June 2020

Thank you for contacting me about cancer treatments during the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic.

I completely understand and share your concerns – conditions like cancer have not just disappeared because of Covid-19 and it is crucial that treatment can continue safely and in a timely manner. That sentiment is shared by ministers across Government, including the Prime Minister and Health Secretary, who have repeatedly made clear that the NHS remains open to care for patients beyond Covid-19.

The NHS is adapting how it runs its cancer services to ensure the safety of both patients and staff. Cancer specialists are discussing with their patients the potential risks to them, either through undergoing or to delay treatment at this time.

A letter has also been issued to NHS trusts, which sets out that local systems and cancer alliances must continue to identify ring-fenced diagnostic and surgical capacity for cancer and providers must protect and deliver cancer surgery and cancer treatment by ensuring that cancer surgery ‘hubs’ are fully operational. NHS England has also published guidance and supported the development of these hubs for cancer surgery. Out of the 21 cancer alliance areas across England, hubs have already been developed for 18 and will soon be in place for all.

The NHS is working to bring cancer treatment back to pre-pandemic levels at the earliest possibility to minimise potential harm and to reduce the scale of the post-pandemic surge in demand. The NHS has responded brilliantly to Covid-19, and, thanks to social distancing, we have managed to protect it from becoming overwhelmed. It is now time to get the rest of the NHS going again, and that work is underway.

Locally, the NHS has contracted a large number of beds in private hospitals where it hopes to conduct cancer treatment going forward.

Thank you for taking the time to contact me.

Yours faithfully,

**CHRIS HEATON-HARRIS MP**

**MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR DAVENTRY**