

All-Party Parliamentary Group for Radiotherapy: Annual General Meeting
Wednesday 7th July 2021
Meeting Notes

Attendees

- Tim Farron MP
- Josh Price (Office of Tim Farron MP)
- Cait Maloney (Office of Grahame Morris MP)
- Lord Rennard
- Baroness Golding
- Viscount Simon
- Professor Pat Price (Action Radiotherapy)
- Daniel Laing (Tendo Consulting supporting the CatchUpWithCancer campaign)
- Siân Lloyd (Tendo Consulting supporting the CatchUpWithCancer campaign)
- Aulyria Tabio (Tendo Consulting supporting the CatchUpWithCancer campaign)

Election of Officers

After brief introductions, Tim Farron MP spoke through the election of officers. It was agreed that Tim would continue as Chair with the following Vice-Chairs:

- Grahame Morris MP
- Henry Smith MP
- Derek Thomas MP
- Baroness Golding
- Lord Rennard

Income and Expenditure Statement

Professor Pat Price talked through the Income and Expenditure Statement which was agreed by those in attendance.

Update on Cancer Backlog

Professor Pat Price gave an update on the cancer backlog including:

- Having previously warned of the inevitable backlog in cancer diagnosis and treatment, we are now seeing the backlog materialise and a diagnosis bottleneck.
- The message from the frontline is that cancer services are struggling to cope with the influx of cancer patients and that people, particularly younger people, will suffer as a result.
- There is a sizable shift from curative treatments to palliative because people are being diagnosed later than they should have done, and this is only going to get worse.
- Research has shown that the economic costs of the cancer backlog is expected to be £1.3bn.
- A flash survey by Action Radiotherapy found that 77% of the radiotherapy workforce surveyed disagreed or strongly disagreed that the Government's response to the COVID-induced cancer backlog has been sufficient and 65% said that the pressure of the pandemic or the recovery has caused them or a colleague to consider leaving the profession.

Tim Farron MP said that in his area, figures showed that in 50% of cases the 62-day target was being missed. He said FOIs would be needed to get the figures from other Trusts.

Pat said there is a real crisis and that the money requested for new radiotherapy machinery to deal with the backlog had not been given in the Budget. The only new funding for radiotherapy is £32m which has been taken from the £320m given to radiology diagnostics. She stressed that this was not sufficient.

Update on Work of the APPG

Tim Farron MP outlined the recent work of the APPG including the Cancer Summit led by himself and Chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Health Group Dr Lisa Cameron MP, and the subsequent report and 7 key recommendations.

He added that there had been no additional investment in cancer services at the Budget but that recent meetings with No 10 advisers had been positive.

Next Steps

Tim Farron MP said that he felt the comments from new Secretary of State for Health and Social Care Sajid Javid MP had been encouraging especially the acknowledgement of there being a problem.

Everyone present agreed it would be a good idea to aim for a Westminster Hall debate before the summer recess. Lord Rennard and Baroness Golding agreed to consider the options for an equivalent in the House of Lords.

Tim also confirmed that he was writing to Sajid Javid MP to welcome him to the new role, thank him for his recent comments and highlight the 7 recommendations of the recent report. He said the letter would also request a meeting. Tonia Antoniazzi MP, chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Cancer is also trying to confirm that a planned meeting with Matt Hancock MP will be honoured by Sajid Javid MP. If so, Tim plans to also feed into that.

Daniel Laing outlined the plans to mark the anniversary of the Catch Up With Cancer Campaign co-founded by Professor Pat Price including a potential trip to Downing Street to hand in the Change.org petition.