

Alcohol, cigarettes, obesity, age, genetics – the range of factors that increase or decrease the risk of developing breast cancer are bewildering. When someone is diagnosed with breast cancer the effect on them and their family can be devastating, emotionally and physically. Sadly by the end of this year 11500 women and 80 men will have lost their lives due to breast cancer.

Completely indiscriminate, 700 000 people in the UK get diagnosed with breast cancer, with one in eight facing the disease in their lifetime. Tragically it remains the most common form of cancer in the UK. While 95.6% of women survive breast cancer for at least one year, shockingly that drops to 86% over a five-year period meaning the UK has one of the lowest breast cancer survival rates in Western Europe.

This October marks Breast Cancer Awareness Month giving breast cancer the additional attention it deserves. Recently I joined Sky News presenter and breast cancer survivor Jacquie Beltrao at a parliamentary event to promote this year's Wear it Pink Day, which is Breast Cancer Now's flagship fundraising event and is taking place on Friday 20 October. People are encouraged to show their support and wear it pink helping raise vital funds for life-saving research.

Wear it Pink has raised £30 million so far funding world-class research focused on four key areas – risk and prevention, early detection and diagnosis, treatment and secondary breast cancer. Money goes to fund 450 researchers at 29 institutions across the UK and Ireland. They believe together we can stop people dying from breast cancer by 2050.

Most cases of breast cancer are found by women noticing unusual changes and visiting their doctor to get them checked. The earlier breast cancer is found, the better the chance of beating it. It is a small thing but I hope you will wear it pink on 20 October and help raise funds to end breast cancer.