

Minister Karin Smyth
Minister of State for Health (Secondary Care)
39 Victoria St
London
SW1H 0EU

03 April 2025

Dear Minister,

We are 63 parliamentarians who, alongside the charity Pancreatic Cancer UK, are writing to raise our concerns over the alarming shortages of Pancreatic Enzyme Replacement Therapy (PERT). The shortages are severely affecting thousands of people with pancreatic cancer across the country. We are therefore calling for a national plan to tackle these.

PERT 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 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 Viatrix, the manufacturer of Creon. Whilst we recognise that Viatrix 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 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,

Adam Dance, Member of Parliament for Yeovil and South Somerset

Alison Bennett, Member of Parliament for Mid Sussex

Angus MacDonald, Member of Parliament for Inverness, Skye and West Ross-shire

Anna Sabine, Member of Parliament for Frome and East Somerset

Anneliese Midgley, Member of Parliament for Knowsley

Antonia Bance, Member of Parliament for Tipton and Wednesbury

Ayoub Khan, Member of Parliament for Birmingham Perry Barr

Baroness Golding

Ben Lake, Member of Parliament for Ceredigion Preseli

Ben Maguire, Member of Parliament for North Cornwall

Cameron Thomas, Member of Parliament for Tewkesbury

Carla Lockhart, Member of Parliament for Upper Bann

Caroline Voaden, Member of Parliament for South Devon

Chris Bloore, Member of Parliament for Redditch

Chris Coghlan, Member of Parliament for Dorking and Horley

Christine Jardine, Member of Parliament for Edinburgh West

Claire Hanna, Member of Parliament for Belfast South and Mid Down

Clive Betts, Member of Parliament for Sheffield South East

Clive Jones, Member of Parliament for Wokingham

Danny Chambers, Member of Parliament for Winchester

Dave Doogan, Member of Parliament for Angus and Perthshire Glens

David Chadwick, Member of Parliament for Brecon, Radnor and Cwm-Tawe

Dr Allison Gardner, Member of Parliament for Stoke-on-Trent

Dr Scott Arthur, Member of Parliament for Edinburgh South West

Ellie Chowns, Member of Parliament for North Herefordshire

Euan Stainbank, Member of Parliament for Falkirk

Frank McNally, Member of Parliament for Coatbridge and Bellshill

Freddie Van Mierlo, Member of Parliament for Henley and Thame

Greg Smith, Member of Parliament for the Mid Buckinghamshire

Gurinder Josan, Member of Parliament for Smethwick

Helen Maguire, Member of Parliament for Epsom and Ewell

Ian Roome, Member of Parliament for North Devon

Ian Sollom, Member of Parliament for St Neots and Mid Cambridgeshire

Jas Athwal, Member of Parliament for Ilford South

Jess Brown-Fuller, Member of Parliament for Chichester

Jim Shannon, Member of Parliament for Strangford

John Milne, Member of Parliament for Horsham

Juliett Campbell, Member of Parliament Broxtowe

Kim Johnson, Member of Parliament for Liverpool Riverside

Lee Dillon, Member of Parliament for Newbury

Liz Jarvis, Member of Parliament for Eastleigh

Liz Saville-Roberts, Member of Parliament for Dwyfor Meirionnydd

Lord Moylan

Manuela Perteghella, Member of Parliament for Stratford-on-Avon

Maureen Burke, Member of Parliament for Glasgow North East

Michael Wheeler, Member of Parliament for Worsley and Eccles

Mike Martin, Member of Parliament for Tunbridge Wells

Nadia Whittome, Member of Parliament for Nottingham East

Neil Duncan-Jordan, Member of Parliament for Poole

Olly Glover, Member of Parliament for Didcot and Wantage

Paul Kohler, Member of Parliament for Wimbledon

Paulette Hamilton, Member of Parliament for Birmingham Erdington

Rachel Gilmour, Member of Parliament for Tiverton and Minehead

Richard Tice, Member of Parliament for Boston and Skegness

Robin Swann, Member of Parliament for South Antrim

Sarah Edwards, Member of Parliament for Tamworth

Sarah Gibson, Member of Parliament for Chippenham

Seamus Logan, Member of Parliament for Aberdeenshire North and Moray East

Steff Aquarone, Member of Parliament for North Norfolk

Steve Darling, Member of Parliament for Torbay

Victoria Collins, Member of Parliament for Harpenden and Berkhamsted

Will Forster, Member of Parliament for Woking

Zoe Franklin, Member of Parliament for Guildford