

Open letter to Rt Hon David Cameron MP and Rt Hon Jeremy Hunt MP

3 November 2015

Dear Prime Minister and Secretary of State for Health

Blood cancer charities urge Government for Cancer Drugs Fund solution

As an alliance of blood cancer charities, and on behalf of the 27,000 blood cancer patients and their families who have signed the petition against the recent delisting of life-saving drugs from the Cancer Drugs Fund, we are writing to express our deep concern regarding the Government's failure on the Cancer Drugs Fund (CDF).

The Government has always been aware of the flawed nature of the CDF, but due to politics, has let it progress to the situation where clinically effective treatments are being removed without a long-term solution to access being in place. The CDF is majorly overspent and no data has been collected on whether or not any CDF-funded treatments have actually worked. As a result of these failures 12 blood cancer drug indications, previously deemed clinically effective by NHS England, are set to be removed from the Fund with no guarantee of any future access.

Blood cancer patients have been badly let down by being caught in the middle of a set of competing interests that have led to the failure of the CDF from all perspectives.

Whilst we appreciate that drugs need to be both clinically and cost-effective to be made available on the NHS, the Government's inability to put cancer patients first and resolve this issue, has led to a series of short-term approaches, such that treatments can be approved in January and then removed in November despite good clinical outcomes. This is wholly unacceptable and the removal of these medicines from the CDF harms patients and removes the only hope of effective treatment for some people with blood cancer.

While the CDF has improved access to cancer drugs not routinely available on the NHS in England, it was always intended to be a temporary solution while a long-term pricing mechanism was worked out. We are frustrated at the ongoing delay and uncertainty that has surrounded the CDF reform process and hold the Government accountable.

Through the revised CDF and the independent Accelerated Access Review, there is a real opportunity to put patients at the heart of the system and ensure they are able to access the newest and most innovative medicines on the NHS, as they are in leading European countries. Given the volume of effective blood cancer drugs coming down the line, this is an opportunity that the Government can no longer afford to miss.

Yours sincerely

Blood Cancers Alliance

Eric Low
Chief Executive
Myeloma UK



Sophie Wintrich
Chief Executive
MDS UK



Sandy Craine
Chief Executive
CML Support



Roger Brown
Chair
WMUK



David Innes
Chair
CLL Support Association



Monica Izmajlowicz
Chief Executive
Leukaemia CARE



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jonathan Pearce".

Jonathan Pearce
Chief Executive
Lymphoma Association



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Cathy Gilman".

Cathy Gilman
Chief Executive
Bloodwise

