Professor Caroline Dive, CBE, is internationally renowned for advancing circulating biomarker research, with a strong focus on circulating tumour cells (CTCs), particularly in lung cancer. She leads the Manchester Cancer Centre for Biomarker Sciences (over 100 staff) at the Cancer Research UK Manchester Institute, coordinating activities of scientists, bioinformaticians and clinicians. She has validated and implemented pharmacodynamic, prognostic and predictive biomarkers in clinical trials, working in tandem with clinical researchers and the Christie NHS Foundation Trust Cancer Treatment Centre. She developed unique xenotransplantation models using CTCs enriched from small cell lung cancer patients’ blood samples, providing a fully tractable system for therapy testing and understanding drug resistance mechanisms, a landmark development in the field.

Professor Michael R. Speicher, is Professor of Human Genetics and Head of the Institute of Human Genetics at the Medical University of Graz in Austria. For many years Dr. Speicher studied chromosome structure and morphology using various molecular cytogenetic approaches. His current research is focused on hereditary tumor syndromes, the contribution of germline and somatic genomic variants to cancer, and liquid biopsies.

Professor Thomas Würdinger studied molecular biology in Amsterdam and received his PhD in Utrecht, focusing on oncolytic viruses. He spent 3 years as postdoctoral fellow at Harvard Medical School. Currently he is professor at the Cancer Center Amsterdam where he works on the preclinical developments of new therapies and diagnostics directed against brain cancer, with potential spin-off for other tumor types. To advance cancer diagnostics in the field of liquid biopsies he studied exosomes and platelets as carriers of RNA biomarkers, this has resulted in the formation of thromboDx BV and Exbiome BV.

Dr. Martin Sprick heads the group Experimental Oncology at the HI-STEM institute at the DKFZ. His research is focused on the discovery of drug-resistance mechanisms in cancer, identification of markers for patient stratification and fundamental mechanisms that determine cancer evolution and aggressiveness. He is active in the development of novel pre-clinical models for various cancer entities.