Your full address in this corner.

(You need to provide an address when writing to your MP)

Dear (X),

I am writing to you as a member of your constituency to ask for your assistance in the fight against pancreatic cancer.

(If you have a personal connection to pancreatic cancer, please explain it here.)

Around 10,000 people are diagnosed with pancreatic cancer every year, approximately 80% of those people will not survive for one year and under 7% will survive for 5 years. In comparison, around 86% of breast cancer patients will still be alive after five years and 98% of patients with testicular cancer. In fact, pancreatic cancer has one of the highest incident-to-mortality rates of any disease.

These shocking statistics are in part related to difficulties diagnosing the disease. Pancreatic cancer is often diagnosed late, at an advanced stage where the tumour is inoperable and average life expectancy is between two to six months. Surgery is currently the only cure for pancreatic cancer, but only around 20% of patients are diagnosed in time for this option.

The UK lags remind Europe and other comparable countries in terms of one- and five-year survival for many cancers, pancreatic among them. Both survival rates are lower than the European average and countries like Australia have a five-year survival rate that is around double that of the UK. Only around 3% of research funding into cancer is currently spent on pancreatic, and as the UK’s fifth biggest cancer killer, much more is needed.

Furthermore, survival rates across the UK vary by location, age, race and other socioeconomic factors. Mortality rates are between 20-25% higher in the most deprived areas of the country compared with the least deprived. Reducing these inequalities could save an estimated 400 lives a year.

These statistics capture the high levels of unmet need for pancreatic cancer and patients with the disease. Pancreatic Cancer Action is calling for an audit of the support available to patients and their experiences with pancreatic cancer. Audits of similar scale have been completed in Scotland (link) and for lung cancer (link). As MP for my constituency, I hope that you can write to the relevant NHS bodies and join calls for an audit to understand discrepancies in survival and the services available to patients.

I also hope that you will raise the issue of pancreatic cancer in parliament, and help Pancreatic Cancer Action in their call for a measurable survival target for cancers like pancreatic that are unlikely to reach the 75% early diagnosis target laid out in the NHS long term plan.

Finally, I ask that you consider joining the APPG on pancreatic cancer (link), where along with parliamentary colleagues you can help be a voice for early diagnosis.

I look forward to your response and thank you in advance

Kindest regards,

(Name)