



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

The Rt Hon Sajid Javid MP
Department for Health and Social Care
39 Victoria Street
London
SW1H 0EU

15th November 2021

[sent by email to: mb-sofs@dhsc.gov.uk]

Dear Secretary of State,

As you know, the Covid-19 pandemic has caused huge disruption to healthcare for millions of people, including for those living with heart and circulatory diseases, which are still responsible for a quarter of all deaths in the UK. We are writing to urge you to prioritise the recovery of cardiovascular care in the Government's upcoming delivery plan for tackling the elective backlog¹.

Despite the unwavering efforts of everyone across the health and care system to respond to the needs of all patients over the last 18 months, millions of people have not been able to access the care they need to stay well during the pandemic. This is likely to have contributed to the more than 5,800 excess deaths from heart and circulatory diseases in the first year of the pandemic in England alone, with hundreds of thousands of people still waiting for vital heart care and diagnosis.

Treatments like heart surgery aren't a luxury. Long waits for diagnosis and treatment of conditions like coronary heart disease, abnormal heart rhythms and heart failure are emotionally distressing and can increase the risk of someone becoming more unwell or even dying while they wait for care.

In your speech to the Grange in Blackpool, you outlined how there are nearly a quarter of a million people currently waiting for heart-related surgery. This is just the tip of the iceberg. The British Heart Foundation (BHF) predicts that the number of people anxiously waiting for heart care and diagnosis could peak at over half a million in January 2024, and it could take up to five years for cardiac waiting lists in England to recover to pre-pandemic levels.

Without immediate action, there is a risk that thousands more people could die from heart and circulatory diseases.

But by acting now it's possible to prevent these predictions from becoming a reality and ensure the NHS remains on track to achieve its ambitions for CVD as outlined in the Long Term Plan.



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That's why we're supporting the BHF's call for a **clear national cardiovascular strategy** for recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic within the Government's forthcoming plan for tackling the electives backlog. This must be backed up with long-term targeted funding, a strong workforce strategy and leadership that prioritises cardiovascular care at all levels of the health system.

We want to prevent more lives lost to treatable heart conditions and urge you to commit to mitigating the worst effects of the pandemic on people with heart and circulatory diseases in the Government's forthcoming plan.

Yours sincerely,

Andrew Gwynne MP
Apsana Begum MP
Caroline Lucas MP
Daisy Cooper MP
Damian Green MP
Dan Jarvis MP
David Warburton MP
Diane Abbott MP
Emma Hardy MP
Helen Hayes MP
Henry Smith MP
Hilary Benn MP
Ian Byrne MP
Ian Lavery MP
Jason McCartney MP
John McDonnell MP
Kate Hollern MP
Kate Osborne MP
Kim Johnson MP
Layla Moran MP
Marsha De Cordova MP
Matt Vickers MP
Mick Whitley MP
Mohammad Yasin MP
Munira Wilson MP
Paula Barker MP

Rebecca Long-Bailey MP
Rupa Huq MP
Sarah Green MP
Sarah Olney MP
Siobhain McDonagh MP
Sir Ed Davey MP
Sir John Hayes CBE MP
Virendra Sharma MP
Zarah Sultana MP
Baroness Brinton
Baroness Browning
Baroness Featherstone
Baroness Harris of Richmond
Baroness Jones of Moulsecoomb
Baroness Masham of Ilton
Baroness Randerson
Baroness Walmsley
Lord Beith
Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth
Lord Hunt of Kings Heath
Lord Jones of Cheltenham
Lord McNally
Lord Reid of Cardowan
Lord Strasburger
Lord Willis of Knaresborough
The Lord Bishop of Carlisle



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ⁱ *Build Back Better. Our plan for health and social care.* HM Government. September 2021. p.27