

# The Ovarian Cancer Postcode Lottery



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for those diagnosed with ovar...



TARGET  
OVARIAN  
CANCER

For every woman. For life.



Every year, 7,000 women are diagnosed with ovarian cancer across the UK and 1 in 50 women will have ovarian cancer at some point in their life. While cancer doesn't discriminate according to postcode, Target Ovarian Cancer research has found that women's awareness of the symptoms, access to clinical trials and likelihood of surviving ovarian cancer can vary hugely according to where they live.

### What is ovarian cancer?

Ovarian cancer is cancer arising from the cells in and around the ovary and fallopian tube. The four most common symptoms of ovarian cancer are:

- Having a bloated tummy
- Needing to wee more often and/or more urgently
- Having tummy pain
- Always feeling full

Any woman who starts to experience any of these on a persistent basis, more than twelve times a month, should visit her GP. Women might also experience changes in bowel habit, extreme fatigue, unexplained weight loss and loss of appetite.



*I had suffered from IBS for years and it had been getting worse so I went to see my GP. He noticed a swelling near my navel and referred me for an ultrasound. As he thought it was a hernia I wasn't worried. No one asked if I had any other symptoms and I was told it was something that could be dealt with once I got back from a planned holiday. However, on my return I went to see my consultant and he sent me for a CT scan. He telephoned me the next day to say it was bad news. I then started the long road of living and dealing with ovarian cancer.*

*Shani,  
Kent*



## Knowledge is power

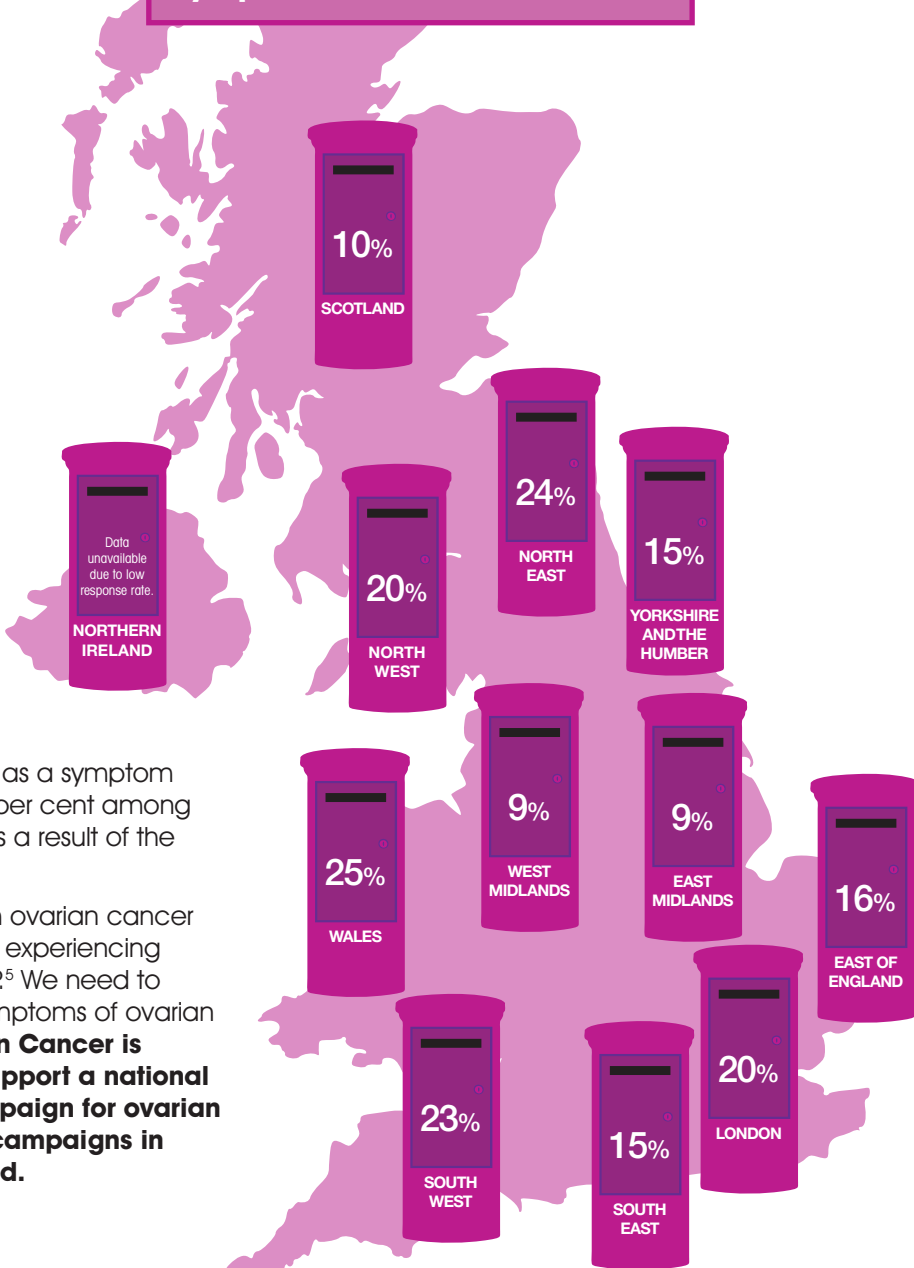
One in five women with ovarian cancer die within three months of diagnosis.<sup>1</sup> It is vital that women know what the symptoms of ovarian cancer are so they can go to their GP as soon as they have concerns.

There are now national cancer awareness campaigns in England (Be Clear on Cancer), Scotland (Detect Cancer Early) and Northern Ireland (Be Cancer Aware), but as yet none have included a national awareness campaign for ovarian cancer.\*

The Be Clear on Cancer campaign in England ran a regional ovarian cancer pilot in the North West in 2014. This proved extremely successful in raising awareness, with the number of women recognising feeling bloated as a symptom of ovarian cancer rising from 25 to 40 per cent among the key audience of women over 50 as a result of the campaign.<sup>4</sup>

At the moment one in four women with ovarian cancer are waiting over three months from first experiencing symptoms before going to see their GP.<sup>5</sup> We need to make sure every woman knows the symptoms of ovarian cancer so she can act. **Target Ovarian Cancer is calling on all parliamentarians to support a national Be Clear on Cancer awareness campaign for ovarian cancer in England, with equivalent campaigns in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.**

## The percentage of women confident at spotting the symptoms of ovarian cancer<sup>2,3</sup>



\*Wales has yet to launch either a general or site-specific cancer awareness campaign.

## Accessing world class treatment

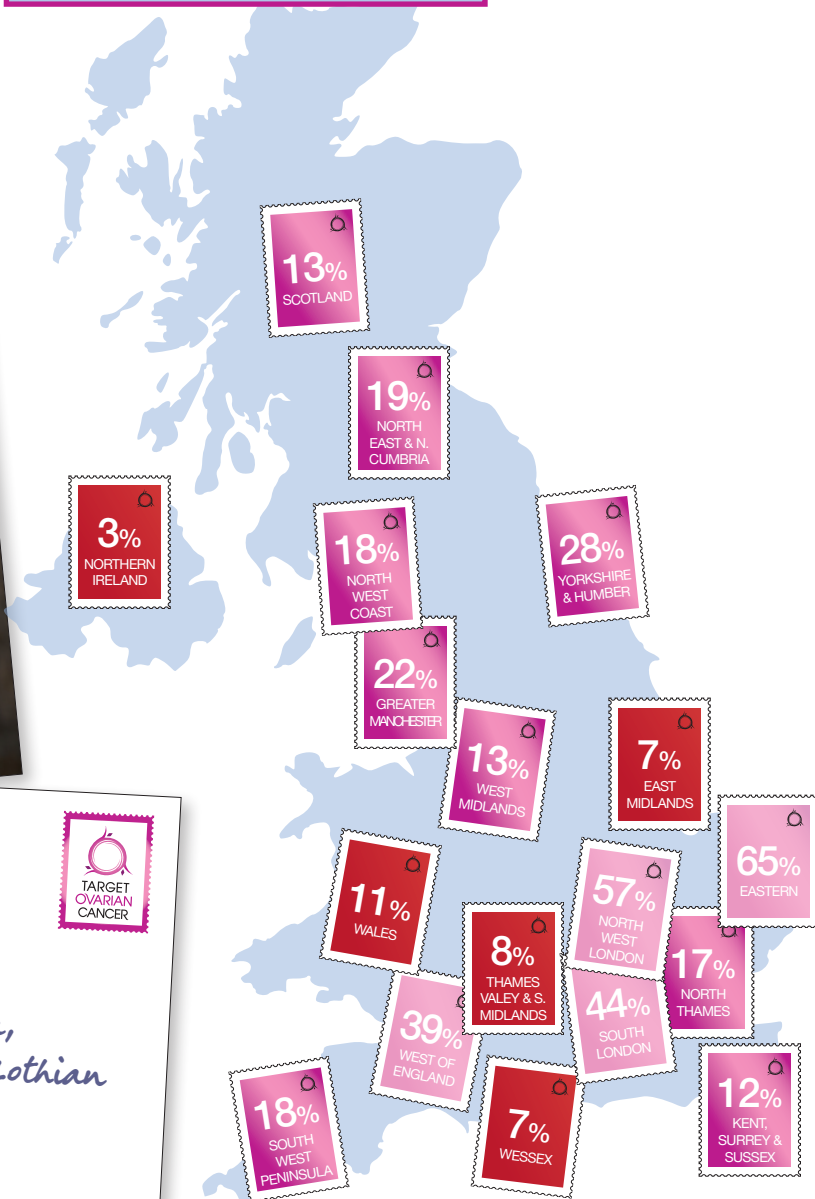
Clinical trials are not just essential to the discovery of new treatments for ovarian cancer, but they are also a benchmark of excellence in care. Participation in a trial may mean receiving a new drug or form of treatment, or volunteers may be placed in the control group to enable researchers to measure the impact of the trial. However, all trials require care to be provided at the highest possible standard and participation in a trial, regardless of whether it is in the test or control group, has been shown to lead to improved outcomes for women with ovarian cancer.<sup>6</sup>



*I was keen to take part in a clinical trial because I want to try and increase the different drugs that are available for use with ovarian cancer. Without participation in trials, new drugs will not be tested and progress will not be made. Moving forward and increasing survival time is so important. My trial ran alongside my standard chemo initially, then carried on for a year. It took little time and was of no inconvenience to myself or my family. I worked full time throughout. I would encourage other women, if it's right for them, to take part and help map a better outlook for those diagnosed with ovarian cancer*

Rona,  
East Lothian

## The percentage of women with ovarian cancer in clinical trials<sup>7</sup>



## The percentage of women with ovarian cancer surviving five years or more<sup>8</sup>

To help both women and clinicians find and access clinical trials, Target Ovarian Cancer launched its award winning Clinical Trials Information Centre in 2013. But more needs to be done.

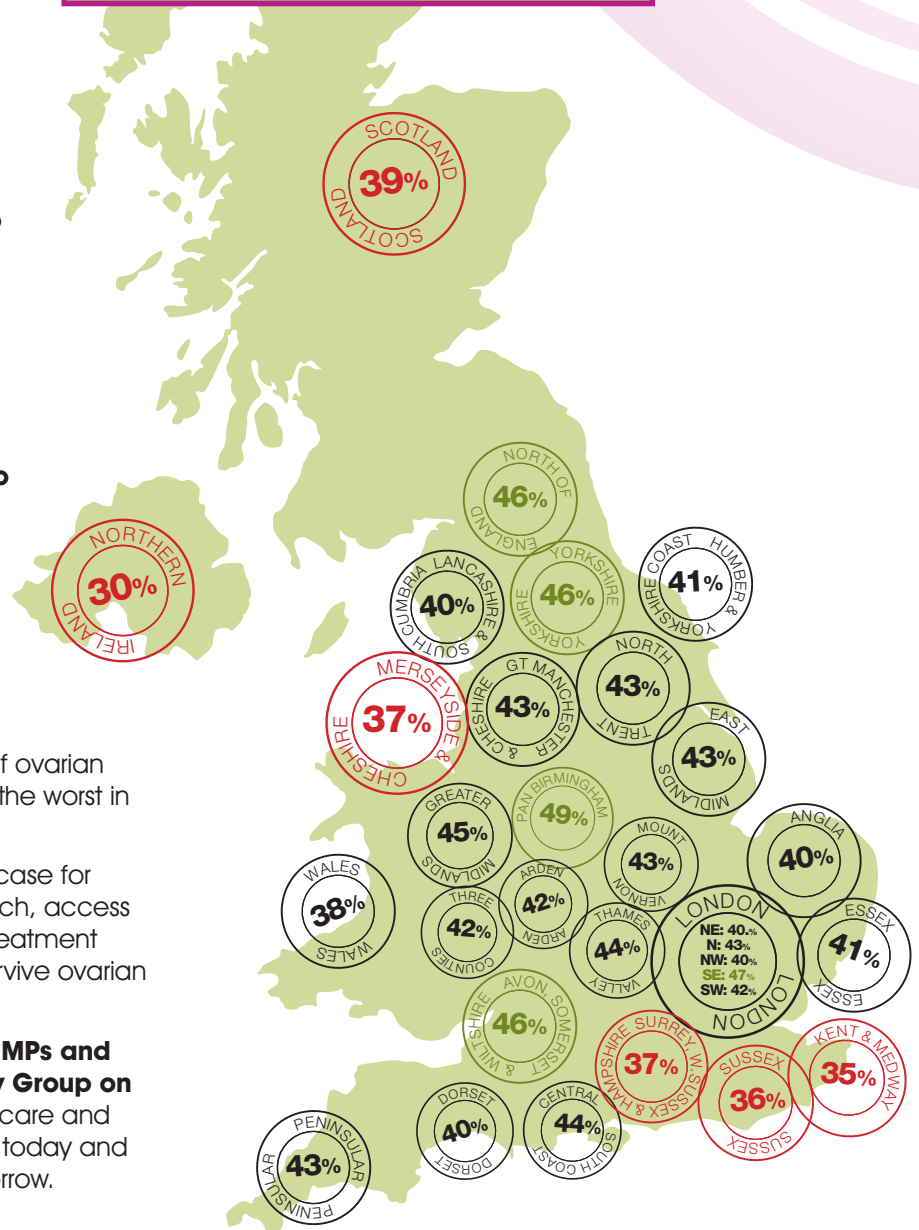
Every woman should have the chance to access a clinical trial and the world class care and treatment this brings. **Target Ovarian Cancer is calling on MPs to write to their local Trust, NHS Board, Health Board or Health and Social Care Trust to ask what steps they are taking to ensure all women with ovarian cancer have the opportunity to participate in clinical trials.**

### Surviving ovarian cancer

Every day 12 more women in the UK die of ovarian cancer and the UK survival rate is among the worst in Europe.

We need more people to be making the case for improved awareness, investment in research, access to clinical trials and the step-changes in treatment that are needed if more women are to survive ovarian cancer.

**Target Ovarian Cancer is calling on all MPs and peers to join the All Party Parliamentary Group on Ovarian Cancer** to help us transform the care and treatment for women with ovarian cancer today and for those we know will be diagnosed tomorrow.





# What you can do

**Helping end the postcode lottery is simple. We need all parliamentarians to:**

- 1. Support a national Be Clear on Cancer awareness campaign for ovarian cancer in England, with equivalent campaigns in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland**
- 2. Write to your local Trust, NHS Board, Health Board or Health and Social Care Trust to ask what steps they are taking to ensure all women with ovarian cancer have the opportunity to participate in clinical trials**
- 3. Join the All Party Parliamentary Group on Ovarian Cancer**



Target Ovarian Cancer is the UK's leading ovarian cancer charity working to improve early diagnosis, fund life-saving research, and provide much-needed support to women with ovarian cancer.



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Registered charity numbers: 1125038 (England and Wales), SC042920 (Scotland)

1. National Cancer Intelligence Network (2013) Routes to diagnosis. (England only) Available at: [www.ncin.org.uk/publications/routes\\_to\\_diagnosis](http://www.ncin.org.uk/publications/routes_to_diagnosis)
2. The percentage of women fairly confident or very confident that they would be able to recognise the symptoms of ovarian cancer. All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from YouGov Plc. Total sample size was 2207 adults. Fieldwork was undertaken between 28 and 29 January 2015. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all GB adults (aged 18+).
3. Due to the low response rate, data is unavailable for Northern Ireland.
4. Public Health England (2015) Be Clear on Cancer: ovarian cancer awareness regional pilot campaign. Interim evaluation results. Available at: [www.ncin.org.uk/view?rid=2907](http://www.ncin.org.uk/view?rid=2907)
5. Target Ovarian Cancer (2012) Bridging the gap: improving outcomes for women with ovarian cancer. Results from the Target Ovarian Cancer Pathfinder Study. Available at: [www.targetovariancancer.org.uk/our-research/key-findings-our-pathfinder-study](http://www.targetovariancancer.org.uk/our-research/key-findings-our-pathfinder-study)
6. du Bois A, Rochon J, Lamparter C, Pfisterer J (2005) Pattern of care and impact of participation in clinical studies on the outcome in ovarian cancer. International Journal of Gynaecological Cancer, 15(2):183-191.
7. This data is for 2013-14 and was provided on request by the National Institute for Health Research. Data for England is provided for local Clinical Research Networks (CRNs). There are 15 local CRNs across England and each one delivers research across 30 clinical specialties, including cancer.
8. Data for England covers 2003-2005 and comes from the National Cancer Intelligence Network/Trent Cancer Registry (2012) Overview of ovarian cancer in England: incidence, mortality and survival. Available at [www.ncin.org.uk/view.aspx?rid=1740](http://www.ncin.org.uk/view.aspx?rid=1740) (Data is for relative survival rates but is not age standardised. Information is provided for cancer networks – cancer networks existed in England from 2000 to 2013 and brought together cancer services within a region to share expertise and coordinate services.)  
Data for Scotland covers 2007-2011 and comes from the Scottish Cancer Registry/IDS. Available at: [www.isdscotland.org/Health-Topics/Cancer/Cancer-Statistics/Female-Genital-Organ/#ovary](http://www.isdscotland.org/Health-Topics/Cancer/Cancer-Statistics/Female-Genital-Organ/#ovary) Data is for relative survival rates and is age standardised.  
Data for Wales covers 2004-2008 and comes from the Welsh Cancer Intelligence and Surveillance Unit. Available at: [www.wcis.u.wales.nhs.uk/cancer-statistics](http://www.wcis.u.wales.nhs.uk/cancer-statistics) Data is for relative survival rates and is age standardised.  
Data for Northern Ireland is for 2003-2007 and comes from the N. Ireland Cancer Registry. Available at: [www.qub.ac.uk/research-centres/nicr/CancerData/OnlineStatistics/Ovary/](http://www.qub.ac.uk/research-centres/nicr/CancerData/OnlineStatistics/Ovary/) Data is for relative survival rates and is age standardised.