

PRESS RELEASE

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New treatment approved by NICE for soft tissue sarcoma

The approval of a new treatment for soft tissue sarcoma by NICE has been hailed as a “major breakthrough” by the cancer charity Sarcoma UK, which played a leading role in the effort to have the drug approved.

Olaratumab is the first new treatment since 2010 to be approved by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) for soft tissue sarcoma. NICE has approved the use of the drug (also known as Lartruvo™) within the NHS in England until 2020. During this time, further data will be collected, including from a Phase 3 clinical trial. At the end of this period, olaratumab will be re-assessed.



Sarcoma UK’s Chief Executive Lindsey Bennister said: *“We welcome this landmark decision by NICE to approve olaratumab for sarcoma patients in the NHS in England. It gives hope to thousands of people with sarcoma and their families who have waited seven years for a new treatment for soft tissue sarcoma to be approved by NICE.”*

“During this time two vital sarcoma drugs were delisted from the Cancer Drug Fund whilst new therapies have emerged for other types of cancer. We are delighted that sarcoma patients will now be able to access this new innovative treatment.”

“Sarcoma UK has been at the forefront of the efforts to have the treatment approved by NICE, with our specialist nurse Sam Hackett and patient advocate Anjula Thompson among those who gave evidence to the NICE committee. We’re pleased that our voice has been heard. This decision represents another step forwards in our drive to transform the landscape for everyone affected by sarcoma.”

Anjula Thompson, who lost her husband Dave to soft tissue sarcoma in 2016, said, *“I have seen at first-hand how new treatments can give hope to people with sarcoma, their spouse, partners, children, family and friends. Dave had limited options available to him during his battle with sarcoma – he tried everything he could but there just weren’t the treatments available at the time that could stop the relentless progression of his sarcoma.”*

She added: *“NICE approval of olaratumab is a crucial and positive step in the fight to manage sarcoma, and prolong and enhance the quality of life of people with sarcoma.”*

Sarcoma affects 3,800 people each year in the UK, with around 3,300 cases involving a soft tissue sarcoma. Only half of these affected will survive five years. Despite new developments in cancer treatments worldwide, there are still very limited treatments available for sarcoma in the UK.

For further information about olaratumab, please consult your clinician, download Sarcoma UK's [fact sheet](#) or call the Sarcoma UK Support Line on 0808 801 0401.

Sarcoma UK works with patients, carers, supporters, health professionals and researchers to drive awareness of sarcoma, promote early diagnosis and improve patient experience.

To find out more visit www.sarcoma.org.uk

Case studies are available on request.

For further information, please contact Vicki Smith, Communications Director:
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Notes

1. Sarcoma is cancer of the bone and soft tissue. It can develop anywhere in the body.
2. Sarcoma UK is the only cancer charity in the UK focusing on all types of sarcoma.
3. Sarcoma UK was chosen as 10 Downing Street's Charity of the Year for 2016 in memory of Chris Martin, Principal Private Secretary to David Cameron, who died of sarcoma in November 2015.
4. In **Wales**, any drug approved by NICE will be made available within two months of the guidance being published.
5. In **Northern Ireland**, the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSPSS) usually reviews NICE guidance within three months of publication.
6. In **Scotland**, new treatments are assessed by the Scottish Medicines Consortium (SMC) according to their own processes. Currently, there is no date set for an assessment of olaratumab.
7. Trabectedin (Yondelis™) was the last drug for soft tissue sarcoma to be approved by NICE, in 2010.
8. Pazopanib, a new drug for advanced soft tissue sarcoma was available for a short time to patients in England via the Cancer Drugs Fund but was delisted in January 2015.
9. Caelyx, an established drug used to treat advanced soft tissue sarcoma, was delisted from the Cancer Drugs Fund in September 2015.
10. Regorafenib, a drug for advanced Gastro-Intestinal Stromal Tumour (a type of soft tissue sarcoma) has been funded in England via the Cancer Drugs Fund. A NICE Technology Appraisal is currently underway and a decision is anticipated November 2017.