

Dear party leaders,

For over a decade there have been calls for changes that improve the experiences of people with incurable secondary breast cancer across the UK. But across too many areas, change has been slow or not forthcoming.

Research conducted by Breast Cancer Now has shown that many people with secondary breast cancer feel they are not acknowledged, experience delays in diagnosis, struggle to access the support of a specialist nurse and fear they won't be able to access the treatments they need in the future.

Following this research, Breast Cancer Now, along with incredible women from our Secondary Breast Cancer campaign group, set out the urgent action needed to improve the lives of people living with secondary breast cancer in Scotland.

We know the NHS is facing huge pressure and are thankful for the NHS staff who have supported the continuation of cancer services. However, improving treatment and support for people living with secondary breast cancer must remain a priority. These are our urgent recommendations:

- For everyone living with secondary breast cancer to be acknowledged. The next Scottish Government should publish whatever data are available on the diagnosis of secondary breast cancer. NHS Scotland should also support Health Boards and explore future options to collect routine data on the secondary breast cancer patients in their care.
- For everyone with secondary breast cancer to receive a prompt diagnosis. The next Scottish Government should work with NHS Scotland to develop and utilise tools and resources to help GPs recognise cases of secondary breast cancer as quickly as possible, and provide all patients with information on the signs and symptoms of secondary breast cancer, as part of follow-up support after primary breast cancer. Also to explore as part of the piloting and roll out of Early Diagnostic Centres their potential to support earlier diagnoses of secondary breast cancer.
- For everyone with secondary breast cancer to have information about clinical trials. The next Scottish Government should work with NHS Scotland to develop and adopt a mechanism to ensure patients eligible for clinical trials are informed about them and

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are offered the opportunity to participate. Support should also be provided to clinicians and local systems to allow this to happen.

- For everyone with secondary breast cancer to be supported by a Clinical Nurse Specialist (CNS). The next Scottish Government should review and publish a breakdown of the current number of FTE CNSs supporting people with secondary breast cancer and how much time they dedicate to doing this. It should also provide the investment needed to recruit and train enough CNSs to support people with secondary breast cancer now and in the future.

We recognise these are challenging times, but we stand ready to work with the next Scottish Government to deliver change for people living with secondary breast cancer over the next five years. We ask that action to ensure people with secondary breast cancer live well for longer is included in your party's manifesto.

If you would like any further information, please don't hesitate to contact us by email: [publicaffairs@breastcancer.org](mailto:publicaffairs@breastcancer.org).

Yours sincerely,



Baroness Delyth Morgan, Chief Executive, Breast Cancer Now

**Together with secondary breast cancer patient advocates:**

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