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NATIONAL CANCER TISSUE BANK TO BE BASED IN HERTFORDSHIRE

THE UK's new world-class archive of patients' tissue and blood samples for use in cancer research, is to be based in Bishop Stortford, Hertfordshire - it was announced today (Wednesday).

Following the decision to award Fisher Bioservices the contract to store the samples, onCore UK will now begin collecting and cataloguing high quality tumour tissues, blood and other bodily samples donated by patients.

The use of biological samples donated by patients is fast becoming the cornerstone of cancer research - especially in studies looking at the effects of potential new treatments. Set up to accelerate this vital work, onCore UK will make high quality samples, coupled with anonymous information about the patient, available to cancer researchers on a scale unprecedented in the UK.

Brian Clark, chief executive of onCore UK, said: "Today's announcement is the first step towards our goal of speeding up the pace of cancer research in the UK. Having selected Fisher Bioservices to provide our central repository, we're looking forward to working with partners in the NHS to build a world-class archive of tissue samples for use in cancer research."

Fisher Bioservices were chosen because of their high specification repository - which is fully equipped to safely and securely manage and maintain donated tissues - their convenient, central location and their ability to meet expansion needs. As well as acting as onCore UK's repository, they will also provide logistical support.

Robert Jones, head of UK operations for Fisher BioServices, said: "Fisher BioServices has a long history of providing high quality sample management services to cancer research organisations in the UK and US, and we are delighted to have been chosen by onCore UK to house such an important resource in the fight against cancer.

"The partnership between onCore UK and Fisher BioServices will provide cancer researchers an unparalleled archive of biomaterials collected, stored and distributed in the highest quality and most regulated manner."

At the same time as building its own extensive archive of high quality biological samples, onCore UK is participating in efforts to harmonise standards across other cancer tissue banks in the UK through its membership of the recently formed Confederation of Cancer Biobanks. The onCore UK team is also working closely with ethics and regulatory authorities, and patient representative groups.

Brian Clark added: "The ultimate aim is to benefit cancer patients. If researchers are to find the answers to their questions they need access to sufficient numbers of high quality patient samples to test their hypotheses. By taking a national approach to this issue we hope to be able to speed the development of new treatments for cancer."

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For media enquiries, contact Sophy Fitzpatrick on 020 7 061 8318 or, out-of-hours, the duty press officer on 07050 264 059.

Notes to Editors:

Fisher Bioservices are part of Thermo Fisher Scientific, the world leader in serving science and are specialists in biological specimen management, specimen kit production and temperature control logistics. Fisher BioServices are a global brand, operating biorepositories in the UK, North America, Switzerland and Singapore.

Thermo Fisher Scientific has 30,000 employees and serves more than 350,000 customers in pharmaceutical and biotech companies, hospitals and clinical diagnostic labs, universities, research institutions and government agencies as well as environmental, industrial quality and process control settings.

For more information visit www.fisherbioservices.com

onCore UK is a newly formed charitable company founded through a collaborative funding partnership with the Department of Health (England), the Medical Research Council, and Cancer Research UK. Along with its partners in the NHS, its role is to act as an honest broker of donated samples: to source, process and protect donated samples and ensure their high quality so that cancer researchers can use them.

For more information visit www.oncoreuk.org