The Future of Cancer Care: The Context

What do we know already about the future landscape?

Cancer survival has doubled over the last forty years. Now, half the people diagnosed with cancer will survive the disease. Cancer Research UK’s goal is to see three quarters of people diagnosed with cancer survive their disease for 10 years or more by 2034.

We want to know the biggest challenges and opportunities for UK health systems and services in the next 20 years.

- What major barriers will stop health systems from preventing and curing more cancers, and giving people more time with their families?

- How can the NHS provide the best environment for conducting research?

- What are the opportunities on the horizon which we will need to embrace?

Understanding these opportunities and challenges will provide a stronger platform for our health services to adapt to become fit for the future. It will help us accelerate progress.

This paper is intended as a background briefing. It provides context for our 2019 survey and in-depth conversations. The audiences are health professionals, healthcare planners and providers, researchers, people affected by cancer, other experts in the health and science fields and members of the public.

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For more information please email healthfutures@cancer.org.uk
1. Summary: the cancer landscape in 2035*

1. The number of people needing cancer care in the UK is at an all-time high: around 514,000 people are diagnosed with cancer, up from over 360,000 in 2014. There has been a greater increase in men than women since 2014.¹

2. 46% of people (234,000) diagnosed with cancer are over 75, up from 36% (around 132,000) in 2014. This means more people with cancer have other conditions that also need treating/managing. People aged 75 and over are projected to account for 62% of all cancer deaths.²

3. More than four million people are living with a cancer diagnosis in the UK, up from 2.5 million in 2015². By 2040, almost a quarter of people aged at least 65 will be cancer survivors³.

4. Together, smoking and overweight and obesity could cause more than 95,000 UK cancer cases in 2035 alone – compared with around 75,000 cases in 2015. The level of overweight and obesity means £2.5 billion in extra direct health costs in the UK⁵. It could cause more cancer cases than smoking in UK females by 2043⁴.

5. Breast and prostate cancers are still the most common cancers among females and males, respectively in 2035. Incidence rates of kidney, oral and thyroid cancers have increased since 2014, among other cancers. Incidence rates of bladder and uterus cancer have decreased in women since 2014. Incidence rates of bowel and lung cancers in men decreased, but cases of these cancers have increased, due to population changes.¹

6. Our understanding of cancer has increased immeasurably. Progress in the science of early detection and understanding risk means more people are diagnosed early. By 2035, we understand how to treat and follow up people based on their own cancer type and personal experiences.

*based on projections and therefore subject to change

2. Infographics: cancer incidence and mortality projections for 2035

Figure 1

![Cancer incidence and mortality projections for 2014 and 2035](image)

Incidence rates have increased by 12% since the early 1990s. Largely due to a growing and ageing population, the number of cancer cases is projected to rise by more than 40% to around 514,000 new cases per year in 2035, with a greater increase in men than women.

Figure 2

![Cancer incidence and mortality projections for 2014 and 2035](image)

*All cancers (C00–C97 excl. C44) not otherwise individually named, plus D32–D33, D35.2–D35.4, D42–D43, and D44.3–D44.5 where Brain is not individually named.

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WHY ARE WE EXPECTING MORE PEOPLE TO BE DIAGNOSED WITH CANCER?

It’s mostly because the population is growing and getting older, but risk factors that cause cancer are also playing a bigger part.

2014 UK POPULATION 65 MILLION

2035 ESTIMATED UK POPULATION 73 MILLION

PEOPLE IN THE UK DIAGNOSED WITH CANCER

2014

= 5,000

Total cases in 2014 360,700

Cancers due to risk factor changes 12,600

2035

Cancers due to population changes 140,600

Estimated total cases in 2035 514,000

Source: cru.uk/cancerstats

LET’S BEAT CANCER SOONER

cru.uk