

action

Research. Remarkable women.
Resilience.



**This is
what hope
looks like**

ovarian
canceraction

Walk in Her Name

Read some of the stories behind our biggest event so far

Our champions

See our incredible community in action

From the lab

An exciting year at the Ovarian Cancer Action Research Centre



News

Your bite-sized round-up of the latest news!

Welcome

On May 8th we celebrate World Ovarian Cancer Day. For us, this isn't just another date; it represents our shared determination for a future where the shadow of ovarian cancer no longer looms over us.

Recently, the NHS boldly set its sights on eradicating cervical cancer by 2040, a goal that inspires us all. Early screening and the HPV vaccine – both discovered by research – have already made a huge difference, helping many women get diagnosed early and have a much better chance of survival.

With the same spirit and determination, we embrace the challenge to achieve this for ovarian cancer as well.

Only by funding more research will we be able to truly make a change, that's why it's our main focus.

It's with your support that we can make this possible. Thank you for all that you do.

Ovarian Cancer Action speaks out

You helped us take the fight directly to Parliament for World Cancer Day 2024, joining forces with other leading cancer allies. We were determined to spotlight the critical issue of cancer treatment delays under the #CatchUpWithCancer campaign.

Together with people affected by cancer and healthcare professionals, we asked for shorter waiting times and improved outcomes for cancer patients. Ultimately, we need our leaders to prioritise cancer care in the UK's health agenda.

See more of the day at ovarian.org.uk/wocd-2024

An initiative for high-risk patients

A new NHS programme specifically targets individuals with at least one Jewish grandparent. This initiative focuses on the Jewish population because both men and women have a significantly higher chance (1 in 40) of carrying a BRCA gene mutation than the general public.

This gene mutation increases the risk of ovarian and other cancers; yet it's believed that a staggering 90% remain unaware of their carrier status.

Read more here: ovarian.org.uk/brca-2024

GatewayC: a game-changer in cancer care

GatewayC is an online platform for GPs and health professionals, entirely focussed on early diagnosis. Offering free e-learning courses, this initiative could mean a world of difference for women with ovarian cancer and their families, promising quicker diagnoses, up-to-date information and a brighter outlook on life. Our healthcare heroes are now better equipped than ever to identify and tackle ovarian cancer head-on.

In partnership with Ovarian Cancer Action, the NHS has recently added an educational ovarian cancer podcast to GatewayC that you can listen to today!

Listen to the podcast episode dedicated to ovarian cancer at gatewayc.org.uk/podcast

More people now qualify for genetic testing under the NHS

In a ground-breaking move, the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) has unveiled a new guideline that marks a significant advancement in the battle against ovarian cancer.

This pivotal guideline broadens the eligibility for genetic testing: the family members of women with ovarian cancer can now benefit from easier access to vital genetic testing. This means that more women can now be screened for hereditary risks associated with ovarian cancer, ensuring early detection.

Please speak to your GP if you think you qualify for genetic testing, because knowledge is power. Learn more at: ovarian.org.uk/nice-2024

For every woman, you did it!

This March was not only Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month, but it also marked an incredible moment as we hosted our largest ever Walk in Her Name, with nearly 1,800 of you taking part. Together, you raised a fantastic £200,000 and counting! Each step taken was a pledge, a promise to the women we are and the ones we love. Together, you were unstoppable, and the funds you raised will change lives.



Some of our wonderful researchers took part too, raising over £1,000.

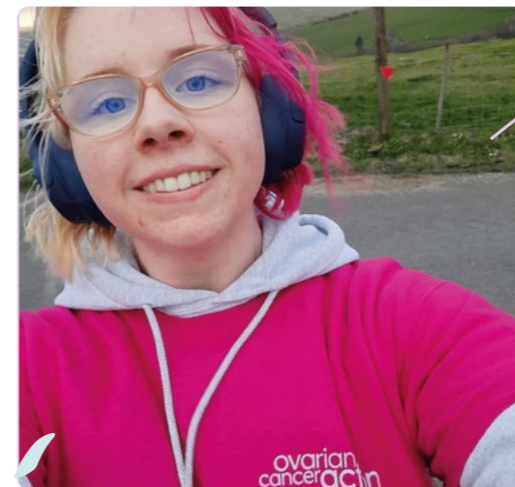


Lioness Beth Mead, alongside the Arsenal Women's team, raised over £5,000!

"I've lived with ovarian cancer for over nine years – during that time, I've had two re-occurrences and have been lucky enough to have access to the latest treatments research has provided. I've walked 100km to give back to the ovarian cancer community, which has been such a help and support in so many different ways, and which I hope to belong to in many years!"
– Annie

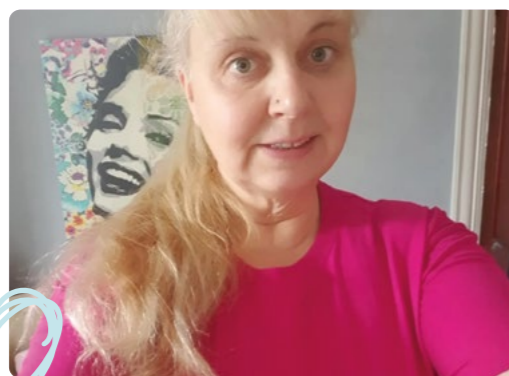


The team from NIXI Body organised their own in-person walk from Ditching Beacon to Devil's Dyke

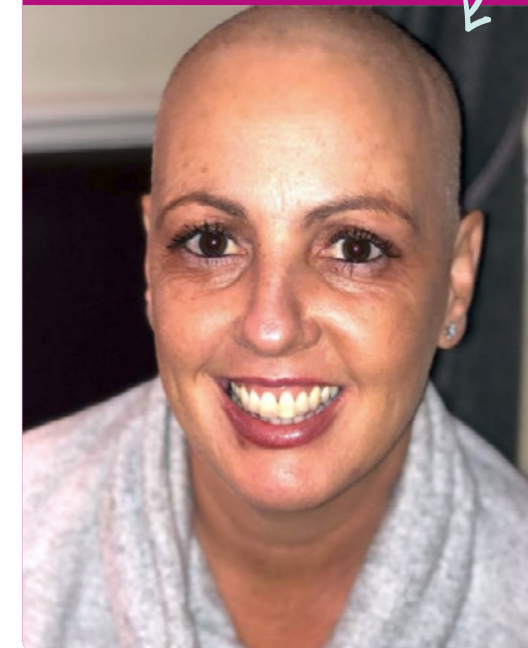


"I've done this for my beautiful sister, who we lost a year ago in January to this cruel disease. She fought it for four and a half years. Whilst doing this, she raised £57,000 for cancer charities. I will do my best so we can hopefully get somewhere for early detection."
– Siobhán

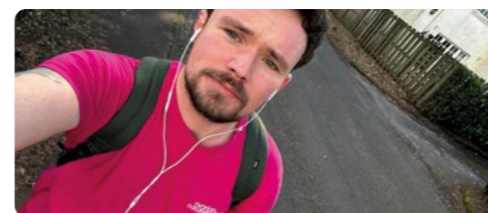
"I did this for my amazing mum Barbara; she knew one grandchild was due but never got to meet her in time. Since then, eight babies have been born within a few years, and she missed them all. I hope she looks down now on her kids and her eight grandchildren and sees how much we love and miss her."
– Nicola



West Ham United FC Women proudly fundraised in solidarity with everyone taking part in Ovarian Cancer Action's Walk In Her Name this year.



Arsenal Women's Supporter's Club took part a second year in a row, raising over £10,000. Incredible!



This event was more than just a walk. It was a powerful moment to celebrate and remember, where we shared our hopes and strength. To every single one of you, thank you. Together, with every step, you made a difference.

Denise's lasting gift for women with ovarian cancer



Denise was more than a friend to Fiona; she was a beacon of strength and courage. Diagnosed with ovarian cancer in the spring of 2021, Denise faced her journey through treatment and recurrence with an unwavering spirit. However, the harsh reality of this disease took her from those she loved on 30th January 2023.

Yet, while Denise's battle with ovarian cancer was heartbreakingly short, her legacy will outlive us all. Before she died, Denise made a significant decision – one that mirrored her courageous heart. She chose to leave an incredible £300,000 in her Will to Ovarian Cancer Action for which we are so grateful.

Through her close friend Fiona, we get to read about the wonderful woman she was.

"I'll always cherish the memory of my friend leaving our Paris hotel one evening, dressed perfectly in a mini dress, fancy tights, and high heels for a night out by herself. I am sorry I didn't capture that moment with a photo! She spent a marvellous evening at the Folies Bergère, enjoying the performance from a private box along with half a bottle

of champagne. Unperturbed by being alone or navigating the Parisian metro in her glamorous outfit without speaking any French, she represented independence and courage – this was Denise.

Denise qualified as a doctor in Milan and had moved to the UK in 2003. She and I first met while working at Northampton General Hospital where she was a speciality doctor in the Department of Sexual Health. We became particularly good friends after my retirement and spent a lot of time together.

Once we went on holiday to Spain and she was the driver. At one point we were parked between two vehicles on a very steep hill but she couldn't get the car out of the tight space. We asked a passing stranger for help and he kindly moved it for us. He obviously thought we were completely mad but it was very funny!

Her driving was very Italian. She didn't wait around for anyone. At one point she had this little red Mazda sports car, and I can still imagine her driving to work on the M1 and speeding past huge articulated lorries, with a cushion behind her back because she was so little she could hardly reach the pedals.

But despite her small stature, she was a formidable presence. As a friend and colleague, Denise was caring, loyal, quite private but with a great sense of fun. She was also very hard-working.

Denise had a love and passion for life

She loved her double espresso coffee and would make one at home and have it before her shift started and then another at lunch. Above all else though she loved her family – I know she interrupted her university education to care for her parents. When her father died she moved her mother from Italy to live with her in the UK. She was completely selfless.

I'm so proud to have called her my friend

I remember taking her down to the hospital for her operation; she looked so small that day. Her illness had developed rapidly but she

was determined to do everything she could to fight it. She had a fighting spirit.

And her fighting spirit still lives on. After much thought, Denise decided to leave a gift in her Will to Ovarian Cancer Action. She ultimately chose a charity focussed on research because of her experience – she was filled with gratitude towards her oncologist and surgeon, for the treatment and care she received in hospital.

I am so proud of her for deciding to do this.

Above all, Denise's smile and her laughter are the memories I hold dear. Her joyous nature, even in conversation, was infectious.

I miss her dearly, but I am proud of the difference her legacy will make for so many women like her."

A lasting legacy that changes lives

Gifts in Wills from incredible people like Denise, have enabled vital breakthroughs and research.

A gift in your Will, no matter the size, will move us to a future where ovarian cancer will be detected early, treated effectively and ultimately defeated.

We want to thank everyone who has decided to leave a gift in their Will.



£1,500

can help supply a research lab with essential equipment such as microscopes or cell culture supplies.

£15,000

can help cover the cost of hiring a PhD student and support the next generation of ovarian cancer researchers.

£50,000

could support a clinical trial to test new treatments or early detection techniques.

£300,000

is a game-changer. It can help fund a grant to pilot innovative research projects that can significantly advance our understanding of ovarian cancer.



For more information about leaving a legacy to Ovarian Cancer Action, please scan here or get in touch at legacy@ovarian.org.uk

Our champions

Whether you're knee-deep in fundraising, facing cancer head-on, or spreading vital awareness – you are part of an incredible community of champions!

To all who make a difference: your courage inspires us, your laughter uplifts us, and your determination drives us forward. Together, we are a force to be reckoned with.

Pedal power

Elaine Morgan turned her grief into gear and pedalled a phenomenal 50km cycle in memory of her daughter, Karen. Oxhill may be tiny, but the support for Elaine's ride was massive, with villagers joining the ride and helping to smash a £10,000 fundraising target.

Elaine's journey is more than just miles—it's a chain of community and courage, showing us all that where there's a wheel, there's a way.



Elaine

Crafted with love

Jeanette Duggin turned a time of sorrow into a symbol of awareness by crafting a dress from the most unexpected materials – daily quarantine supplies.

This poignant display honours her mother's fierce battle with ovarian cancer, showcasing creativity's power in the face of grief.

Jeanette reminds us that the fabric of our resolve against cancer is stitched with the stories we share.



One of Jeanette's creations

Razing hope for more women

Ann Atkinson isn't just cutting her hair; she's cutting straight to the heart of what matters. In solidarity with her daughter Nichola, who's battling ovarian cancer, Ann's going for the brave shave.

With £2,195 raised, they're proving that sometimes, it's not about the hair on your head but the hope in your heart.



Anne

Sam's uphill challenge

Sam Wilks is lacing up to run not just any marathon, but one across the rugged terrain of the Brecon Beacons. Why? For his stepmother, Florence, a true force of nature in her fight against ovarian cancer. Sam's gruelling run celebrates her courage and a push towards an incredible fundraising milestone.

It's a testament to the extraordinary lengths we go to for the ones we love.



Sam

Paws for the cause

Nick Johnson, alongside his trusty four-legged companion Louis, is literally walking the walk. They're trekking the English coastline over 7 long months. This incredible feat is in honour of his wife Lisa, who sadly died from ovarian cancer.

With a fantastic target of £50,000, Nick and Louis prove that every journey starts with a single step... and, ideally, a wagging tail.



Nick and Louis

If these tales of tenacity and heart inspire you, get in touch at fundraising@ovarian.org.uk.

Now let's keep this amazing momentum going strong!

A year of exciting research progress

Five exciting new research ventures kick-started at the Ovarian Cancer Action Research Centre last year – and what a busy year it was indeed.

Led by Professor Iain McNeish and Professor Christina Fotopoulou, our dedicated team have been tackling ovarian cancer with innovation and a renewed sense of urgency. These research projects are charting a new course for hope and survival for every woman diagnosed with ovarian cancer.

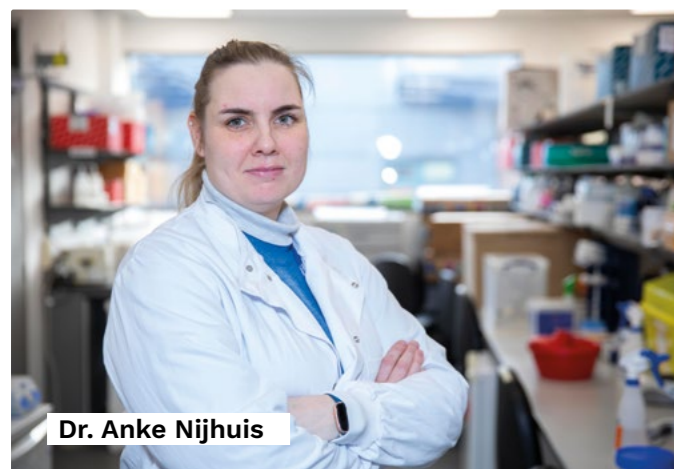
This progress is happening because of your support.



The search for longer-lasting therapies

Dr. Anke Nijhuis is leading a breakthrough in overcoming drug resistance in ovarian cancer treatments. Time is precious, especially when fighting cancer. This project is focused on extending those precious moments for women.

This year, researchers have been exploring the potential of combining existing treatments – Indisulam and PARP inhibitors – to create a longer-lasting therapeutic approach. The early results are encouraging – they're showing significant promise! This exciting development could fast-track a new clinical trial and potentially lead to longer-lasting treatments, giving women more time with their loved ones.



Dr. Anke Nijhuis

Could a breast cancer drug be effective for ovarian cancer?

Sometimes, the best discoveries come from unexpected places.

Scientists have been exploring the potential of repurposing existing drugs. They are investigating whether Samuraciclib, a drug used to treat breast cancer, could also be effective against ovarian cancer.

Early-stage trials have shown promise in the past year, suggesting the drug is well-tolerated and may have anti-tumour activity. This exciting development could lead to a faster path to clinical trials for ovarian cancer patients – as the drug has already been approved – offering a potential new weapon in the fight against this disease.

The next stage of research involves pre-clinical studies. The team will use biopsies from ovarian cancer patients to test whether Samuraciclib could be an effective treatment – by itself and in combination with existing treatments like carboplatin and PARP inhibitors.

These are early days, but the research holds the promise to move onto clinical trials and be considered as an additional treatment for ovarian cancer.

Silencing cancer's conversation

Professor Iain McNeish and his team have discovered that some cells create an environment that allows the tumour to flourish.

In theory, if we disrupt the communication between cancer cells and these allies, we might reduce the chances of cancer making an unwelcome return.

These findings have now been published in a well-received paper and shared with scientists worldwide.



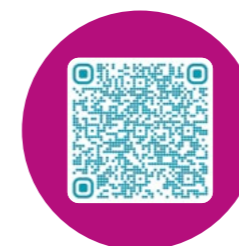
Professor Iain McNeish

The path to stopping recurrence

Researchers are tackling the issue of methylation, a process cancer cells exploit to evade treatment and return.

This year, the team has created specialised molecules to control methylation. These molecules could make cancer cells more susceptible to existing therapies and even prevent them from coming back altogether – increasing the chances of survival for patients with ovarian cancer.

You can help accelerate this progress today



Tailored treatments are closer than ever before

Each woman's experience of ovarian cancer is unique – so their treatment should be personalised too. Over the past year, Professor Christina Fotopoulou and Dr. Paula Cunnea have meticulously gathered a comprehensive set of tumour samples, revealing significant variations between individual cases.

This work paves the way for a more targeted approach, moving beyond a 'one-size-fits-all' strategy. By diligently collecting and analysing tumour samples, scientists are laying the groundwork for treatments tailored to each patient's specific needs – because personalised care should not be a luxury but a necessity.



Professor Christina Fotopoulou and Dr. Paula Cunnea

Our dedicated scientists tirelessly work towards groundbreaking advancements in treating and caring for ovarian cancer patients. But they can't do it alone.

You can help fund vital research and accelerate progress in the fight against this devastating disease. Together, we can see a future where every woman can conquer ovarian cancer.

Will you help the next year of progress?

Please visit ovarian.org.uk/together to donate online or call 020 7380 1730. Or, scan the QR code to donate instantly. Thank you.

We will not give up until every woman survives ovarian cancer.

We are the scientists, the women diagnosed, their friends and their families. We have one mission – to ensure that every woman survives.

Together, we will fundraise. We will fund more life-saving research. We will spread awareness until we break through. Until every woman survives.

Thank you for joining us.

**“I’m incredibly proud of
the work we’re doing.
Research can turn the tide
against ovarian cancer,
making what was once
incurable, treatable.”
– Professor Ahmed**



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