



Department
of Health &
Social Care

*From Baroness Merron
Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for
Patient Safety, Women's Health and Mental Health*

*39 Victoria Street
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18 February 2025

Dear Colleagues,

I want to thank you for your contributions to the oral statement on 10 February 2025 on the National Cancer Plan.

I am writing to provide additional clarity to some remarks I made during the statement. When responding to the question from Baroness McIntosh of Pickering, regarding waiting times for cancer treatment, I stated, "The planning guidance set stretching targets for cancer, which will see around 100,000 more people every year having cancer confirmed—or ruled out—within 28 days, and about 17,000 more people beginning treatment within two months of diagnosis." I meant to say that 17,000 more people beginning treatment within two months of referral, rather than diagnosis. I apologise for any confusion caused.

Considering the focus of the question from Baroness McIntosh, I would like to confirm that the government is determined to improve cancer performance at all stages of the cancer pathway, including for referral and diagnostics. The National Cancer Plan will include further details on how we will improve outcomes for cancer patients, as well as speeding up diagnosis and treatment, ensuring patients have access to the latest treatments and technology, and ultimately bringing this country's cancer survival rates back up to the standards of the best in the world.

I hope the above response proves useful. I am copying this letter to all those who contributed and the editor of Hansard. I have deposited a copy of this letter in the library.

All good wishes,

BARONESS MERRON