

**IMPACT
REPORT
2020-21**



THANK YOU
FOR YOUR SUPPORT





INTRODUCTION

At St George's, we are proud of our commitment to developing our students so that they are not only prepared for a career as future healthcare professionals, but are inspired to improve society and transform lives. Your kind support enables us to give all of our students access to a range of initiatives and opportunities to help them fulfil their potential.



In the past year, many of our students have felt the financial and emotional impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. It is thanks to the generous donations of our alumni, friends and supporters that we have been able to help even more of our students as they have adapted to new ways of working and studying. This has included extending our hardship support so that we can meet the increased demand for emergency funding and ensure that financial hardship is not a barrier to our students' learning and development.

In addition, your generous support has helped us to fund ground-breaking research, bringing benefit to patients within our local community and worldwide. In the past year, we have supported research across our Institutes which will ultimately save lives and open the doors to more accessible, affordable treatment for a variety of conditions and diseases. We have also provided pump prime funding to enable two new Covid-19 research projects.

We are also immensely appreciative of the support of our growing community of volunteers, who have shared valuable careers insight and given advice to current students. Whether you have shared a story or profile, volunteered to interview prospective students or taken part in an Alumni Q&A, giving your time has opened up new avenues for our students to seek careers and well-being advice, and learn about the career paths available to them when they graduate.

However you have supported us, we would like to express our sincerest gratitude for allowing us to do even more to improve health through inspiring education and focused research, and provide a quality experience our students will remember long after they become alumni.

NIKE ALESBURY

Associate Director of Development and Alumni



IMPACT ON STUDENTS

The mental health and well-being of our students, and equal access to education, are more important than ever before as many of our students face increased financial and emotional pressure as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. Thank you to all of those who have helped ensure that all of our students are able to access the support they need.

AILEEN O-BRIEN, Dean for Students

OFFERING FLEXIBLE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

The rising costs of attending university in London and the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic have meant that more students than ever are facing unexpected financial difficulties. Through our Hardship Fund, we strive to ensure that financial circumstances are not a barrier to learning.

The Fund exists to help students most in need of financial support, many of whom could not continue their studies without financial assistance. This year, **30 Hardship grants** were awarded and donations from alumni have allowed us to contribute £17,000 towards St George's overall hardship support.



"I was fortunate enough to be in receipt of a Hardship Fund bursary this academic year, when I was faced with difficult unforeseen circumstances. This year, I supported doctors and healthcare professionals on the front line providing additional support for patients with Covid-19. During my GP placement, I co-ran an emergency treatment clinic with a nurse seeing patients face-to-face. I found myself truly in at the deep end, and then I caught Covid-19 myself.

During this time I was living in a hotel, and subsequently self-isolated for the required amount of days in addition to spending time recovering. I couldn't afford to pay the hotel bill, but I wasn't able to leave until I was better. Thanks to support from the Hardship Fund, not only was I able to isolate and get better, but it helped alleviate worries about the difficult financial circumstances which Covid-19 had brought about for me. Months on, I have now graduated as a doctor and feel immense gratitude to all the donors who helped not only me but other students alike."

2020-21 HARDSHIP FUND RECIPIENT

In addition to support from the alumni community, the St George's Hardship Fund benefitted from contributions from organisations this year too.

"The Medical Society of London has, in recent years, provided a bursary to assist with the financial costs of electives for medical students. The impact of the 2020/21 pandemic, on travel in particular, curtailed such experiences for students. The President, Trustees and Council were unanimous in agreement that the funds for this year be donated to support students facing hardship as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. The Medical Society of London is pleased to have supported students in these challenging circumstances."

COMMANDER MIKE FLYNN, Medical Society of London

SUPPORTING DOCTORAL RESEARCH STUDENTS

During this year's Telephone Campaign, we launched a new Doctoral Support Appeal as part of the Hardship Fund, to offer support to postgraduate students who are facing specific financial challenges as a result of the pandemic.

Lockdown restrictions last year forced our students out of the labs and stopped patient recruitment to trials, leaving our doctoral research students struggling to gather data and complete their studies within their original timeframes.

The alumni community has already contributed over **£20,000** through this appeal, which will continue to raise money for postgraduate students in need of support. The success of this appeal was made possible thanks to the generous support of alums Judy & Stephen Kane who offered matched funding for new regular donations through the Telephone Campaign.

"Receiving a funding extension has meant that I can continue to live in London while I finish my PhD and I have the time to bring my experiments to a satisfactory close after extensive disruptions caused by Covid. Most importantly, it has given me the peace of mind that I will be able to achieve my PhD after a difficult couple of years. Thank you to everyone who contributed to the Doctoral Support Appeal, access to this funding has made a huge difference to all the students who have been affected."

**2020-21 GRADUATE SCHOOL
HARDSHIP FUND RECIPIENT**

The alumni community has already contributed over **£20,000** through this appeal, which will continue to raise money for postgraduate students in need of support.



"The Covid-19 pandemic had a significant impact on doctoral students and their research. To help mitigate the impact on students, the Graduate School created a Doctoral Hardship Fund using funds donated, in large part, from generous alumni contributions. These funds have played a crucial role in enabling several students to progress with their research and, in due course, the funds will help ensure that these students graduate with a doctoral degree."

CARWYN HOOPER, Head of Graduate School

GIVING ACCESS TO MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING SUPPORT

Long periods of isolation, increased uncertainty and financial pressures as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic have led to an increased demand from our students for emotional, academic and welfare support. The generous gifts of our donors allowed us to respond to this demand so that students could access flexible mental health and well-being support, whatever their personal circumstances.

Thanks to your generosity, we have been able to provide continued access to Togetherall, a 24-hour, anonymous online service offering guidance and self-guided support to students on a range of topics, from coping with grief to stress management. Last academic year, our students signed up to 34 self-guided courses and saw a 15% increase in new users compared to the previous year.

We have also continued to help fund the role of our Education and Welfare Support Officer, Lon Teija, who offers support to students on a range of academic procedures and welfare issues. Since the beginning of 2021, over 200 student support sessions have been delivered to over 80 students by Lon and the Students' Union welfare team.

Since the beginning of 2021, over

200

STUDENT SUPPORT SESSIONS

have been delivered to over 80 students by Lon and the Student's Union welfare team



"I really appreciate your support and help. I am so grateful that the service helped me work out some practical steps for me to take, so that I could focus on my exams."

"St George's is a very supportive and caring community, and this reflects on the healthcare professionals who graduate from here."

"I really look forward to my sessions with Lon – it genuinely feels like she has helped me find motivation from within myself to get through not just university, but also life's hardships too. We talk about everything ranging from university studies, financial and health issues, to family problems. This service has made such a difference for me and I am sure will continue to help me and others. Thank you!"

2020-21 USERS OF THE STUDENT WELFARE SUPPORT SERVICE

SUPPORTING OUR STUDENTS BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

We are proud to be able to support our students to broaden their horizons through developing their interests, pursuing their passions and planning for their future careers alongside their studies. Our prizes and bursaries allow us to provide funding to students so that they can fulfil their potential beyond the curriculum.

ALASTAIR HUNTER FUND

At St George's, our students have a strong tradition of combining their studies with sport – playing for teams at St George's, as part of a local team or even at representative or national level. We understand that for many of our students, the cost of competing, alongside the rising costs of living in London, can act as a barrier to participating. The Alastair Hunter Sports Prize allows us to help our students manage the costs of competing so that they are able to fulfil their ambitions both as students and athletes.

The 2020-21 recipient of the Alastair Hunter Bronze Prize, Omkaar Divekar, has a passion for rugby and cricket, representing St George's in both sports. He has also balanced his time at St George's with roles as Treasurer for the St George's Rugby Club and President of the St George's Cricket Club.



Alastair Hunter Prize recipient, **OMKAAR DIVEKAR**

“The money I received through the Alastair Hunter Sports bursary has helped me immensely over the past few months. As life begins to go back to normal, so does my hectic timetable of sporting activities. The bursary has allowed me to play rugby and cricket matches for the University 2-3 times per week, as well as travelling to some incredible cricket grounds up and down the country to represent the United Hospital Cricket Club. This support is greatly appreciated by myself and (hopefully) the multiple sports teams I’m able to represent at the University because of it. It may well have not been possible to take part in some of these great opportunities without the generous help of alumni donations.”

2020-21 RECIPIENT OF THE ALASTAIR HUNTER BRONZE PRIZE, OMKAAR DIVEKAR

CONFERENCE PRESENTATION FUND

Our Conference Presentation Fund gives our students the chance to develop their knowledge beyond their degree, giving them valuable experience that can help advance their future careers and make an impact on their community and the wider world. In 2020-2021, **15 conference fund grants** were awarded, enabling our students to join the scientific community and share their findings.



15

Conference fund grants

were awarded from
2021-22

“I was so excited to have my abstract accepted at a prestigious conference - I've never done one before and was really looking forward to it. But I found the registration fees to be an unpleasant surprise after a financially difficult year due to the pandemic. This put me in a position where I had to consider advancing my career against my ability to pay my bill.

“Giving an oral presentation at a national conference can give you lots of points on future specialty training applications and other applications. It's almost impossible to get the chance to give one of these presentations at a really good conference as a student, so rejecting it would have felt crazy but I just couldn't pay the fees. I did some research and found out I could apply for the conference presentation fund, and luckily I was accepted for a grant.

This removed a lot of pressure so that I could focus on prepping for my presentation, which went really well! I am so grateful for this award for allowing me to advance my career in this way and I hope that many more students will get to benefit from it.”

2020-21 CONFERENCE FUND RECIPIENT



IMPACT ON EDUCATION

We are committed to creating an inclusive environment in which all of our students are equipped with the skills and experience they need to succeed as healthcare professionals. We are so grateful for your support, which has allowed us to develop our facilities and support key educational initiatives at St George's.

INVESTING IN FUTURE GENERATIONS

Leaving a gift in a will to St George's is an opportunity to have a lasting impact on our mission to improve healthcare for everyone.

Knowing that we might receive a legacy is also vital for our long-term planning. This year, we are grateful to have discussed a number of legacies with our supporters, about gifts large and small, which will enable us to continue to deliver activity both for students and in research, as well as establishing new initiatives.

"My motivation to leave a gift to St George's in my will is to 'pay it forward' for pharmacists to benefit as I did from the MSc in Health Sciences at the Medical School.

"The multi-disciplinary course expanded my horizons to make more of a difference to people's lives, as a valued member of the wider healthcare team.

"My legacy means St George's can invest my gift to provide an annual bursary to support post-graduate pharmacists to continue their quest to improve health.

"The profound impact my time at St George's had on my professional practice as a pharmacist will live on through countless others who follow in my footsteps for many years to come."

ERICA BARRIE, Alumna, MSc in Health Sciences



IMPROVING OUR LEARNING FACILITIES



Earlier this year, we received a donation of £5,000 towards enhancing the educational experience of our students.

This generous gift allowed us to fund the provision of simulators (manikins) for our self-directed learning room where students can practise their clinical skills, such as taking blood.

Course Director for MBBS (Medicine), Professor Hannah Cock, says:

“The facilities in our self-directed learning room are in constant demand. We are so grateful for this generous support, which has allowed us to fund a resource which is needed more than ever as a result of the impact of Covid-19 on clinical placement opportunities.”

Director of the Institute of Medical and Biomedical Education, Professor Rachel Allen, adds:

“An added benefit of the donation will be to expand the numbers of training manikins in diverse skin tones, supporting our ongoing Equality, Diversity and Inclusion initiatives.”

ENGAGING WITH THE PUBLIC



The St George's, University of London Pathology Museum has been teaching St George's students about disease for almost 200 years. It has over 2000 examples of human disease, and each one has a story to tell about the patient and the life they led.

Thanks to money raised through a Crowdfunder page last year, we have raised over £500 to help share the Museum with a wider audience through a collection of free virtual art tutorials. These tutorials, run by talented artists, will be freely accessible to everyone - from beginners through to advanced - and aim to help participants to explore different human diseases as well as understanding more about their own health.

Lead for Public and Civic Engagement and Curator of the Pathology Museum, Dr Carol Shiels, says:

"I am incredibly grateful to all of those who have helped make it possible to reach public audiences in new ways. Your support will enable us to create a wider variety of art tutorials so that even more people can learn from the museum. I look forward to keeping in touch about new opportunities for you to get involved in tutorials over the coming months and am excited to see how we can continue using our collection to help others learn about human diseases and develop a better understanding of their own health."

DR CAROL SHIELS,

Lead for Public and Civic Engagement and Curator of the Museum of Human Diseases

GIVING YOUR TIME TO SUPPORT OUR STUDENTS

We are very grateful that so many of our alumni generously choose to give their time to support our current students and new graduates. Our volunteers share valuable advice with those following in their footsteps, as well as insight into life after St George's.

This year, our alumni have been involved in a number of initiatives across St George's, from interviewing prospective students through our Multiple Mini Interviews to talking about their career paths in a live or recorded Q&A.

Thanks to an overwhelming response to a request for advice, stories and profiles, our alumni have helped shape the content of our career webpages, making them a valuable source of information about a broad range of disciplines and careers.

In the last year, over

100 ALUMNI

have volunteered to share careers insight or other advice with our current students and new graduates

As part of this year's careers week,

11 ALUMNI

from seven different courses took part in recorded Alumni Q&As to share careers and well-being advice





“I am always happy to give my time to St George’s as it is an institute that has given so much to me. St George’s has afforded me an opportunity to work in such a rewarding career and to study in a place unlike any other. The career I am in is not well known about. Talking about it raises people’s awareness of the profession and offers me the chance to provide careers and study advice to any students considering, or currently taking, the healthcare science course.”

CHRIS REDMOND, Healthcare Science alumnus



“I felt it was important to give back to the students of St George’s as I know that, for me, there were only one or two GPs who were visible in terms of role models whilst I was a student. Having a portfolio career in General Practice, and as a doctor, means that there is probably an aspect of what I am doing which a student might relate to. My hope is that it inspires students to look beyond their studies and consider what “real life” might look like after finishing university.

“In addition, since St George’s has featured so heavily in my training, it is really valuable to be able to support current students. The process was easy, took place online and was not too time consuming. I would encourage others to volunteer as well!”

DR NIRJA JOSHI, MBBS alumna



IMPACT ON RESEARCH

“Research is central to our ambitions at St George’s. Major donations to the University are crucial in allowing us to advance our efforts in delivering transformative research. As the UK’s specialist health university, such income can be pivotal, boosting our ability to upscale and develop our research, tackling real life health issues and making a difference to people’s lives throughout the UK and around the world.”

PROFESSOR JON FRIEDLAND,
St George’s, Deputy Principal for Research & Enterprise

ENABLING AFFORDABLE TREATMENTS

The major donations we receive at St George's allow our scientists to carry out life-changing research which improves the lives of patients both locally and globally.

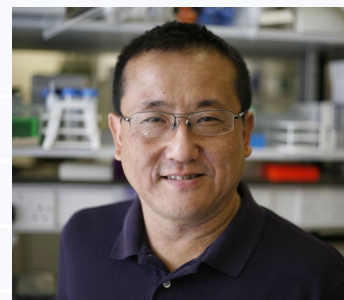
For the past 20 years, St George's has been generously supported by Sir Joseph Hotung, whose significant contributions towards facilitating transformative research have likely changed the landscape for how medicines could be produced on a global scale.

By investing in a research group focused on “molecular pharming”, Sir Joseph has opened the doors for cheaper, more accessible drugs across a variety of conditions and diseases.

Led by Professor Julian Ma, Director of the Institute for Infection & Immunity, the Hotung Molecular Immunology Unit are working on finding ways to successfully produce working antibody treatments from genetically altered plants.

Thanks to Sir Joseph's funding, the Unit's researchers have made significant progress and, in particular, are close to being able to start clinical trials for one of their products; an antibody cocktail designed to prevent transmission of HIV from pregnant mothers to their children.

Sir Joseph has been awarded with the Honorary Degree of Doctor of Science (Medicine) this year by St George's in recognition of the impact of his long-standing commitment to the university, as both a Council member and a generous supporter.



“Our progress in getting HIV antibodies into clinical trials using a new manufacturing platform has been extraordinary, and only made possible through the sustained and generous support from Sir Joseph Hotung”.

PROFESSOR JULIAN MA,
Director of the Institute
for Infection & Immunity



INVESTING IN PEOPLE

In 2007, Robert Lancaster died while on a skiing holiday with his family. He suffered a cardiac arrest on the slopes, seemingly without explanation. One year later, Robert's parents, James and Margaret, found out that Robert had a condition called Brugada syndrome – a rare but serious genetic fault that affects the way electrical signals pass through the heart. Since the diagnosis, they have been motivated to find out more about Brugada syndrome, providing vital financial support for the research of Professor Elijah Behr into the condition.

The funding from James and Margaret has been critical to Professor Behr's team's work on sudden death, enabling research fellows to undertake PhDs and produce new research, as well as funding the staff who are responsible for keeping the projects going, such as a research coordinator and a computer scientist.

Thanks to the research of Professor Behr and his team, more cases of sudden death can now be accurately identified than ever before, with 40% of families now receiving a specific diagnosis, screening and management to prevent further deaths.



“Setting up the Robert Lancaster Fellowship, in memory of our youngest son, has enabled us to keep Robert's name alive and contribute to moving forwards research into Brugada Syndrome. We were on a skiing holiday in Canada when Robert had a cardiac arrest. He was 21, bright, sporty, with so many opportunities ahead of him. At first, we wanted to understand why he had died and this eventually led us to Professor Behr. Now, by funding PhD students in Professor Behr's group, we are able to see first-hand the advances in understanding Brugada Syndrome. Our investment in these fearsomely brilliant young people will hopefully mean that we are able to multiply the effect of Professor Behr's research, which will in turn attract bigger grants. Ultimately, our focus is on looking forwards, in the hope that we will be able to help somebody else's child, so that one day it will be possible to diagnose & treat Brugada Syndrome as quickly and efficiently as any other heart problem.”

JAMES AND MARGARET LANCASTER

During the last year, **DR CHRIS MILES**, who is part of the team that is supported by the Robert Lancaster Fellowship, was awarded his PhD and appointed as an NIHR Academic Clinical Lecturer

SUPPORTING OUR RESEARCH INTO CORONAVIRUS

This year, we have been inspired to see members of our community continuing to raise funds towards research into the Covid-19 pandemic.

We are grateful to leading Virologist Dr Elisabetta Groppe for running in her lab coat twice a week to raise money for the Coronavirus Action Fund. Her JustGiving page raised £800, which will help support grants to fund our scientists' research into the disease.

With the funds raised through the Coronavirus Action Fund, we have been able to offer two grants to St George's researchers, intended to 'pump prime' individuals, collaborations and ideas related to Covid-19 research.

One of the grants has been awarded to Dr Kathrin Göritzer, who is developing Covid-19-fighting antibodies in plants. From the Institute for Infection and Immunity, Dr Göritzer, is leading a project to develop innovative treatments for Covid-19, funded through the St George's Hospital Charity and the university's Coronavirus Action Fund. The project will identify whether certain antibodies, called IgA antibodies, might prevent or treat Covid-19.



"I think the fund is a fantastic cause.

The money raised can help us continue to work and collaborate as a community on key coronavirus research projects. This can act as a springboard for bigger things with a national impact."

DR ELISABETTA GROPELLI



KEEP IN TOUCH

However you have chosen to support us, thank you again for everything you have done to enrich the lives of our students and advance research that transforms lives. We really value our supporters' continued donations and are keen to continue conversations with you about our work.

If you'd like to find out more about our fundraising, set up regular donations, make a one-off gift or get involved in volunteering, find out more at sgul.ac.uk/for-alumni/support-us or get in touch via the email address or telephone number on this page.

We hope we are able to welcome you back to St George's again soon. In the meantime, if you would like to speak to a member of the team about holding your own event or reunion, you can get in touch by email or connect with us on our alumni Facebook page.

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