

WALES CANCER ALLIANCE MANIFESTO NATIONAL ASSEMBLY FOR WALES ELECTIONS 2007

Who are we?

Established in 2006, the Wales Cancer Alliance strives to promote the best cancer prevention, treatment, research and care for people in Wales. The Alliance comprises leading voluntary cancer organisations who wish to positively influence legislation, policy-making, resources and services for the people affected by cancer in Wales. Currently, the Alliance consists of Breast Cancer Care Cymru, Cancer Care Cymru, Cancer Research UK, Macmillan Cancer Support, Marie Curie Cancer Care and Tenovus – the cancer charity. Together, we invest approximately £15m every year in cancer research and services in Wales.

What is the manifesto?

This manifesto aims to address the key issues facing people in Wales today in relation to cancer services. Contained within this document are realistic and attainable proposals to develop world-class, equitable cancer services the people of Wales deserve. It aims to affect the future of cancer research and care provision in Wales and to increase awareness of cancer issues among politicians, the media and the public during the electioneering period and beyond.

Seven key issues for the 2007 Assembly elections

The Wales Cancer Alliance urges the next Welsh Assembly Government to take urgent action on the following seven key issues to secure 'world class' cancer services for the people of Wales:

Cancer Plan for Wales

Wales currently has a plethora of policies, yet has failed to produce a one-stop, focused vision that would ensure the delivery of the best cancer services possible for the people of Wales. A comprehensive, patient centred Cancer Plan for Wales, with ring-fenced funding, is needed to pull together the existing policies, standards and strategies.

More investment in the cancer workforce

With many cancers now managed as chronic conditions, the need for greater investment in workforce planning and training has never been more important. Protection of current posts as well as the development of new initiatives is essential. This is true for all stages of care delivery – from preventative interventions to end of life care.

Improving early diagnosis

Increased availability and access to both screening and diagnostic facilities for all people in Wales is essential to survival outcomes. Greater collaboration between Government, cancer charities and the media is necessary to educate people on both the symptoms of cancer and the need for screening, particularly amongst socially excluded or minority groups.

Providing choice in end of life care

Community palliative care is a priority to tackle the barriers that prevent people from dying at home. That means making sure the right information and resources are available for patients and their carers. Terminally ill patients should be able to live and die where they choose, wherever possible.

More investment and research in prevention and vaccines

Half of cancer diagnoses are attributable to lifestyle issues. An overall increase in spending on cancer prevention and appropriate research will reduce long-term cancer treatment costs and save lives. For example, forward planning to establish the health, social and economic benefits of introducing a HPV vaccination programme is required.

More research and clinical trials investment

The development of a national patient information campaign specific to cancer clinical trials would help more patients make informed choices about their treatment options. Increased Government funding is necessary to further develop the Clinical Centres model, specifically targeting clinical training, early phase clinical trials and core infrastructure support. Encouraging Primary Care practitioners to undertake cancer research is also essential.

Taking social care seriously

91% of cancer patients' households suffer loss of income as a direct result of a cancer diagnosis. All cancer patients should be offered / referred to specialist benefits advice at the point of care delivery. The Hospital Travel Costs Scheme (HTCS) should be better publicised and made available to all cancer patients.

A detailed manifesto is available on the websites of all Alliance member charities.

