Department of Health & Social Care

From the Lord Kamall
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Innovation (Lords)

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Iain Stewart MP
By email to: iain.stewart.mp@parliament.uk

29 October 2021

Dear Iain,

Thank you for your correspondence of 22 October on behalf of a number of your constituents about access to Trodelvy for cancer treatment.

I am grateful to you for raising your constituents' concerns and I understand how important it is for cancer patients to have access to the most effective treatments on the NHS.

As your constituents are aware, in August Trodelvy was licensed through Project Orbis for use in the treatment of triple negative breast cancer. Project Orbis aims to deliver faster access to innovative cancer treatments, and the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency has been participating in the scheme since 1 January.

It is important that we have a system in place for making evidence-based decisions on whether new medicines should be routinely funded by the NHS. We need to ensure that NHS funds are spent in a way that provides the most health benefits for society.

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) is the independent body responsible for providing evidence-based guidance for the NHS on whether medicines represent a clinically and cost-effective use of resources.

The NHS in England is legally required to fund medicines recommended by NICE, usually within three months of final guidance. Many thousands of patients have benefitted from access to effective new treatments as a result of NICE's work, and it recommended 100 per cent of the new cancer medicines it appraised in 2020/21.

NICE currently expects to issue guidance on Trodelvy in June 2022, with draft guidance expected in April 2022. Your constituents can find information on the progress of NICE's appraisal at www.nice.org.uk/guidance/indevelopment/gid-ta10829.

I understand that Gilead is in contact with NICE and NHS England and NHS Improvement to explore potential options for providing interim access to the medicine, ahead of NICE's guidance.

I hope this reply is helpful.

LORD KAMALL