

Biofocus DPI

case study     pharmaceutical sector

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Senior Vice President

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Biofocus DPI

accelerating drug discovery



BioFocus DPI, based at Chesterford Research Park near Saffron Walden in Essex, is the leading contract research organisation in the UK for drug discovery and one of the top five laboratories in this field in the world. BioFocus DPI performs early stage research in the design of selective drugs and helps clients accelerate the discovery process by rapidly identifying and validating drug targets.

The company is a research partner to a number of different organisations around the world, including pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies, patient foundations and charities which focus on specific diseases such as cystic fibrosis, Huntington's disease and cancer.

Biofocus DPI has made major investments in advanced technologies and research tools that other companies can use on an outsourced basis. As Senior Vice President Dr Chris Newton explains, structural biology is a good example of outsourcing, where investing in the specialist skills and equipment needed to research the structure of proteins would prove too expensive for many organisations.

"Renting the resources from BioFocus DPI is a much more cost-effective option," he says. "Our partners also benefit from our ability to provide an integrated service that brings together the work of chemists who make new molecules, biologists who test the molecules and pharmacokinetic specialists who study how the body interacts with drugs. This combination of disciplines ensures an efficient, cost-effective project."

BioFocus DPI represents the high end of drug discovery research and Essex has the right technology profile to support this knowledge-based company. "We're in the Cambridge cluster here," says Chris Newton. "There's a community of scientists and life science companies in the area and that's very important to our business. We get a major benefit from being so close to Cambridge and its infrastructure."

From a recruitment perspective, the proximity of so many pharmaceutical-related companies means there is a large pool of highly-qualified people within easy travelling distance.

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Northern Essex is also conveniently situated for a team that must travel to meet clients and partners. Collaboration is key to the success of BioFocus DPI and the company works with academic institutions and other pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies. "Our scientists have to attend meetings in Cambridge, London and Oxford," says Chris Newton. "The rail and road infrastructure makes UK travel straightforward. As we are part of Galapagos, we are flying regularly to other group sites in Europe and North America, as well as partner companies around the world. Having London Stansted Airport and London City Airport so close by is a real bonus."

Essex provides global knowledge-based companies like BioFocus DPI with the mix of location, quality of life they need to attract and retain high-calibre research staff. It also has the infrastructure to support a high level of national and international mobility.



INVEST Essex provides confidential advice and practical support to companies wanting to establish a presence or expand in the UK. We promote Essex as an outstanding business destination and help existing and potential investors make the most of our strategic location, thriving business environment, and quality of life.

Tel: 01245 702480 **Email:** contact@investessex.co.uk **www.investessex.co.uk**

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