



Department
of Health &
Social Care

From Will Quince MP
Minister of State for Health and Secondary Care

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

20 July 2023

Dear Sir George,

Thank you for your correspondence of 4 July on behalf of a number of your constituents about pancreatic cancer.

As you know, the Government announced on 24 January that it will publish a major conditions strategy. The strategy will bring together the six major conditions that contribute most to morbidity and mortality across the population in England. It will focus on delivering better, joined-up and holistic care to address the needs of patients as a whole, rather than focusing on one illness at a time. The strategy's interim report will be published before autumn.

We recognise that early diagnosis is key to improving survival rates and are working with the NHS to improve diagnosis and treatment for those with cancer, including pancreatic cancer. One of the principal priorities 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 has allocated £10 million 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.

NHS England has also commissioned five new cancer clinical audits to build the evidence base, increase the consistency of access to treatment, and bring about improvements in cancer treatment and outcomes for patients. The audits will cover pancreatic cancer, ovarian cancer, non-Hodgkin lymphoma, kidney cancer, and primary and metastatic breast cancer. All five audits will cover care delivered in England and Wales and will see an investment of around £5.4 million for an initial period of three years.

The Royal College of Surgeons began work on the pancreatic cancer clinical audit in October, with the first outcomes expected during this financial year. The aim of this audit is to provide regular information to cancer services about where care in England and Wales varies. This will support NHS services to make access to treatment more consistent, help quality improvement initiatives, and improve cancer detection, treatment and outcomes for patients, including survival rates.

We have committed our support to the Less Survivable Cancers Taskforce, which targets cancers with stubbornly poor survival rates. This radical partnership is targeting pancreas, lung, liver, brain, oesophagus and stomach cancers, and is raising awareness of less-

survivable cancers so that more people understand their symptoms and go to see their GP if they have concerns.

Pancreatic Cancer UK is part of the Cancer52 alliance, with which we have regular conversations and will continue to do so going forward.

I hope this reply is helpful.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Will Quince', written in a cursive style.

**WILL QUINCE MP
MINISTER OF STATE**