



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

11th March 2020

Jean Confortant,

RE: BLOOD CANCER.

Thank you for your recent correspondence in respect of blood cancer; your comments upon which I have read with great interest.

I am afraid I was unable to attend the event you kindly invited me to, owing to longstanding parliamentary commitments, but with around 13,000 people dying from leukaemia, lymphoma, or myeloma each year across the UK, please allow me to assure you that improving outcomes for patients diagnosed with blood cancers remains a key NHS priority, and one I continue to follow closely.

Early diagnosis of blood cancers can be difficult with symptoms - for example back pain, bruising, or tiredness - often misdiagnosed. That is why I am glad that guidance for clinicians on diagnosing blood cancer has been set out by the National Institute for Health & Care Excellence (NICE). Whilst I support these moves to raise awareness of the symptoms and welcome the NICE guidance, I am also delighted that £200 million has been announced in transformation funding to encourage new and innovative ways to diagnose cancer earlier, which will help to speed up diagnosis.

Stem cell transplants are also a key treatment for blood cancers, with over 2,000 people a year across the UK requiring a bone marrow or stem cell transplant. As such, I am pleased that a unified UK stem cell registry has been established - the Anthony Nolan and NHS Stem Cell Registry - streamlining the provision of stem cells for transplant. This has helped increase the number of registered blood stem cell donors from 770,000 in 2010, to over 1.4 million as of 2017.

The 'NHS Long Term Plan', published in January 2019, commits to improving detection, with more targeted screening and rapid access diagnostic centres, so that in 10 years' time these measures will help achieve 55,000 more people surviving cancer each year.

I am confident that continued investment into ways of diagnosing blood cancers earlier, as well as increasing the pool of available stem cell donors, will help to drive up survival rates of leukaemia, lymphoma, and myeloma even further.

Once again, thank you for having taken the time to contact me and if I can ever be of any further assistance to you then please do not hesitate to contact me again.

With best wishes,

TOM PURSGLOVE MP
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT
CORBY & EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE