



Medical Research Scotland
65th Annual Report and Financial
Statements

2018-19

*Medical Research Scotland is the operational name
of the Scottish Hospital Endowments Research Trust (SHERT)
Recognised in Scotland as a charity with Scottish Charity No. SC014959*

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Medical Research Scotland

As Scotland's largest independent charity funder of medical research, Medical Research Scotland is committed to:

- supporting people in the early stages of their careers in medical research in Scotland
- supporting only the highest-quality research, which is aimed at improving understanding of the basic mechanisms of disease processes; or the diagnosis, treatment or prevention of disease; or the advancement of medical technology.

PATRON

HRH The Princess Royal

MEMBERS

The following served as Members/Trustees during the year:

Professor Philip Winn, BA, PhD, FRSB, FAPS, SRPharmS (Chair)

*Professor John R Brown, CBE, BSc, PhD, MBA, Dr HC, FRSE

Professor Bernard A Conway, BSc, PhD

Mr Scott Johnstone, BEng(Hons), MBA, CEng, FIET FIMechE (retired 26th October 2018)

*Mr Graham Paterson, MBA, FCCA

Professor Jennifer M Woof BSc, PhD, FHEA, FRSB

Professor Andrea Nolan OBE, FRSE, MRCVS

*Mr Barry Rose, BSc

*Mr Alasdair G K Gill BEng, FIA

Professor Heather M Wallace BSc, PhD, FRCPath, FBTS, FRSC, FRSB, FBPhS (Vice Chair)

Dr Michael L Roberts, PhD (appointed 26th October 2018)

** Denotes membership of the Audit & Investment Sub-Committee*

PRINCIPAL ADDRESS

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SECRETARIES

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SCIENTIFIC ADVISER

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AUDITOR

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INVESTMENT MANAGER

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Patron's Foreword



BUCKINGHAM PALACE

Medical research and education are two disciplines in which Scotland retains an enviable reputation, and I am delighted to be Patron of a Charity that so actively supports both of these.

Medical Research Scotland supports young people starting their careers in scientific research in a range of different ways. It actively shows school pupils the variety of careers open to them in the biomedical sciences; it supports undergraduate students, letting them do full time research in their summer vacations allowing them to test whether full time research is right for them; and, as its flagship programme, it supports postgraduate students working for their doctorates, the critical last step in full time education that will prepare them for careers in academia, industry or wherever they choose. On top of all of this, I am pleased that Medical Research Scotland continues to work with the outstanding Daphne Jackson Trust, supporting scientists returning to science after a career break.

It is also important to me that Medical Research Scotland has a broad vision, and ensures that all its postgraduate students work on projects that involve collaboration between Universities and industry, helping the translation from bench-to-bedside, research benefiting people everywhere with healthcare needs.

I am pleased to see that the Trustees of Medical Research Scotland understand the need to keep moving forward, not resting on their laurels. The improvements that have been made, especially with regard to their online presence, and the future plans for the Charity give me confidence that Medical Research Scotland will strive to improve its work, developing the careers of the best and brightest scientists and creating research that will improve global healthcare.

HRH The Princess Royal

Chair's Report

Medical Research Scotland supports scientists early in their career and the Trustees are proud of all of them, whether they are studying for doctoral degrees, returning after a career break with support from the Daphne Jackson Trust, or undergraduates holding Vacation Scholarships, finding out what full-time research is like. We are proud of the quality of the science they do and their outreach work, whether presenting to school pupils at our Meet the Researcher Showcase events at Dundee and Glasgow Science Centres as in previous years or working on independent get-out-there projects supported by their Universities. The desire to do great science and to do good in the world was clear to our Patron, HRH The Princess Royal, when she spoke to our researchers at the Showcase event in Glasgow this year.

We have a sound organization and a strong financial base. The Charity is economically secure, with optimistic forward projections derived from a well-managed endowment. Additional income is always welcome and during the year to 31st March 2019 we received donations from individuals, legacies and trust giving. All were acknowledged individually and highlighted on our website. It is encouraging to know that there are people willing to contribute to the work we do. In particular, the Trustees wish to specifically acknowledge the generosity of the late Mr and Mrs MacDougall.

Our organization continues to evolve, as it must. During the period, we launched our new website – so much cleaner and attractive than before – and for the first time we used our online system to receive applications for Vacation Scholarships. This test flight worked well and MRS will be using the online platform for the next round of PhD award applications and beyond. We want to be the most effective and efficient grant organization with prompt turnaround from application to award.

To date all our PhD studentships have been collaborative with industry, a significant part of our strategy. This is not changing, but will expand. We are going to include external partner organizations that are not commercial agencies, as well as commercial ones. All partners will still have to provide financial support, still have to provide supervision and still have to provide a research experience outwith the University that supports students' research, training and career development. It is an expansion that recognizes the diversity of agencies making contributions to the health of the nation with whom our students can work.

Chair's Report (continued)

Another change we made this year came from consideration of how well we make ourselves known, to Universities, potential partner organisations and indeed anyone interested in medical research and higher education in Scotland. We are working with Stripe Communications in Edinburgh to develop our presence, a bold move for us. Any charity has to consider carefully how it spends its money and marketing can look like a luxury. But our hope is that with better awareness of our mission and portfolio we will be able to increase the numbers of applicants for all our awards and to create a better base for fundraising. Medical Research Scotland does great work and we need more people to know.

Confident in our mission, confident in our ability to do ever better, confident in the scientists we fund and ourselves – confident, but we always strive to do ever better.

Professor Philip Winn
Chair

Trustees' Report

The Trustees present their report along with the Financial Statements of the Trust for the year ended 31st March 2019. The Financial Statements have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out in Note 2 to the Financial Statements and comply with the Trust's constitutive legislation the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005, the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 (as amended) and the Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their financial statements in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard 102 applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102).

Objectives and Activities

The objectives of the Trust are to:

- Receive and hold endowments, donations and bequests;
- Award funding from these to promote medical research in Scotland;
- Engage in fundraising activities for the purposes of the Trust;
- Develop and exploit ideas and exploit intellectual property.

The Trust aims to improve health standards by funding research of the highest quality into the cause, diagnosis, treatment and prevention of all forms of illness and genetic disorders, and into the advancement of medical technology.

The Trust fulfils its objectives by providing a range of opportunities to support and encourage research-minded individuals to pursue high-calibre research in medicine, independently or in collaboration with colleagues in their own or other universities, major hospitals and research units in Scotland, or with external organisations operating in healthcare-related fields. Through its short Undergraduate Vacation Scholarships, PhD Studentships and its support of part-time Daphne Jackson Trust Fellowships, the Trust offers provision for medical researchers. The awards help to prepare the recipient researchers for a career, or return to a career, in academia or the health-related commercial sector.

Grant-making Policy

The Trust aims to support research of the highest quality. It has a rigorous system of assessment of funding applications before they reach Trustees.

Funding decisions for the PhD Studentship awards are taken in a two-stage process. Applications, detailing a defined research project, are subject to expert peer review by members of the specially-appointed PhD Studentship Panel, who are first provided (by the Scientific Adviser) with sufficient information about each to enable them to declare any possible conflict of interest in any application. The Panel members then review the applications independently and their reports are subsequently considered by all the Panel members meeting in committee. Recommendations for funding are then made to the Trustees, who take the final decisions. Those accepting the offer of funding then select appropriately highly-motivated and qualified students following advertisement and interview by a group comprising representatives from the academic institution and the external organisation. Following appointment of suitable students, recipients of PhD awards must submit annual reports providing information about progress on both the academic and external organisation aspects of the award. These are scored by the scientific Trustees to ensure that the work is progressing satisfactorily before payment of subsequent years' fees is made.

Trustees' Report (continued)

Vacation Scholarship applications are reviewed separately and independently by the scientific and medical Trustees, who make recommendations to the Trustees. The final funding decisions are taken by all the Trustees in light of those recommendations and available funds. After completion of the Vacation Scholarship, a short report is required from the award holder and the student. These reports are reviewed by all the Trustees.

The Trust also sponsors a number of Daphne Jackson Trust Fellowships with Trustees participating in the funding decisions taken by the Daphne Jackson Trust. Progress reports are received by the Trust from recipients of these Fellowships on a six monthly basis.

Funding Awarded

During the 2018-19 Financial Year the Trustees awarded a total of 9 PhD Studentships (13 in 2017-18) and 71 Undergraduate Vacation Research Scholarships (60 in 2017-18). The topics of the PhD Studentships cover a wide range including kidney disease, neurodegenerative disease, heart disease, leukaemia and spinal cord injury. Vacation Scholarships were held at the following universities:- Aberdeen, Dundee, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Glasgow Caledonian, Heriot-Watt, St Andrews, Stirling, Strathclyde and West of Scotland. Further information about all the awards formally accepted can be found on the Trust's website: www.medicalresearchscotland.org.uk. The total value of the funding awarded amounted to £2,081,206.

Achievements and Performance

The Trust's **Annual Plan** for 2018-19 and performance against it are summarised as follows:

1. To make up to 15 PhD Studentship Awards for attractive and innovative, relevant projects submitted by university/industry collaborations, to make funds available for up to 100 Undergraduate Vacation Research Scholarships and also to seek to appoint up to three Daphne Jackson Fellowships for those seeking to return to medical research following a career break.

9 PhD Studentships and 71 Undergraduate Vacation Research Scholarships were awarded. The Trustees agreed to support two Daphne Jackson Trust Fellowship awards.

Trustees' Report (continued)

2. To continue to raise awareness of the Trust within the Scottish academic and global business communities, seeking to ensure appropriately high-quality applications.

The availability of the PhD Studentships and Vacation Scholarships was widely circulated among the academic and commercial medical sectors. The number and quality of the applications received suggest these continue to be increasingly popular and competitive.

The Trustees completed the full update of the Trust website in order to raise the Trust's online profile. The Trustees engaged with a public relations and marketing agency in order to develop this further.

3. To continue with Meet the Researcher Showcase events and to monitor and develop working with a wide secondary education audience.

The Meet the Researcher Showcase programme of events continued in 2019 with well attended events being held at Glasgow Science Centre and Dundee Science Centre on 27th February and 28th February 2019, respectively.

A highlight of the events was the attendance of the Charity's Patron, Her Royal Highness the Princess Royal, on 27th February. Her Royal Highness took a keen interest in the research projects presented and the future aspirations and opportunities for the pupils.

Professor Paul Hoskisson, Professor of Molecular Microbiology, University of Strathclyde and Dr James Ainge, Senior Lecturer, University St Andrews gave fascinating talks about their research and the pupils actively engaged with a wide range of interactive hands-on exhibits provided by University and charity outreach representatives, which spanned many research disciplines.

Five Medical Research Scotland PhD Students, six Vacation Scholars and one MRS-sponsored Daphne Jackson Fellow presented posters about their research work at the event, accompanied by exhibits to further illustrate their research.

After a successful visit to the 2018 Meet the Researcher Showcase, St George's School for Girl's, Edinburgh invited Medical Research Scotland to take part in a STEM week in December 2018, to celebrate the school's 130th anniversary. Eleven PhD Students and Vacation Scholars provided hands on exhibits and poster presentations for the Senior 4-6 pupils to help illustrate the breadth of STEM opportunities and careers.

Similar opportunities for Medical Research Scotland students to visit other secondary schools are being explored and to equip the students for presenting at such events, Medical Research Scotland was delighted to provide funding for 15 of the PhD students to attend a public engagement training course delivered by Glasgow Science Centre. The course provided the students with ideas on how to present their work in accessible ways to the public.

4. To be compliant with GDPR.

In accordance with applicable data protection laws, the Trustees and Trust Secretaries carried out a thorough review of their data protection policy and a data audit and mapping exercise in order to have in place comprehensive but proportionate governance measures. The Trust Secretaries also worked with external advisors to ensure all third parties confirmed that they are compliant with GDPR.

5. To keep under close review the Trust's investment portfolio and its income and to review the strategy and management of the Trust's investment portfolio.

Trustees' Report (continued)

The Audit & Investment Committee continued to review in detail the portfolio performance and asset allocation and considered how to further improve the diversification of the portfolio on a global basis with a view to taking action in that regard in the coming year.

6. To have the Trust's Annual Report & Financial Statements available from its website during 2018.

The Annual Report & Financial Statements was printed and signed on 26th October 2018 and is available on the Trust's website.

7. To launch the Trust's new website and finalise the work to implement an online application system to streamline applications and capture data.

The new website was launched in November 2018 along with the online application system for the Vacation Scholarship Awards. The Trustees continued to work with the online application system developer in connection with the PhD award applications.

8. To review work with industrial partners.

It remains fundamental to our strategy that all PhD Studentships must have an external organisation as a partner. There was an active review of this during the year by a panel of the Trustees. It was agreed that partnerships would be maintained but opening up the range of possible partners rather than being restricted to commercial trading companies.

9. To review the PhD Studentship and Undergraduate Vacation Scholarship Award process and criteria.

A review of the award process for the Vacation Research Scholarship awards took place in advance of the launch of the online application management system. A similar review commenced in relation to the PhD Studentship awards and will be completed prior to the launch of the online application management system for those awards.

10. To keep under review the membership of the Trust to ensure that there is the appropriate breadth of expertise needed for the continued good governance of the Trust.

During the period, one Trustee retired and one new Trustee was appointed.

11. To review the quality and effectiveness of the services provided to the Trust in line with the agreed timetable.

The Trustees undertook to review the timetable of services and appointments dates for all the Trust services.