

PE1806/A

Scottish Government submission of 8 September 2020

I would like to take this opportunity to emphasise how seriously the Scottish Government takes the early identification of Pancreatic Cancer. An early diagnosis is known to have significant effect on the outcome of the patient. That is why over recent years, the Scottish Government has invested significant resource into improving Scotland's pancreatic cancer services, and have given it particular focus in our recent update to the national cancer strategy. With that said, we appreciate that pancreatic cancer have not seen the same improvements in survival to other cancers have so there is still work to be done. We are committed to improving outcomes for pancreatic cancer patients which is why we updated our referral guidelines in 2019 to raise awareness of the potential signs and symptoms.

Alongside this, we seed funded the PrecisionPanc project, which sees clinical and biological information from individual patients enrolled onto a master protocol so that it may be identified and extracted in a timeframe relevant for use in clinical trials.

In April 2020, we published an update to our 2016 Cancer Strategy. The following actions were specifically designed to improve pancreatic cancer pathways, services, outcomes for patients:

17. We are working with clinical leads to discuss with boards how diagnostic pathways can be expedited for patients with potential pancreatic cancer
18. We are also working with clinical leads and the Scottish HepatoPancreatoBiliary Network to discuss the possible redesign and development of an early intervention / "first responder (CNS)" for patients referred with a suspicion of pancreatic cancer
26. We have supported a clinical audit of pancreatic cancer services that has made a range of recommendations for improvements and are working with clinical leads and people affected by cancer to take these recommendations forward. These recommendations could benefit patient experience by reducing the number and/ or frequency of appointments, improving how they are communicated with and potentially increase their chances of better outcomes.
35. We will monitor and consider potential new initiatives and service changes to improve recovery after surgery, such as the Enhanced Recovery After Pancreatic Cancer Surgery (ERAS) programme. Poorer recovery from surgery can result in longer stays in hospital and readmissions, which can affect quality of life. Complications sometimes prevent further treatment options, which may in turn affect outcomes.

COVID-19 had a significant impact on our health services in Scotland. On 19 August, the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport announced the production of a new national recovery plan for cancer services, publishing in the Autumn to ensure patients continue to have access to the best possible treatment and care. While the majority of cancer treatments have continued throughout this pandemic, some treatments had to be suspended to minimise individual risk. The Scottish Government is focused on the safe and steady resumption of services in the cancer

pathways that were paused during the pandemic. This will also look at opportunities for design and improvement, including within pancreatic cancer services.

The Scottish Government is in regular contact with the Less Survivable Cancers Taskforce, of which Pancreatic Cancer UK are a member. This Taskforce consists of 6-member charities who represent less survivable cancers and strive for further research and prioritisation. We are meeting them shortly to discuss suitable actions for our recovery plan.