

**Association of Cancer Physicians/UK Society for Medical Oncology
Response to the NHS England National Cancer Plan**

Medical oncologists welcome the NHSE National Cancer Plan, and its commitment to the central importance of professionally led, clinical leadership in shaping cancer policy and delivering meaningful improvements in patient outcomes.

The National Cancer Plan sets out ambitious goals: improving long-term survival so that three in four people diagnosed with cancer are living well or cancer-free five years after diagnosis by 2035; meeting all cancer waiting time standards by 2029; expanding diagnostic capacity closer to home; scaling genomic testing and robot-assisted surgery; improving access to specialist centres and clinical trials; and strengthening support for people living with and beyond cancer. Its stated focus on delivery, equity and outcomes is both timely and necessary.

The National Cancer Plan's focus on developing and improving services is encouraging. In particular the plans regarding the evolution of MDT processes, enhancements in specialised care, work to reduce disparity in cancer care throughout the country, research expansion and the development of supportive and acute oncology alongside investment in developing the oncology workforce are particularly welcomed.

The Association of Cancer Physicians/UK Society for Medical Oncology (ACP/UKSMO), the professional body representing medical oncologists, provides an independent clinical voice grounded in frontline experience, evidence-based practice and shared professional standards. Cancer policy must remain closely connected to patient need, clinical reality and best practice. We support rapid, safe implementation across the NHS.

Andrew Wardley, Outgoing Chair of the ACP/UKSMO Executive Committee, said:

The strength of medical oncology leadership lies in its credibility and accountability to patients and peers. We appreciate the engagement from DHSC and NHSE in developing The Cancer Plan. Medical oncologists will be critical to leading progress in modern diagnostics, genomics, data-enabled care, access to clinical trials, workforce development, and supporting people to live well with and beyond cancer. Publication of the plan is an important first step, but sustained clinical leadership will be essential to turn ambition into better care for patients.”

Dr Lennard Lee, Policy Lead and ACP/UKSMO Executive Committee member, added:

High-quality cancer care depends on strong professional clinical leadership aligned to patient need. The success of this plan will be judged not by its ambition, but by the clarity of delivery, pace of implementation and demonstrable improvement in outcomes

for patients. Meaningful partnership with professional cancer bodies will be essential to achieve this.”

Quote from Dr Anna Olsson-Brown, incoming Chair of ACP/UKSMO:

The National Cancer Plan provides an opportunity to accelerate progress, but success will depend on empowering clinical leaders to implement change, scale evidence-based innovation, and ensure patients across England benefit equally from advances in cancer care.

By highlighting the need for research and service development alongside a focus on investment in the oncology workforce and supportive and acute oncology, it means that there is tangible potential for significant improvement in cancer care from diagnosis, cancer treatment, therapeutic complications and care following cancer treatment.

Medical oncologists are essential in translating this policy into practice. We lead the design and delivery of clinical trials, bring innovation safely into routine care, and work across systems and alongside our multi-professional partners to support patients and reduce unwarranted variation. The ACP/UKSMO stands ready to work in collaboration with NHS England, government and colleagues to deliver this together.”