



**PROSTATE  
CANCER UK**

# Prostate Cancer UK

## Manifesto for the 2022 Northern Ireland elections

### Prostate Cancer statistics for Northern Ireland

- More than 1,000 men are diagnosed with prostate cancer every year
- More than 200 men die from prostate cancer per year
- More than 11,000 men are living with and after prostate cancer (1)

Ahead of the 2022 Northern Ireland Assembly Election's in May, Prostate Cancer UK are calling for four priorities to be addressed by those seeking office at Stormont.

### Support

All men should have access to the support they need at every stage of the prostate cancer pathway. A crucial aspect of this means having access to a Clinical Nurse Specialist (CNS).

Men who have access to a CNS are more likely to be positive about their care and treatment.<sup>(2-4)</sup> They provide cost-effective, high quality and consistent care across the entire patient pathway, reducing appointment cancellations and unnecessary hospital admissions, free up doctor capacity and ensure that more care is delivered in the community.<sup>(5)</sup>

By 2028 Prostate Cancer UK estimate that 26 CNSs will be needed in Northern Ireland. In 2018 there were four.

This number is based on population projections of the number of men who will be living with prostate cancer in 2028 in the UK and the CNSs needed to support them. Figures are estimated from the Department of Health commissioned Frontier Economic Report.<sup>(6)</sup>

**Prostate Cancer UK wants to see a robust cancer workforce strategy and funding settlement to make sure prostate cancer patients have access to a CNS when they need them.**

### Diagnostics

Since 2017, it has been our ambition to make sure that every man with suspected prostate cancer can get access to an MRI scan before a biopsy.

An MRI is significantly better at identifying clinically significant prostate cancer compared to the previous method of a TRUS biopsy. It reduces the number of men having biopsies unnecessarily by a quarter (27%) because the scan will only pick up cancers which could cause men harm and need further tests, and helps improve the accuracy when taking

biopsy samples, targeting directly any suspicious areas seen on the MRI.<sup>(7)</sup>

This election is an opportunity to provide clear and transparent auditing requirements for medical imaging services in Northern Ireland, including MRIs, and address workforce shortages that persist across radiology.

Three of the five Northern Ireland Trusts' Clinical Directors of Radiology have stated that there are not enough consultant radiologists to provide safe and effective care<sup>(8)</sup>

**Prostate Cancer UK wants to see regular mandated audits, reports and ministerial responses examining radiology services in Northern Ireland specifically, the radiology workforce including medical physicists, the status of MRI machines, their age, image quality and calibration data, and the demand on these services.**

### **Data accessibility**

Prostate Cancer UK recently launched a UK-wide campaign to locate a cohort of men missing from the prostate cancer treatment pathway as a gap in diagnosis and treatment numbers emerged as a result of the pandemic.

The data from England is clear on this issue and we were able to ascertain similar evidence in Wales and Scotland, establishing that 14,000 fewer men had been treated for prostate cancer as a result of the pandemic. Northern Ireland's Cancer Registry is a fantastic resource but was unable to provide the data required in the same methodology as the other UK nations.

Short of a FOI request to each trust, which would have tied up valuable resource, we were unable to present explicit findings for Northern Ireland.

This campaign shows the impact that public health data can have in identifying health issues and acting to address them quickly and effectively to everyone's benefit.

**Prostate Cancer UK wants open and accessible Northern Irish data in-line with the rest of the UK.**

### **Personalised Care**

In 2021 the UK Government committed to providing personalised care, where appropriate, to every person diagnosed with cancer. We would like a commitment to roll out personalised care in Northern Ireland by any incoming administration.

In the context of prostate cancer care this means Personalised Stratified Follow-Up (PSFU). PSFU moves follow-up care from outpatient clinics to remote monitoring. Men who are eligible for remote follow-up therefore don't need to attend routine appointments unless an issue arises.

As prostate cancer incidence is set to rise amongst an ageing population, PSFU provides a more sustainable model of cancer follow-up care. It mitigates capacity issues faced by healthcare services by reducing the number of clinic appointments.<sup>(9)</sup>

**While we are aware of initial conversations around PSFU in Northern Ireland, support from the Executive would allow this work to develop more quickly and with greater urgency.**

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