
Sarcoma UK chief executive moves on to lead mental health research charity MQ

For immediate release

Sarcoma UK has announced today that Lindsey Bennister, Chief Executive, will be leaving the charity at the end of March.

Sarah McDonald, current Director of Research, Information and Support, will take on the position of Acting CEO at Sarcoma UK, starting in April, while a full-time replacement is recruited.

Lindsey joined Sarcoma UK in 2010 as the charity's first Chief Executive – and first professional member of staff – and established the infrastructure and funds needed to deliver an ambitious strategy to transform the landscape for sarcoma.

This year the charity is on course to raise £1.6 million, compared with £198,000 in its first year. This has enabled the charity to significantly grow its investment into high quality scientific research. Sarcoma UK has awarded over £2 million in grants through a research grants programme that has been cited as an example of best practice by the Association of Medical Research Charities (AMRC).

In 2014, Sarcoma UK launched its innovative 'golf ball' national awareness campaign to highlight the signs and symptoms of sarcoma to GPs and the public.

Lindsey was responsible for Sarcoma UK's National Sarcoma Survey in 2015. This was the largest survey of sarcoma patient experience undertaken in England and Wales, and created an evidence base for the future that informs Sarcoma UK's work.

In 2016, Sarcoma UK launched its national nurse-led Support Line, which has provided expert personal support and information to anyone affected by sarcoma.

In the same year, the charity entered into a successful partnership with 10 Downing Street, working with two Prime Ministers and their staff to raise awareness of sarcoma.

Sarcoma UK Chair Glyn Wilmshurst said: "Lindsey has been an outstanding Chief Executive whose drive and strategic thinking have been absolutely integral to the charity's development. After eight years of great leadership she leaves with the Board's grateful thanks and very best wishes for the future.

"Sarcoma UK is at a hugely exciting stage of development, with impressive growth and a newly-refreshed strategy and the Board is focussed on delivering our mission to fund ground-breaking research, support people with sarcoma, and increase public awareness."

Lindsey is moving to a new role as Chief Executive at mental health research charity, MQ. She said: "Sarcoma UK will always have a place in my heart. I have no doubt that the charity will go from strength to strength, and I intend to play a part in its future as a supporter and volunteer. I would like to pay tribute to all the truly inspirational supporters whom I have met in the last eight years. I feel honoured to have worked alongside them at Sarcoma UK."

Perrett Laver have been appointed to assist the Board in the recruitment of a new Chief Executive for Sarcoma UK. Details of the role will be posted on sarcoma.org.uk shortly.

Sarcoma UK is the only cancer charity in the UK focusing on all types of sarcoma. Its mission is to drive awareness of sarcoma, promote early diagnosis and improve patient experience. The charity offers support to those affected by sarcoma and has funded more than £1.7 million in sarcoma research to date. To find out more visit sarcoma.org.uk

Notes to editors

For further information, please contact Bevis Man, Communications Director at Sarcoma UK: bevis.man@sarcoma.org.uk or 07931 254 697.

- Sarcoma is cancer of the bone and soft tissue. It can develop anywhere in the body.
- A key symptom of sarcoma is a lump that is increasing in size, often quickly.
- About 3,800 new cases of sarcoma are diagnosed each year in the UK, making up approximately 1% of all cancer diagnoses.
- In Scotland, around 350 new cases of sarcoma are diagnosed each year. Around 200 of these are soft tissue sarcoma.
- Sarcoma is one of the hardest cancers to diagnose. People visit their GP more times than those with any other form of cancer before being diagnosed with sarcoma.
- Early diagnosis could increase survival by 20%.
- Sarcoma is usually the size of a baked bean tin when diagnosed. If sarcoma is diagnosed when it is smaller than a golf ball, it would increase the chance of survival by at least 20%.
- People with sarcoma tend to be younger than most people with cancer. 16% of sarcomas are diagnosed in people under 30, compared to only 2% of all other cancers.