

Sarcoma Awareness Week Returns for 2016

- **Sarcoma Awareness Week takes place from 4th – 10th July**
- **Sarcoma UK aims to raise awareness of sarcoma and its symptoms to promote early diagnosis**
- **Sarcoma patients visit their GP more times than those with any other form of cancer before being diagnosed**
- **16% of Sarcomas are diagnosed in people under 30**

Sarcoma UK has announced the return of **Sarcoma Awareness Week**, taking place between from **4th and 10th July**.

Sarcoma is one of the cancers least understood by the general public and GPs, and an aim of Sarcoma Awareness Week is to drive awareness of the disease and its symptoms. A survey carried out by Sarcoma UK in 2015 found that only 53% of people had heard of sarcoma, with only 26% knowing it was a form of cancer.

Sarcoma is a cancer that affects the bone and soft tissue. A key symptom is a lump that is increasing in size, often at a fast pace. Regularly at the stage of diagnosis the lump is the size of a baked bean tin with research showing survival rates would drastically increase if it was detected at a size smaller than a golf ball.

Research from Sarcoma UK indicates that patients visit their GP more frequently than those with any other form of cancer before receiving the correct diagnosis. Discovering sarcoma early in patients could increase survival rates by as much as 20%.

Ten new cases of sarcoma are diagnosed every day in the UK, and it is more likely to develop in young people than all other cancers. 16% of sarcomas are diagnosed in people under 30, whereas only 2% of those diagnosed with other cancers are under the age of 30.

Lindsey Bennister, Chief Executive of Sarcoma UK says, "We are encouraging everybody to get behind the week. At Sarcoma UK we are fully focused on transforming the landscape of sarcoma. Our mission is to amplify awareness of the disease, inspire involvement, and fund ground-breaking research to transform the lives of everyone affected by sarcoma, and we hope that Sarcoma Awareness Week will help put more of a spotlight on this form of cancer."

Paralympic Gold Medallist Richard Whitehead MBE has been a patron of Sarcoma UK for the past three and a half years and has a close personal affiliation with the work of Sarcoma UK, having lost close friend Simon Mellows to sarcoma in 2005.

Ahead of Sarcoma Awareness Week Richard said "I've seen first-hand the vital work that the team implements and the support that it offers those affected by sarcoma. Sarcoma is one of the hardest cancers to diagnose, so it is vital that we raise awareness of its symptoms through Sarcoma Awareness Week; early diagnosis really is key. Since I've been involved with the charity we've made great strides in putting sarcoma on the map, but there is still a long way to go on our journey to one day finding a cure for sarcoma".

2016 has also seen Sarcoma UK become 10 Downing Street's charity of the year in memory of Chris Martin who was Principal Private Secretary to the Prime Minister David Cameron before passing away from Sarcoma in November 2015.

Upon the news of the collaboration David Cameron stated; "It is an honour to support Sarcoma UK, a cancer charity very close to my heart. Having lost Chris to sarcoma, we have seen first-hand the devastating effects of the disease. Number 10 is proud to raise funds and awareness of sarcoma, helping Sarcoma UK to save lives and ultimately find a cure"

Sarcoma UK is the only UK charity providing personal support and expert information on sarcoma. Sarcoma UK works with patients, carers, supporters, health professionals and researchers to drive awareness of sarcoma, promote early diagnosis and improve patient experience.

To find out more visit www.sarcoma.org.uk

Case studies are available on request

For further information, please contact sarcomaUK@housepr.com / 020 7291 3000

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Notes to editors:

About Sarcoma

Sarcoma is cancer. It can develop anywhere in the body.

A key symptom of sarcoma is a lump that is increasing in size, often quickly.

To find out more about sarcoma or to donate to Sarcoma UK visit www.sarcoma.org.uk.

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Sarcoma UK works with patients, carers, supporters, health professionals and researchers to drive awareness of sarcoma, promote early diagnosis and improve patient experience.

Sarcoma UK has pledged to invest over £3million into sarcoma research by 2020 with the aim of finding effective treatment for the disease within the next 10 years.

Sarcoma UK is the only UK charity providing personal support and expert information on sarcoma. In February 2016, the charity launched its national Support Line. Due to high demand it plans to double the number of specialist nurses who answer the line by July 2016.

Sarcoma UK aims to increase survival rates by at least 10% by 2020. Early diagnosis saves lives.

Sarcoma UK provides education and training for GPs to help them recognise the symptoms of sarcoma.

Sarcoma UK was chosen as 10 Downing Street's Charity of the Year for 2016 in memory of Chris Martin, Principal Private Secretary to the Prime Minister, who died of sarcoma in November 2015