

# The Welsh academic turned life sciences entrepreneur worth nearly £400m following stock market float

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A Welsh academic turned entrepreneur has amassed a paper fortune of nearly £400m from the flotation of life sciences firm Exscientia.

Professor Andrew Hopkins, originally from Neath and the first member of his family to go to university, has made a paper fortune from the listing of Oxford-based artificial intelligence drug discovery firm Exscientia through a flotation on New York's Nasdaq stock exchange.

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Following its debut on Friday shares in the company soared 32% to \$29 in early trading – valuing the company at \$3.7bn, before falling back to \$27.

Prof Hopkins, one of the most distinguished and cited scientists in modern drug discovery, set up the company in 2012 as a spinout from the Dundee University.

The 49-year-old owns 18.6 million shares, giving him a 15.8% stake of the company. However, the chief executive of Exscientia has no plans to divest his equity interest.

At close of trading of Friday his stake was worth £370m, making him one of Wales' richest people.

He was educated at Dwr-y-Felin Comprehensive School and Neath College. His first summer job at the age of 16 was in the British Steel labs at Port Talbot steelworks. He was the first in his family to attend university when he was awarded a scholarship from British Steel to attend Manchester University, where he gained a first class degree in chemistry in 1993.

After graduate research at Wadham College Oxford he attained doctorate in molecular biophysics for his work on anti-HIV drug design, which led him to join Pfizer.

After a decade with Pfizer after he joined the University of Dundee in 2007, where a new drug discovery unit had been established.

Exscientia uses artificial intelligence to allow it to take much less time and money to discover new blockbuster drugs. It automatically analyses patients' genetic data and finds molecules that could be used in new medication.

Prof Hopkins is an honorary chair of medicinal informatics at

Dundee University's School of Life Sciences.

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