



Many constituents have written to me about cancer care and services.

Britain has made substantial progress on cancer but we still face big problems. Dedicated clinicians and NHS staff work to support patients and deliver quality care. But too many patients are waiting too long for treatment.

The Government's national cancer target - that 85% of patients should start treatment within 62 days of a GP referral - has been missed for over a year and the number of people waiting more than six weeks for key diagnostic tests is now five times higher than it was in May 2010. I have raised this issue directly with the Prime Minister as well as with Health ministers. Shockingly 1 in 4 bowel and lung cancer patients wait for longer than 62 days, often much longer. This reduces the chance of patients receiving successful treatment and creates stress and anxiety for thousands of patients and their families.

The NHS should have the best cancer survival rates in Europe. To do this we need to be improving early diagnosis, public awareness and screening programmes, and making sure that GPs have the training, resources and support they need to identify symptoms and refer patients quickly.

NICE has now published new guidance on improving early cancer diagnosis, with a view to saving thousands of lives a year. This is welcome news but this needs to be matched by investment.

At the General Election I stood on a manifesto that included commitments to improve early cancer diagnosis, to speed up waiting times for cancer test results, and to create a new Cancer Treatments Fund so that patients have access to the latest drugs, surgery and radiotherapy. As someone who has survived cancer I take this issue very seriously and I'll carry on standing up for this in Parliament.

Yours ever,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Fiona Mactaggart".

Fiona Mactaggart MP