

University of Aberdeen Rowett Institute officially opens superb new facility



The University of Aberdeen Rowett Institute is arguably the UK's leading research centre for food and nutrition and currently has the greatest concentration of nutrition researchers in the UK. Throughout its long and proud history it has made a significant impact on animal health and human nutrition.

The Institute recently entered an exciting new era with the completion of a new building on the University's health campus at Foresterhill, Aberdeen; after over 100 years on its original site, this represented a really major change for all concerned. Spread over six floors and with a total floor space of around 10,000 square metres, the building was one of the most complex projects ever undertaken by the University. It is designed to manage the demands of a variety of busy and complex laboratory environments as well as providing a pleasant and welcoming working ambiance. One of the very special areas in the building is the Human Nutrition Unit, which is unparalleled in the UK for its facilities. Specialist dietetic staff are able to prepare bespoke meals for volunteers and serve them in the light and airy volunteers' dining room. Several en-suite bedrooms and a body composition measurement suite enable the most demanding of studies can be undertaken in the Unit. State of the art research laboratories are complimented by superb analytical equipment.

This fantastic new building was officially opened by HRH The Duchess of Rothesay, Chancellor of the University, on Wednesday 18th January. Her Royal Highness was met by The Lord Provost of Aberdeen on arrival and then enjoyed a tour of the facilities hosted by Professor Sir Ian Diamond, Principal of the University and Professor Peter Morgan, Director of the Rowett. Her Royal Highness met several research staff and heard about some of the innovative research being undertaken, including that by Dr Alex Johnstone on weight loss strategies that enabled Marks & Spencers plc to formulate their 'Fuller for Longer' range (now called 'Balanced for you'). Dr Jacqueline Wallace presented some of her own research looking at the role of maternal nutrition in determining birthweight and lifelong health. Dr Wallace's findings have identified that a mother's weight at conception determines the size of the placenta and therefore the baby, and that remaining weight-stable during the child-bearing period reduces the risk of abnormal birthweight in subsequent pregnancies. Professor Julian Mercer and Dr Dan Powell talked to Her Royal Highness about the potential to reduce sugar intake by changing preferences by repeated flavour exposure and changing habits. Much of this research has been funded by the Scottish Government, who also provided a substantial amount of funding towards the building itself.

Her Royal Highness was also introduced to Ian Gourlay, one of the Rowett's longest-serving volunteers, who has taken part in fifteen studies to date. Volunteers are essential to the Rowett's research and it is important to recognise their contribution.

If you are interested in finding out more about the work of the Rowett Institute they have three short videos available on [their web site](#) which give an insight into some of their work and facilities.