Tessa Jowell
BRAIN CANCER MISSION

TJBCM Fellowship Programme: Neurology

Guidance Document

In partnership with

King's College London
King's College Hospital NHS Foundation Trust
Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust
King's Health Partners
Pioneering better health for all
NIHR | National Institute for Health and Care Research

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1.0 Introduction

This guideline outlines the neuro-oncology training fellowship programme for trainees in neurology.

1.1 About the Tessa Jowell Brain Cancer Mission

The cure rates for brain tumours have remained low for many decades due to multiple complex issues. If we are eventually to be in the position to cure all patients with a brain tumour, challenges to improving outcomes must be identified and targeted. To achieve this, scientists, who as experts in neurobiology, preclinical tumour modelling, genomics, drug discovery and development, must have access to the best neurologists, neuropathologists, neurosurgeons, radiologists, clinical and medical oncologists. Training for a career in neuro-oncology in the UK has a clear pathway for neurosurgeons but less so for the other disciplines.

Following Dame Tessa Jowell's call to action to improve treatment, care and research for people with brain tumours, the Tessa Jowell Brain Cancer Mission (TJBCM) was formed to work with existing stakeholders in the government, academic, NHS, Charity, patient and volunteer sectors to design and deliver a new national strategy for brain tumours. The Mission, an independent community interest company, serves as a convening body for these stakeholders, enabling them to work together to make a tangible change in brain tumour treatment and research.

TJBCM designs and delivers a national portfolio of eight transformational programmes focused on accelerating research, advancing precision medicine and novel treatments, improving care for today's patients, and connecting and training NHS staff. With the above initiatives, the Mission aims to significantly grow the brain tumour research community in the UK, train outstanding healthcare professionals and offer better care for patients in the UK.

As part of the connecting and training NHS staff strand, the Fellowship programme, led by Dr Sarah Jefferies, is tasked with designing training opportunities for healthcare professionals. The programme aims to create new attractive and rewarding career opportunities for aspiring scientists and clinicians, in a challenging disease area on the cusp of exciting and promising breakthroughs. The Tessa Jowell Fellowship is the perfect launchpad for emerging talent to build a clinical career dedicated to helping patients with complex needs whilst also leading cutting-edge research and innovation.

The TJBCM Fellowship Programme is a training programme for all medical specialities involved in the delivery of treatment, care and research for patients with brain tumours. While Fellows will apply for a fellowship in line with their speciality (e.g. oncology or neurology), it aims to provide a holistic overview of the multi-disciplinary management of brain tumours. Fellows will learn about the latest best practices in their own specialities as well as being encouraged to observe and learn from specialities across the pathway.

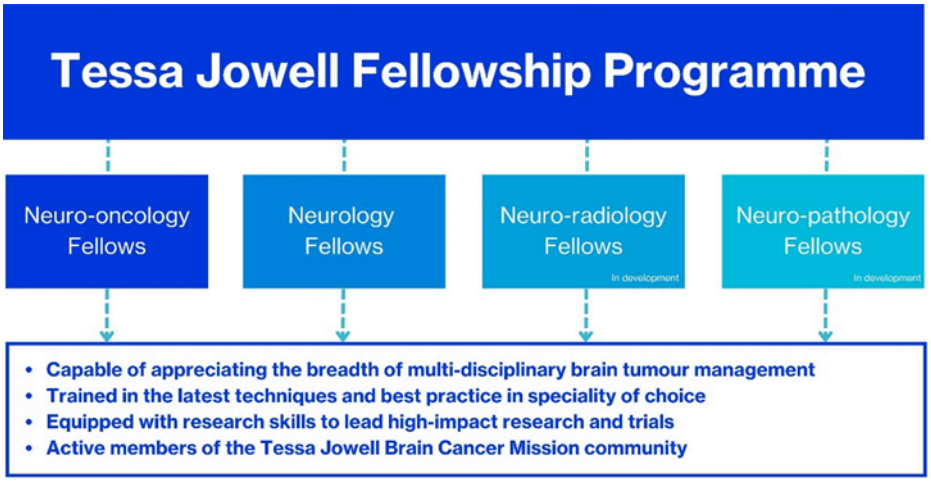

Fig.1 Tessa Jowell Fellowship Programme Structure

1.2. About the Tessa Jowell Fellowships in Neurology

Brain tumours are the 9th most common cancer in the UK with 11,432 cases reported in 2015. Brain tumour incidence rates are projected to rise by 6% between 2014 and 2035[1]. Treatment options include surgery, radiotherapy and chemotherapy, primarily delivered by neurosurgeons and oncologists, supported by neuroradiology, neuropathology and neurology. The neuro-oncology multi-disciplinary team (MDT) requires specialist input from clinicians dedicated to providing high-quality management of CNS tumours. In 2006 the NICE cancer service guidelines for brain and CNS tumours highlighted the importance of specialist neurological input in managing patients with CNS tumours[2]. Progress towards delivering world-class neuro-oncological cancer care in the UK requires training MDT members who have a deep appreciation of the treatment and management strategies applied throughout the team.

Neurologists can have a wide remit in a brain tumour patient's treatment journey, covering both diagnosis and treatment planning, as well as managing tumour and treatment-related complications. In 2018, following a Task and Finish work group report[3], the government called for greater involvement of neurologists in neuro-oncology. Patients often experience seizures, headaches and other neurological deficits or complications which require careful monitoring and management. Patients may present with brain masses which are not tumours and require neurological expertise to achieve a diagnosis without recourse to biopsy. Neurologists are well-placed to work closely with various Allied Health Professionals to coordinate and oversee rehabilitation programmes, to address neurological deficits and cognitive impairments and help regain or maximise neurological function in order to maintain quality of life. In the case of incurable disease, neurologists can also work with palliative care teams to ensure a patient's comfort and quality of life until end of life. However, in the UK neurologists are primarily involved in the diagnosis of tumours affecting the nervous system, with limited further contribution to their management. Presently, many NHS services struggle to obtain sufficient neurology input and only few centres (32%) report routine neurology attendance at neuro-oncology clinics[4]. Centres do not always have neurologists in posts with a dedicated interest in brain tumours or neurologists may not

have sufficient time in their job plan allocated to neuro-oncology to address the many unmet needs patients present with.

The TJBCM Fellowships are designed to support clinicians to address the future needs of neuro-oncology. The Fellowships aim to train highly skilled clinicians who understand all aspects of comprehensive brain tumour management. In addition to primary brain tumours, neurologists need to be aware of the rapidly changing landscape in the management of non-CNS cancers, particularly where new immunological and cellular therapies are being used, many of which have serious neurotoxic side effects and need neurological input.

The neurology fellowship is for neurologists who have completed General Neurology training and want to develop a specialist interest in neuro-oncology. They will gain expertise in all aspects of the diagnosis and management of neuro-oncology patients including:

1. Management of primary or secondary tumours involving the nervous system, particularly directed investigation of suspected mass lesions where there is a differential diagnosis and management of Brain Tumour Related Epilepsy.
2. Management of neurological complications of brain radiotherapy and treatments of other mainly haematological cancers. This includes immunotherapies, such as chimeric antigen receptor T (CAR-T) cells and immune checkpoint inhibitors.
3. Assessment of neurological symptoms/signs in patients with an underlying cancer in which imaging is non-contributory or discordant with the neurological presentation.
4. Long-term follow-up of patients with low-grade primary CNS tumours.

The Fellow will undertake research which impacts diagnosis and management of brain tumour patients. Research topics may range from lab work with live human brain tissue through liquid biopsy to clinical research. The ultimate objective is to prepare the Neurology trainee to lead clinical neuro-oncology research projects in the future.

1.3. About King's Health Partners

The Regional Neuro-oncology unit at King's College Hospital (KCH) and Guy's Hospital Cancer Centre is one of the largest Neuro-oncology units in the country with a catchment area of over 4 million people. The Unit provides team-based care in all aspects of neuro-oncology delivered by: eight Consultant Neurosurgeons (five for adult patients, three for paediatric and teenage patients), four Consultant Oncologists, two Consultant Neurologists, four Specialist Neuro-oncology and three Epilepsy Nurses, with on-site input form Neuro-radiologists, Neuropathology, Neuropsychologists and Therapists. The KCH and Guy's Regional Neuro-oncology service is one of the inaugural Tessa Jowell Centres of Excellence for Neuro-oncology.

There are Neuro-oncology clinics for Adults, Teenage and Young Adults and Low-grade gliomas at KCH, and Oncology clinics at Guy's Cancer Centre. At Guy's, the Fellow also liaises with the Neurofibromatosis service and the Medical Genetics service for patients with inherited causes of cancer. State-of-the-art Neurosurgery is provided at King's College Hospital with all necessary support. Oncology (chemoradiotherapy) management is based at the purpose-built Cancer Centre at Guy's Hospital. Treatment plans are overseen at weekly MDT meetings.

Cases with possible cancer involvement, e.g. glioma mimics, meningeal disease, or brain tumour patients with functional neurological disorders are investigated at KCH. The network has close relations with the Ophthalmologists and Haematologists to diagnose primary CNS lymphoma. KCH has a large CAR-T therapy service for patients with blood malignancies. Neuro-oncology is an active research area at KCH and Guy's, with regular talks that the Fellow can attend.

[1] Smittenaar CR, Petersen KA, Stewart K, Moitt N. Cancer incidence and mortality projections in the UK until 2035. Br J Cancer. 2016 Oct 25;115(9):1147-1155. doi: 10.1038/bjc.2016.304. Epub 2016 Oct 11. PMID: 27727232; PMCID: PMC5117795.
[2] Task and Finish Working Group on Brain Tumour Research . Report of the Task and Finish Working Group on Brain Tumour Research . Department of Health and Social Care , 22 Feb. 2018.
[3] National Institute of Health and Care Excellence (NICE). Improving outcomes guidance: Improving outcomes for people with brain and other central nervous system tumours. https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/csg10 (2006).
[4] Data collected as part of the Tessa Jowell Adult Centre of Excellence designation 2020-21 round. Data reported by 28 of 30 centres in the UK providing the full neuro-oncology pathway.

2.0 Fellowship Structure

2.1 Eligibility

The Tessa Jowell Fellowships are for applicants who are near completion of training in neurology. Applicants will need to be able to demonstrate that they meet the range of skills and experience outlined in the person specification (appendix 1).

2.2 Aims and Objectives

The aims of the Tessa Jowell Fellowship Programme are to:

- Develop neurologists who can deliver high-quality neuro-oncological patient care with comprehensive knowledge of all the associated disciplines.
- Provide supervised training in the inpatient and outpatient practice of neuro-oncology.
- Cultivate the future neurology leaders in neuro-oncology in the UK.
- Equip fellows with the necessary research skills to lead high impact research in the future.

The objectives of the TJBCM Fellowship for Neurology are to train neurologists to:

- Specialise in the diagnosis and management of neuro-oncology patients including primary or secondary tumours involving the nervous system, neurological complications of treatments and brain tumour mimics.
- Improve awareness of the role of neurologists in the diagnosis and management of neuro-oncology patients.
- Carry out a research project in neuro-oncology, and to develop research skills and familiarity with clinical trial development and conduct.

Interactions with other disciplines

To ensure a holistic understanding of brain tumour management, Fellows will be asked to develop familiarity and an understanding of other key specialities involved in the delivery of brain tumour treatment and care. Through the fellowship they should:

- Develop familiarity with surgical decision-making, advanced techniques, and the management of surgical complications.

- Develop a familiarity with brain tumour imaging and to understand the benefits and limitations of advanced imaging sequences.
- Gain an understanding of neuropathology and molecular genomics.
- Gain an understanding of the planning and delivery of complex radiotherapy and chemotherapy for CNS tumours.

2.3 Fellowship Structure

The Fellowship will be structured as concurrent core speciality experience and module participation. Importance is placed on the longitudinal experience of managing brain tumours, in which neurology trainees usually have limited experience within a standard training programme. The Fellowship post will involve 50% research and 50% clinical training, which can be arranged flexibly and in line with the Fellow's interest and the centre's service provision and opportunities. Fellows will be expected to present neuro-oncology cases at neurology meetings and Hospital grand rounds as well as teaching neurology trainees. The fellowship may be organised in discrete modules or modules may be undertaken concurrently, with different days of the week allocated to specific modules and research elements undertaken throughout the year.

a. What educational strategies will be adopted?

The educational strategy applied will be trainee-centred integrated learning. The fellowship will be planned to deliver bespoke modules of training that address the educational needs of the trainee. The individual goals of the trainee will be agreed upon with the host supervisor and programme lead prior to commencement.

b. What content will be included?

Specific content will be decided by the fellow and their host institution supervisor, and will be shaped by the educational opportunities at the host institution in addition to opportunities available through the TJBCM network.

c. What teaching methods will be used?

Training will be centred around work-based learning methods, such as reflection, role-modelling, mentoring, interprofessional interactions, and opportunistic clinic or 'bedside' learning.

d. How will assessments be carried out?

Feedback

A short written report will be requested from the Fellow and the host supervisor at the end of each quarter of the fellowship. This will be reviewed by the programme lead, the TJBCM and colleagues at the host institution to assess satisfaction and engagement with the fellowship.

Behavioural change

By the end of the Fellowship the trainee should be applying their learning. Either the application of new techniques or integrating obtained knowledge into their clinical practice.

Impact

The impact of the Fellowship will occur in two phases. Following the completion of the fellowship, it is anticipated the trainee will begin a substantive post treating brain tumours in the UK with at least a 50% of clinical workload. Long term, fellows will support the local delivery of high-quality neurological care and develop national and international roles in brain tumour management.

Neurological accreditation

The Fellow will comply with the rules for Post CCT Fellowships approved by the Association of British Neurologists (ABN) so that the post may accredited by the ABN.

e. What educational environment or climate will be fostered?

Work-based learning has learning embedded into the everyday practice, routines and cultures of the host institution. Learning is supported by more knowledgeable and experienced colleagues, alongside the wider healthcare team. Consequently, engaged mentors and module leads are vital in identifying development opportunities. Host institutions should be nationally recognised in one or two module areas to promote excellence for Fellows.

f. External opportunities:

Fellows will be encouraged to attend the annual neuro-oncology, neurology and cancer research meetings such as BNOS, EANO, CRUK and the Association of British Neurologist Conference. There will also be opportunities to attend NIHR sponsored events as well as TJBCM-led meetings. Fellows may explore and suggest other external opportunities in line with their interest and fellowship budget including short courses on clinical trials and experimental therapeutics.

2.4 Host Institution

a. Tessa Jowell Centre of Excellence Network

The Tessa Jowell Centre of Excellence designation serves as national recognition of a centre's staff going above and beyond for patients with brain tumours. For patients, designation creates transparency and instils confidence that they will receive the highest standard of care under the NHS.

Tessa Jowell Centres of Excellence are centres which have obtained designation status following a review by the Tessa Jowell Brain Cancer Mission against the Tessa Jowell Centre of Excellence standards. Each participating centre has demonstrated an active commitment to service development and improvement and will provide the level of training outlined in this document. Additionally, they will demonstrate the ability to promote the overall TJBCM fellowship goals and support educational activities.

In 2020, King's Health Partners obtained the Tessa Jowell Centre of Excellence designation.

b. Other opportunities

Applicants may wish to explore observership opportunities at other institutions to provide additional experience which cannot be obtained at the primary site. Fellows are encouraged to discuss this with their primary supervisor in the first months of the fellowship.

c. Institution requirements

- The host institution must demonstrate that it possesses the facilities and resources necessary to support a quality educational experience:
    - The institution must provide the fellows with a suitable working environment and demonstrable access to administrative support, typical office equipment and supplies, and education and library resources.
    - Fellows are expected to have access to the appropriate experience according to the modules selected.

2.5 Fellowship Funding

The full 1-year Tessa Jowell Fellowship award is £109,775 This consists of:

- Full salary cost (equivalent to ST8 banding)
- Employment on-cost
- Fellowship travel and conference bursary
- TJBCM administrative costs

The Tessa Jowell Fellowship is co-funded as following:

- King's Health Partners, which funds 50% of the salary and on-costs;
- The National Institute of Health and Care Research which funds the remainder of the fellowship costs.

2.6 The successful applicant's input into TJBCM

The Tessa Jowell Fellowship programme is part of the Tessa Jowell Brain Cancer Mission's programme portfolio. The successful candidate will be expected to take an active role in the Mission's activities, to help deliver its national strategy for brain tumours and drive excellence in brain tumour treatment and care in the UK. The Fellow will be invited to join the Mission team at their head office to learn more about the Mission's broad programme portfolio, which spans from research and precision medicine to improving clinical practice and working with the government on developing new policies to transform cancer care. The Fellow will be encouraged to take on a key role as part of the Tessa Jowell Academy - the Mission's online training and networking platform for NHS professionals working with patients with over 2000 members. In particular, the Fellow will join the neurology working group, made up of the foremost UK neurology experts with a dedicated interest in neuro-oncology, to develop activity strands to promote neurology input into neuro-oncology nationally.

3.0 Fellowship structure

Led by the Programme Lead and with the support of the TJBCM, The Fellowship Core Faculty sets the curriculum, undertakes the selection process for the fellowships, and ensures

centres are able to support the required aspects of training in neuro-oncology. TJBCM is responsible for the general administration and expansion of the fellowship programme.

The faculty additionally works with leading experts who provide advice on speciality-specific aspects of the curriculum and support selections of candidates in line with their speciality:

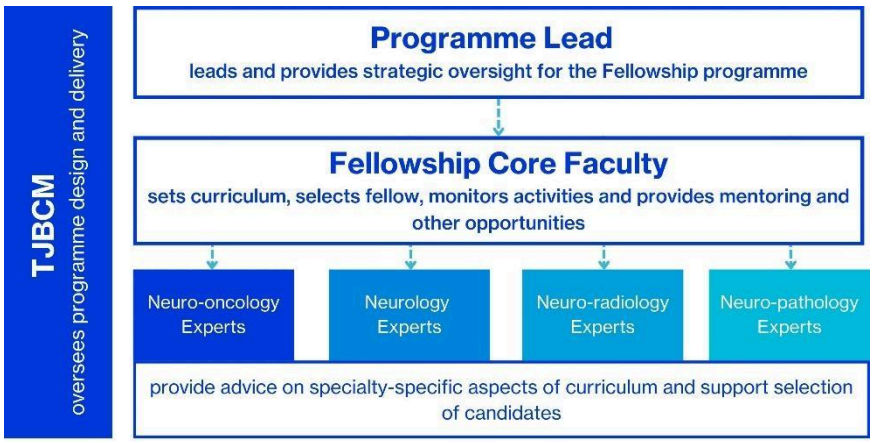

Fig.3 Summary of roles and responsibilities of Fellowship committee

the faculty consists of:
Programme Lead – Dr Sarah Jefferies

The Programme Lead is accountable for the operation of the fellowship program and fulfils the following:

- possesses requisite speciality expertise such as demonstrated evidence of experience in the field of neuro-oncology, as well as documented educational and administrative abilities and experience in their field.
- has significant prior experience in the training of neuro-oncology.
- reports on the training program to the TJBCM committee.

<u>Core Faculty</u>

The Faculty oversees and organises the activities of the educational programme as well as the module content. It is responsible for the selection of the fellow, jointly monitors the fellowship training with the Programme Lead and may offer wider opportunities for networking, mentoring and other activities.

Medical oncology – Dr Juanita Lopez

Clinical Oncology – Prof. Anthony Chalmers, Dr Faye Robertson, Dr Gillian Whitfield, Dr Cressida Lorimer

Neuroradiology – Dr Gerry Thompson

Neurology – Dr Fiona McKevitt

Neuropathology – Prof Kathreena Kurian

Director of Services and Policy Brains Trust – Dr Helen Bulbeck

Patient Representative – Peter Realf

NIHR Representative – Rachel Dwyer

Institution Representative – Dr Gerald Finnerty

4.0 The Application Process

The TJBCM Fellowships are aimed at individuals planning a clinical academic career in neurology. For this reason, the application will expect you to demonstrate:

- Evidence of developing independent research ideas.
- Having started to make research contributions in neurology.
- An awareness of research in other fields/disciplines and how your own research could benefit from working across disciplines.
- Having identified appropriate career development opportunities.
- Plans to develop relevant skills and knowledge to drive the development of your own cancer research ideas.
- Evidence of balancing other commitments e.g. clinical, teaching and supervision activities.
- Having started to develop leadership skills.
- Effective communication skills across different audiences.

The Fellowship is open to candidates at all stages in their research career, with a key factor being an interest in pursuing research in addition to a clinical career. The Fellowship committee will use the above points in conjunction with other specifications to make the award decisions. See Appendix 1 for detailed person specifications.

Application Process

The 2025 TJ fellowship recruitment window opens on **09 April 2026** and closes on **10 May 2026** Applicants will be asked to submit through the KCL portal linked here. The Fellowship start date aims to be in **August 2025**, however can be flexible for applicants coming out of programme. Shortlisted candidates will be invited to interview with the TJ Fellowship committee (date to be shared post application closing).

If you would like to apply for the Tessa Jowell Fellowship, please see the attached application form and person specification. If you need further guidance on the fellowship or the application process – please contact camille.goetz@tessajowellbcm.org.

Appendix 1 – Person Specification

Education/Qualifications	**How measured** *(application form, interview, test, presentation, references, occupational health)*
Essential • Basic medical degree and evidence of suitability for higher medical training. Broad knowledge of general internal medicine with MRCP or equivalent. • Applicants should be near to gaining their certificate of completion of training in neurology. • Eligible for full GMC registration. **Desirable** • Intercalated honours degree and/or additional qualifications e.g. MSc/PhD etc. • Demonstration of the potential for scientific independence and the ability to contribute to a research team. • Evidence of commitment to neurology care of neuro-oncology patients.	Application form
Experience	
Essential • Training in diagnosis and management of the types of neurological problems faced by neuro-oncology patients, e.g. epilepsy, headache, stroke, cognitive dysfunction, complications of cancer treatment. • Demonstration of acquisition of neuro-oncology-related knowledge and skills needed by neurologists. **Desirable** • Experience of neuro-oncology during neurology training e.g. by doing a neuro-oncology rotation, inpatient care or ward referrals, case presentations.	Application form/interview
Skills/Abilities/Knowledge	
Essential	Application form/interview

• Experience in the management of neurology as it relates to neuro-oncology e.g. epilepsy, headache, complications of cancer treatment. • Evidence of team working skills. • Evidence of leadership potential. **<u>Desirable</u>** • Experience and knowledge of clinical trial methodology.	
Educational and Personal Aspects	
<u>Essential</u> • Demonstration of understanding, and commitment to, a career in neuro-oncology. • Indication of medium and long-term career goals. • Demonstration of educational reasons for applying for the TJ fellowship.	Application form/interview