

UK cancer research could see £167 million drop in funding as a result of charity income loss

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Due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, cancer research charities are predicting their spending on research could drop by 46%, equating to £167m.

Charities play a vital role in UK cancer research. Data collected by the National Cancer Research Institute (NCRI) shows that in the year 2018/19, charities accounted for over 50% of publicly funded cancer research, a total of £362m.

With the financial impact of COVID-19, cancer research charities are projecting a 46% decrease in research spend over the next year, and some expect a more significant effect on research spend in the future. This reduction will see overall public investment in cancer research drop by 24%.

This projected drop in [research funding](#) is reflected nationally across the medical research sector, as data from the Association of Medical Research Charities (AMRC) shows.

The greatest impact will be seen on research focussed on specific cancer types, as a large proportion of site-specific cancer research [funding](#) comes from charities (70%). Health departments and medical research councils are large funders of non-site-specific research and the research infrastructure that supports all types of cancer research.

NCRI, whose partners include charities, research councils and health departments from all four nations of the United Kingdom, has been collecting research funding data since 2002 to understand the distribution of funding. NCRI publish annual summaries of this data as well as periodic reports to identify trends and gaps in funding across a range of research areas.

Data show that charities are the largest public funders of site-specific cancer research, including [blood cancer](#) (66%), brain tumours (87%), [lung cancer](#) (62%), pancreatic cancer (85%) and prostate cancer (80%).

The UK has a strong tradition in medical research and a vibrant research sector in which government, private and commercial funders each play an essential role. As the UK went into lockdown [charity](#) shops were closed, fundraising events were cancelled, and donations were diverted. As a result, cancer research charities have reported losses ranging from 20-70% in fundraising income.

There is concern that cancer research funding in the UK will be disproportionately affected compared to other countries due to the high levels of research supported by charitable funding. NCRI is working with the International Cancer Research Partnership (ICRP), which collects cancer research funding data on an international level, to investigate this.

Dr. Iain Frame, NCRI Chief Executive said "At this time where funding is reduced, [cancer](#) research funders must work together to coordinate research, reducing duplication of effort, and identifying priority areas that will have maximum impact for patients. Partnerships like the NCRI, which brings together charities, [research councils](#) and government from all four nations of the United Kingdom, are vital to act as a catalyst for progress in [cancer research](#) through collaboration."

Provided by National Cancer Research Institute

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