

MARY GLINDON MP

MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR NORTH TYNESIDE

"I'm so proud to represent the amazing people of North Tyneside".



Radiotherapy 4 Life / #CatchUpWithCancer

Thank you for contacting me about the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on cancer services. I share your concern that cancer pathways have been affected and I agree with you that we need a fully resourced plan to address the growing backlog of unmet clinical need.

Estimates suggest more than 40,000 fewer people started cancer treatment last year, three million screenings were missed and there was a 39% drop in the number of key diagnostic tests carried out.

We should not have to choose between COVID-19 care and cancer care, yet for too many that has been the stark reality, and it means that an additional 4,500 avoidable cancer deaths are expected in 2021 because of pandemic disruptions.

Even before the pandemic, waiting times were rising and key cancer targets were repeatedly being missed. I remain concerned that years of NHS underfunding, cuts and understaffing weakened and exposed our health service as the pandemic hit. As a result, waiting lists for treatment now stand at a record 5.1 million, with over 385,000 patients waiting longer than a year.

At the Budget in March, the Chancellor missed a crucial opportunity to address the long-term funding needs of our health service. NHS staff, who have put their lives on the line, need the resources to rebuild our National Health Service. Instead, Ministers are cutting day-to-day health spending and they have proposed a real-terms pay cut for hardworking staff.

I believe the Government must prioritise patient care in the recovery from COVID-19. It is crucial that Ministers provide hospitals, our NHS staff, and patients with a fully resourced 10-year rescue plan.

More widely, the Royal College of Radiologists has warned that without the much needed investment in the workforce, NHS trusts across England will be unable to recover lost capacity or address growing backlogs. I believe the Government must put together a proper solution for recruitment and retention, starting with a guarantee of a fair and decent pay rise for all NHS staff, in recognition of their dedication throughout the pandemic.

The Government should make good on its promise to fully resource our health service to provide effective, timely diagnosis and referral, and make sure that all cancer patients receive the care and treatment they need.

Yours sincerely

Mary