June 2022

Thank you for contacting me about the Catch Up With Cancer Campaign.

As you point out, the Covid-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on waiting times for cancer diagnosis and treatment over the past two years.

Let me assure you that I share the commitment of the campaign to see waiting lists for cancer treatment and care to be reduced over the next few years and I have ensured that Ministerial colleagues are aware of the campaign and its calls to action.

In recent months, the Government has provided funding to help recover cancer services, and a plan that outlines how that funding will be spent effectively.

Last year it was announced that nearly £6 billion would be allocated towards capital investment for new beds, equipment and technology.  This funding will contribute towards expanding mobile diagnostics for cancer and upgrading MRI and screening technology.

The expansion of elective capacity will focus on rolling out new and innovative forms of radiotherapy to deliver treatment in a more targeted and intensive way, meaning cancer patients spend less time in hospital.

It is right that this funding comes with high expectations for reducing cancer waiting times.  By March 2024, the NHS has set an ambition for 75% of patients who have been urgently referred by their GP for suspected cancer to be diagnosed or have cancer ruled out within 28 days.

The Government is currently developing a new 10 Year Cancer Plan, which will consider access to cancer treatments, including radiotherapy.

I share the desire of the Catch Up With Cancer campaign to bring down cancer waiting times as soon as possible.

However, I could not support the proposed amendment to the Queen’s Speech, because the Government has already set out a clear plan with funding to eliminate the backlog of operations (including cancer treatment) over the next three years.  This includes targets to eliminate waits of longer than two years by July 2022, and one year by 2025.

I fully recognise that more must be done to support people waiting for cancer treatment, and I am grateful to the large number of patient groups like Radiotherapy UK who provide vital information, support and services to people with cancer and their families.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.



Yours faithfully,

**CHRIS HEATON-HARRIS MP**

**MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR DAVENTRY**