



Department
of Health &
Social Care

From Helen Whately MP
Minister of State for Care

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The Rt Hon Sir George Howarth MP
By email to: george.howarth.mp@parliament.uk

30 November 2022

Dear Sir George,

Thank you for your correspondence of 24 November on behalf of a number of your constituents, about pancreatic cancer.

I am grateful to you for raising your constituents' concerns.

The NHS England Cancer Programme's key approach to improving survival rates for cancer, including pancreatic cancer, is earlier diagnosis. One of the principal priorities, as set out in the *NHS Long Term Plan*, is to increase the proportion of cancers diagnosed at stages 1 and 2 to 75 per cent by 2028.

The NHS's Help Us Help You campaign has focused on the barriers to earlier diagnosis across all cancer types and aimed to address some of the underlying challenges. This phase of the campaign ran during March and June and in both months saw a 1,600 per cent increase in the number of visits to the NHS website's cancer symptoms page. NHS England's plans include repeating the abdominal and urological symptoms campaign, which addresses symptoms relevant to bladder cancer.

The NHS is undertaking a systematic review of tumour sites that typically present late, to identify further opportunities to improve cancer diagnosis and save lives. A recent review of pancreatic cancer has highlighted new opportunities to improve earlier diagnosis rates among people with new-onset diabetes and those with hereditary risk factors. These reviews will be used to develop plans to improve earlier diagnosis among the less survivable cancers.

The NHS has allocated £10million to innovations to support earlier and more efficient diagnosis, including the PinPoint blood test and a new genetic test that can be used as a 'liquid biopsy' for those with suspected pancreatic cancer.

We have committed our support to the Less Survivable Cancers Taskforce. This radical partnership is targeting cancers with stubbornly poor survival rates – specifically lung, liver, brain, oesophagus, pancreas and stomach cancers.

Yours,

HELEN WHATELY