



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

15th March 2024

Dear Contribute,

RE: BREAST CANCER

Thank you for your recent correspondence in respect of your concerns about breast cancer. I have read your comments carefully and with interest.

First, thank you for your kind invitation to attend Breast Cancer Now's parliamentary drop-in event held on Wednesday 28th February. 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.

Please be assured that the Government is committed to ensuring that breast cancer is diagnosed as early as is possible. As part of the 2021 Spending Review, £2.3 billion was allocated to improve diagnostic capacity over the following three years. Through this investment, Community Diagnostic Centres are being established, including a new one in Corby that I campaigned for, to provide one-stop-shops for checks, scans and tests, helping those with suspected breast cancer to access earlier diagnostic tests closer to home.

The NHS's Breast Screening Programme in England offers all women between the ages of 50 and 70 the opportunity to be screened every three years for breast cancer. These screenings play a key part in the early diagnosis of breast cancer, and preventing approximately 1,300 women dying each year.

I fully recognise the urgency of Breast Cancer Now's campaign to increase the recovery and uptake of breast screening services. It is particularly disappointing to see the NHS figures for 2022/23, which show a reduction in the number of women who were invited for breast screening and who took up the invitation compared to 2021/22.

In response to these trends, NHS England has developed an internal national plan to improve uptake within the breast screening programme. Over the next few months, NHS England will also be conducting research to better understand the reasons why women do not attend screenings, so that any barriers to uptake can be addressed. These projects are expected to report findings by April 2024.

I understand that several steps are being taken to improve breast cancer screening rates in the United Kingdom. Through the 'Women's Health Strategy', £10 million of funding has been provided to expand capacity for breast screening through the delivery of 29 new breast cancer screening units, 58 remote access upgrades, and nearly 70 life-saving service upgrades.



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', with a horizontal line underneath.

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