

Dear Candidates,

An opportunity to make the UK a world leader in cancer research and care

I am writing to set out why the opportunity to make the UK a global power in research and deliver world class outcomes for cancer patients should be of critical importance to the next leader of the Conservative Party and our country's Prime Minister.

Over the past 50 years, research has transformed the prospects for people with cancer. In the 1970s, only 1 in 4 UK cancer patients survived their disease for ten years or more. By 2010, this had risen to 2 in 4. Our ambition is to accelerate progress so that by 2034, 3 in 4 people will survive their cancer for at least 10 years. The new Prime Minister has the opportunity to build on this by developing Britain's thriving research environment and accelerating cancer survival to among the best in the world.

There is much to be done. In the UK, 1 in 2 people will get cancer in their lifetime. Disappointingly, our cancer survival still lags behind comparable countries and there is significant variation across the UK. A growing and ageing population means cancer incidence will rise at an alarming rate, so by 2035 the number of new cancer cases is projected to increase to over half a million a year, with one new case every minute.

But there is also a huge opportunity here. We can help more people survive their cancer, reduce the burden of preventable diseases, and ensure the UK remains a world leader for research by:

- 1) **Investing in the NHS cancer workforce:** Given the rapidly increasing number of cancer cases, it is vital that cancer is at the heart of health policy if we are to deliver on the promise made in the NHS Long Term Plan to diagnose 75% of cancers at an early stage by 2028, and ensure every patient gets high quality treatment and care. To realise this ambition, there must be urgent investment in Health Education England and a fully-funded long-term plan for the NHS cancer workforce which accounts for rising patient demand.
- 2) **Prioritising prevention:** 1 in 4 cancers are preventable. We can lead the world in protecting future generations from preventable cancers by delivering on Chapter 2 the Childhood Obesity Plan in full. If we are to achieve the Government target of halving childhood obesity by 2030, protecting children from junk food marketing on TV, online, in-store and on the street is an essential first step. Accompanying this is the need to deliver on a smoke free generation by ensuring all smokers have access to evidence-based support to quit, including through local Stop Smoking Services.
- 3) **Building a world class research environment:** Every £1 invested in medical research delivers an economic return of around 25p every year forever. The UK is already a global leader in science and there is an opportunity to build on this by going beyond the Government target to reach 2.4% of GDP invested in R&D by 2027. Additionally, patients and the research environment must be a priority as we leave the EU. International collaboration underpins our research, driving vital progress for patients and delivering significant economic benefits. 28% of the clinical trials CRUK supports involve at least one other EU nation, and 76% of postdoctoral researchers at our Institutes are not originally from the UK. Whatever form Brexit takes, our vibrant international research environment must be able to flourish.

We are asking all candidates to buy into our vision for the future of cancer research and care.

Yours sincerely,



Michelle Mitchell OBE
Chief Executive
Cancer Research UK