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News release

Alzheimer's Society to support tomorrow's dementia research leaders

With six times more researchers working on cancer compared to dementia in the UK, Alzheimer's Society has launched a new programme aimed at attracting and retaining talented individuals in dementia research.

The new Dementia Research Leaders programme aims to grow and develop the UK dementia research community, offering support for everyone from undergraduate students through to those looking to become an independent investigator.

Alzheimer's Society has an outstanding record of investing in researchers. Of the biomedical research fellows that we have funded over the last 20 years, 70 per cent have remained active in dementia research and 60 per cent now hold tenured positions in universities and research institutes. Building on this success, our new Dementia Research Leaders programme will provide funding and development opportunities for people from biomedical, clinical and social science backgrounds.

The new online resource will also help career scientists, clinicians, nurses and therapists navigate the complicated landscape of dementia research, offering a whole range of support including funding opportunities, career advice, training opportunities, and help to develop top quality research proposals.

By supporting scientists and clinicians to follow a career in research, the Society hopes to speed up the pace of dementia research, growing one of the smallest research communities of all disease areas. This will hopefully accelerate the search for new treatments and drive forward improvements in care for those living with dementia.

The programme launch coincides with a commitment from the government and other research funders - including the Alzheimer's Society - to substantially increase the funding available for dementia research. But with a serious lack of capacity, the research community will be limited in how quickly and effectively they can respond to the extra investment.

Dr Doug Brown, Director of Research and Development at Alzheimer's Society, said:

'Research into dementia is vastly underfunded compared to other diseases in the UK when considering the massive impact it places on families and society.

'The additional funding promised at the G8 dementia summit is a very positive step forward, but in order to make full use of the investment we need to grow and strengthen the community of people who work in dementia research.

'Our new programme will support more of the UK's greatest minds to work on the brain's greatest problem and hopefully drive forward the pace of dementia research.'

Professor Nick Fox, Director of the UCL Dementia Research Centre and a former Alzheimer's Society Fellow, said:

'Alzheimer's Society's new programme addresses one of the key challenges in dementia research at the moment, namely the limited number of scientists and clinicians focusing on neurodegenerative diseases.'

'With a new online resource and additional funding opportunities, this new programme should encourage more people into dementia research and will help make it an increasingly attractive career path.'

For more information about the Dementia Research Leaders programme, please visit: <http://www.alzheimers.org.uk/researchleaders>

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Notes for editors

Alzheimer's Society

- Alzheimer's Society is the third biggest funder of dementia research worldwide, and we are committed to spending at least £100 million on research over the next decade
- Alzheimer's Society's flagship Drug Discovery programme aims to repurpose existing drugs, hoping to deliver a new dementia treatment within the next 5 to 10 years
- Alzheimer's Society funds research into cause, cure, care and prevention of all forms of dementia
- People affected by dementia are involved in all our research funding decisions, ensuring that our research investment is guided by their priorities
- Through our Dementia Research Leaders programme, Alzheimer's Society is committed to nurturing, supporting, and developing researchers who are new to the field or at the early stages of their careers
- Dementia can happen to anyone and Alzheimer's Society has a plan to deal with dementia. Help us support people to live well today and fight for a world without dementia tomorrow. We rely on voluntary donations to continue our vital work. You can donate now by calling 0845 306 0898 or visiting alzheimers.org.uk
- Alzheimer's Society provides a National Dementia Helpline, the number is 0300 222 11 22 or visit alzheimers.org.uk