



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

September 2021

Dear Constituent,

Thank you for contacting me about breast cancer. Please be assured that every effort is being made to continue raising awareness of breast cancer and to improve the treatment of all those diagnosed with this disease.

Breast cancer survival rates have improved remarkably over the last 40 years, with five-year survival rates for women at over 86%, up from just 53% in the 1970s. This is a testament to the efforts made to raise awareness of, and boost funding into tackling this disease, but more must be done.

Great efforts are being made to improve cancer services and to ensure that the NHS continues to provide some of the world's best cancer care. The NHS Long Term Plan (LTP), published in 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. Further, the LTP outlines that, where appropriate, every person diagnosed with all types of cancer, including those with secondary cancers, should have access to personalised care by March 2022.

I am aware that some NHS services, including screening appointments for breast cancer, have, in some areas, been necessarily slowed down or paused to enable resources to be used in the ongoing fight against coronavirus. While I know that this may be concerning, anybody who displays any symptoms, or has concerns, should still contact their GP.

The National Health Service 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, which is central to the Government's ambition of achieving world-class cancer outcomes. The NHS is trialling expanding compulsory screening to women aged between 47 and 73. This trial began in 2009 and is expected to run until the mid-2020s, until the NHS has sufficient information to understand its effectiveness.

With regard to after care, I am glad that the NHS is committed to ensuring that people live well with and beyond cancer, which remains a priority area within the Cancer Strategy. As I understand, NHS England are reviewing good practice approaches to reduce and manage the long term consequences of cancer treatments.

I completely understand concerns about the availability of breast reconstruction for women recovering from breast cancer. For many, this is an absolutely essential part of their recovery, and I am encouraged to hear that NHS England is working closely with local providers to ensure consistent care is available to all women in the country, in line with the guidance from the NHS's Clinical Expert Group for Breast Cancer. The NICE guidance on breast cancer contains detailed guidelines for breast reconstruction.



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As part of the annual £1 billion funding for the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) from the Government each year, £882 million has been spent on cancer research since 2010 through the NIHR, with annual spending on cancer research up by over £35 million since 2010. I also recognise the indispensable contribution made by charities in driving forward research into cancer, with Cancer Research UK alone spending £45 million on breast cancer over the last financial year.

While I understand that some trials have paused during the coronavirus pandemic, I welcome news that the NIHR and Clinical Research Network are working to support trials to restart, including through the NIHR's Framework for Restart.

I understand the frustration that Sacituzumab Govitecan, also known as Trodelvy, is not yet available in our country. We have moved closer to that point now that Trodelvy has been licensed through Project Orbis for use in the UK. The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) is responsible for developing guidance for individual medicines and following discussion with Gilead, the manufacturer of Trodelvy, NICE has been able to accelerate its appraisal and now expects to issue guidance in June 2022, with draft guidance expected in April 2022. I will continue to monitor this issue closely.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Yours faithfully,

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

CHRIS HEATON-HARRIS MP
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR DAVENTRY