



Campaigning Toolkit

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Everything you need to know about campaigning

Find out more about campaigning and the difference we can make!

What is campaigning?

Campaigning is all about influencing those who have the power to change things to make decisions to improve the lives of everyone affected by ovarian cancer. Whether you're signing a digital call to action or writing to your elected representative, that's campaigning!

The more of us who tell decision-makers that things should be different, the more wins we can secure in the future.

We all want to see change for everyone affected by ovarian cancer.

What can we change?

We want to see policy across all four nations of the UK that will transform awareness, diagnosis and treatment of ovarian cancer. That's why, alongside those with ovarian cancer, their family and friends and healthcare professionals, we will not stop campaigning to make change happen.

Join our movement!

This change would not be possible without you, our campaigners! Together you form a strong, people-powered movement right across the UK that takes action to transform the future of ovarian cancer diagnosis, treatment and care. Join us today!





Talking about ovarian cancer while campaigning

You are part of this movement. We want you to feel empowered and informed when talking about ovarian cancer.

This page contains statistics relating to ovarian cancer that you may not wish to see. Please contact our nurse-led support line if you need any support on 020 7923 5475.



What is ovarian cancer?

The ovaries are two small organs, each about the size and shape of an almond. They're located low in the tummy area and form part of the female reproductive and hormonal systems.

Ovarian cancer starts from the cells in and around the ovary and fallopian tubes.



There are four main symptoms of ovarian cancer:

1. Persistent bloating
2. Feeling full quickly and/or loss of appetite
3. Pelvic or abdominal pain
4. Urinary symptoms

Symptoms will be:

- **Frequent** – they usually happen more than 12 times a month
- **Persistent** – they don't go away
- **New** – they are not normal for you

Occasionally, there can be other symptoms. These can include changes in bowel habit, extreme fatigue (feeling very tired), and unexplained weight loss. Any bleeding after the menopause should always be investigated by a GP.

► What can we change?

Symptom awareness:

There is an awareness crisis in ovarian cancer. We need to change this, so we're campaigning for national awareness campaigns that will give everyone the best chance of survival.



Percentage of women in the general population in the UK able to name one of the four main symptoms of ovarian cancer:	
Persistent bloating	21%
Pelvic or abdominal pain	32%
Feeling full/loss of appetite	3%
Increased urinary urgency/frequency	1%

Try not to refer to ovarian cancer as a 'silent killer'. This can reinforce the perception that the symptoms of ovarian cancer can't be spotted until later stages. We want to increase early diagnosis, in order to save lives, and therefore need to change these perceptions.

Cervical screening awareness:

Cervical screenings (also referred to as smear tests) only screen for cervical cancer. 40 per cent of women in the UK wrongly believe that cervical screening detects ovarian cancer.

Early diagnosis:

Transforming early diagnosis is vital to saving lives. Across the UK, too few women are diagnosed with ovarian cancer early.

- Over a quarter of women visit their GP three or more times before being referred to diagnostic tests.

- In England, only 32 per cent of women are diagnosed at an early stage (stage 1 or 2). The NHS England target for early diagnosis is 75 per cent.
- One in seven women die within two months of an ovarian cancer diagnosis.

Better treatment:

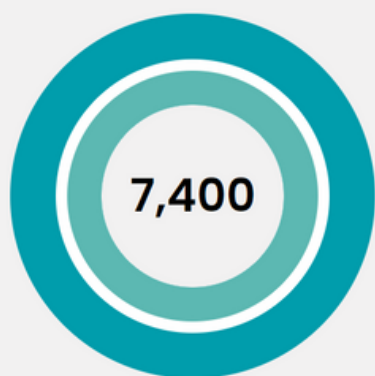
Access to treatment and cancer drugs varies across the UK. We want to improve access so that everyone has the best treatments options for them, no matter where they live.

- Only 23 per cent of women report being asked if they would like to join a clinical trial.
- Older women are less likely to receive treatment. 37 per cent of women over 70 receive neither surgery nor chemotherapy compared to six per cent of women under 50.

Support:

Care and support is crucial to deal with the impact of ovarian cancer. However:

- 54 per cent of those diagnosed are not asked by anyone involved in their treatment about the impact on their mental health.
- 62 per cent of women who would have liked support with menopause report that it was not discussed with them.
- 34 per cent of women diagnosed did not have a Clinical Nurse Specialist (CNS) with them when they got their diagnosis.



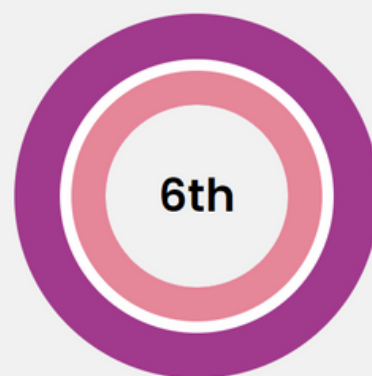
7,400
women are
diagnosed each year

with ovarian cancer in the UK.



11
women die every day
from ovarian cancer.

That's one woman every two
hours.



6th
ovarian cancer is the
6th most common

cancer amongst women

Engage with your elected representative

Demand change by meeting or writing to your elected representatives.

Engaging with your elected representatives keeps ovarian cancer a priority high on the agenda.



▶ Email your elected representative

Emailing your elected representative is one of the quickest and easiest ways to campaign for Target Ovarian Cancer!

Your elected representatives are there to hear about the issues you are passionate about and concerns you have. Emailing your elected representative is an effective way of getting their attention and calling on them to act.

We've created an email template for you to use to ask your elected representative to become a Target Ovarian Cancer Champion and take action on ovarian cancer awareness, diagnosis and treatment. Try to make your email as personal, powerful and compelling as you can. You can do this by sharing a personal story if you feel comfortable doing so.



“

Tell them about your experience and why it is important to support you. It is helpful to be armed with statistics that you know well and create an impact.”

Annie





Meet with your elected representative

Find out how to effectively meet your elected representative, step-by-step.

Meeting with your elected representatives is an effective way to persuade and influence them to act.

The more we speak to them about the issues facing those diagnosed with ovarian cancer and the need for action, the greater the chance of change. Elected representatives can influence their party and governments, from asking your questions to speaking to ministers. We know that MPs, MSPs, MLAs and MSs find it helpful to speak to their constituents about their concerns and what matters to them.



How to meet your MP



Find your elected representative

You can find out who your elected representatives are and how to contact them online. This will change depending on what nation you live in.

For example, if you live in Scotland or Wales, your constituency MSP or MS may be the best way to approach unless you think one of your regional representatives will be more supportive. If you live in Northern Ireland, you may wish to approach all of your MLAs or only those who you think will be more influential or supportive.

2 Arrange an appointment

Elected representatives carry out surgeries, which are sessions for constituents to discuss issues with them.

The best way to find out your representative's surgery arrangements is to contact their office. They'll be able to give you more information and tell you how to set up a meeting. There may also be information on your elected representative's website. Tell them you would like to discuss ovarian cancer and would like their help. Surgeries may be in person, virtually, or over the phone. We can help you set up video calls if you need.

3 Contact us!

If you plan to meet your elected representative, contact us! We can help you set up the meeting, send you statistics about ovarian cancer in your local area, and provide you with a briefing to present to your representative.

Depending on the issues that you are most passionate about, we can also discuss actions you would like your representative to take!



Campaigner Diane meets her MP to talk about raising awareness of ovarian cancer.

4 Prepare your key points and actions

The more prepared you are, the more confident you will feel! You don't have to be an expert, but it's good to have a grasp on some of the issues before the meeting.

Write down the key points you want to talk about:

- Why you're passionate about campaigning on ovarian cancer. You may wish to share a personal story if you feel comfortable as this can be very powerful and compelling.
- Over 7,000 women are diagnosed with ovarian cancer each year in the UK. Too few women are being diagnosed at an early stage (I or II) when chance of survival is greatest.

Come up with some key actions for your representative to take forward:

- Write to the health minister or table a question in your country's legislature.
- Raise awareness of the symptoms of ovarian cancer on social media.
- Host an event in your constituency about ovarian cancer.

You might find it helpful to run through what you want to say in the meeting with a family member or friend. This could help you identify other things to mention.

5 Actions during the meeting

During the meeting try to get your key points across, share your story, and end with the key actions you want them to take away. Ask their permission to take a photograph to share online too!

If your representative asks a question you can't answer don't worry. You can say you're not an expert and that you can find out and get back to them. Keep the discussion friendly. This will help achieve results by building a good relationship with your elected representative.

Surgeries usually only last 15 minutes, so don't worry if you forget anything or didn't have time to include all of your points. You can mention anything extra in a follow up email.

6 Actions after the meeting

Send an email to your representative thanking them for the meeting as well as summarising the key points you raised and the key actions that were agreed.

If you don't hear from them for a few weeks, you could send another email asking whether they have carried out what they agreed to do. You could send them information each time Target Ovarian Cancer launches a new campaign, report or action too.

Always remember that your MPs, MSPs, MLAs and MSs have been elected to represent you. Don't ever feel like you're bothering them or wasting their time. They are there to listen to your views and act on your behalf.

Campaigner Annie outside her MP's office.



“

I contacted the MSP's office to arrange a meeting and spent some time beforehand preparing a list of points I wanted to say. I shared my story and some of the things I wanted to see change, particularly greater awareness of the symptoms of ovarian cancer in Scotland and the need for an awareness campaign.

In spite of feeling a bit nervous about it, we ended up having a lovely and productive chat and she was very helpful.”

Christine



Campaign by raising awareness

Raising awareness of ovarian cancer symptoms saves lives.

Find out more about the different ways you can make a change.



Write to your local newspaper

Raise awareness in your community by featuring in your local newspaper.

Local newspapers are a fantastic way to raise awareness of ovarian cancer and the campaigning you're doing.



Writing to your local newspapers will have a huge impact because:

- There may be people in your area experiencing symptoms that could indicate ovarian cancer but haven't heard of the disease before. It may be the signal they need to contact their GP.
- It could lead to more people getting involved with your campaigning or wanting to do more. Campaigning is more likely to bring about change when as many people get involved as possible.
- Elected representatives pay very close attention to what is in local newspapers in their constituencies so they know what their constituents' concerns and worries are. By seeing an article or letter about ovarian cancer, they may want to do more to help.

“

I spoke to my local newspaper because I'm passionate about helping raise awareness of ovarian cancer. It's so important that women know the symptoms to look out for and where to turn if they need support. Local newspapers are such an important way to spread the word.”

Pauline



How to use the press release:

1 Fill in the press release

Fill in the blanks on the press release – <text that looks like this>. We have added comment boxes where you need to do this. Delete before sending!

Local journalists like to know about you! If you are happy for it to be in the public domain, you can include your full name, age, occupation and your family, including if you have any children. Personal stories and quotes are really powerful, so include these if you can. It is important to include your full name and a clear location of where you live – including the exact area if you live in a town or the city you live in (e.g. Small Heath, Birmingham).

Be prepared to interview. Add your contact details (including a phone number) in the 'notes to editors' – journalists will often want to check the details with you. If in doubt, speak to our media team who are here to help. Show who you are. Attach a picture of yourself, you and family or of a campaigning activity you've taken part in. The picture needs to be good quality – preferably around 1MB in size.

2 Talk to us!

We want to help you campaign for change and can provide you with ovarian cancer statistics relevant to your local area. While our press release focuses on symptom awareness, we can offer guidance on how to include other issues you're campaigning on in the press release. Contact press.office@targetovariancancer.org.uk for any questions – or if you want the team to look over your press release before you send it on to journalists.

3 Contact your local newspaper

You can find your local newspaper's contact details online. Start by finding their contact number and calling the news desk first.

When you call, introduce yourself and explain that you wish to send a press release via email about your experience of ovarian cancer and the need for local awareness of the symptoms. You could even invite them to an event you are attending or organising!



Raise awareness online or in your community

All women must know the symptoms and feel empowered to contact their GP.

▶ Raise awareness in your local community:

Displaying posters

One of the most vital ways of raising awareness of the symptoms of ovarian cancer is through displaying posters in places like pharmacies, GP surgeries and shops.

You can download our symptoms poster [PDF] and get in touch with your pharmacy, GP surgery or local shop so they can print the poster and display it in their premises.

You might want to explain a bit about ovarian cancer, why it is important that women know the symptoms to look out for and why you feel so passionately about raising awareness. You could also explain how raising awareness saves lives, and that women who see these posters may contact their GP as a result.

Set up a stall

You can set up a stall to raise awareness at local events or community centres! We can supply the materials and offer advice on speaking about ovarian cancer. Team up with friends, family or other campaigners if you're nervous doing this alone.



Campaigner Diane and her ovarian cancer awareness stall with friends and family.

Give a talk

Community centres and local venues may host meetings and events where you can talk to an audience about your experience and the importance of symptom awareness.

Public speaking isn't for everyone, however some campaigners find it an empowering way to share their story and raise awareness. Some campaigners even present at our parliamentary events!



Raise awareness online:

Create and share a video

You could record a video of yourself explaining why you're passionate about ovarian cancer, telling people the symptoms and to visit our website. You could ask your elected representative to share this video!

“



There are a lot of women, not just in the South Asian community, who do not feel empowered about their own health.

I want to be a voice. I want to campaign to make sure that ovarian cancer is much more visible, more discussed, and to raise awareness, especially in my own community.”

Sbba

On social media

You can reach a wide audience through social media! You can use Instagram to connect with people through photos, videos and captions to share your story and raise awareness of the issues you are facing. X (formally Twitter) allows you to connect with key people such as MPs and hospital board members.

You can help raise awareness of the symptoms by sharing our ovarian cancer symptoms placard [PDF] on your Facebook, X or Instagram account with this message, and ask your friends to do the same or share your post. If everyone who posted did this, it would help save even more lives.



Do you know the symptoms of ovarian cancer? I'm joining @TargetOvarian in raising awareness to save lives. Contact your GP if you're worried. The main symptoms of ovarian cancer are: bloated tummy, always feeling full, tummy pain and needing to wee more.

Take action through craftivism

Craftivism is a powerful and creative way to bring about change and raise awareness.

Craftivism is perfect if you don't feel comfortable taking part in certain activities, like hosting an event or meeting with your elected representative. You can create flyers, stickers, bags or badges to draw attention to a particular campaign or issue.



Connect with others:

Craftivism can be fun with others! Why not invite some family and friends to create with you? For example, you could get together to design your own symptoms poster or design badges that you could send to your elected representatives.

You could even hold a craftivism workshop. This could be a private event, and a space to support others and share stories, or a public event to raise awareness of ovarian cancer in the local community.

Things to consider:

Who is your target audience?

You might display your crafts in homes, shop fronts, or doctors' offices, or you might even send them to decision-makers directly.

What message do you want to get across?

And what is the best way to do this? You might want to create a banner for a stall displaying the symptoms, or create something that shares your story to send to a certain audience.

How can you promote your craftivism?

Your creations might stay local to your area and be displayed in the community centre or local newspapers, but you can share the message far and wide through social media. Don't forget to take pictures!

Influence your local health systems

Local healthcare systems can appear complex and intimidating, but there are easy steps to take to make a change for those diagnosed with ovarian cancer in your local area.





Ovarian cancer 'Red Flags'

Make a difference in your local healthcare settings by helping us distribute our information resources to your local GP practice.

You can help us equip GPs with the knowledge and tools they need to diagnose ovarian cancer early.

We've created an 'Ovarian Cancer Red Flags' postcard and fact sheet to encourage healthcare professionals to consider ovarian cancer when patients present with recurrent UTIs or new diagnoses of IBS.

This will help us challenge the misconceptions about ovarian cancer that prevent early diagnosis. Make a difference in your local healthcare settings by helping us distribute our information resources to your local GP practice!



Ovarian Cancer Red Flags



Be aware

**New diagnosis
of IBS in the >50s**



Be aware

**New onset 'overactive bladder'/
'recurrent UTI' in >50s**

Influence your Integrated Care Board (ICB) (England only)

It takes only five minutes to email your ICB about steps to demand attention for ovarian cancer.

What are ICBs?

In England, Integrated Care Boards (ICBs) are responsible for developing plans to meet the health needs of the local area. They can play a vital role in improving early diagnosis of ovarian cancer by having sufficient systems to support primary and secondary care, like GPs and Cancer Alliances.



At the moment, how early a woman is diagnosed varies significantly depending on where they live in the country. We want ICBs to support and work with our Early Diagnosis Network to raise awareness and commit to improving stage of diagnosis in primary care.

How can I get involved?

ICBs like to hear from residents about what is important to them about health and care services in their area. Join us to call on ICBs to do more to improve early diagnosis.

It takes only five minutes to email your ICB asking them to share our work on early diagnosis with primary and secondary health systems in your local area. We've created a template email for you to send that has everything they need to know – all you need to do is input your details!

ICBs are only part of the NHS in England. If you live in the other nations of the UK, you can still campaign with us to improve early diagnosis! Contact us.

► Thank you for campaigning with us!

Demanding change for those affected by ovarian cancer would not be possible without you, our campaigners.

Together you form a strong, people-powered movement right across the UK that takes action to transform the future of ovarian cancer awareness, diagnosis, treatment and support.

Remember, change takes time – start small and grow momentum. Don't forget to celebrate your success, big and small!

“

I'm determined to embrace the negative and use it to make a positive, using my experience and voice to campaign for change.”

Catherine



► Find out more



targetovariancancer.org.uk



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[@TargetOvarianCancer](https://www.linkedin.com/company/TargetOvarianCancer)



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