Dear Mr Ryner,

Thank you for your letter of 27 July to Jeremy Hunt enclosing a copy of a letter to NHS England about the Cancer Drugs Fund (CDF). I have been asked to reply.

Advances in medical science mean that new cancer medicines are emerging all the time and the CDF needs to regularly reprioritise its national CDF list so people can access these too. Decisions to add or remove drugs from the list are made by NHS England, taking into account the need to ensure the limited resources of the Fund are used most effectively.

In line with the CDF Standard Operating Procedure, a drug will not be removed from the CDF if it is the only proven systemic therapy available in the NHS for that particular cancer. Additionally, NHS England will consider individual CDF requests for cancer medicines not on the CDF list to treat individuals with rarer types of cancers including those affecting children, or individuals whose clinician can demonstrate clinical exceptionality.

I hope you and your co-signatories receive a satisfactory response from Mr Stevens about the specific issues you raise with regard to treatments for chronic myeloid leukaemia.

Yours sincerely,

Malcolm Jones
Ministerial Correspondence and Public Enquiries