

# News story: Innovative brain cancer treatment aid now available across England

The innovative cancer treatment aid 5-ALA is now available across the country and will transform treatment for patients.

Known as 'the pink drink', 5-ALA uses fluorescent dye and ultraviolet light to make cancerous cells glow under UV light. This allows surgeons to more accurately identify the affected areas of the brain.

The treatment aid will help to tackle some of the hardest to treat cases and make sure healthy cells are left untouched.

Around 2,000 patients a year could benefit, according to new figures released today.

The announcement comes one year on from the death of Baroness Tessa Jowell, who died from brain cancer in May 2018.

The treatment aid has been rolled out in every neurological centre in England as part of the NHS's contribution to the Tessa Jowell Brain Cancer Mission, established by the government after her death.

[The NHS Long Term Plan](#) aims to save thousands more lives by catching more cancers early and starting treatment fast. The ambition is that by 2028, an extra 55,000 people each year will survive for 5 years or more following their cancer diagnosis.

Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, Matt Hancock, said:

Tessa Jowell fought passionately and courageously for more recognition of rare brain cancers before she tragically passed away last year.

One year on, the effects of her tireless campaigning can already be seen. I am proud to announce we have now rolled out this groundbreaking treatment aid across the country, transforming care for 2,000 patients every year – a fitting testament to Tessa's memory.

A cancer diagnosis is life-changing, but I want every single patient to feel reassured that they have access to the best and fastest care in our wonderful NHS. While more people are surviving cancer than ever before, we can and must do more, especially for people with few options left like those with rare brain cancer.

As part of our Long Term Plan, this new pioneering technology is

already saving lives – offering thousands of patients a greater chance of recovery and hope for the future.

Cally Palmer, National Cancer Director at NHS England, said:

This is a positive step forward for brain cancer treatment and patients are already benefiting from Tessa Jowell's inspirational campaigning in her final months.

Transforming the lives of millions of people with cancer is at the heart of NHS England's Long Term Plan and we are rapidly driving forward action to catch more cancers earlier, provide innovative new treatments and save tens of thousands more lives every year.