



Chris Heaton-Harris
Member of Parliament for Daventry
House of Commons, London SW1A
0AA
Tel: 020 7219 7048

February 2021

Dear Constituent,

Thank you very much for contacting me about improving outcomes for cancer sufferers.

Cancer is a priority for the Government and survival rates are at a record high. Since 2010 rates of survival from cancer have increased year-on-year. Around 7,000 people are alive today who would not have been had mortality rates stayed the same as then.

In October 2018 measures were announced that are being rolled out across the country with the aim of seeing three quarters of all cancers detected at an early stage by 2028 (currently just over half are detected at an early stage). The plan sees the overhauling of screening programmes, provides new investment in state-of-the-art technology to transform the process of diagnosis, and boosts research and innovation. This is part of the NHS Long Term Plan, published in January 2019, and forms part of how the Government will achieve its ambition to see 55,000 more people surviving cancer for five years in England each year from 2028.

The 2015 Cancer Strategy for England, prepared by the independent Cancer Taskforce, set out a vision of what cancer patients should expect from the health service: effective prevention; prompt and effective diagnosis; informed choice and convenient care; access to the best effective treatments with minimal side-effects; always knowing what is going on and why; holistic support; and the best possible quality of life, including at the end of life.

NHS England has confirmed funding of over £600 million to support delivery of the Cancer Strategy for England. £200 million of this funding was used in 2017 and 2018 on a transformation fund for Cancer Alliances to encourage local areas to find new and innovative ways to diagnose cancer earlier, improve the care for those living with cancer and ensure each cancer patient gets the right care for them.

I fully understand the importance of screening and the difference early diagnosis can make for cancer survival rates. Professor Sir Mike Richard's Review on Adult Screening, which was published last year, included a range of recommendations on using technology to increase screening attendance such as a national roll-out of SMS reminders. NHSX is currently undertaking an end-to-end digital transformation of the national screening programme in England, starting with screening for breast cancer. It is also taking forward an interim cervical screening call/recall programme.

I understand that some patients with cancer are concerned about the impact the disease will have on their own finances, and I would like to assure you that minimising the impact of cancer is a priority for the Government. The Healthcare Travel Costs Scheme provides families eligible for the NHS Low Income Scheme with support to fund travel costs to hospital or NHS facilities for diagnostic tests or treatment, after referral. My colleagues in the Department of Health and Social



Chris Heaton-Harris
Member of Parliament for Daventry
House of Commons, London SW1A
oAA
Tel: 020 7219 7048

Care work with colleagues across Government, including the Department of Work and Pensions, to ensure that patients with long term illnesses are supported in the workplace and at home.

I congratulate Cancer Research UK on all campaigns to raise awareness of the importance of early diagnosis. I know that the NHS Long Term Plan focuses on the need for early and speedy diagnosis, to give patients the best chances of long term survival, and I wholeheartedly support this commitment.

I support Government commitments to train and recruit 25% more doctors and nurses every year. That is roughly 1,500 more doctors, and 5,000 more nurses being trained on the NHS and the Government is working closely with universities to ensure that our higher education sector is prepared to train a new generation of recruits. Additionally, I am happy to say that there are over 50,000 nurses already in training, and the introduction of the new Nursing Degree Apprenticeship and nursing associate roles will significantly bolster the nursing workforce in the short term, as we continue to build an NHS workforce for the future.

I hope you join me in welcoming the announcement of an additional £33.9 billion investment in the NHS by 2023/24. This will significantly support its efforts to improve cancer services.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Yours faithfully,

CHRIS HEATON-HARRIS MP
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR DAVENTRY