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Delayed Diagnosis of Cancer

Between 2017 and 2019 the statistics show that there were over 167,000 deaths from cancer in the UK. Then COVID hit, the UK was locked down and medical care more or less stopped. People were frightened to leave their homes, the NHS frontline was stretched to breaking point and primary care services didn't know how to react.

What effect has this had on the statistics for cancer diagnosis and mortality rates? We are yet to find out as the current figures stop at 2019.

What we do know is that the "NHS Backlog" created, in part, by COVID remains. This week the BBC reported that there are still likely to be thousands of yet-to-be diagnosed cancer cases. Many cancers are diagnosed through routine referrals. In this situation the disease is not suspected by a GP but is diagnosed following subsequent tests following referral. If those referrals aren't happening or there is a huge backlog, this causes problems.

At Lester Aldridge we see this situation time and again when we are contacted as a result of GP failure to refer despite "red flag" symptoms or a routine referral has been made and the "NHS backlog" means that there is a lengthy delay in undertaking the tests that lead to diagnosis and treatment. Clients or, often, family members will contact our lawyers and explain how treatment is now more invasive as a result of the delays, the cancer may have spread or, in extreme cases, the disease is no longer treatable and only palliative care can be offered.

Melanie Lidstone-Land, Senior Associate in our Clinical Negligence team says:

"I have been practising law for over 30 years and I specialise in Clinical Negligence. I have acted for many clients, and their families, where late diagnosis of cancer has had a devastating effect on their lives. I have acted in situations where delay has caused more invasive treatment needs including extensive chemotherapy & radiotherapy treatments, limb loss where cancers have spread, infertility where cancers have not been diagnosed soon enough and even death. Fighting a disease like cancer is so very difficult for patients and their families without the added pain of knowing that the fight should have been avoidable."

At Lester Aldridge we have genuine experience of handling these claims. We have access to independent medical experts who are extremely skilled in assessing medical records and evidence. We quickly get to the bottom of medical mistakes that have been made and begin putting together a legal team that will advance your claim and move towards settlement as soon as possible.

If you need to speak with one of specialist personal injury and medical negligence solicitors please email online.enquiries@la-law.com or call 0344 967 0791.