

# **Manifesto for the UK General Election 2024**



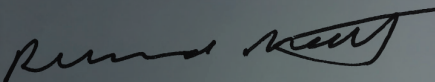
## Cancer Focus Northern Ireland's mission is to support local people on their cancer journey. We work to reduce the risk, impact, and outcomes of all cancers.

Every day in Northern Ireland, another 38 people are told "you have cancer". This is one of the most devastating moments anyone can experience, either for themselves or for someone they love. Our goal is to reduce the incidence of cancer in our society, while ensuring that those who face a diagnosis get access to timely, world-leading treatments as well as to practical and emotional support.

For over 50 years, Cancer Focus Northern Ireland has worked to provide care and support services for cancer patients and their families, in addition to offering a range of cancer prevention programmes and funding cancer research. We are currently building our first of multiple Therapeutic Cancer Support Centres, which will help bring cancer support and information away from clinical settings and into communities. However, we cannot alone create a healthy Northern Ireland. From health promotion to the cancer workforce and research, we need policy from the highest levels to empower cancer prevention, treatments, and patient support across Northern Ireland.

We invite the MP candidates and political parties to reflect our ambitious vision for cancer. We want cancer incidence here to be among the lowest in the world, and for our patients to have the best outcomes in the world. This Manifesto for the forthcoming 2024 UK General Election reflects some asks for how to achieve just that.

If I can be of any further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.



**Richard Spratt**  
CEO

Cancer Focus Northern Ireland  
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## Our proposals

With reference to nation-wide policies and influence on devolved matters, we call on all political parties and candidates to adopt and commit to the following measures to improve health, cancer outcomes, inequalities, and patient care in Northern Ireland.

### Support for Healthy Habits:

The Northern Ireland Cancer Strategy (2022-2032) estimates that ~30-40% of cancers in NI could be preventable, as result of modifiable lifestyle and environmental factors. Moreover, these factors contribute significantly to health inequalities within NI and across the UK.

To reduce the prevalence of cancer and empower people to make informed decisions for their health, we call on Westminster, the NI Assembly, and the relevant bodies to:

- Reintroduce and pass the **Tobacco and Vapes Bill**.
- Enable **regulations on novel tobacco and nicotine products**, including vapes.
- Standardise and simplify **food labelling** while reducing marketing for unhealthy, ultra-processed foods.
- Implement **minimum unit pricing**, limit price promotions, and add **health warnings** for alcohol.
- Reduce **VAT on sunscreen**.
- Ban **sunbeds**.

### Resourcing of Health Services in Northern Ireland:

The NI health system is in crisis and under severe strain. It needs to be resourced not only to deliver the timely, quality care outlined by the principles of the NHS, but also to be able to implement the transformations needed to become as efficient and effective as possible. Refusing to invest in health is "penny-wise and pound-foolish": delays to diagnosis and treatment, workforce gaps, and poor-quality care are all likely to incur greater costs down the road, as compared to when issues can be pre-empted or addressed early, when they are also less invasive for patients.

Investments and multi-year budgets are required to deliver on cancer priorities in NI and to keep NI health on par with the rest of the UK. We urge the sustainable resourcing of:

- The **NI Cancer Strategy (2022-2032)** and **waiting lists**.
- The **cancer workforce**.
- Equitable **treatment access**.
- **Cancer prevention, screening, and the relevant strategies**.

### Enhancing Research Access in Northern Ireland:

Northern Ireland has access to world-leading cancer research facilities, including two universities, but risks losing access to the advancements such research can provide, especially as compared to elsewhere in the UK. These advancements, from genetic testing to AI, have the potential to both improve the patient experience and lower long-term costs.

To help NI contribute to and advantage of cancer innovations, we call for:

- The development and delivery of a **Cancer Research Strategy**.
- Expanded **clinical trial access and infrastructure** in Northern Ireland.
- Investments in **opportunities to improve treatments** (e.g., AI, genetic testing).

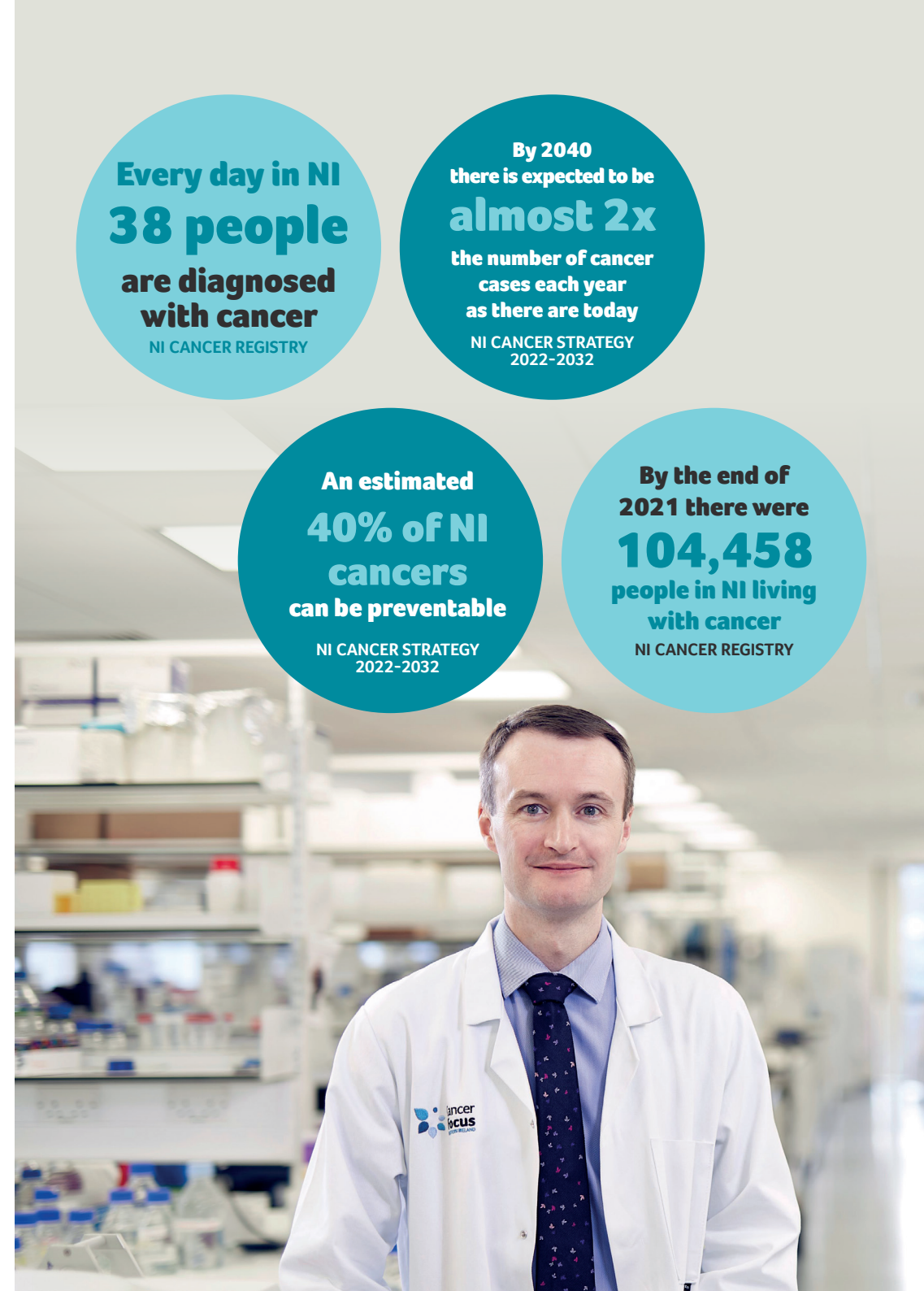
### Enabling Comprehensive Cancer Care:

Health policies and reforms are not delivered by the Health Departments in a silo; rather, they require cross-government and cross-sector commitments. From infrastructure with shade for UV protection to volunteer cancer support groups, we all need to do our part to help realise a healthier society.

To improve outcomes across the cancer journey, we ask governing bodies to:

- **Partner with the voluntary sector** to enhance cancer research, education, and patient support services.
- **Coordinate decision-making** across all government departments.

Learn more about these asks by visiting [www.cancerfocusni.org](http://www.cancerfocusni.org) or contacting [policy@cancerfocusni.org](mailto:policy@cancerfocusni.org).



If you have any concerns about cancer  
you can talk to one of our experienced  
nurses on the Cancer Focus NI **FREE**  
information and support Nurseline

**0800 783 3339**

Monday, Wednesday and Friday 9am - 1pm.  
Calls are **free** and **confidential** from a landline.  
[nurseline@cancerfocusni.org](mailto:nurseline@cancerfocusni.org)



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