

worldwide
cancer
research

The Curestarter Review

Annual Review & Accounts 2023

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Reflecting on a successful year of growth with our Chair

2023 was a year to remember for Worldwide Cancer Research, for our Curestarter community and most importantly, for discovery research – which ultimately benefits people with cancer.

We have much to celebrate in this Annual Review. Over the past year, the charity has shifted gears, gaining momentum during the first phase of our 10-year strategy. We are incredibly proud to have funded the highest level of new cancer research for more than five years.

Our plan for the year was to build on the solid base of 2022's performance, continuing all key elements of a stretching strategy for growth.

The world is quite an unstable place, creating a challenging backdrop. There have been some bumps in the road along the way, but the charity has been able to navigate them reasonably well so far and the resilience of the organisation has proved to be remarkable.

When the Board first redefined our strategy, we were clear that we could not just invest in organisational growth for one year; this had to be a sustained period of investment to allow for continued increases in research funding long into the future. However, it is also crucial that our fundraising investment becomes self-funding over time.

Having ended 2022 on a strong financial footing, the team were able to start thinking more proactively about the future of our research programme and our aim to champion discovery research.

I am pleased to report that we are heading in the right direction. We funded 30 innovative new research ideas – a total of £6.5 million in grants, including £800k of co-funding. Every project we fund has enormous potential to lead to new cancer cures.

“2023 was the first time we opened the Grant Round in partnership with other funders, helping to extend our reach and supporting our ambitious global search for cures.”

I am a great believer in partnerships and in leveraging as much as you possibly can. 2023 was the first time we opened the grant round in partnership with other funders, helping to extend our reach and support our ambitious global search for cures. We have a fantastic list of potential research opportunities, so co-funding allows us to support even more ground-breaking projects.

2023 saw a significant investment in the brand and fundraising, including a Curestarters campaign that led to an increase in awareness and donations. 12,000 new regular givers joined our united effort to stop lives being cut short by cancer, with every donation helping to fund more cancer research, bringing hope to patients and their families.

We are seeing success with diversifying our fundraising income, with legacies in particular experiencing 25% growth in 2023. In fact, the team exceeded expectation across multiple fundraising streams, beating the overall target by over half a million pounds. That is an increase of approximately 15% year-on-year, and we hope it is a positive sign of sustainable growth, although we remain attuned to the challenges brought by the cost-of-living crisis as we enter 2024. Most importantly, it is another step towards funding even more cancer research breakthroughs.

“We are gradually increasing research funding opportunities in a prudent way, because we only want to be funding the very best ideas.”

Later in 2023, we started to see the impact of the cost-of-living crisis on supporters. We understand that household incomes are under pressure and the economic environment is quite volatile. We have a culture of agility with our fundraising efforts, and 2024 will see us moving into the second phase of our 10-year strategy, with an emphasis on optimisation. We will aim to drive greater impact from the cancer research funded and higher returns on fundraising investment. If we can work more efficiently, this will flow through to bolster the budget for research grants.

“A lot of energy has been directed at building and strengthening the team and increasing organisational capability.”

Meanwhile, energy has been directed at building and strengthening the team and increasing organisational capability, as well as gathering data and putting the right infrastructure in place to support long-term aims.

I am particularly proud of last year's staff engagement survey results, which were incredibly positive. As a truly flexible employer, we wish to enable those with responsibilities outside of work to be able to balance those with their career. We trialled and implemented a nine-day fortnight with great success – we even saw our income forecast improve during the trial period. This just shows how well the team embraced the change, and how a better working environment leads to even more positive results.

As we look ahead, we face many societal and economic challenges, so it remains important to diversify our investment and fund the very best ideas in as many different fields of cancer research as possible. In the not-too-distant future as our income continues to grow, I would like to see us planning for two grant rounds annually.

It is easy to underestimate the impact of the work that we or any cancer charity does. With so many high-profile people being affected in the past year, it is a reminder that cancer does not discriminate, and it will take a collective effort globally to stop it. We know 1 in 2 people will be affected, and we will do everything we can to lower that proportion.

Every pound we invest in research typically helps scientists secure £4.34 of further funding down the line, so they take their idea to the next stage. So, whether you have just joined us or you have been a Curestarter for a long time, your role is just so important. You are enabling us to do what we do. So please keep supporting us and we will continue starting new cures to help stop cancer.

Yours sincerely,



David Sole OBE
Chair of the Board of Trustees

We are bringing forward breakthroughs

1 in 2 of us will be diagnosed with cancer in our lifetime. That means losing precious time with the people we love. At Worldwide Cancer Research, we are investing in bold, pioneering research so we are ready to face the cancer challenges of tomorrow.

In 2023, we continued to deliver our **Bringing Forward Breakthroughs** strategy, to ensure that our Curestarters' support is transformed into real impact:

Purpose



To stop cancer by starting new discoveries worldwide.

Vision



To see a day where no life is cut short by cancer.

Ambition



To bring forward cancer breakthroughs by:

Expanding our global search

Funding more bold ideas

Increasing our impact in prevention, diagnosis, and treatment.



Julia at Lake Garda

“Research saved my dad, but not everyone has that chance.”

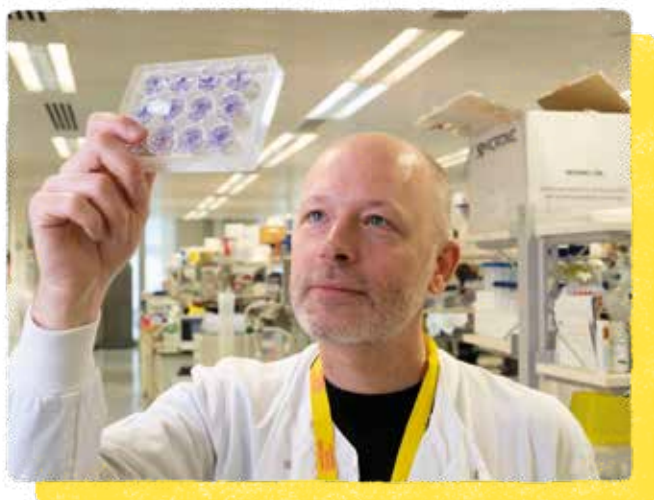
Julia and her father Bertrand are making new memories after his recovery from blood cancer. She knows things could have been different if not for discovery research – a close friend lost their dad to the same cancer only 10 years ago.

Julia said: “It just shows how vital research is and how many advancements have happened within those 10 years. I hope we can find cures for this awful illness.”

Curestarter Julia recently raised money for new cures by running the Lake Garda half marathon with friends from around the world. “We are all working together to make sure others have the same chance my father had.”

This report outlines the progress that we have made in 2023 towards a day when no life is cut short by cancer.

Worldwide Cancer Research in 2023



Research

More pioneering research for new cures, all made possible by our Curestarters.

Find out more

on pages 08-09

Impact

Breakthroughs that deliver new hope for people affected by cancer, now and in the future.

Find out more

on pages 10-11



People

The lives affected by cancer that drive us to action. Their stories sit at the heart of what we do.

Find out more
on pages 12-13



EDI

A continued commitment to Equity, Diversity and Inclusion throughout our work.

Find out more
on pages 14-15



Dr Olivier Pardo (centre) receives a visit from our team

What we started in 2023

Bringing forward breakthroughs by funding world-class research – our 2023 impact.

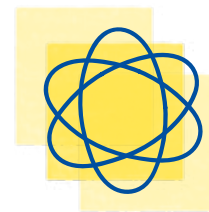
New research projects:



Our Curestarters helped start **30** innovative new projects in 2023. In total, **£6.5million** of research funded worldwide launched aiming to find vital new cures.



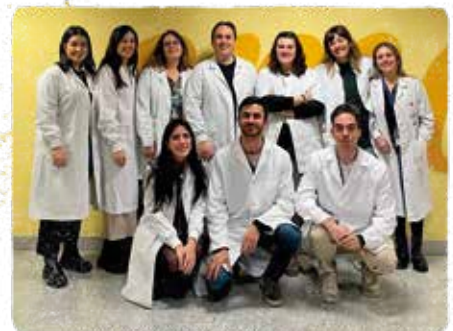
Our global search in 2023 started cures in **10 countries**. That pioneering work spans **23 cities** and **29 research institutes**.



Those 30 projects are investigating **16 different cancer types**, 12 of which are exploring the fundamental biology of cancer.

“Discovery science lays the foundation for groundbreaking concepts that can eventually be translated into clinical applications.”

Dr Hector Peinado in Spain is shining a light on the link between obesity and breast cancer’s ability to spread. Dr Peinado thinks that metastasis is more aggressive in patients with obesity because their dormant cancer cells ‘wake up’ faster. He hopes to find a way to keep the tumour cells ‘sleeping’ and stop the cancer spreading or coming back.



Dr Hector Peinado and his team



Starting more **bold ideas** together

Working together with our partners means we can deliver more impact for our Curestarters and stop brilliant ideas for new cures being left unexplored. In 2023, we teamed up with four organisations to start even more bold ideas.

The French Foundation for Cancer Research (Fondation-ARC) is helping to fund four impactful projects in France.

The Spanish Association Against Cancer (AECC) is supporting a vital brain cancer project in Spain.

The Irish Cancer Society have contributed funds towards a project studying lymphoma.

Prostate Cancer Research are co-funding a UK project with ideas for new cures for prostate cancer.

It will take a united effort to reach a day when no life is cut short by cancer. In the future, co-funding projects will continue to form a cornerstone of our efforts to bring forward breakthroughs.



Discoveries and **breakthroughs**

At least **65 incredible breakthroughs** were published in scientific journals in 2023 thanks to Curestarters.

- A discovery made by Dr Allison Bardin and her team in **France** could one day help prevent cancer in people who inherit faulty genes.
- Dr Tracy O'Mara and her team in **Australia** made a breakthrough in understanding the risk factors of endometrial cancer.
- In **Italy**, Dr Luigi and his team uncovered how the microbes in our guts can influence bowel cancer growth and potentially guide treatment choices.
- Dr Cathy Tournier and her team in the **UK** found a promising new route to better, safer treatments for aggressive breast cancer.

Our first ever **Impact Report**, published in 2023, showcases some stand-out stories that demonstrate the power of bold discovery research – all made possible by our Curestarters.

By funding projects like these worldwide, we will bring forward the breakthroughs we need to revolutionise the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment cancer.



Dr Luigi Nezi and team



“It is a privilege for me to start working with the Worldwide Cancer Research community, and I would like to say a huge thanks to everyone who supports Worldwide Cancer Research. Without them, this work would not be possible.”

Dr Serena Zacchigna

Can we stop cancer with a **heartbeat?**

Exploring why the heart does not get cancer could reveal new ways to stop cancer in other organs

For the first time, Curestarters have funded research into heart cancer – if we can understand why the heart so rarely develops cancer, researchers hope to reveal clues about how to stop cancer in other organs. Dr Serena Zacchigna and her team in Italy even hope this research funded by you could lead to a new wearable device to prevent cancer growing and spreading.

You have probably never heard of heart cancer before. It is incredibly rare and so very little research has been done about it. Dr Zacchigna, an expert on the heart, has set out to uncover why cancer does not develop there, or why it does not spread there from other organs through the bloodstream.

Early investigations by Dr Zacchigna suggested that the beating motion that pumps blood around our bodies could be protecting the heart from tumours. She found that cancer cells implanted into heart tissue in the lab grew much less when they were under a mechanical load.

Spurred on by this exciting breakthrough, she applied to Worldwide Cancer Research and successfully received Curestarter funding to take this idea further.

With your support, Dr Zacchigna and her team can now study the genes associated with the mechanics of the heart beating. Understanding how these 'mechano-sensing' genes play a role in stopping cancer will provide the basis for a new cancer therapy based on mechanical stimulation in the heart.

The research team also have an incredible idea to develop a wearable device to mimic the heartbeat to mechanically stimulate cancer cells. They hope that this will stop cancer cells from growing. If their idea works, this will offer a revolutionary new way to treat cancer, particularly skin cancer and breast cancer which could more easily be reached with a wearable device.

Funding for discovery cancer research has been in decline in recent years, meaning we could be missing vital clues for new cures. Curestarters are taking action to change this and believe that bold research can save lives.

Thanks to you, Dr Zacchigna's pioneering cancer research - and many other bold ideas like it - are getting the support they need to make breakthroughs possible.



“Dr Zacchigna’s project is one the many innovative projects we fund, and I can’t wait to see the results – not just from their lab over the next few years, but in decades to come as the impact of their work continues.”

*Dr Lynn Turner, Director of Research,
Worldwide Cancer Research*

Curestarter Jesse's story

“I was told people my age didn't get this type of cancer, I was then told I had 18 months to live.”

In August 2021, Jesse woke up with the feeling of déjà vu, things were fuzzy and foggy. Something did not feel right.

As a healthy 23-year-old she did not really know what could be causing this, but as episodes became more frequent, her concern grew. 24 hours later, she visited her GP and was diagnosed with seizures.

A follow-up MRI scan showed a 'lesion' on her brain, but the word cancer had not been mentioned. It was only after phoning a number she had been given to call that Jesse's worst fears were confirmed.

“That's how I found out, nobody answered my call and the voicemail said 'welcome to the brain tumour unit'”

The phone call confirmed that Jesse's 'lesion' was in fact a tumour – but she was assured that the tumour was benign and she would be able to live a healthy life.

“I couldn't believe it, I just remember thinking 'okay, so that's what I've got', there are a lot of emotions in that moment.”

Five weeks later, everything changed again.

Jesse said: “Soon after, I had another seizure and they scanned again. My tumour had quadrupled in size, even though I had been told it wouldn't grow. At that point, I was still being assured that people my age didn't get this type of cancer.

I was then diagnosed with the most aggressive, incurable brain cancer – grade four glioblastoma. I was told I had around 18 months to live.”



“My biggest fear at that point was that I wouldn’t be able to leave my mark on the world, I was only 24 by the time I was given my diagnosis.”

Since her first MRI, Jesse has endured a nine-hour surgery, chemotherapy, and radiotherapy.

Remarkably, she has since been told she has “no evidence of the disease”, which is the closest she will ever be to being cured. Jesse is working again and has gone back to living her life to the fullest – she and her partner Faith recently got married and bought a flat where they live happily together.

Jesse’s extraordinary journey from diagnosis to recovery introduced her to Dr Jamie Dean, a pioneering researcher who leads a Worldwide Cancer Research project focusing on glioblastoma. He and his team are working on making radiotherapy more effective as a cancer treatment. Dr Dean invited Jesse to see this ground-breaking work for herself at University College London.



Jesse said: “Research like Jamie’s gives us a reason to be optimistic, the opportunity for breakthroughs that will benefit many more people with this disease. It’s comforting to know people care – that people, some who you’ll never meet, care about helping and improving treatments.”

Dr Dean added: “From a researcher’s perspective, it is so important that we speak to people who have lived this to learn more and bring that knowledge to our research. Jesse is a truly remarkable person, and an inspiration.

“I would like to thank everyone who supports Worldwide Cancer Research. Your support gives people hope for the future, makes research like ours possible, and will help change more lives.”

Curestarters are helping to deliver a better future for people affected by cancer - by bringing forward the breakthroughs that make new cures possible.

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

Breaking down barriers to start new cures – our continued commitment to EDI

At Worldwide Cancer Research, we believe that embracing innovative thinking and diverse perspectives within cancer research is vital in our mission to start new cures. Bold ideas with the potential to save lives can be found anywhere around the world, and we cannot let lifesaving cures go undiscovered.

Cancer is a global problem – it does not discriminate. People of any age, gender, ethnic background, sexual orientation, or nationality can be affected.

Our commitment to EDI reflects our determination to help ensure that one day no life is cut short by cancer.

In 2023, we took further steps to cement diversity and inclusion within all aspects of our organisation. We continue to be guided by our Diversity & Inclusion Steering Group; this cross-organisational committee has a rotating membership to ensure a range of voices and perspectives are heard.

This year, we:

Introduced our first **Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion policy**, which was signed off by the Board of Trustees in July 2023. Driven by the Diversity & Inclusion Steering Group, the policy formalises our commitment to diversity and inclusion as an organisation, and will hold us accountable.

Became an accredited **Disability Confident employer**, reflecting our commitment to taking action that improves how we recruit, retain, and develop disabled members of staff.

Collected demographic data from grant applications for a third year, allowing us to investigate whether any biases exist in our review process and funding decisions.

Began advertising all vacant roles on Evenbreak, a leading disability job board.

Included EDI goals for all staff to embed this activity across the organisation.

Updated all recruitment information to ensure language is inclusive of all applicants.

Increased consideration of diversity and inclusion when tendering suppliers.

“We spent a lot of time considering how to mainstream EDI. For me, it’s about embedding it into our core objectives and doing practical, measurable, observable things to improve inclusivity.”

Dr Helen Rippon, Chief Executive

By making this commitment and reviewing the work of the whole charity through this lens, we hope to understand where existing practices may include barriers – to current or potential staff, researchers, or our Curestarters. The steps taken in 2023 reflect our commitment to action, and our founding principle that great ideas for new cancer cures can start from anywhere, with anyone.





Celebrating our Curestarters

A growing community, the return of big events, and a famous face

Our Curestarters are driven to see a day where no life is cut short by cancer. 2023 was a year that led to a significant increase in fundraising income, driving growth in research funding. Not only did that allow us to fund more discovery research than we have in the last five years, but it also starts new cures that ultimately will lead to improved outcomes for people with cancer.

Despite the impact of the cost of living crisis, our Curestarters once again stood behind our common purpose. From increasing our number of regular givers, to extending our fundraising events portfolio, and seeing legacy income increase again: we saw success across the board. The majority of income came from supporter donations – both cash and regular gifts as you will see on page 21. However, we also saw income from prize draws, events and philanthropic giving – from both Trusts and major donors - demonstrating the power of funding partnerships which we hope continues long into the future. These combined efforts allowed us to raise almost £12million for discovery cancer research in 2023.

Our key investments in 2023 included:

Building our Curestarter Community

Despite a cost-of-living crisis, 12,000 new Curestarters signed up to a monthly direct debit – far more than we had anticipated. Every donation enables us to start more cures, so we can bring forward more cancer breakthroughs. We also sought to bring down the cost of fundraising by exploring new digital methods, with some success, particularly in one-off donations.

New Events for Supporters

2023 brought a renewed enthusiasm for organised events and community fundraising after the impact of the pandemic. We expanded the range of events available, offering more opportunities to take part. In community fundraising, supporters raised funds in all kinds of interesting ways: from skydives to dragon boat races, gaming marathons to golf days. Read more in our Hello Friends Newsletter or monthly e-news updates.

The Importance of Legacy Giving

Legacy giving is a very private way of fundraising, so we wanted to create a more open dialogue with supporters by creating an inspiring campaign based on storytelling: encouraging Curestarters to share their cancer stories. One of the key faces of this campaign was opera singer Russell Watson, who shared his own personal gift of a song to be released posthumously. He is a true legacy hero and an inspiration to our Curestarters.

We recognise that we may be yet to feel the full effects of the cost-of-living crisis in our fundraising, so we are already focusing on how to optimise our activity moving into 2024. Our aim will be to continue to build our core income by highlighting the importance of regular giving in creating long-term, sustainable research funding. Monthly direct debits allow us a level of certainty in our income levels, which in turn make it possible for us to make long-term decisions about research funding levels.

Equally, when there is a strain on disposable income, we must ensure that Curestarters can support Worldwide Cancer Research in a way that works best for them. This may be pledging a gift in their Will, which is a way of giving tomorrow that does not impact on personal spending today. Fundraising events are another option that allow Curestarters to take on a personal challenge while raising money for life-saving discovery research. Our goal is to build on the success of 2023 by continuing to diversify our fundraising portfolio, to best serve our Curestarters and our researchers who need long-term growth in funding opportunities.

We know times are hard right now, but your support means we can remain steadfast and fund more bold ideas. As a Curestarter, you are standing with thousands of like-minded people around the world turning their compassion into action to help save lives.

Thank you again, from the bottom of our hearts, for being part of a movement to stop cancer by starting new cures. We could not do it without you.



Luke follows in father's fundraising footsteps

Curestarter Luke honoured his late father Greg by continuing his London Marathon charity fundraising legacy. Incredibly, he raised more than £3,000 for new cures.

"It gave me a boost, especially at the major landmarks, thinking about how he'd run past them previously. I hope I've made him proud."



Our incredible Curestarters

Curestarters believe that bold ideas have the power to change the world. They want to push forward faster, and uncover breakthroughs that bring us closer to a day when no life is cut short by cancer. We cannot start new cures without their backing.

We asked what supporting Worldwide Cancer Research and being a Curestarter means to each of them:



Our incredible Curestarter **Basil**

Tennis expert and cancer survivor Basil is leaving a gift in his Will to help ensure future generations do not have to suffer the pain of cancer.

"I hope they can eradicate cancer, so there are no more cancer patients in the world. That would be something. It's why I have left a gift in my Will to support Worldwide Cancer Research."



Our incredible Curestarter **Carol**

Cures can start anywhere. Carol and her friends start cures from her kitchen by playing Scrabble together.

"What really impresses me is when we started to raise money for Worldwide Cancer Research, we had lost a lot of friends to cancer. I can truthfully say that since we started raising money, we probably know as many people who have actually recovered because they've had cures."



Our incredible Curestarter **Pihla**

Curestarter Pihla recently completed the London Marathon for Worldwide Cancer Research, in memory of her beloved aunt Sini-Tuulia.

“I’ve worked in cancer research myself, and know first-hand how fundraising is so important to finding new cures. Medicine can’t be made if we don’t find what works.”



Our incredible Curestarter **Ross**

Keen runner Ross has raised more than £5,000 for vital discovery research, in memory of his dad Michael.

“I really feel part of the Curestarter Community. Even that term ‘Curestarters’ used to describe supporters, it really resonated with me. That’s what we all want to be isn’t it? We all want to help make a difference and help find cures for this disease.”



Our incredible Curestarter **Alice**

After losing two of her grandparents to cancer in the space of just five weeks, 13-year-old Alice decided that she wanted become a researcher to help others and find cures.

“It’s definitely a dream that I’m going to continue to pursue, and, in the meantime, I’ll keep donating my pocket money to Worldwide Cancer Research. It’s so rewarding to know that I am helping in a small way.”

2023 in numbers

The united effort of our Curestarters raised an incredible **£11.8 million** for discovery cancer research, meaning we could start 30 pioneering research projects for new cures worldwide.

Our income

The charity's strategic fundraising initiatives have delivered strong income in 2023 with growth across all key income lines: Legacies, Regular Giving, Cash, Events, Partnerships and Philanthropy. Similar to 2022, prize draw income reduced in the year after an unexpected spike in 2021 during the pandemic. This performance was delivered despite the challenging fundraising environment, where the cost-of-living crisis presented headwinds in both retaining and recruiting supporters.

Fundraising expenditure

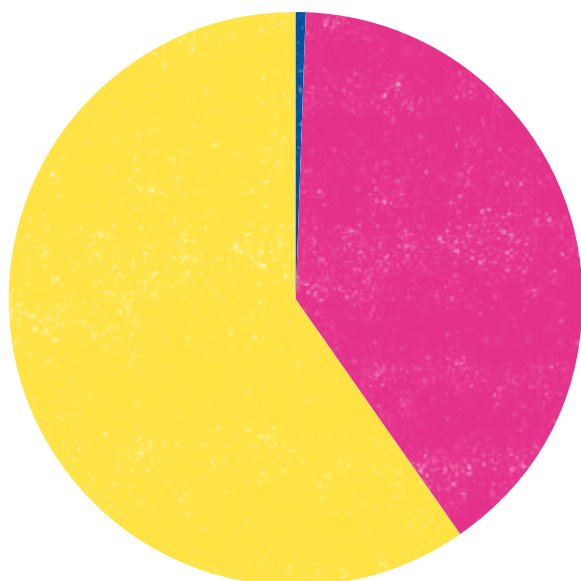
Expenditure on charitable activities was £8.7 million (£7.5 million in 2022) reflecting the increase in the level of research grant funding awarded and awareness raising activity.

Fundraising costs for the period were £5.3 million (£4.0 million in 2022) as the charity made strategic investments in new supporter acquisition, with significant year on year increases in the face-to-face activity to gain new direct debit supporters, and digital activity to secure cash donations.

Our reserves

In 2022, the Board reviewed the approach to reserves and agreed a multi-year strategy to utilise the prudent level of reserves built up during the pandemic and preceding years. Accordingly, the Board designated £4m of the charity's reserves to support higher levels of research funding in the short term while also investing significantly in fundraising to ensure continued growth of research funding in the medium term.

Delivery of this strategy reduced the total reserves held by the charity by £1.7m (22%) in 2023 (33% in 2022). The Board's intent is to continue this approach, running with an annual deficit for the next one to two years. This will gradually reduce the level of reserves held by the charity as we invest at a higher level in both research and fundraising.



Reserves were split between restricted, designated and general reserves as follows:

Restricted Reserves £34k¹

(2022: £19k)

Designated Reserves £2.4m²

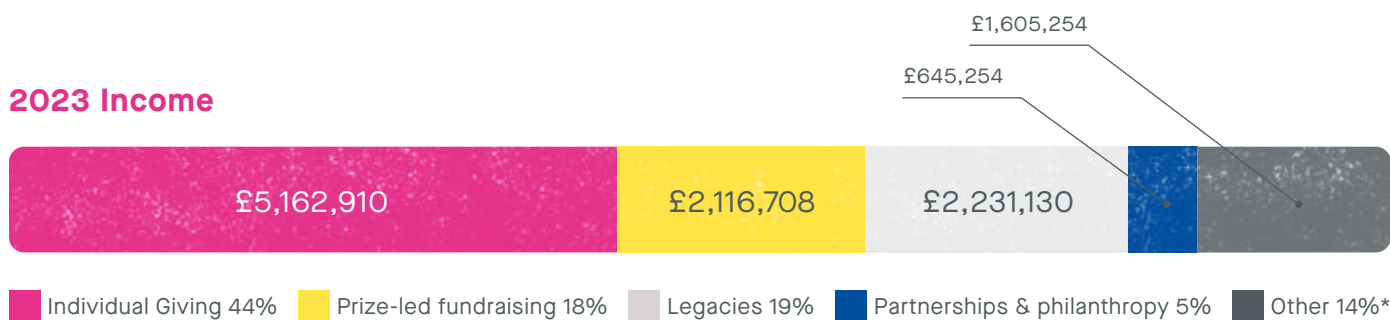
(2022: £4.0m)

Unrestricted Reserves £3.6m³

(2022: £3.6m)

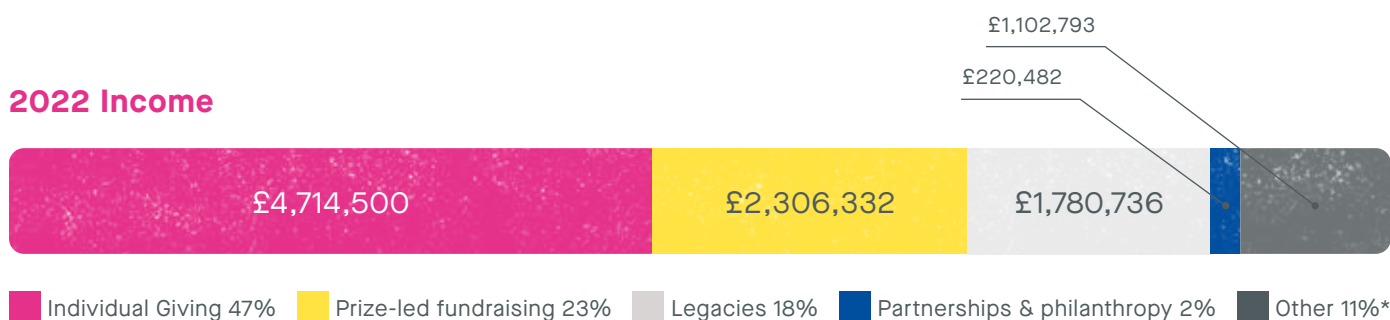
¹This represents funds that are subject to restrictions including to specific research projects or cancer types. ²This represents unrestricted funds ringfenced by the Directors for future research projects. ³These funds are expendable at the discretion of the Directors in furtherance of the objects of the charity. Each year the Directors assess the level of reserves and the use of these funds when the annual budget is prepared and approved.

2023 Income



Total: £11,761,256

2022 Income



Total: £10,124,843

2023 Expenditure



Total: £14,026,412

2022 Expenditure



Total: £11,523,641

*Other income includes Events, research and development funding from the UK Government Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy, funding from Yorkshire Cancer Research for peer review services, intellectual property income, and investment income.

Starting cancer cures in 2024 and beyond

2023 was a stellar year! Thanks to Curestarters like you, we were able to fund even more grants than expected, worth an incredible £6.5 million. Every project will give us more knowledge that can help stop cancer, by starting new discoveries worldwide.

We set ourselves some really ambitious goals for 2023 – significant growth in income, significant growth in research spend and charitable activity, and also quite a lot of internal change.

We saw outperformance on a lot of income lines – the fruit of years of honing the brand and message. ‘Curestarter’ has become a rallying cry that works across all sorts of people, however they are contributing, so will continue growing the community in the year ahead.

There is a lot of injustice in this world and many people are not on a level playing field. We have been reviewing the charity through an Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) lens, working out what we can do to meaningfully and measurably improve inclusivity.

I believe EDI should be mainstream and part of everyone’s objectives. We now have our first EDI policy and are accredited as a Disability Confident Employer. Having reviewed our employee offering, we won the Marketing Society award for Employer Brand of the Year in 2023, which will allow us to attract even more talented team members going forward.

On the research side, we say we are open to ideas from anywhere. But the reality of the world is that some people are better placed to have those ideas heard. The research team continues to look at where we might be putting up barriers to access, reviewing EDI data in grant applications and working to improve the gender balance on our Scientific Advisory Committee.

We are always working to extend our reach, so we can pull in the best research ideas. One of the ways we can find great ideas is by sourcing them through our partners. In 2023, for the first time ever, we co-funded a project submitted to us by a partner, rather than us having to make the approach. Building these partnerships can encourage others to invest in discovery research and curestarting ideas in the future too.

A particular highlight in 2023 was the successful phase 1 trial of Omomyc. It is a new treatment that we funded in 2013, with the potential to work on lots of different cancer types. We are excited to see that more and more of the ideas we have funded are turning into cures. And we hope this list will keep growing in future, as a result of the ground-breaking science we are funding today. For example, a current project about why the heart does not really get cancer... we cannot wait to see where it will lead.

Measuring impact can be a challenge for us, because the timeline is so long between funding a new idea and its outcomes directly benefiting patients. We now have impressive data and stories wrapped up in our first impact report, and we will continue building on this to demonstrate to supporters how they are making a difference to the lives of patients and their families.

Towards the end of the year, we started to see the impact of the cost-of-living crisis on supporters. We understand that household incomes are under such pressure and the economic environment is just quite volatile. We have a culture of trying to be quite agile and nimble about how we raise funds, and 2024 will see us moving into the second phase of our 10-year strategy, with an emphasis on optimisation. We will aim to drive greater impact from the research funded and higher returns on fundraising investment. And if we can work more efficiently, this will flow through to bolster the grant budget.

We are also now in a space where we can start to think about our deeper impact. For example, how we can help research to thrive beyond the lifetime of our grant. There are some big questions in the sector and we are open-minded about how we could help answer them.

The problem of cancer is getting bigger, but survival rates are improving – so research works. I fundamentally believe in the power of human ingenuity and creativity: We can tackle global problems, including cancer, if we can just back really bright ideas.

Thank you so much for your ongoing support – we cannot do it without you.

Helen Rippon

Dr Helen Rippon
Chief Executive



“Our founder Colin Thomson saw that every great medical advance starts with an idea, but that somebody has to back it. We exist to support scientists to explore brand new, bright ideas and make curestarting discoveries.”



