

**ENGAGEMENT TITLE: Brain Tumour Awareness Month – Wear A Hat Day Photocall and Reception**

<p><b>Date and time of engagement</b></p>	<p>Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> March 2024 after First Minister’s Questions</p> <p>Photocall: 12:45</p> <p>Reception: 13.00-13:30</p>
<p><b>Where</b></p>	<p>Photocall: Garden Lobby, Scottish Parliament (please bring a hat to wear)</p> <p>Reception: in the Burns Room (Committee Room 1)</p>
<p><b>Who</b></p>	<p>Speakers at the reception:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Professor Steve Pollard, University of Edinburgh, whose team is working to better understand brain stem cells and their potential role in 'glioblastoma' - a fast-growing brain cancer.</li> <li>• Theo Burrell, BBC Antiques Roadshow expert and Brain Tumour Research Patron, who is living with a glioblastoma.</li> <li>• Hugh Adams, Head of Stakeholder Relations at Brain Tumour Research.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Background/ purpose</b></p>	<p>Beatrice Wishart MSP (Shetland, Scottish Liberal Democrats) has sponsored this event, during Brain Cancer Awareness Month.</p> <p>The Wear A Hat Day events, organised by Brain Tumour Research, are a chance to learn about the important research happening in Scotland and across the UK and to raise awareness of brain tumours.</p>
<p><b>Key message</b></p>	<p><b>Cancer remains a key priority for this government.</b></p> <p>The Scottish Government’s ambitious ten-year cancer strategy launched in June last year. The strategy takes a comprehensive approach to improving patient pathways, from prevention and diagnosis through to treatment and post-treatment care. The strategy aims to improve cancer survival and provide excellent, equitably accessible, care across Scotland.</p> <p>We know survival rates in some cancers, including brain, have improved at much slower rates than others.</p> <p>We know the earlier cancer is diagnosed the easier it is to treat. Diagnosing brain cancer can be challenging as symptoms are wide-ranging and often vague.</p>
<p><b>Top facts or figures</b></p>	<p>The most recent estimates of 1-year age-standardised net survival for brain cancer were 35.6% for men and 32.1% for women.</p> <p>The 5-year age-standardised net survival rate for brain cancers</p>

	<p>cannot be estimated due to small patient cohort sizes meaning survival could not be estimated robustly. For other, more survivable cancers, the average five-year survival rate is 69%.</p> <p>Each year in Scotland around 330 children and young people under 25 years are diagnosed with cancer. From 2010 to 2019 just over a quarter (26%) were cancers of the brain and central nervous system.</p> <p>The most common causes of death from cancer in children were: cancers of the brain and central nervous system; leukaemia; and cancer of the adrenal gland. These caused around 77% of deaths from cancer in children in 2010-2019.</p>
<b>Annexes</b>	<p><b>ANNEX A: Background</b></p> <p><b>ANNEX B: Lines to take</b></p>
<b>Official support</b>	<p><u>In person:</u>  <b>[REDACTED]</b>, Cancer and Rehabilitation – <b>[REDACTED]</b></p>
<b>Suggested Tweet</b>	<p>I was pleased to attend the wear a hat day reception today in parliament in support of brain tumour research.</p> <p><i>NOTE: Brain Tumour Research will be taking a pink top hat with them to parliament. They are hoping you will post a photo of yourself with the hat on social media.</i></p>

## ANNEX A: BACKGROUND

### Brain Tumours

Diagnosing brain cancer can be challenging as symptoms are wide-ranging and often vague. Triage of patients with signs and symptoms that may indicate a brain tumour in primary care is challenging due to the common and non-specific nature of the presenting symptoms.

Brain cancers do not get assigned a stage like other cancers. They are the most common cancer type to be diagnosed as an emergency presentation in the UK and many of these patients would have previously presented to their GP with symptoms. Emergency admissions can act as a proxy for 'late-stage' detection.

The latest cancer incidence report from Public Health Scotland, published March 2023, shows that the pattern for diagnosis has been constant for a number of years. Data for 2020 and 2021 suggests there was not an increase in the proportion of 'late-stage' brain cancer diagnoses during the pandemic, e.g. due to delays to diagnosis that may have been caused by disruption to cancer services.

### Children and young adults

Each year in Scotland around 330 children and young people under 25 years are diagnosed with cancer.

In the ten-year period 2010-2019, 1312 children (aged 0-14, 53% male) and 1970 young people (aged 15-24, 52% female) were diagnosed with cancer. Just over a quarter (26%) were cancers of the **brain and central nervous system**.

Cancer is the most common cause of disease-related death in children. The most common causes of death from cancer in children were: **cancers of the brain and central nervous system**; leukaemia; cancer of the adrenal gland. These caused around 77% of deaths from cancer in children in 2010-2019.

### Brain Tumour Research

Brain Tumour Research is the only national charity in the UK focused on finding a cure for all types of brain tumours through campaigning to increase the national investment in brain tumour research to £35 million per year, while fundraising to create a network of seven sustainable Brain Tumour Research Centres of Excellence across the UK.

### Wear a Hat Day

Every March, as part of Brain Tumour Awareness Month, people from all walks of life put on their favourite hat at work, in school, with friends and family, and hold hat-themed events and make donations to help find a cure for brain tumours, which kill more children and adults under the age of 40 than any other cancer.

The Wear A Hat Day events are a chance to learn about the important research happening in Scotland, and across the UK, and to raise awareness of brain tumours.

## Clinical Research

Research is essential if we are to continue to develop new and effective approaches to the diagnosis and treatment of brain tumours.

The NHS Research Scotland (NRS) Cancer Network is funded by the Scottish Government to increase, support and sustain cancer clinical trial activity in Scotland.

In a typical year around 3000 cancer patients participate in Clinical Trials supported by the NRS Cancer Network.

The Scottish Government, in partnership with Cancer Research UK (CRUK), has increased its funding for the Experimental Cancer Medicine Centres (ECMCs) in Glasgow and Edinburgh. ECMCs specialise in the delivery of early-phase cancer clinical trials, including in brain tumours. The combined Scottish Government/ CRUK funding for the adult and paediatric ECMCs is £4.68 million over 5 years from the start of the current financial year (2023-24).

In 2023 we published an Independent Report on Improving Equity of Access to Cancer Clinical Trials. We have established an Implementation Board through which we are working closely with the cancer research community on pathways to implementation of recommendations highlighted in the report.

The SG Chief Scientist Office has recently established a collaboration with the Tessa Jowell Brain Cancer Mission to fund neurology fellowships in Scotland. These Fellowships are a 1 year programme for medical specialty trainees near to completion of their training and consist of both clinical and research training. The aim is to train clinicians to appreciate the breadth of comprehensive brain tumour management and equip them with research skills to lead high impact practice-changing clinical trials of the future.

We would advise that, for any patient, their individual clinical team are best placed to advise on individual circumstances and which clinical trials are most appropriate.

### CANCER STRATEGY AND EARLIER DIAGNOSIS VISION

#### Cancer strategy 2023 to 2033

- Cancer remains a national priority for the NHS and Scottish Government which is why we published our ambitious ten-year cancer strategy and initial three-year action plan in June last year.
- Over the next 10 years, our strategic aim is to improve cancer survival and provide excellent, equitably accessible care.
- The strategy and plan take a comprehensive approach to improving patient pathways in cancer, from prevention and diagnosis through to treatment and post-treatment care.
- We continue to have a focus on the less survivable cancers, including brain cancer, and improving their outcomes.
- We have established the national Oncology Transformation Programme to review and optimise our service models to make this happen.
- This includes a review of workforce and training requirements as we recognise that our workforce is central to delivering the outcomes of the strategy and plan.
- The plan commits to carrying out a clinically led review of latest data and evidence and determine whether there is merit in specific additional or alternative cancer waiting times standards for different types of cancer and cancer treatment.
- We have committed to increasing funding for Systemic Anti-Cancer Treatment (chemotherapy) services by £10.5m by 2026.

#### Earlier Diagnosis vision

- We know that the earlier cancer is diagnosed the easier it is to treat, and even cure, which is why we continue to invest in our Detect Cancer Earlier (DCE) Programme
- The Programme takes a whole-systems approach to early detection and encompasses primary care, diagnostics, public education, data, innovation, and screening.
- A new Earlier Cancer Diagnosis Vision was developed as part of the new cancer strategy for Scotland. The vision is to reduce later stage disease and has a focus on reducing the health inequalities gap.
- A new Detect Cancer Earlier campaign – Be The Early Bird – ran in March and September last year, aiming to reduce fear of cancer and empower those with possible symptoms to act early.
- We are investing in optimal cancer diagnostic pathways, and are continuing to support Rapid Cancer Diagnostic Services across Scotland.