

Three thyroid cancer drugs approved for NHS in England

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Credit: Cancer Research UK

Three thyroid cancer treatments have been approved for routine use on the NHS in England.

The [recommendation](#) by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) will move cabozantinib (Cometriq) and sorafenib (Nexavar) from the Cancer Drugs Fund.

Lenvatinib (Lenvima) was the third [drug](#) to be approved, after previously being available only on compassionate grounds.

Rose Gray, Cancer Research UK's senior policy adviser, welcomed the decision as great news for patients.

Few treatment options for patients

Cabozantinib was recommended for treating medullary thyroid [cancer](#) that is inoperable or has spread. Around 80 patients are diagnosed with the disease in England each year.

Gray said clinical trial results suggest cabozantinib can delay cancer progression. The drug is one of only two treatments for inoperable medullary thyroid cancer.

Lenvatinib and sorafenib were approved to treat differentiated [thyroid](#) cancers, the most common type, if surgery or radioactive iodine therapy don't work. After surgery and radioactive iodine, these two drugs are the only [treatment options](#) for these patients.

Around 200 patients in England each year could benefit from the two drugs.

Lenvatinib and sorafenib were less cost-effective than usually deemed acceptable, but were approved by NICE after patients said they improved quality of life.

"NICE heard from patients about how the drugs provide symptom relief, demonstrating the value of including people affected by cancer in decisions about treatments," said Gray.

Mirella Marlow, acting director of the NICE centre for health

technology evaluation, said the drugs will give patients extra time, as well as improving their quality of life.

"Treatment options for these types of [thyroid cancer](#) are limited, so it is important that we are able to give patients much needed access to alternatives to best supportive care at this stage of their disease," she said.

Provided by Cancer Research UK

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