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**Approval of new cancer drug by Scottish Medicines Consortium (SMC) gives hope for people with sarcoma in Scotland**

For immediate release

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People with sarcoma in Scotland now have access to a new treatment through NHS Scotland. Olaratumab (also known as Lartruvo) has been approved in Scotland for people with a soft tissue sarcoma that has spread and can't be treated with surgery or radiotherapy.

Sarcoma UK sat alongside clinicians at the SMC to provide a clear understanding of why access to a new drug is so vital to the sarcoma community and what a potential difference it could make. The SMC acknowledged that sarcoma often occurs in younger people who may have significant work and family commitments and this treatment gives patients the ability to maintain a good quality of life.

Olaratumab is one of the new generation of cancer treatments called a monoclonal antibody. These are proteins that are made in the laboratory. They bind with a substance in the cancer cell and block signals that tell the cancer to grow.

Sarcoma is a type of cancer that occurs in the bone and soft connective tissue, with around 350 people diagnosed each year in Scotland. Around 200 of these people will be diagnosed with a soft tissue sarcoma.

“We made a strong case to the Scottish Medicines Consortium, presenting the views and experiences of patients and carers affected by sarcoma”, explains Lindsey Bennister, Sarcoma UK Chief Executive, “The SMC decision is an important and positive step in the fight to transform the sarcoma landscape in Scotland.”

The announcement follows the decision by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) in June 2017 to approve Olaratumab for use in the NHS in England and Wales.

Sarcoma UK Trustee Dr Jeff White, consultant medical oncologist at the Beatson West of Scotland Cancer Centre, says: “This is wonderful news for patients living with soft tissue sarcoma in Scotland. As a clinician treating sarcoma patients within the Scottish Sarcoma Managed Clinical Network, it is vital that we have access to the latest treatments for sarcoma so this is a very positive step forwards.”

Sarcoma UK is the only cancer charity in the UK focusing on all types of sarcoma. Its mission is to drive awareness of sarcoma, promote early diagnosis and improve patient experience. The charity offers support to those affected by sarcoma and has funded more than £1.7 million in sarcoma research to date. To find out more visit [sarcoma.org.uk](http://sarcoma.org.uk)

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**Notes to editors**

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- Sarcoma is cancer of the bone and soft tissue. It can develop anywhere in the body.
- A key symptom of sarcoma is a lump that is increasing in size, often quickly.
- About 3,800 new cases of sarcoma are diagnosed each year in the UK, making up approximately 1% of all cancer diagnoses.
- In Scotland, around 350 new cases of sarcoma are diagnosed each year. Around 200 of these are soft tissue sarcoma.
- Sarcoma is one of the hardest cancers to diagnose. People visit their GP more times than those with any other form of cancer before being diagnosed with sarcoma.
- Early diagnosis could increase survival by 20%.
- Sarcoma is usually the size of a baked bean tin when diagnosed. If sarcoma is diagnosed when it is smaller than a golf ball, it would increase the chance of survival by at least 20%.
- People with sarcoma tend to be younger than most people with cancer. 16% of sarcomas are diagnosed in people under 30, compared to only 2% of all other cancers.