



December 2021

Dear Constituent,

Thank you for contacting me about cancer treatment during the coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic.

The Government is absolutely committed to supporting the NHS recovery from Covid-19, which will help to reduce waiting times for cancer treatment and care.

Waiting lists will be tackled with the biggest catch-up programme in the NHS's history and I am reassured that cancer patients will continue to be prioritised. I especially welcome the doubling of spending this year, to £2 billion, to start this important work. More than £8 billion will be spent in the following three years from 2022-23 to 2024-25.

Cancer patients will absolutely benefit from these commitments, which could deliver the equivalent of around nine million more checks, scans and procedures. It will also mean the NHS in England can aim to deliver around 30% more elective activity by 2024-25 than it did before the pandemic. £500 million in capital funding has been invested for extra theatre capacity and productivity-boosting technology, to increase the number of surgeries able to take place.

Additionally, I welcome the commitment of £2.3 billion in the 2021 Spending Review to transform diagnostic services. This will support the opening of at least 100 community diagnostic centres across England benefitting millions of patients who will be able to access earlier diagnostic tests closer to home.

The Government has committed to building a bigger, better trained NHS workforce. In 2020/21, £260 million was provided to continue to support commitments made in the NHS Long Term Plan, of which £52 million was provided to Health Education England to invest in the cancer and diagnostics workforce.

It is encouraging that the 2021 Spending Review reaffirmed the Government's commitments to recruiting 50,000 more nurses, providing hundreds of millions of pounds of additional funding over the next four years.

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. I agree that we need to keep working on this, which is why I welcome the Government's stated aim to see three quarters of all cancers detected at an early stage by 2028 (currently just over half are detected at an early stage). The plan will overhaul screening programmes, provide new investment in state-of-the-art technology to transform the process of diagnosis, and boost 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



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each year from 2028. I will continue to support the Government and the NHS to deliver on this, despite the ongoing coronavirus pandemic.

The NHS Long Term Plan (LTP), published during 2019, outlined a number of new measures for catching cancer early and providing treatment, with the aim that from 2028, 55,000 more people each year will survive their cancer for at least five years after diagnosis. One of the measures outlined in the plan is safer and more precise treatment, including advanced radiotherapy techniques and immunotherapies to continue to support improvements in survival rates. This will be supported by a £130 million upgrade of radiotherapy machines across England, including £32 million to replace 17 Linear Accelerators aged over 10 years by the end of March 2022, as well as commissioning the NHS new state-of-the-art Proton Beam facilities in London and Manchester.

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