

Rt Hon Iain Duncan Smith MP  
Secretary of State for Work and Pensions  
Department for Work and Pensions  
Caxton House  
Tothill Street  
London  
SW1H 9DA

Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> December 2011

Dear Secretary of State,

It is with grave concern that we are forced to write to you again about the impact the Welfare Reform Bill proposals will have on cancer patients.

As representatives and supporters for the whole cancer community, we are speaking on behalf of many cancer patients and their families whom we believe the Welfare Reform Bill will push into poverty.

Cancer patients want to work. They haven't chosen to give up the safety of employment. The assertion that providing hard earned benefits at a time of greatest need encourages a dependency by seriously ill cancer patients on benefits is utterly without foundation.

The UK's leading cancer charities have repeatedly asked for vital changes to the Bill. However, not only has the Government failed to address their concerns but instead you are proposing to make it even harder for many patients undergoing gruelling chemotherapy to claim the financial support they desperately need.

In our experience of treating, supporting, or being cancer patients, one year is simply not long enough for many people to recover from cancer treatment. Chemotherapy and radiotherapy can be highly debilitating. The ongoing and severe side-effects can leave patients struggling for years. Although there is clear evidence that one year is not long enough for patients to recover, the Government has shown no willingness to find a compromise.

Your proposal to cut a vital out-of-work benefit – Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) – after one year will leave 7,000 cancer patients up to £94 worse off a week simply because they have not recovered quickly enough. These are people who have paid into the system all their working lives. It is wrong to put them under further financial and emotional distress on top of recovering from a life-threatening illness.

We are very concerned by plans to change the rules to force cancer patients in the middle of intravenous chemotherapy to undergo stressful benefit checks to receive ESA. They could be asked to attend back-to-work interviews or be found fit for work while undergoing treatment. This is despite recommendations from senior oncologists and cancer charities who stated that all patients undergoing

chemotherapy treatment - and who have to leave work - should be automatically eligible for this benefit.

We accept that the benefits system is in need of reform. However, the proposals in the Welfare Reform Bill will leave cancer patients without vital financial support when they need it most. Despite repeated opposition from cancer charities, MPs, and Lords, the Government has so far failed to act on these concerns. As the Bill enters its final stages, we urge you and your Ministers to please listen to us and work with the cancer community to make the Bill fairer to cancer patients.

Yours sincerely,

**Lord Crisp**

**Baroness Finlay of Llandaff**

**Baroness Lister of Burtersett**

**Lord Patel**

**Baroness Delyth Morgan of Drefelin**

Chief Executive, Breast Cancer Campaign

**Ciaran Devane**

Chief Executive, Macmillan Cancer Support

**Gillian Guy**

Chief Executive, Citizens Advice Bureau

**Henry Braund**

Chief Executive, Anthony Nolan

**Mark Flannagan**

Chief Executive, Beating Bowel Cancer

**Deborah Alsina**

Chief Executive, Bowel Cancer UK

**Sue Farrington Smith**

Chief Executive, Brain Tumour Research

**Jenny Baker**

Chief Executive, Brain Tumour UK

**Helen Bulbeck**

Director, brainstrust

**Chris Askew**

Chief Executive, Breakthrough Breast Cancer

**Samia Al Qadhi**

Chief Executive, Breast Cancer Care

**Dr Frank Chinegwundoh**

Chair, Cancer Black Care

**Lorraine Clifton**

Chief Executive, CLIC Sargent

**Nick Turkentine**

Chief Executive, James Whale Fund for Kidney Cancer

**Robert Music**

Chief Executive, Jo's Cervical Cancer Trust

**Tony Gavin**

Director of Cancer Campaigning and Patient Advocacy, Leukaemia CARE

**Sally Penrose**

Chief Executive, Lymphoma Association

**Ella Pybus**

Chief Executive, Meningioma UK

**Dr Vinod Joshi**

Chief Executive, Mouth Cancer Foundation

**Louise Bayne**

Chief Executive, Ovacom

**Alison Stunt**

Chief Executive, Pancreatic Cancer Action

**Alexandra Ford**

Chief Executive, Pancreatic Cancer UK

**Owen Sharp**

Chief Executive, The Prostate Cancer Charity

**Andrew Wilson**

Chief Executive, Rarer Cancers Foundation

**Paula Chadwick**

Interim Chief Executive, The Roy Castle Lung Cancer Foundation

**Lindsey Bennister**

Chief Executive, Sarcoma UK

**Paul Woodward**

Chief Executive, Sue Ryder

**Anwen Jones**

Chief Executive, Target Ovarian Cancer

**Simon Davies**

Chief Executive, Teenage Cancer Trust

**Robert Marsh**

Chief Executive, The Eve Appeal

**Pamela Healy OBE**

Chief Executive, The Haven Breast Cancer Support Charities

**Marilyn Gentry**

Chief Executive, World Cancer Research Fund

**Professor Jane Maher**

Macmillan Chief Medical Officer and Consultant Clinical Oncologist at Mount Vernon Cancer Centre and Hillingdon Hospital

**Dr Jo Armes**

Research Fellow, Florence Nightingale School of Nursing & Midwifery King's College London

**Professor Peter Beresford OBE**

Professor of Social Policy, Brunel University

**Dr Graham Collins**

Consultant Haematologist, Oxford University Hospitals NHS Trust

**Professor Jessica Corner**

Macmillan Chief Clinician and Professor of Cancer and Palliative Care and Deputy Head of School, at the University of Southampton's School of Nursing and Midwifery

**Professor Charles Davis**

Professor of Neurosurgery at the Royal Preston Hospital, Immediate past President of the British Neuro-Oncology Society

**Professor Mustafa Djamgoz**

Professor of Cancer Biology at Imperial College London and Chair of the Science Council, College of Medicine

**Dr Kathleen Dunn**

Consultant Clinical Oncologist, Weston Park Hospital, Sheffield

**Professor Tim Eisen**

Professor of Medical Oncology, Cambridge University Hospitals

**Dr Patricia Fisher**

Consultant Clinical Oncologist, Clinical Director, Specialised Cancer Services,  
Weston Park Hospital

**Ms Diana Greenfield**

Clinical Lead in Late Effects, Sheffield Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust  
Honorary Senior Lecturer, Late Effects Research Team, University of Sheffield

**Dr Robert Glynne-Jones**

Macmillan Consultant in Gastrointestinal cancer

**Professor Ian Judson**

Professor of Cancer Pharmacology, Royal Marsden Hospital

**Mr Sean Kehoe**

Chair of Medical Advisors, Ovacome, President British Gynaecological Cancer  
Society

**Dr Caroline Lee**

Consultant Clinical Oncologist, Weston Park Hospital

**Professor Alastair Munro**

Professor of Radiation Oncology, University of Dundee

**Mr Graeme Poston**

President of Association of Upper Gastrointestinal Surgeons of Gt. Britain and  
Ireland, Consultant Hepatobiliary Surgeon at Aintree University Hospitals

**Ms Catherine Priestley**

Clinical Nurse Specialist, Breast Cancer Care

**Dr Karen Robb**

Consultant Physiotherapist (Cancer), Bart's Hospital

**Martin Robinson**

Reader Clinical Oncology, Head of Academic Unit of Oncology, Sheffield Teaching  
Hospital

**Dr Richard Simcock**

Consultant Clinical Oncologist and Lead Clinician for Breast Care

**Professor Will Steward**

Professor of Oncology at University of Leicester

**Dr Claire Taylor**

Lecturer in Gastrointestinal Nursing, Florence Nightingale School of Nursing and  
Midwifery, King's College London

**Bhavin Visvadia**

Consultant Maxillofacial Surgeon and Clinical Advisor to the Mouth Cancer  
Foundation

**Dr John Wadsley**

Consultant Clinical Oncologist, Weston Park Hospital

**Dr Mary Wells**

Senior Lecturer in Cancer Nursing, School of Nursing and Midwifery, University of Dundee

**Dr Isabel White**

Clinical Research Fellow in Psychosexual Practice, Royal Marsden NHS Foundation Trust

**Dr Theresa Wiseman**

Lead for Health Service Research, Nursing, Rehab and Quality, Royal Marsden NHS Foundation Trust

**Kay Nichols**

Welfare Rights Adviser, Macmillan

**Karen Holmes**

Centre Manager, Cancer Information and Support Centre, Sheffield

**Gina Ashford (cancer patient)**

**Keith Cuthbert (cancer patient)**

**Trevor Dunwell (cancer patient)**

**Deb Eaton (cancer patient)**

**Aldina Firth (cancer patient)**

**Carol Gibbs (cancer patient)**

**Caroline Gooding (cancer patient)**

**Ciaran Henderson (cancer patient)**

**Ian Leech (carer)**

**Denise Maguire (cancer patient)**

**Anne Martin (cancer patient)**

**Susan Morton (cancer patient)**

**Venus Otar (cancer patient)**

**Bridget Rochfort (cancer patient)**

**Katherine Genevieve Ruane (cancer patient)**

**Julian Rutter (cancer patient)**

**Bengu Shail (cancer patient)**

**Saba Shahdad (cancer patient)**

**Karen Sheldon (cancer patient)**

**Sarah Stradwick (cancer patient)**

**Stephen Townend (cancer patient)**

**Amanda Whetstone (cancer patient)**

**Roger Wilson CBE (cancer patient)**

**(89 total)**