



Together We Will Defeat Dementia

Half a million pounds awarded for a new dementia Consultant Senior Lectureship

BRACE has awarded £500,000 for a new, 5-year Consultant Senior Lectureship role at the University of Bristol's Medical School.

The new position, which has been taken up by Dr Jonathan Blackman, will play a pivotal role in developing dementia research in Bristol.

His work will focus on developing earlier dementia diagnosis methods and the development of new research projects to support possible dementia treatments. Crucially, he will also train new and upcoming dementia researchers at the University, supporting undergraduate and postgraduate students.

Currently, there are almost one million living with dementia in the UK but in England as many as one in three people are not diagnosed.

With no cure for dementia and only limited treatments available, there is an urgent need for more dementia researchers to tackle the condition.

However, in the UK there are significantly fewer active clinical dementia researchers, with just 512, compared to cancer with almost 7000. This role will play an important part in helping to increase the number of dementia researchers in the region.



Dr Blackman says:

“I am incredibly grateful to have the support from BRACE for this new role. Dementia is far too prevalent and with an ageing population we need all the resources we can get to tackle the condition. Simply put, we can’t afford not to have more researchers. I hope that soon, meaningful treatments will be available for any dementia patient meeting with a doctor, thanks to research breakthroughs.”

BRACE CEO, Liberty Harrison says:

“Too many people are living with dementia and the only way that will change, both now and in the future, is through more research, and crucially more researchers.

This new role will not only support important dementia research today but help develop the clinical academic workforce we need for the future. Dr Blackman will use his expertise to train the next generation of researchers and as a small charity we are proud to be making that possible.”

Fantastic supporters!

Bristol choir, the Filtones, have chosen BRACE as their Charity of the Year and held their summer concert in July. A lovely time was had by all who attended so look out for their Christmas concert being held on Friday 11th December which is sure to be a wonderful occasion.

Bird & Blend Tea Company have chosen BRACE as their Chari-Tea and held a Cuppa for a Cure coffee morning in early July - raising over £400!

A supporter in Powys also held a Cuppa for a Cure which again raised £400 so a big thank you goes to them as well.

If you'd like to hold an event for us, or choose us as your group's Charity of the Year, please look at our website to find out how. Cuppa for a Cure has raised thousands of pounds for research and makes a big difference.

[www.alzheimers-brace.org/
community-support/cuppa-for-a-cure/](http://www.alzheimers-brace.org/community-support/cuppa-for-a-cure/)



Save the Date

40 years of  **BRACE**
Dementia Research



BRACE Dementia Research's 40th anniversary celebratory concert



**Friday 7.30pm, 24th September 2027
All Saints Church, Clifton, Bristol**



**Tickets available on
BRACE website soon.**



Dr Kevin Kemp and his team at the University of Bristol have been developing a potential new APOE4-targeted gene therapy for Alzheimer's.

Could there soon be a gene therapy for Alzheimer's?

The goal is to help prevent or slow Alzheimer's in people who carry the APOE4 gene variant.

Why APOE genes and Alzheimer's?

Alzheimer's disease is the most common type of dementia.

Alzheimer's is not caused by a single gene. However, APOE4 is the most significant known genetic risk factor major, especially for late-onset Alzheimer's. People with this version of the gene are much more likely to develop Alzheimer's than those without it.

The APOE genes have many roles in the body, but one of its most important jobs is helping the brain to clear the toxic build-up of amyloid protein, which is found in the brains of people with Alzheimer's.

Everyone has two APOE genes. People with two copies of APOE4 have the highest genetic risk of developing Alzheimer's.

There are three common versions of the APOE gene that can be inherited.

Think of these versions of the APOE gene like traffic lights - green, yellow, and red - representing the lowest to highest risk of developing Alzheimer's.

- APOE2 is associated with the lowest risk of developing Alzheimer's.
- APOE3 is seen as 'neutral' for Alzheimer's risk.
- APOE4 is associated with the highest risk of developing Alzheimer's.

Dr Kemp's research into an APOE4 gene therapy

Dr Kemp and his research team aimed to create an Alzheimer's gene therapy that could convert the high-risk APOE4 into the lower-risk APOE3, in the body's immune cells. The aim being that the therapy could help prevent or slow down the progression of Alzheimer's.

Developing the therapy

The team began by developing and testing different methods to convert APOE4 into APOE3.

They then tested these methods on human immune cells made from people living with Alzheimer's, who carry two copies of APOE4. Having two copies of APOE4 makes the chances of developing Alzheimer's ten to fifteen times higher than for someone without them.

The reason for using human immune cells was to ensure that the responses observed were as close as possible to real-life responses in humans.

Testing for safety

Once they successfully converted APOE4 to APOE3 in the immune cells, the team checked for unwanted changes to the cells' DNA. Reassuringly, the results showed that the conversion had very little impact on the rest of the DNA, which was promising for this early stage of testing.

The next step was working out how to safely deliver the APOE4 converting

technology to cells in the body. To do this, the team used a modified virus, to act as a delivery vehicle, to target immune cells in the blood. This allows the conversion of APOE4 to APOE3 to take place only in these cells.

Delivering the therapy

Excitingly, the research team has developed a potential new gene therapy for Alzheimer's that could be administered via the bloodstream.

Targeting blood immune cells means the therapy could pass through the brain's protective barrier and reach the whole brain.

Why is this important?

This barrier plays an important role in protecting the brain, but it has stopped previous Alzheimer's treatments from entering all parts of the brain. This has made them less effective.

The research from Dr Kemp and his team provides an important step towards a new gene therapy that could help prevent or slow the progression of Alzheimer's.



When will this gene therapy be available?

While this project has had several exciting developments, more research is needed before the therapy can become available for patient use in a medical setting.

FAQs

What is gene therapy?

Gene therapy works by delivering DNA or RNA into cells to change how genes behave in a helpful way.

Can I be tested for APOE4 on the NHS?

The NHS only offers APOE4 gene testing for a small number of people who have a family history of early-onset Alzheimer's, which develops before age 65 and can, sadly, affect people in their 30s and 40s. It is also possible to pay privately for APOE4 testing.

How many people have one or two copies of APOE4?

As many as 1 in 4 people carry at least one copy of APOE4, and around 1 in every 50 people carry two copies of APOE4.

Does having APOE4 mean I will get Alzheimer's?

For those with just one copy of APOE4, the risk is lower than for

people with two copies. Either way, having APOE4 increases the risk of Alzheimer's but it does not mean someone will definitely develop it.

Research shows that healthy lifestyle habits can help reduce the risk of Alzheimer's and dementia:

- Staying physically active
- Not smoking
- Eating a healthy diet
- Staying socially connected

Stories behind the research



My name is Doctor Laura Palmer. I'm the manager of the South West Dementia Brain Bank and I have had a really personal journey with BRACE.

I was lucky enough to be a BRACE-funded PhD student and I'm still funded by the charity as the Brain Bank Manager, plus one of our technicians and our administrator is also funded by BRACE. These are absolutely key roles in the day to day running of the brain bank.

Without them we wouldn't have a Brain Bank.

What is the South West Dementia Brain Bank?

The Brain Bank is an incredible resource of donated brain tissue. We accept brain donations from both people who have a diagnosis of dementia or other types of memory conditions and people without dementia.

Brain donations may seem like something that only affects people who have left us, who've died. Actually, brain donations make a difference for everyone. So those people who are yet to be diagnosed with dementia, those people who are living with dementia today, everything that we find out about the condition, how it develops, how we might potentially prevent it or cure it in the future, all of those things are going to make a difference to people with dementia, either living with the



condition now or in the future.

The donations also support the development of treatments. Without the use of human brain tissue, we wouldn't have drugs for Alzheimer's disease. Brain donations are incredibly important.

I studied microbiology and pathology at the University of Bristol before I got my job at the Brain Bank. Sadly, my grandmother, who lived with us, who cared for us during my earliest years, she developed vascular dementia when I was in my teens.

I hadn't really heard of dementia. I certainly hadn't been affected by it. I didn't really know anyone who'd been affected by it. Seeing what she went through and what we went through as a family, trying to support her with the disease, made me want to find out more about dementia and to make a difference.

And I certainly feel that in all the families I've been able to deal with for brain donation in my 22 years now with the bank has made a difference. I can see the difference we make to people at the time of a loved one's death, and I can see how we're making a difference going forward.



Abi is running the 2026 Manchester Half Marathon for her nan.

"Watching someone you love go through dementia is incredibly difficult. It changes relationships, memories, and moments you once took for granted. That's what makes this challenge so important to me, it's not just about running a half marathon, it's about doing something meaningful for my nan and our journey with dementia - and for every family going through the same thing.

Every mile I run will be for my nan, and for everyone affected by dementia. Supporting BRACE means turning something painful into something purposeful and that means everything to me."





Tom Ritchie will be running the London Marathon for BRACE Dementia Research in April 2027.

“A few years ago, my dad was diagnosed with Alzheimer’s. Since then, my family and I have watched the gradual loss that comes with this cruel disease. Little by little, parts of the person you know and love begin to disappear. It affects not just the individual, but everyone around them.

Before Dad’s diagnosis, I never truly understood the impact Alzheimer’s has on families. Now I do.



In 2017, before his illness, I helped my dad achieve a lifelong goal: walking the Pennine Way. For 14 days, we battled through exhaustion, pain, bad weather, and moments where we both wanted to quit - but we kept going and crossed the finish line together. It’s one of the greatest memories I’ll ever have.

Today, I know that experience is something we would never be able to do again.

That’s why I’m taking on the London Marathon for BRACE in April 2027. I said that I’d never do another marathon again, but this time feels different. This time, it matters.

Training for a marathon will be tough, but it’s nothing compared to what families living with dementia face every single day.

I’m running for my dad, for my family, and for the millions of people affected by Alzheimer’s and dementia, and I’m incredibly proud to be supporting BRACE. I’m hopeful that my contribution will help to accelerate research and brings us one step closer to defeating dementia.”



**Make a donation
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doubled***

BigGive

***up to £10,000 of donations**

**Donate
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[www.alzheimers-brace.org/](http://www.alzheimers-brace.org/big-give) 

call the BRACE charity office on 0117 414 4831

Jayne Connery, Director and founder of Care Campaign for the Vulnerable (CCFTV), has just released a biographical book sharing the very personal story of her late Mum Ellen's dementia. The loss, heartbreak and determination resulted in Jayne setting up CCFTV and campaigning for improved dementia care and dementia research.



The Long Road Back to Tipperary

This is Ellen's story, and it matters to me that I tell it in a way she would have wanted, with honesty and love, to honour who she was and everything she lived through. But I can't tell her story without also telling some of my own, because what happened to her didn't happen in isolation. It shaped me. It changed everything, and it altered the course of my life, setting me on a path I could never have imagined. Before dementia entered my life, I was by most measures, fortunate. I had a career I loved, I travelled the world and I lived a life untouched by the kind of worries that steal your sleep at night. All of that changed with Mum's diagnosis and, with it, so did I.

My real purpose only began the day I stepped into the role of advocate for my mum

I had never thought about my parents ageing, their vulnerability, or what it would truly feel like to watch someone you love slowly fade before your eyes - to lose the person you once depended on. Back then, I believed I had purpose. But my real purpose only began the day I stepped into the role of advocate for my mum, when she began to forget who she was, and where she came from.

My mother, Ellen, was born in Ballyporeen, a small village in County Tipperary, in the south of Ireland. It's a place where time seems to slow, where the air carries the scent of earth, stillness, and belonging. It is also where Mum rests now, side by side with my father. It was her lifelong wish to be laid to rest

there, and, of course, where Mum went, Dad always followed. Somehow, that feels exactly as it should. The landscape is strong, striking, and quietly defiant, a reflection of her spirit, and of the love he carried for her all his life.

Mum was drawn to people who seemed down on their luck. It was as if she felt a natural affinity with them, as though she was somehow more comfortable in their company. If an upstairs neighbour was downbeat, Mum would invite them in without hesitation. It was something we all noticed about her. Whenever someone was vulnerable or rough around the edges, she had a way of softening towards them. She recognised something in them that others hadn't seen in her when she was younger.

Mum was part of the wave of young Irish girls and boys who crossed the sea in search of something more - freedom, independence, and a better life. There were no glittering opportunities waiting. Just hardships and hard work. She came to England with her Uncle Ned and his wife in 1954 and ended up in Shepherd's Bush. She got a part-time job at Lyons' Corner Houses and tea shops.

London was everything Ballyporeen was not; fast, loud, and anonymous. She could walk through the streets without anyone knowing where she came from or who had failed her.



For the first time in her life, Mum could decide who she wanted to be. And yet, even with very little, she retained her dignity. Her hair was always styled perfectly, her blouse pressed, and she always wore a touch of lipstick. She may not have had much, but she had pride.

Mum was never the kind of woman to lash out. She was strong, resilient, and fiercely proud of her Irish heritage. She was sometimes fiery, always sharp and quick with her wit but never cruel or aggressive. So, when dementia began stripping away the person we knew, what it left behind was distressing beyond words, both for her, and for those of us who loved her.

This was not the kind of dementia people often imagine, the kind portrayed with gentle forgetfulness or harmless wandering. Mum's dementia

was merciless. It stole her mobility, her understanding, her safety and, most painfully of all, it stole her dignity.

The pain, the helplessness and the frustration at a world that treats people with dementia as if they're broken or inconvenient never left me. It also lit a fire in me - a quiet, determined fire that would later grow into CCFTV. No one living with dementia should ever be forgotten. No one should be left to struggle and my mum, or anyone's parent, should never be humiliated simply for being unwell.

The book is available to buy on Amazon with proceeds going towards BRACE Dementia Research, a small charity funding research into the causes of dementia, earlier diagnosis, and the development of treatments.



BRACE Dementia

Your purchase could make a big difference to dementia research.

Thousands of pounds are raised each year through shop orders for the charity.

Together we will defeat dementia.

To order, please visit www.alzheimers-brace.org/shop where you can see the full collection of items we have available. Alternatively, please call the office to place a shop order over the phone on 0117 414 4831

Thanks so much for your support.



Twiddlemuffs

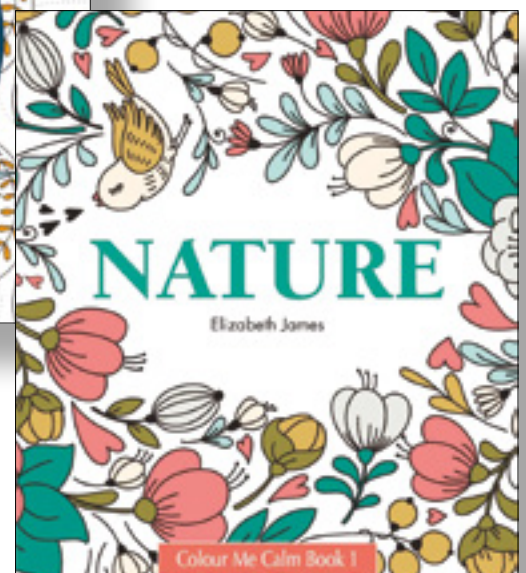
A twiddlemuff is a cozy knitted hand muff with various textures and objects inside. They are great for providing stimulation for people with dementia who have restless hands.

£10 each
or two for £15



Relaxing colouring book of your choice and pencils for £10.

A great gift or treat for yourself



Research Shop



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Be prepared for any occasion with these beautiful cards.

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£2.00

The cards and envelopes are manufactured in the U.K. from materials carrying the FSC® (FSC-C003675) Chain of Custody certification. The Forest Stewardship Council® (FSC) is an independent, non-governmental, not-for-profit organisation established to promote the responsible management of the world's forests.

Christmas Cards

There are different Christmas cards designs available and they come in packs of ten with envelopes.

The cards are priced at £4.50 per pack.



For our full selection of cards please visit our online shop: www.alzheimers-brace.org/shop

Donation form

☒ Yes, I will donate to defeat dementia!

I would like to give a donation of:

☐ £10 ☐ £25 ☐ £50 ☐ My choice of £_____

I would like make this donation

☐ monthly ☐ annually ☐ once only

Boost your donation by 25p of Gift Aid for every £1 you donate

Gift Aid is reclaimed by the charity from the tax you pay for the current tax year.

☐ Yes - I am a UK taxpayer and would like to Gift Aid my donations now and in future.

I understand I must pay enough income tax and/or capital gains tax each tax year to cover the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations, and I am responsible for paying any difference.

giftaid it

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Thank you so much for your support

www.alzheimers-brace.org/privacy-policy

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From PhD student to Research Associate!

Dr Oliver Hermann completed his BRACE-funded PhD studies in spring 2026 when he was awarded his doctorship.

During his PhD, Oliver undertook research at the University of Bath, which was led by Dr George Stothart, into the early Alzheimer's test, Fastball. A key focus of his PhD was investigating the Fastball test as a way to potentially diagnose other types of dementia, such as Lewy bodies.

The Fastball test has attracted international attention for being able to detect Alzheimer's disease up to five years before noticeable symptoms. The test is currently being developed for possible NHS use and if the research findings continue to be positive, then it could be used alongside blood tests to support earlier dementia diagnosis.



Following on from Oliver's PhD he is now working as a BRACE Research Associate on Fastball. This position benefits from Oliver's recent studies and insight, and builds on Dr Stothart's Fastball research, which has been supported for several years by BRACE.

The Research Associate role supports patients and volunteers to take part in Fastball studies at the Bristol Brain Centre, a GP surgery and the Royal United Hospital. BRACE is excited to see what the next step of Fastball and Oliver's research will bring for earlier diagnosis.

To learn more about Fastball please visit:
www.alzheimers-brace.org/fastball

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