



British Thoracic Oncology Group (“BTOG”) Response to the
[10-Year National Cancer Plan for England](#)

BTOG largely welcomes the government’s 10-year National Cancer Plan for England, which is to be applauded for its ambition, wide engagement (including that from patients and carers), and long-term view. Annual progress reports, and a review at 3 years, should help with delivery of that ambition. However, BTOG also has reservations and concerns about some aspects.

Perhaps the greatest impact will be the commitment to full roll out of lung cancer screening by 2030, and the Plan is to be commended for this, as well as the support for self-requested chest x-rays. However, we would also have liked to see uniform integration of smoking cessation into the screening program and a recognition that increased capacity is required downstream from screening for lung cancer diagnostics and treatment. The focus on early detection is very welcome, although the proposed use of liquid biopsies for this purpose would not seem to be supported by the current clinical evidence.

BTOG supports the shift of focus from treatment to prevention, including a generational smoking ban in the Tobacco and Vapes bill, but are disappointed by the lack of emphasis on smoking cessation at the time of cancer diagnosis, which is known to improve lung cancer outcomes. Investment in smoking cessation is highly cost effective, reducing the overall burden of lung cancer and having additional positive impacts on other major diseases.

Being a national organisation, BTOG is pleased to see that tackling regional variations in the access to the best cancer care is at the centre of the Plan, with audits such as the National Lung Cancer Audit one of the key drivers of this. The addition of metrics looking at the Emergency Diagnosis of cancers is welcome, because this is a surrogate for late and often missed diagnosis, and is especially common in lung cancer patients. However, there is little mention of the role of primary care, which is needed if plans for integration of cancer care into existing neighbourhood health models is to be achieved.

Although BTOG agrees with the ambition to hit all cancer wait time targets by 2029, given that have been missed for several years, it is not clear how that will be achieved with the modest funding commitments in the Plan. The recommendation for increased use of community diagnostic centres does not address the bottlenecks in lung cancer diagnosis which occur due to constrained access to imaging, biopsy techniques, molecular testing and workforce. Any substantial increase in investment, which would seem to be needed, will be constrained unless current spending review settlements are changed. Whilst innovation is proposed as the key to this challenge, it is unclear if and when that will be achieved.

The Plan highlights that MDT meeting reform is required. Lung cancer MDT meetings are among the most complex and time-pressured and BTOG would value feeding into a review of cancer MDTs.

BTOG applauds the aim of developing national leadership in cancer research to improve the UK's performance and international standing. For example, the Clinical Trials Accelerator Programme has the potential to speed up delivery of trials, although assurance is needed that this will include academic, as well as commercial, studies.

The Plan recognises that an increase in digital capacity, including the NHS App, is needed as part of a modern national cancer service. Many existing services, for example roll-out of digital pathology, lag behind. BTOG agrees, but the plan is light on how this will be achieved and how patients will be supported to make the change.

The development of new cancer manuals to showcase excellent cancer care are an interesting idea, and an improvement on current NICE guidelines and treatment algorithms which often do not keep pace with best practice. But the Plan is thin on detail about who will write these, and how they will be kept up to date and relevant.

Overall, BTOG supports the 10-year Plan and looks forward to working with the NHS, our members and our partners to address our concerns where they exist, and to deliver excellence in thoracic cancer care across the country.

Response dated 23rd February 2026 and prepared by

Dr Tom Newsom-Davis, BTOG Steering Committee Chair

For and on behalf of the BTOG Steering Committee

British Thoracic Oncology Group (BTOG)

Website: www.btog.org

Email: info@btog.org

Press enquiries: btog@sandstarcomms.com

The **British Thoracic Oncology Group (BTOG)** is the multi-disciplinary group for healthcare professionals involved with thoracic malignancies throughout the UK.

Mission is to support and educate thoracic oncology healthcare professionals, creating a professional community to exchange ideas, information and innovation and to foster the development of research. The overall aim is to represent the needs of people with thoracic malignancies in the UK and ensure they have equitable access to optimal care.

Vision is to contribute to achieving survival rates equal to the best in the world.