

Karin Smyth
Department of Health and Social Care
39 Victoria Street
London SW1H 0EU

Dear Minister,

As [final number TBC] Members of Parliament, and alongside the charity Pancreatic Cancer UK, we are writing to raise our concerns over the alarming shortages of Pancreatic Enzyme Replacement Therapy (PERT) which are severely affecting people with pancreatic cancer across the country, and to call for a national plan to tackle these going forward.

Pancreatic Enzyme Replacement Therapy plays an integral role in helping people with pancreatic cancer **to properly digest their food, maintain a healthy weight and be well enough to have treatment, including life-saving surgery**. For those where treatment is no longer an option, PERT can make their final months much more comfortable. The current shortages are therefore extremely concerning and devastating for people affected by this deadly cancer.

Over the last 12 months, people with pancreatic cancer across the UK have felt the devastating impact of these shortages. With **more than 61,000 people relying on PERT**, whether for pancreatic cancer or for other conditions, urgent action is vital. Without access to PERT, people become severely malnourished, literally starving to death as their body is unable to digest food properly. Ultimately, **the lack of PERT is impacting people's chances of survival, their physical and mental health and their ability to play an active role in society**.

We understand the shortages are due to a lack of raw active ingredients (pig-derived enzymes) and the limited manufacturing capacity of Viatris, the manufacturer of Creon. Whilst we recognise that Viatris has endeavoured to tackle this shortfall, we are concerned that the shortages are expected to persist. Meanwhile, patients will have to bear the huge stress and anxiety of finding the necessary dosages to survive.

These challenges will continue to be exacerbated by the increased demand for PERT as a historically under-prescribed medication. PERT is essential for all people with pancreatic cancer and thanks to greater awareness and updated guidance, demand will and should continue to increase.

Whilst the Government has been taking steps to tackle the shortages, the situation isn't being resolved quickly enough. We need strong leadership from the Government to really drive forward progress on this issue. We are therefore calling for:

- 1. The Government to convene and lead a high-level stakeholder roundtable to address the shortages alongside PERT manufacturers, patient advocacy groups and Government stakeholders to discuss practical measures and solutions to the ongoing crisis.**

2. Following this roundtable, we ask that the Government produces a detailed action plan and establishes a PERT shortages taskforce to help to achieve these next steps.

As you'll agree, living with pancreatic cancer is devastating enough without the significant stress and anxiety caused by shortages of a crucial medication. PERT is an absolute necessity for thousands of people, and we urge you to act now to address this crisis.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours Sincerely,

[MP signatures]

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