

**PE1779/A**

Scottish Government submission of 24 March 2020

Through the £42 million Detect Cancer Early programme, the Scottish Government aims to increase the proportion of cancers that are detected at the earliest stages and includes increasing awareness of the symptoms of ovarian Cancer.

As part of the overall early diagnosis programme the Revised Scottish Referral Guidelines for Suspected Cancer were published on 22 January 2019.

These guidelines support primary care clinicians in identifying patients who are most likely to have cancer and therefore require urgent assessment by a specialist. Equally, the Guidelines help in identifying patients who are unlikely to have cancer, embedding safety netting as a diagnostic support tool.

The updated guidelines include specific reference to the role of CA125 levels and pelvic ultrasound in urgent referral for ovarian cancer.

The Scottish Government's social marketing strategy and the latest 'Survivors' campaign aims to reduce fear of all cancer, which we know remains a key barrier to people presenting early and encourage those with any unusual or persistent changes to their body to visit their GP practice.

The Scottish Government has had social media activity for ovarian cancer month including linking to case studies and highlighting the symptoms.

The Scottish Cancer Coalition, which includes the ovarian cancer charity, Target Ovarian forms part of, was consulted throughout the development of this mass awareness public-facing campaign and I'm aware that officials continue to work through this network to source and share powerful human interest stories - regardless of their tumour group - which we know often sparks individuals into action. This is supported by our 'Getcheckedearly' website which has an ovarian cancer specific page with case studies and links to Target Ovarian Cancer and Cancer Research UK.

In light of COVID-19, the Public Petitions Committee will wish to be aware that NHS Boards are expected to make every effort to treat people with a suspicion of cancer within the cancer waiting standards. However, the timing of an individual patient's appointment is based on their clinical need with the most urgent patients being seen quickest.

The Scottish Government continues to emphasise the importance of people and those living within the same home with symptoms suggestive of COVID-19 (a fever or a new cough) should stay at home for 14 days. Updates on public health advice for coronavirus can be found on the [NHS Inform website](#), and a free helpline has been set up for those who do not have symptoms but are looking for general health advice: 0800 028 2816.

Finally, I am grateful for you bringing this to my attention and trust this response provides the Public Petitions Committee with the Scottish Government's commitment to raise awareness for types of cancer, including ovarian.