



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

October 2023

Dear Constituent,

Thank you for contacting me about research into and treatment for dementia.

An estimated one million people will be living with dementia by 2025, so research is crucial to understanding the condition and improving outcomes for those affected. I was proud to stand on a manifesto that committed to doubling dementia research funding and finding a cure for dementia.

In memory of the late Dame Barbara Windsor, the Government launched a new mission in 2022 to put this into practice. Research funding for dementia will rise to a total of £160 million a year by 2024, with an additional £95 million being provided to increase clinical trials and research projects.

A new taskforce – made up of industry, the NHS, academia and families affected by dementia – will lead this work to allocate funding. You can register your interest to take part through the Join Dementia Research website here:

<https://www.joindementiaresearch.nihr.ac.uk/>

The Government has announced its intention to develop and publish a Major Conditions Strategy. The strategy will set out a strong and coherent policy agenda that sets out a shift to integrated, whole-person care. Interventions set out in the strategy will aim to alleviate pressure on the health system, as well as support the Government's objective to increase healthy life expectancy and reduce ill-health related labour market inactivity. Dementia is one of the six major conditions included in the strategy.

On the 17th May, the Government launched its call for evidence for the Major Conditions Strategy which ran until 27th June. The Government is analysing responses and will respond shortly.

I am greatly encouraged by the clinical trial results for Lecanemab and Donanemab, the first drugs of their kind to demonstrate a reduction in the rate of decline in people's memory and thinking in clinical trials. These findings will bring hope to the many thousands of people affected by dementia, and I look forward to receiving further updates about the development of these drugs. Research conducted and funded by medical research charities is critical to discovering new treatments and interventions for diseases like dementia, and I congratulate Alzheimer's Research for the work that has led to these findings.

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Due to the impact of the pandemic, the estimated dementia diagnosis rate fell below the national target for the first time since 2016. While the rate has recovered slightly since the early part of the pandemic, there is more to do if we are to reach the national target for two thirds of people with dementia to be formally diagnosed. In 2021-22, £17 million was made available to Clinical Commissioning Groups to address dementia waiting lists and increase the number of diagnoses, which I hope will have an impact in our local area.

In December 2022, the recovery of the dementia diagnosis rate to the national ambition of 66.7% was included in the NHS priorities and operational planning guidance as part of the refined mental health objectives for 2023/24. This reinforces dementia as a key priority for NHS England and provides a clear direction for integrated care boards to support delivery of timely diagnoses within systems.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Chris'.

CHRIS HEATON-HARRIS MP
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR DAVENTRY