

onCore UK was established 4 years ago with a 2-fold role: (i) to promote biobanking in the research community, NHS and among cancer patients; and, (ii) as a national cancer biobank, to collect and distribute biosamples. It is an independent charity funded by the Department of Health, Medical Research Council and Cancer Research UK, and works closely with the National Cancer Research Institute (NCRI), National Cancer Research Network (NCRN), and others towards an integrated approach to translational research in cancer.

onCore UK has been highly successful in the first of these roles, having among other things: promulgated a 'guiding principles' document; been instrumental in setting up the NCRI Confederation of Cancer Biobanks (CCB); promoted an understanding of regulatory and governance issues; worked to ensure that a mechanism is available for ethical review of research biobanks; fostered the involvement of patients in biobanking; pioneered biobank information management; promoted quality management in biobanking; organised a number of workshop meetings; and participated in international networking groups and meetings.

The experience of onCoreUK in biosample collection has been that a standardised national approach has been difficult to achieve. At the same time, the formation of groupings such as the CCB and the Experimental Cancer Medicine Centres (ECMCs) has demonstrated that the needs for biobanking can be effectively fulfilled by local biobank activity, which is responsive to local circumstances but operating within a national framework. The funders and trustees of onCore UK have now decided that in light of these experiences the next phase of onCore UK's work should focus on the promotion of biobanking and its associated activities within the research community and the health service. Therefore, onCore UK will no longer collect new tissue samples. This refocused role of onCore UK will be subject to Charity Commission approval

The Board of Trustees has asked the Chief Executive to prepare a forward plan focussed on the advisory, promotional and coordination functions of onCore UK. This will include plans to ensure that the samples already collected will be made available for research as originally intended. It is expected that details of this more focussed remit will be published when these have been finalised later in 2009.

The Trustees and Chief Executive of onCore UK wish to thank everyone who has contributed professionally to the work of the charity to date, and especially to thank the donors of tissue for their participation. It is hoped that they will wish to continue to support onCore UK in its future work.

Professor Colin C Bird CBE
Chairman