



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

26th February 2024

Dear Conthrent,

RE: RADIOTHERAPY

Thank you for your recent correspondence in respect of the #CatchUpWithCancer campaign and access to radiotherapy treatment. I have read your comments with interest.

First, thank you for your kind invitation to attend the APPG on Radiotherapy event held on the 6th February 2024. Unfortunately, owing to prior, longstanding diary commitments, I was unable to attend, although please rest assured that I will continue to follow the issues raised closely.

The Prime Minister has made it clear that one of the top priorities for the Government is to see waiting lists for cancer treatment and care, including radiotherapy, significantly reduced over the next few years. During 2023, the Government provided funding to help recover cancer services, and a plan that outlines how that funding will be spent effectively.

It is right that this funding comes with high expectations for reducing cancer waiting times. The NHS has set an ambition for 75 percent of patients who have been urgently referred by their GP for suspected cancer to be diagnosed, or have cancer ruled out, within 28 days. Some progress is being made towards diagnosing patients earlier, with the NHS meeting the Faster Diagnosis Standard for suspected cancer for the first time in February 2023. However, more progress is needed, given the APPG on Radiotherapy's recent report has highlighted that just 17 NHS providers in England are meeting the target for patients to start radiotherapy treatment within 31 days.

Tackling major conditions that cause ill-health - including cancer - provides an opportunity to improve the lives of millions of people. That is why a 'Major Conditions Strategy' is being developed to outline how outcomes in six major condition areas will be improved, including all cancers.

In the meantime, I understand that the payment arrangements for radiotherapy have been reviewed to ensure providers can increase access to new treatments and upgrade and replace equipment. These arrangements came into effect in April 2023. Reinforced by £6 billion of capital investment in the 2021 Spending Review, the NHS is also gradually reducing the number of linear accelerators aged 10 years or over.

The Government is also implementing a delivery plan for tackling the elective care backlogs caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Ministers will spend more than £8 billion between now and 2024-25 to drive up elective activity, including cancer diagnosis and treatment. On top of this, £21 million of funding has been announced to roll-out AI across the NHS, which will help to improve diagnosis and to reduce waiting times for cancer care.



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,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Tom Pursglove', written over a horizontal line.

**TOM PURSGLOVE MP
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT
CORBY & EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE**