



September 2020

Dear Constituent,

Thank you for contacting me about pancreatic cancer treatment timelines.

We all know someone close to us who has been affected by cancer. Sadly, pancreatic cancer is a common form of cancer with a higher mortality rate than others. Thus tackling this disease is a top priority for the Government.

In 2017 Public Health England launched 'Be Clear on Cancer', a campaign targeted at identifying symptoms of pancreatic cancer earlier – early diagnosis is key to improving outcomes and in the NHS Long Term Plan published in January 2019 one of the priorities is to save 55,000 more lives each year by diagnosing more cancers early. This regional pilot included symptoms like persistent diarrhoea, bloating and discomfort. More than 90 per cent of the target audience reported that the campaign made them realise these symptoms could be a sign of something more serious. More than 80 per cent reported they were more likely to visit a GP as a result.

During 2020, NHS England is rolling out a new Faster Diagnostic Standard for all cancer patients, including those with suspected pancreatic cancer, which will see patients given a diagnosis or the all clear, within 28 days. The 31-day standard of decision to treat to undergoing first treatment will remain in place. However, this is an upper limit and clinical priority will always remain the main determinant of when a patient should be treated.

Additionally, the NHS Long Term Plan laid out plans to roll out Rapid Diagnosis Centres, designed to speed up cancer diagnosis and support ambitions to achieve earlier diagnosis. Building on 10 models piloted with Cancer Research UK and Macmillan, these centres will begin by focusing on diagnosing patients with non-specific symptoms and who may go to their GP many times before being sent for tests. They will offer a personal, accurate and fast diagnosis service, with excellent patient experience.

I share your ambition for faster treatment pathways across pancreatic and all types of cancer. My colleagues at DHSC are working hard to examine the work being done by clinicians to improve treatment timelines across the country.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.



**Chris Heaton-Harris**  
Member of Parliament for Daventry  
House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA  
Tel: 020 7219 7048

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Chris'.

**CHRIS HEATON-HARRIS MP**  
**MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR DAVENTRY**