

# I will not let Covid block fight to beat cancers like mine, vows ex-minister



Tracey is backing the Daily Express campaign to help struggling Cancer Research UK continue its work



The former minister before her diagnosis

BRAVE breast cancer patient Tracey Crouch last night said she will fight to prevent Covid halting progress against the killer disease.

**EXCLUSIVE**  
By **Giles Sheldrick** Chief Reporter

The Tory MP and mother of one told the Daily Express from her sick bed she would do anything to raise awareness about the “pernicious, nasty, invasive, non-discriminatory, unforgiving, life-shredding beastliness” of cancer.

And that is why the former sports minister has backed our campaign to help cash-strapped Cancer Research UK continue its life-saving work.

### Backed

As this newspaper exclusively revealed the charity has not funded any new clinical trials this year because of a deepening Covid financial black hole, meaning tens of thousands of cancer sufferers have missed the opportunity to access potentially life-extending treatments. It funds around 10 new

And it said the emergency could continue for the next five years unless it received urgent Government help.

Trials a year but all applications are on hold until at least the spring as budgets are slashed.

functional throughout the first wave of the pandemic but others I know did not.

“Our medical researchers are also on their knees and facing a financial cliff edge when it comes to funding.”

Diagnosed in June and currently undergoing gruelling rounds of chemotherapy, she added: “I hate cancer and I will do anything that raises awareness about its pernicious, nasty, invasive, non-discriminatory, unforgiving, life shredding beastliness.”

“I might be ‘bravely’ working my way through my treatment and I desperately cling on to the reassuring

Appeal...  
**Michelle Mitchell**



words of my consultant and oncologist that I can be cured because I desire nothing more than seeing my four year old grow up into a young man, but I hate it with every cell in my body.

“If that means fighting for more research funding so we can prevent, treat and cure cancer, whatever type it is, then fight I shall.”

Tracey noticed a lump in her right breast in June and went to hospital the next day.

Her public battle and infectious optimism has prompted thousands across

Britain to share their own similar stories.

And last week she took to Twitter to urge people: “Check your bits & bobbins and go see your GP if you’re worried.”

Around 367,000 new cancer cases are diagnosed every year, equal to around 1,000 a day.

The fallout from the virus has badly impacted Cancer Research UK’s ability to raise funds, with a predicted drop in income of £300million over three years.

The funding crisis means Cancer Research UK could be forced to sack 1,500 scientists and lose more than a third of its 4,000 researchers, potentially putting tens of thousands of lives at risk.

Worrying analysis shows 126,000 patients have missed participating in trials financed by medical research-funded charities this year, including those searching for

advances in the treatment of Alzheimer’s and heart disease.

But the cancer cuts also come as experts fear people are ignoring signs and symptoms because they cannot get a face-to-face doctor’s examination. It is estimated 50,000 people struck down with cancer during lockdown have not yet received a diagnosis.

Michelle Mitchell, chief executive of Cancer Research UK, said: “We are incredibly grateful to Tracey for sharing her story and for her support.”

She added: “We’ve called on the Government to help support medical research charities with a short-term financial lifeline that will ultimately save lives.”

● To donate to the Daily Express campaign supporting CRUK please visit: [cruk.org/dailyexpress](http://cruk.org/dailyexpress)

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Tracey released this pic to remind people to check themselves

# I’ll fight it all way to see my son grow up

## COMMENT TRACEY CROUCH

Tory MP for Chatham and Aylesford

JUST over four years ago I completed Cancer Research UK’s Pretty Muddy 5K in 35 minutes, scarring my wrist on an obstacle in the process but raising £7,000 for the charity.

I ran it for those I knew with cancer but also for the many thousands more I didn’t, because I knew the money raised that day by fun runners like me would go towards vital research to prevent, treat and cure the disease.

As Parliamentarians we are privileged to meet people from the many cancer charities on a regular basis.

We learn about statistics in our constituencies and often hear from survivors or those who have been left behind.

Not once did I ever think I would be one of those statistics.

But, as it happens, I count my blessings. I have a cancer that, thanks to Cancer Research UK – alongside the brilliant breast cancer charities – decades of work mean life expectancy for people like me has improved hugely and consultants and oncologists like mine talk of “cure”, not “treatment”.

### Curious

However, the research is never over and, in an odd way, I have found my experience a curious, insightful one into what more we could learn about breast cancer and its treatment.

For example, why are some areas seeing a higher rate of oestrogen positive cancers like mine? Why are there more younger women diagnosed?

Can we do more to find alternatives to chemotherapy, such as genomic testing like mine, to see if it is really the most suitable treatment dependent on risk of recurrence? Genomic testing can show us what is driving the cancer, give us its “gene signature” and help deliver chemotherapy to those who need it and avoid chemotherapy in those who are at lower risk.

Analysis of a cancer at its molecular level has translated into tremendous advances in drug therapy but we desperately need more research.

Yet these are all questions for a cancer that can be tackled with an arsenal of research. What about the rare, the genetic, the incurable cancers that rip our loved ones away. That is why I



support the Daily Express campaign to raise the plight of Cancer Research UK during these desperate times.

Covid-19 has robbed us of so much already, it should not take away the world-beating and pioneering advancements that this nation has made that will save lives now and in the future.

I am fortunate my hospital kept its cancer services almost fully functional throughout the first wave but others did not.

The country faces a backlog in diagnosis and treatment and while the nurses, consultants and oncologists around the country work hard to get through the backlog, our medical researchers are also on their knees and facing a financial cliff edge when it comes to funding.

I hate cancer and will do anything that raises awareness about its pernicious, nasty, invasive, non-discriminatory, unforgiving, life-shredding beastliness.

I might be “bravely” working my way through treatment and I cling on to the reassuring words of my consultant and oncologist that I can be cured. I desire nothing more than seeing my four-year-old grow up into a young man. But I hate it with every cell in my body.

If that means fighting for more funding so we can prevent, treat and cure cancer, whatever type it is, then fight I shall.

And then, post-Covid, as soon as we are allowed, I shall be back in that muddy water, doing my bit again.

## Light up this Christmas for NHS



Campaign... David Domoney

TV GARDENER David Domoney wants people to light up their gardens and homes at Christmas to pay tribute to the NHS and key workers.

Launching his Illumination Street campaign, the Love Your Garden star said: “Our incredible NHS staff have been working long shifts in their battle to keep us safe from coronavirus and will

By **Matt Nixon**

be continuing to do so over winter.

“So I’m encouraging Britons to put the cheer back into Christmas and brighten up our streets.

“Let’s do it for the NHS, our emergency services, delivery drivers, food retailers and key workers to bring some light to their lives.”  
Sponsored by British

Garden Centre Group, the campaign is offering £5,000 worth of prizes to the creators of the most spectacular displays.

David, 57, added: “We have seen the power that communities have when they come together.

“The country turned to its gardens for respite and solace this summer during lockdown, so why not continue that into the winter?”



Spectacular: A lit-up house in Crewe that won last year’s competition

## Diabetes deaths doubling

DEATHS among people with Type 2 diabetes more than doubled in April – while experts fear tens of thousands of diagnoses have been missed or delayed because of the pandemic.

Mortality rates rose by around 110 per cent in England and by 66 per cent in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, the University of Manchester found.

Meanwhile, diagnoses across the UK plunged by 70 per cent in April – shortly after the first

By **Hanna Geissler**  
Health Reporter

lockdown started – compared to expected rates. It is thought that patients staying away from their GP surgeries was a major factor.

The study looked at data for new diagnoses among 13 million people between March and July. The diagnosis rate for Type 2 diabetes in English GP practices was down 46 per cent compared to usual levels, with smaller

reductions of 37 per cent in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Between March and July, it is estimated that more than 45,000 may have had a diagnosis missed or delayed. Worst affected are men, especially older ones, and people from deprived areas.

Nikki Joule, from Diabetes UK, said: “To find out your risk, visit Diabetes UK’s Know Your Risk Tool online – and if you’re concerned, it’s important to speak to your GP.”