



Tim Farron MP

MP for Westmorland and Lonsdale
House of Commons, Westminster, SW1A 0AA

Rt Hon Sajid Javid MP

Department of Health and Social Care
39 Victoria Street
London
SW1H 0EU

Monday 9th May 2022

Dear Secretary of State,

As members of the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Radiotherapy, we write to ask that you meet with us to discuss the urgent need for an increase in treatment capacity, particularly to radiotherapy services, to tackle the national cancer backlog. We also hope to aid your Department to fulfil the ambitions of the 10-year cancer plan.

We feel that you will be shocked to hear about the technological solutions in radiotherapy that could, if set free from the bureaucracy holding them back, have an immediate and dramatic impact on cancer outcomes.

Cancer experts from the Institute of Cancer Policy warn that the backlog could be as high as 87,000-100,000 cancer patients. Despite tremendous effort from the NHS during the pandemic to maintain cancer treatment and services, our resources have been strained and the backlog is unsolved. Many cancers become incurable if left untreated – every 4 weeks of delay leads to a 10% reduction in survival.

Radiotherapy is the closest thing we have to a “silver bullet” against the cancer backlog. It is needed in 40% of all cancer cures, and is the most cost-effective of cancer treatments, curing patients for as little as £3,000-£7,000. It is also Covid-safe and can substitute for surgery to reduce waiting lists.

Despite this, radiotherapy currently only receives 5% of the cancer budget. Only 27% of UK cancer patients receive radiotherapy, which lags dramatically behind international standards of 53-60%. The recent House of Commons Health and Social Care Select Committee report into Cancer services put into sharp focus the many problems which hold radiotherapy back. Not only does a significant number of the population live outside of the recommended 45-minute travel radius of their nearest radiotherapy centre, but half of trusts are also using machines older than the 10-year maximum lifespan.

As members of the APPG for Radiotherapy, we are working with frontline radiotherapy professionals who have a unique perspective which can help to dramatically improve cancer outcomes. We hope that you will be agreeable to the suggested meeting and can see the urgency in this situation and our proposed solutions which, if implemented, will prevent thousands of unnecessary deaths from cancer.

Yours Sincerely,

Tim Farron MP

Chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Radiotherapy

Grahame Morris MP

Vice-Chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Radiotherapy

Apsana Begum MP	John Spellar MP
Dr Caroline Lucas MP	Kim Johnson MP
Chris Bryant MP	Dr Lisa Cameron MP
Daisy Cooper MP	Margaret Ferrier MP
Dan Carden MP	Martyn Day MP
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Emma Lewell-Buck MP	Paul Girvan MP
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Greg Smith MP	Baroness Golding