



Tim Farron MP
Member of Parliament for Westmorland and Lonsdale
House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA

Will Quince MP
Minister for Health and Secondary Care
39 Victoria Street
London
SW1H 0EU

Thursday 23rd February 2022

Our Ref: TF23022023

Dear Minister,

Writing on the recommendation from the Chancellor, I am writing in my capacity as Chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Radiotherapy, to ask if you would be willing to meet with myself and leading radiotherapy industry professionals to discuss the currently untapped potential of high-tech radiotherapy technology to vastly improve cancer outcomes across the UK.

The APPG welcomed the recent announcement of the medical technology strategy, and the importance it placed on utilising innovative software for the long-term financial sustainability of the UK health system. However, for this to translate into a world-leading cancer service in this country, we need to properly capitalise on the solutions that smarter, faster radiotherapy medical technology can offer.

Radiotherapy is a highly cost-effective, modern and high-tech cancer treatment that is needed by 50% of cancer patients and in 40% of cancer cures. It is also internationally recognised as the “go-to” solution to tackle the cancer backlog and is incredibly cost-effective in typically treating patients for as little as £3k-£7k per patient. Other cancer treatment services, such as chemotherapy, treat patients for around £100k per patient.

The radiotherapy industry professionals represent a highly specialised and innovative workforce body who are leading the way with high-tech software and AI that can immediately relieve bottlenecks in workforce capacity, and technology that can drastically reduce treatment times and clear waiting lists. There is also a real opportunity to harness radiotherapy to help bring down cancer waiting times. I am sure you will have been as concerned as we are that the latest NHSE quarterly cancer treatment waiting time figures show that nearly 40% of cancer patients waited beyond 62 days for lifesaving treatment – over double the Government’s own target. International research shows that for every four weeks of delay in receiving cancer treatment, the chances of death for cancer patients can increase by 10% on average. Radiotherapy technology solutions can tackle these waiting times and reduce the cancer backlog.

However, despite its overwhelming advantages, radiotherapy has been historically overlooked and underfunded. It receives only 5% of the cancer budget and only 27% of UK cancer patients receive radiotherapy – this is in contrast to other countries, who meet the internationally recommended standards of around 53-60% of cancer patients benefitting from radiotherapy treatment. A meeting with yourself or a representative from the Department to discuss the important role of radiotherapy solutions within the medical technology strategy would be significantly valuable for patient outcomes in this country.

I look forward to working with you to discuss the immediate and cost-effective solutions that radiotherapy can offer.
Yours Sincerely,

Tim Farron MP
Chair of the APPG for Radiotherapy

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