



The Rt Hon Victoria Atkins MP
Secretary of State for Health and Social Care
Department of Health and Social Care
Ministerial Correspondence and Public Enquiries Unit
39 Victoria Street
London
SW1H 0EU

Our Ref: SC22042

2 May 2024

Dear Victoria

I am writing to you following the publication of a policy briefing by the UK Radiotherapy Board which shows alarming waits for patients to begin potentially life-saving radiotherapy treatment on the NHS.

The report reveals that an average of 11% of patients across England waited more than 31-days to start radiotherapy treatment, far in excess of the NHS' target of fewer than 4%. This target has not been met since July 2021.

While these figures are in and of themselves deeply concerning, I am particularly troubled that in the North East, Yorkshire and the Humber, 19%, almost one-in-five patients waited more than 31 days. This stands in stark contrast to figures for the South East, where just 3% waited in excess of 31 days.

The briefing highlights a number of reasons behind these delays, the most significant being serious shortages within the cancer workforce, including doctors, radiographers and physicists. The latest Royal College of Radiographers census of the clinical oncology workforce shows a 15% shortfall for consultant clinical oncologists.

Patients in Rotherham deserve to be able to access the same standard of life-saving care as their counterparts in the South East. It is unacceptable that, currently, services lag so far behind.

I would be grateful for your comments on this matter and for any information you could provide on how the Government intends to address this shocking inequality and deliver the world class care to which my constituents are entitled.

Sarah Champion

Member of Parliament for Rotherham

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I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'S' followed by a horizontal line that extends to the right.

Sarah Champion MP
Member of Parliament for Rotherham