Rt Hon Sajid Javid MP
Secretary of State for Health and Social Care
Department for Health and Social Care
39 Victoria Street

London

SW1H 0EU

Dear Minister,

I am writing on behalf of a number of my constituents, who have been in contact about a much-needed emphasis on pancreatic cancer within the Department of Health and Social Care’s new 10-year cancer plan which is currently under development.

As you know, pancreatic cancer is the deadliest common cancer. Years of research underfunding and a lack of focus has meant that there has been a stagnation in survival, and the survival gap between pancreatic and other cancers has broadened. England has also fallen behind the rest of the world as a result, now ranking 28th out of 32 countries with available data for pancreatic cancer survival.

The Health and Social Care Committee's recent report into Cancer Services was very welcome, in that it singled out pancreatic and the other less survivable cancers – brain, lung, liver, stomach and oesophageal – as warranting clear, specific commitments. The Committee stated the Government must produce a tailored action plan for less survivable cancers to address diagnosis and treatment for these cancers.

Pancreatic cancer has the lowest early-stage diagnosis of all common cancers, with only 16% of people being diagnosed at stage one or two. This lags far behind NHS England’s ambition for 75% of all cancers to be diagnosed at an early stage by 2028. Placing specific focus on improving early-stage diagnosis for pancreatic and other less survivable cancers in the new plan offers the best chance of bringing up the overall average and so meeting this target.

I would hugely appreciate your consideration of this letter as you and your department continue with your work producing the new 10-year cancer plan. We have a rare opportunity here to enhance our reputation as a world leader in cancer, by tackling a cancer where we currently lag far behind, and improving outcomes for the 10,000 people a year who face this deadly diagnosis in the UK.

I look forward to hearing from you, I hope with a commitment to making pancreatic and other less survivable cancers a priority focus within your plan. The charity Pancreatic Cancer UK have specific recommendations on how outcomes for pancreatic cancer can be improved and would be happy to share information and advice on this wherever useful. Please get in touch with emily.waller@pancreaticcancer.org.uk to set up a meeting.

Yours sincerely,

XXX MP