THREE TARGETS

TO TRANSFORM THE FUTURE OF OVARIAN CANCER IN SCOTLAND

Target Ovarian Cancer

Ovarian cancer continues to be overlooked and women with the disease are being failed.

As a Member of the Scottish Parliament you have the power to change this by working with Target Ovarian Cancer.

We have a plan: three targets that will transform the future for everyone diagnosed with ovarian cancer. We need you to help us achieve them.

1 A government funded awareness campaign, so everyone knows the symptoms and their family history

We know that too often women's pain and discomfort have not been taken seriously, and they have not been equipped with the information they need on ovarian cancer.

With no viable screening programme, we need to see sustained investment in symptom awareness campaigns, highlighting not just the main symptoms but key risk factors such as age and family history. It is vital that every woman knows the symptoms and the prevention options offered by genetic testing. We must work together to ensure women feel empowered and informed to contact their GP at the earliest opportunity.

23%

can name the symptom of bloating.

20%

cases of ovarian cancer are linked to a genetic variant

"At 57, I was diagnosed with triple negative breast cancer. Almost a decade later, I developed ovarian cancer. I knew nothing about it, and only after my diagnosis did, I realise I'd had all the classic symptoms.



My doctor linked the two cancers and recommended genetic testing. Discovering I carried the RAD51D gene variant changed everything, not just for me, but for my three daughters. Waiting for their results was terrifying. Two were clear, but Julie tested positive and chose preventative surgery.

My experience shows ovarian cancer doesn't just affect one woman, it affects whole families, and awareness can shape their choices." - Mary

To ensure that everyone knows the symptoms of ovarian cancer we must see:

- A government funded symptom awareness campaign, featuring the symptoms of ovarian cancer
- Improved awareness around family history and access to genetic testing

2 A commitment to invest in innovative diagnostic testing and strengthen GP support to drive earlier diagnosis

Scotland has the shortest diagnostic pathway in the UK being the only nation to offer dual testing, with the CA125 blood test and ultrasound undertaken at the same time. However, there can still be delays both in accessing tests and GPs then interpreting the results.

Over half of women in Scotland are diagnosed at a late stage when the disease is harder to treat. To reduce diagnostic delays for ovarian cancer, dual testing must deliver rapid results and be supported by consistently high-quality ultrasound provision. Evidence shows that ovarian cancer could be detected in up to 96 per cent of postmenopausal women, the group at highest risk if the IOTA–ADNEX ultrasound model were widely available.

26%

women diagnosed in Scotland report visiting their GP three or more times before being referred for tests.

41%

GPs believe incorrectly that symptoms only present in the late stage of the disease.

Alongside this, support and training must be available to GPs. We know that too many women experience misdiagnosis and delays as result of GPs not being equipped with appropriate support and knowledge to diagnose ovarian cancer quickly.

"Looking back, I believe I was fortunate to see a GP who took my symptoms seriously.

I went in with persistent pain in my side, and she listened carefully, asked the right questions, and arranged urgent tests that quickly uncovered ovarian cancer. I know this isn't the experience for every woman, which is why my story shows how important it is for GPs to listen and act when something doesn't feel right.



Early investigation and access to tests can be life-changing. Strengthening diagnostic testing is essential to ensure more women are diagnosed at an early stage."- Christine

To ensure that women with ovarian cancer get the tests they need we need to see:

- Investment in improved diagnostic technologies like IOTA ADNEX
- Better support for GPs across Scotland to interpret and act on CA125 blood test and ultrasound results.

3 A long-term sustainable plan to ensure that everyone can access the best possible treatment no matter where they live

Everyone with ovarian cancer in Scotland deserves the best possible treatment, targeted to their needs. Access to the right treatment is vital to improving a woman's chance of survival, and surgery is the treatment that offers the best long-term prognosis.

However, we know there is a postcode lottery in access to treatment across Scotland, with significant variation in the options available depending on where you live. Women diagnosed with ovarian cancer have faced unacceptable delays in accessing lifesaving surgery, and in some cases have had to self-fund and travel to England to receive the treatment they need.

Less than half

of the health boards in Scotland are meeting the 62 day waiting time standard for ovarian cancer

70%

women will experience a recurrence

The same standard of care and treatment must be offered to all women diagnosed, including those with a recurrence, regardless of location. This includes timely access to treatment and ensuring that at every stage of the pathway, patients are treated as active partners in decisions about their care.

"I was diagnosed with stage three ovarian cancer, which was a huge shock for me and my family.

After my third round of chemotherapy, I was told I needed surgery, then suddenly warned the wait would be at least 12 weeks. That delay completely derailed my treatment plan, leaving an uncertain gap after chemo. That's when going private was suggested. We used our life savings, and I had to travel to London as this surgery isn't available privately in Scotland.



A woman's chance of life saving treatment should never depend on her postcode. This must change." - Mags

To ensure that everyone diagnosed with ovarian cancer gets the treatment they deserve we need to see:

- A review of surgery provision nationally to ensure that women are able to access surgery within the same time frame no matter where they live. This should include improved access to cross network care.
- Same standard of care and treatment is offered to women diagnosed with a recurrence.
- Explore creation of a national ovarian cancer audit for Scotland to drive better outcomes

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