

# Norman Lamb MP wants to **MAKE THE CHANGE**



Liberal Democrat Shadow Secretary of State for Health, Norman Lamb MP, says that he is fully behind the public health campaign spearheaded by the charity Killing Cancer. "From all that I can see, the Department of Health has been dragging its feet for far too long over the development of Photodynamic Therapy (PDT) as a radical, non-invasive, one-off cancer treatment.

"If PDT could be developed and in use for the many cancers and conditions it could treat, it would transform patient care.

"Not only is there a possible £2bn cash saving, but patients currently having months of chemotherapy and radiotherapy could be 'popping' into hospital for a few days to have their cancers destroyed," he says. "With chemo and radiotherapy, the same cancer destruction could take months of daily treatments."

Mr Lamb says that part of the problem has been the failure of the major drug companies to invest in PDT over the past 10 years or more.

"You have to recognise the economics of PDT. A single, one-off treatment taking just days to administer and recover from, has to be better for the patients.

"You would think that a treatment that also gives the patient a chance to escape the trauma of major surgery, would also be something that the NHS and the Department would grasp with real enthusiasm.

"But, instead, the Department seems to be bogged down in paperwork, evidence reviews and insanely long bureaucratic investigations that seem to take absolutely no notice of the successes that PDT patients are enjoying today.

"When you look at PDT's ability now to treat early lung cancers, mouth cancers, skin cancers, prostate cancer and bile duct cancer, I am amazed that these treatments have not been fast-tracked to be offered nationally.

"This science has been developed in the UK, but hospitals in Japan, China, Italy, India and across Europe are getting the benefits with it regarded as a routine way of treating cancer."

UK PDT researcher and head and neck specialist, Colin Hopper, agrees. "I have trained literally hundreds of medical teams from around the world. Two weeks ago I was in Argentina. This week I trained 60 Italians. I have been treating mouth cancer patients in the UK for 18 years at University College Hospital in London – but for assorted ludicrous reasons I am almost a lone voice in the UK for this type of cancer."

Personalities including Sir Alex Ferguson, Chris Tarrant, Sir David Frost, Robert Plant, Jenny Seagrove, Roger Daltrey and Harvey Goldsmith are urging people to donate to medical trials for Photodynamic Therapy that could revolutionise cancer treatment in the UK.

Continues Mr Lamb: "Two years ago the charity offered to fund the setting up of 25 new cancer treatment and research centres around the UK. That offer has yet to be taken up."

Photodynamic Therapy (PDT) kills cancer cells through a combination of drug and light, which starves the cancer of oxygen allowing the body to heal and create new, healthy cells. Despite being approved by the DoH for the treatment of some cancers, fewer than 250 of the 300,000 patients diagnosed with cancer killers received it last year.

The treatment has the ability to destroy cancers usually with a single 20-minute session, avoiding the need for invasive surgery and the traumatic effects of chemotherapy and radiotherapy.

The campaign's target is to have PDT treatments approved and available on the NHS for half of all cancer patients within three years.

Manchester United manager, Sir Alex Ferguson says: 'Both my mother and father died of cancer. I think PDT is an amazing first-step option before resorting to surgery. More patients should have access to it in our hospitals and the NHS should accept the charity's offer of equipment and training without delay.'

Former Led Zeppelin frontman, Robert Plant, agrees. "It really is an injustice that this form of treatment is not available to everyone in the UK. I have friends currently receiving PDT, but only because we pushed to get it."

Another music legend adding his voice to the campaign is wild man of rock and former Hawkwind frontman, Huw Lloyd Langton, whose latest release Photodynamic Therapy will, he believes, help change the life chances of millions around the world.

Sir David Frost, Ronnie O'Sullivan and Miriam Margolyes are also backing the campaign, as well as Chris Tarrant. "There is no question in my mind that we have to fund this research ourselves," says the TV presenter.

The charity's celebrity supporters are sending over 200 million personal emails to their fans and supporters, asking for funds that can be allocated to their choice of one of half a dozen PDT trials.

More details are on the charity's website at [www.killingcancer.co.uk](http://www.killingcancer.co.uk)