

Professor Peter Clark
Chair
Cancer Drugs Panel
c/o NHS England
Leeds
LS2 7UE

13 January 2015

Dear Peter,

Following the publication of the Cancer Drugs Fund reprioritisation decisions yesterday, we wanted to write with some of our concerns about the way the reprioritisation process has been carried out and the engagement of charities in this process.

Many of us attended meetings with you and others from NHS England and NICE late last year about the Cancer Drugs Fund and access to cancer drugs more generally, now and going forward. We have welcomed the commitment from you personally, and from NHS England more generally, to ensuring that patient groups are included in the process for ensuring that future commissioning of cancer treatments is sustainable and works in the best interests of patients. However, we are disappointed with the lack of patient involvement and transparency in the delisting process that has recently taken place. The Cancer Drugs Fund re-evaluation process did not allow patients or patient groups to feed in views about drugs, nor was there any consideration of patient experience. While we welcome the involvement of patient representatives on the Cancer Drugs Fund panel, we do feel that allowing patients and patient groups to input directly would have given the panel valuable insight from a key stakeholder group. This lack of involvement suggests that the panel does not place enough value on the views of patients.

The reprioritisation process has not been transparent. With no understanding of how individual drugs have been scored by the panel, in terms of clinical effectiveness as well as cost, we cannot assess whether the decisions are fair, nor whether they are in the best interests of patients. We appreciate that a degree of confidentiality is required in respect of pricing negotiations but charities should have been provided with more information about how these decisions were made.

The briefing meeting for charities about the Cancer Drugs Fund decisions, originally scheduled for Monday 12 January, has been delayed until a full week after the decisions have been published. For us to serve the patients that we represent, it would have been helpful to be briefed about the decisions prior to them being published, or at the very least, immediately afterwards. This would have enabled us to adequately answer queries from patients who are, understandably, very concerned about the decisions being made by the panel. Holding the briefing meeting a week after the decisions are being published means that charities are being kept in the dark and patients and the public are getting what may turn out to be incorrect information from the media.

As a cancer community we understand the challenges of funding high cost cancer drugs and ensuring effective treatments are made available for patients. We remain committed to continuing to working with you, NHS England and others to develop a better model for the commissioning of cancer treatments. However, we must ensure that the needs of patients remain at its heart. It is essential that the process for developing a new model is transparent and that patients and those

who represent them are involved fully in its development. We are looking for your assertion that this will be the case from now on.

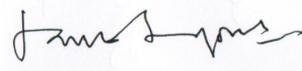
Yours sincerely,



Mark Flannagan
Chief Executive



Chris Askew
Chief Executive



Jane Lyons
Chief Executive



Lorraine Clifton
Chief Executive



Owen Sharp
Chief Executive



Prostate Cancer UK is a registered charity in England and Wales (1005541) and in Scotland (SC039332). Registered company 2653887



Andrew Wilson
Chief Executive



CC: Simon Stevens, Sean Duffy, Jeremy Hunt