

PRESS RELEASE**Date :20th January 2012****Penarth pupils step into the world of business**

Sixth form science students from Stanwell school in Penarth had a taste of science in action when they visited Cardiff Medicentre on Friday.

Based in the grounds of the University of Wales Hospital, Cardiff Medicentre is a business incubator for promising early-stage life sciences companies. It has helped nurture successful businesses like the pharmaceutical company Q-Chip which recently raised £3.6m in funding, as well as the laboratory testing company Tricho-Tech which was acquired for £11.25m and the healthcare consultancy business Cardiff Research Consortium which was bought by outsourcing giant Capita Group plc for £11.6m.

During their visit, the students were introduced to some of the current Cardiff Medicentre tenants who rent offices and laboratories in the purpose-built facility, and who benefit from the Cardiff Medicentre's support in turning ideas into successful products and services.

The visit, which was part of Cardiff Medicentre's Young Innovators programme, demonstrated the benefits of extending classroom learning into commercial environments.

The students tested their skills in measuring the dimensions of an unborn baby using scanning equipment developed by Medaphor to help train sonographers. Across the corridor from Medaphor, the students visited the lab of medical instruments company Asalus and tried out the company's innovative laparoscopic tools, complete with sound effects. In between demonstrations, the students learned from other entrepreneurs based at the Cardiff Medicentre, as well as Dr Chris Pepper, a Haematology expert and former pupil of St Cyres in Penarth, about the opportunities science offers.

Dr Mark Bowman, Director of Innovation at Cardiff Medicentre says, "We were really keen to give these students an insight into how scientists can become successful business people. The life sciences sector contributes £1.3bn to the Welsh economy each year, employing 15,000 people and it's a hugely exciting field in which to be involved."

Interest in the sciences subjects at school is on the up with Stanwell reporting something of a science renaissance. Over the last couple of years it has introduced extra A Level options in Human Biology as well as Applied Science, a more accessible science-based subject.

"I think students are pretty savvy these days," says Dr Bowman. "Many are realising that jobs that produce something useful and difficult to copy are the way forward."

As the economy looks set to become increasingly reliant on small businesses like the ones based at Cardiff Medicentre, those coordinating the Young Innovators programme are hoping that these budding scientists from Stanwell will soon be running companies of their own.

“I hope these students will go on to consider working for technology start-ups as an alternative to more traditional graduate roles in large, established employers,” says Dr Bowman. “With youth entrepreneurship now a key policy objective in Wales, we think we have given the students an appreciation of the hard work and dedication that is involved in setting up a new life sciences company, and of the opportunities these sorts of businesses can present.”

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Editors Notes:

About the Cardiff Medicentre

Cardiff Medicentre is a dedicated Medical, Healthcare, and Life Sciences business incubator, located on the University Hospital of Wales campus. The latter extends across 53 acres, provides a working base for over 4,000 people and is home to Cardiff University's School of Medicine.

The Cardiff Medicentre was established in 1991, and was the first incubator of its kind in the United Kingdom. It provides high quality office and laboratory accommodation comprising of 32 units ranging from 284sq ft to 1,045 sq ft. Low-cost desk leasing facilities are also available to encourage entrepreneurs to enter the Cardiff Medicentre community whilst writing business plans and raising finance.

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