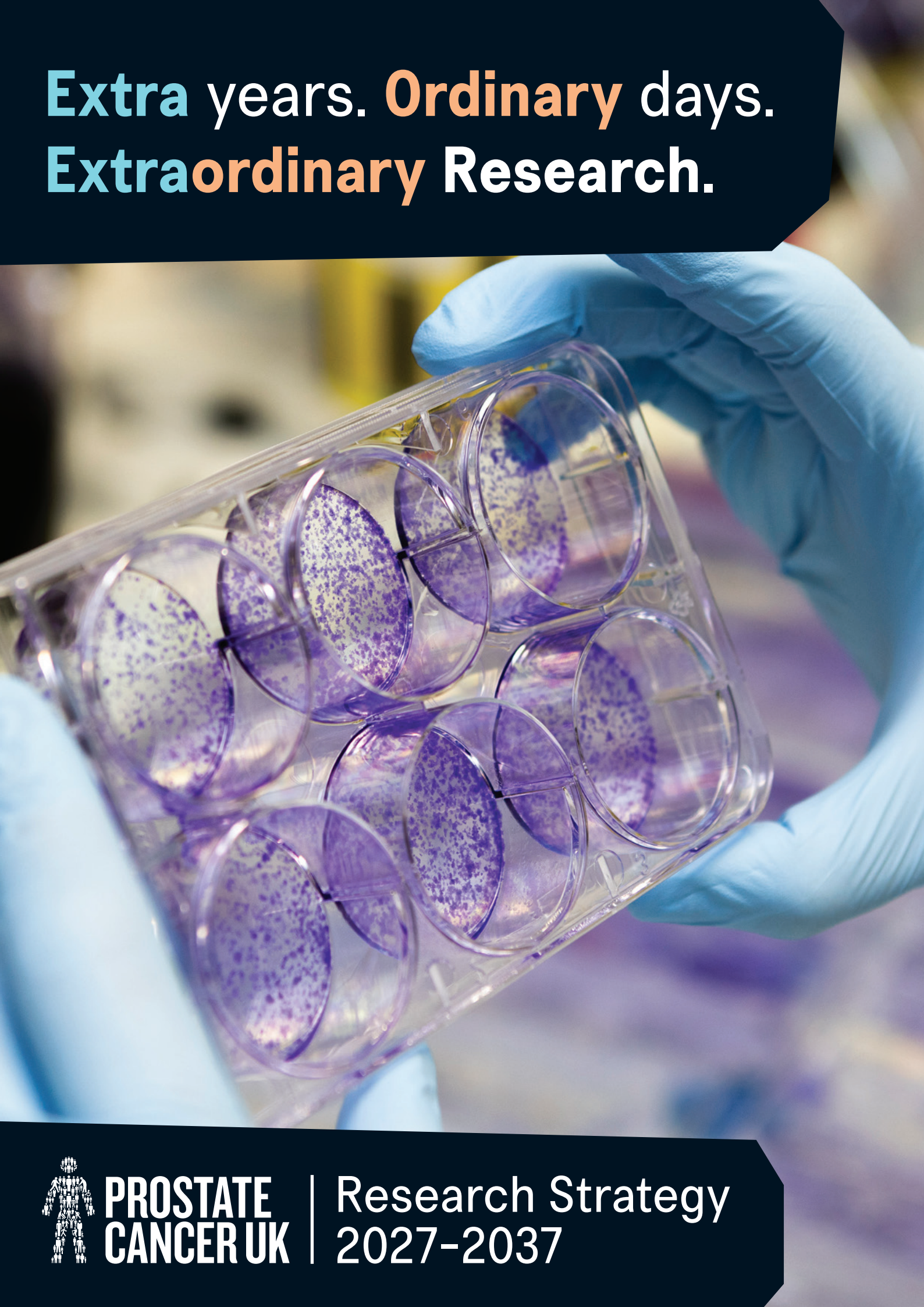
Extra years. Ordinary days. Extraordinary Research.



PROSTATE CANCER UK | Research Strategy 2027-2037

FOREWORD

Good ideas, coaxed into innovations, can become real, glorious, ordinary days for more men like me. Your discovery becomes a Tuesday morning school run I didn't think I'd live to do.

SIMON AYLETT



Over the next 10 years, we will face profound challenges in prostate cancer. More men than ever before will be diagnosed with this complex disease. More men will be living with its consequences. And more of our dads, brothers, grandads and friends will sadly lose their lives to it.

Unless we accelerate progress in prostate cancer through research.

This research strategy sets out how we'll make this happen, contributing to the charity's bold ambition of saving men's lives and revolutionising their experience of living with prostate cancer over the decade ahead.

Only through research will we generate the critical knowledge, innovation and evidence we need – to prevent prostate cancer deaths and give men precious extra years, but also to make sure every man enjoys the best possible quality of life.

That is the purpose of this strategy: to give men extra years, filled not with days made painful or difficult due to their cancer or the treatments they receive, but instead filled with days that can be gloriously ordinary days. Days that they can enjoy with family, friends and loved ones by their side.

Research has already redrawn the boundaries of what's possible. And at Prostate Cancer UK, our funding has unlocked landmark changes in clinical practice, including delivering MRI-led diagnosis, deepening our understanding of prostate cancer biology and introducing the first precision treatments.

Together, we've built one of the world's strongest prostate cancer research communities. We've become the UK's largest non-commercial funder of prostate cancer research. And time and again, we've made bold investments when others could not or would not – including our transformational commitment to improve the way the disease is diagnosed.

Over the next decade, we must continue to build on those foundations – and scale up our research at even greater pace. To do that, we'll increase our funding for:

- innovative discovery and early-stage research, generating vital new knowledge about prostate cancer
- translational research, turning the latest discoveries into clinic-ready tests and treatments
- clinical trials, demonstrating the real-world benefits that those tests and treatments will bring to men.

We'll make deliberate choices about where we invest, where we lead, and where we bring others together to maximise our impact. And we'll make sure this critical shift delivers better outcomes for the men who need it most, building on our commitment and existing funding to understand why prostate cancer disproportionately affects Black men.

But generating evidence alone is not enough. Research only changes lives when new knowledge becomes routine clinical practice. That's why we'll work closely with colleagues in our Health Services, Equity and Improvement directorate to make sure that discoveries in diagnosis and treatment unlocked by our research are adopted and implemented as quickly as possible – so men benefit sooner.

As well as funding exceptional science and innovation, we'll use our expertise, influence and convening power to speed up the journey from discovery to real-world impact. This isn't our mission alone, so we'll work with researchers, clinicians, policymakers, funders, partners, supporters and men with lived experience of prostate cancer, to deliver the extraordinary research that gives men more time and better lives.



Matthew Hobbs
Director of Research and Strategic Impact
Prostate Cancer UK

HOW WE WILL DELIVER MORE TIME AND BETTER LIVES THROUGH RESEARCH

Our 10-year organisational strategy sets out four ambitious goals to prevent men dying from prostate cancer and revolutionise their experience of living with the disease. Research alone will not deliver those goals. However, without the vital new knowledge generated through our research programme, they cannot be achieved in full.

Over the course of this strategy, we will ensure that our research programme is informed by the needs of the men we support – and that it continues to produce evidence we can use to drive innovation into real-life impact. By ensuring that innovative new diagnostics and treatments are made available to men across the UK, irrespective of who they are or where they live.

We will measure the ultimate success of this strategy against the charity's goals: reducing late diagnosis; ensuring lives are saved and extended thanks to new, precise treatments; and reducing harm from overtreatment and side effects (as well as ensuring that we provide direct support to hundreds of thousands of men living with prostate cancer through our wider impact strategy).

Over the next 10 years, we will track enabling outcomes, lead indicators and realised examples of changes to clinical practice – to ensure our research is moving us towards these goals.

When I was diagnosed aged 49 I never thought I would see my kids finish school but now they all have jobs and my eldest is a married homeowner expecting my first grandchild. All thanks to drugs developed through charity funded research.
KEVIN WEBBER



By the end of the strategy period, we will demonstrate clear improvements in how prostate cancer is diagnosed and treated, powered by our research funding.

We will:

- ensure our TRANSFORM screening study is fully recruited, delivered, in follow-up, and generating definitive evidence beyond current global knowledge;
- deliver multiple examples of improved methods to detect and diagnose prostate cancer;
- generate multiple examples where our funding has made treatment more precise;
- develop new treatments or repurpose existing drugs to improve treatment;
- show our funding has delivered multiple changes in practice which help men live with fewer treatment side effects.

Our role in some of these impacts will be funding clinical trials. In other cases, it will be funding the earlier stage research that elucidates new biology or translates new discoveries into clinic-ready tools and treatments. But to deliver the impact men need, it's essential that new knowledge is translated into clinical trials. Therefore, we will track the number of trials we directly fund or that are initiated because of evidence generated by our grants.

Our target is that by the end of the strategy period, **50 trials will have happened because of our funding.**

To know that our research funding is successfully moving ideas and innovations towards and into clinical use, we will continue to employ our sector-leading Impact Realisation Level (IRL) methodology to assess the success of our investments in driving measurable progress.

To make this progress, we need to **continue investing across the full breadth of the research pathway.** We are expert funders, and experts in prostate cancer, and we draw on support and guidance from world-leading researchers and clinicians. As a result, the research that we support has the best chance of making an impact for men. Therefore, our goal during this strategy period is to remain the largest funder of non-commercial prostate cancer research in the UK. If income grows as projected, **our target is to fund over £200 million of world leading, impactful research over the next 10 years.**

We will only continue to deliver the impact men need if we have the excellent researchers needed to generate and test ideas and drive progress over this strategy period and beyond. We will therefore increase our commitment to supporting and building the next generation of research leaders. We will support them through fellowship programmes, through leadership positions and salary funding on our grants, and by providing wider support beyond funding. To do this we will work with, and fund through, partners where that is the best mechanism to achieve our goals. Through this strategy, **our aim is to directly fund 100 individuals**, supporting them across critical career transition points to develop into the **future leaders** we need to deliver progress.

NEW KNOWLEDGE WILL DELIVER IMPACT FOR MEN

We will continue to fund research according to quality and potential impact. Within that broad approach, several scientific and clinical priorities are likely to drive the outcomes we need. This is not an exhaustive list; informed by innovation and the voices of men with lived experience of prostate cancer, we will remain open to new knowledge, priorities and serendipity and alert to opportunities that emerge that mean we need to pivot to make the impact men need.

1. Improve diagnosis so that all men benefit from an early and accurate diagnosis

- Identify who should be screened, who should be screened more often or less often, and who may never need to be screened.
- Close evidence gaps about our current, modern pathway for diagnosing prostate cancer that prevent men from accessing early diagnosis or making informed decisions about testing
- Reduce harm by finding fewer cancers that would never cause problems.
- Save more lives than current PSA-based approaches by missing fewer aggressive cancers.
- Generate the evidence men need at diagnosis to make treatment choices based on their personal risk of harm, recurrence or spread.
- Make diagnosis quicker, cheaper and easier, so population-wide screening becomes more beneficial and practical.

2. Deliver better, more precise treatments that save and extend men's lives

- Match more men to targeted treatments designed to control their specific cancer.
- Increase the number of men whose initial treatment eradicates their cancer and offers a long-term cure.
- Keep treatments for metastatic prostate cancer working for longer by preventing or overcoming resistance.
- Develop new treatment options for men when existing treatments stop working.

3. Protect quality of life by driving down the number of men who experience harm

- Match more men to treatment regimens that avoid unnecessary treatments and side effects.
- Develop completely new ways to treat prostate cancer or new combinations of treatments that result in less severe side effects so that men's lives are better as well as longer.
- Fund research that reduces, prevents or treats treatment side effects that significantly reduce men's quality of life.
- Build the evidence that allows men to make informed choices about their treatment type, intensity and dosing, based on their priorities for length and quality of life.

4. Understand prostate cancer biology to underpin all of our impact ambitions with precision

- Build a more comprehensive understanding of the varied biology of prostate cancer.
- Explain why Black men face higher risks of diagnosis, aggressive disease and death.
- Ensure that development of new treatments is informed by the interacting biological processes allowing prostate cancer to develop, grow, spread, harm and kill men.
- Open long-term routes towards precise prevention and risk reduction.

Together, these priorities will help deliver the charity's wider ambitions: reducing late diagnosis by one third by 2037; preventing 20,000 prostate cancer deaths by 2037 and 100,000 by 2050; preventing over 50,000 men from being harmed by treatments in the next 10 years; and, by 2050, reaching a world where a prostate cancer diagnosis no longer has an impact on a man's quality of life.



When you're diagnosed with cancer, your life isn't yours. It's taken up by treatments and hospital appointments.
GARY HASTIE-DAVIS

OUR STRATEGIC CHOICES FOR THE NEXT 10 YEARS

WHAT WE WILL CONTINUE

Our consultation with researchers in the UK and globally showed that much of our existing programme is working well. We will keep the strengths that are already delivering impact, while sharpening how we use them.

- Maintain a broad strategy across the full disease and translational spectrum, from discovery to late-stage clinical trials, prioritising research quality and potential impact for men.
- Allocate most of our research funding through consistent annual response-mode schemes, using a global expert network to judge quality, feasibility and likely impact. Our Research Innovation Awards, Transformational Impact Awards and Career Acceleration Fellowships will remain at the core of our funding programme each year.
- Make delivery of TRANSFORM our highest priority for diagnosis research, reflecting the scale of our previous investment and its potential to change the evidence base for screening and diagnosis.
- Ensure that TRANSFORM Discovery successfully powers the development and validation of innovative new ways to diagnose.
- Embed experts through lived experience in grant decision-making, and support researchers to involve diverse patient perspectives when developing proposals.
- Continue using long term, sector-leading monitoring and analysis to understand portfolio progress, identify barriers and accelerate impact during and after grants.
- Ensure that a strong research community, driven by interdisciplinarity, continues to focus on prostate cancer by funding and supporting the next generations of research leaders.
- Sustain our support for researchers beyond funding, growing and developing the ideas, people and networks that will drive us towards vital breakthroughs.





Research is crucial; alongside men understanding their risk and pushing for early diagnosis, powering research into prostate cancer will undoubtedly make a huge difference in reducing the number of men who die from this disease.

It will also help deliver medical advances and deliver the breakthrough that is so needed. The work Prostate Cancer UK do is essential in reducing the impact of prostate cancer on men and their families.

SIR CHRIS HOY



WHAT WE WILL START

As prostate cancer harms and kills more men, and as our fundraising grows, we will add targeted initiatives where they can increase impact beyond our core schemes.

- Expand our ambition for TRANSFORM, delivering a trial that invites all eligible Black men to participate through the £18 million additional investment from NIHR.
- Fund more research that primarily seeks to protect or improve men's quality of life after diagnosis, starting by encouraging high-quality proposals to our response mode funding schemes and ensuring the right expertise on funding committees.
- Increase our career support offering to ensure a sustainable, diverse and productive research workforce, with a particular focus on strengthening the pipeline of clinically qualified prostate cancer research leaders by increasing our funding for clinical research fellowships. As part of this we will work more often and more closely with partner funders to ensure that excellent researchers have the funding and support needed to become global prostate cancer research leaders.
- Launch 'Spark Awards', a new funding programme offering small, flexible grants for early ideas, final experiments or evidence gaps that could unlock funding for research at the next level towards impact.
- Introduce SCALe programmes (**S**pecify, **C**onvene, **A**ccelerate, **Le**ad) as a major new funding model to drive major, coordinated progress in selected high-impact topic areas.
- Our new funding schemes, alongside our existing ones, will ensure we are able to fund impactful research across the entire translational pathway.

OUR STRATEGIC CHOICES FOR THE NEXT 10 YEARS (CONTD.)

WHAT WE WILL NOT DO

Although we are projecting growth in our income, we cannot do everything. These choices protect our ability to use finite resources where we believe they can achieve the greatest impact.

- We will not simply double budgets or run more rounds of the same core schemes. Growth in funding will be used to fund different research in different ways: not just more of the same.
- We will not make large-scale primary prevention trial investments until the underlying biology is better understood. Prevention-focused research will sit mainly in early translational stages and be funded through response-mode schemes.
- We will not make major diagnosis investments outside TRANSFORM during this strategy period, although new discoveries and early development of novel diagnostics, along with studies that complement and sit alongside TRANSFORM, or which directly input into the model used by the National Screening Committee, may still be supported through our response-mode schemes.
- We will not run narrow, year-by-year targeted calls outside of our new SCALe programme. Based on low application numbers and funding rates in previous targeted funding calls, consistent strategy-wide schemes remain our preferred route to ensure quality and impact.
- We will not create a standalone PhD studentship scheme, although PhDs may be supported within larger programmes as we believe this gives students a path to a career focussed on prostate cancer.
- We will not prioritise funding through a Centre of Excellence model. We will favour coordinated SCALe programmes that bring multiple excellent researchers together around defined challenges rather than limiting funding to an individual institution or geography.
- We will not make our grant schemes open to non-UK institutions as primary leads, although we will continue to encourage global collaboration and participate in international initiatives.
- We will not make grant awards directly to commercial entities but will continue to encourage partnerships with commercial organisations where our strategies align.
- We will not fund research outside prostate cancer. Non-cancerous prostate conditions and research most likely to impact other diseases remain out of scope.
- Up to 1 million men are projected to be living with or beyond prostate cancer by the end of the 2030s – and providing those men with personalised clinical support that cares for mind and body is essential. However, we believe that Prostate Cancer UK can make the most impact in that area by developing and making available tools and services that provide the information and support men with prostate cancer need, rather than funding research focused on direct service redesign. More information is available in our 10-year organisational strategy.



Before I had prostate cancer, I didn't know Black men were at higher risk. Now we must find out why.

JOE APPIAH MBE

I think a lot more people are aware of prostate cancer. Now I think it's about trying to dig deeper and really get to finding out more about the disease and stopping it.

PAUL PARKER



TOPICS FOR MAJOR INVESTMENT

SCALe programmes will focus on a small number of topics that are responsible for driving prostate cancer mortality or morbidity and where large-scale, coordinated funding could accelerate progress. Each programme will begin with a Frontier Symposium, convening the global research community around the key questions and opportunities for impact.

Each SCALe programme will be different, but our intention is to invest at significant scale (likely around £10 million per programme) and potentially more where partnerships bring other funders alongside us.

Using our expertise, emerging evidence, ongoing challenges faced by men, and input from UK and international researchers, we developed a longlist of potential SCALe topics. We then sought input from experts through lived experience, including more than 200 survey respondents. All topics scored highly for importance, giving us confidence that each matters to men and families affected by prostate cancer.

We will not be able to run SCALe programmes in every area. Some progress will need to come through partnerships or existing funding schemes. A measure of success in 10 years will be how far we have funded, partnered and driven progress across these priority areas.

PRIORITY AREAS FOR INVESTMENT

- **Identifying men with localised but very aggressive prostate cancer and finding better ways to cure it**
- **Developing new treatments and keeping treatments working for longer to reduce deaths from metastatic prostate cancer**
- **Finding ways to eradicate some prostate cancers that are currently considered incurable, rather than only slowing its growth**
- **Improving treatment for men whose prostate cancer returns after first treatment**
- **Developing imaging techniques that could reduce or replace some biopsies**
- **Reducing side effects for men with metastatic prostate cancer through kinder, more personalised treatment combinations**
- **Developing treatments that do not rely on hormone therapy (ADT) to lower testosterone**
- **Improving active surveillance, so more men can safely avoid treatment side effects**
- **Understanding why some men are diagnosed with prostate cancer much younger than expected**

Final decisions about which funding mechanisms are most appropriate to support each of these topics will consider preferences expressed by respondents to the lived experience survey, overlaps between topics, existing investments, barriers to progress and attractiveness to partners and donors.

OUR CROSS-CUTTING COMMITMENTS

These themes will shape how we behave, partner and fund across the strategy period. We will:

- ensure that our plans, decisions and positions are evidence led and, by taking our PPIE efforts to the next level, ensure that those plans are informed and co-produced with people who have lived experience of prostate cancer.
- strive relentlessly for progress, always finding ways to make bigger, faster impact for men.
- remain open to new ideas, evidence and opportunities, and proactively maintain our position as disease and sector experts.
- review our progress, performance, and impact annually, and conduct a formal strategy review after five years.
- leverage Prostate Cancer UK's influencing expertise to ensure that research progress becomes clinical impact making, and ensure that new diagnostics and treatments are available to men equitably across the UK.
- maintain a global perspective, so our research is competitive, non-duplicative and capable of impact beyond the UK, while keeping UK men's outcomes and experiences as our priority.
- consider equity through all our work, including in how research questions are framed, funded and delivered.
- work together with others to bring about the biggest impact, working in partnership where others bring expertise, resources or opportunities that complement ours, and leading where our strengths make us the right organisation to do so.
- continue to share expertise, ideas and challenges with other funders, and contribute and adhere to sector best practice through our active membership of the Association of Medical Research Charities (AMRC).
- be an expert, consistent and honest partner to the research community.
- be more than a funder, supporting researchers to develop as leaders, building networks, sharing results, accelerating and amplifying impact, and harnessing our power to convene.



My dearest wish is that no other man should ever have to go through some of the realities I'm facing. Research will make that possible.

DANNY BURKEY



More time and better lives are within reach for men with prostate cancer

To deliver the charity's ambitions, we must continue to fund excellent, impactful science while tackling the barriers that are slowing progress. That means making deliberate choices: where we invest, where we lead, and where we harness our convening power to bring others together.

This strategy sets out those choices. It builds on the trajectory we have started, but pushes us to go further and faster together - generating the knowledge, treatments and evidence that will give men extra years, filled with those glorious ordinary days spent doing what matters to them. We are excited to work with you to deliver it.



PROSTATE CANCER UK

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