# Labour MP pushes urgent action on chronic urinary tract infections after personal battle



Labour MP Allison Gardner has emerged as a formidable voice for women suffering from chronic urinary tract infections (UTIs), a pursuit she has framed as central to her political ambitions. Newly elected in 2024, Gardner delivered a poignant speech during a landmark Parliamentary debate that underscored both the debilitating nature of the condition and the systemic failures in addressing women's health issues more broadly.

Her emotional address, delivered in Westminster Hall, highlighted the personal toll of her decade-long struggle with UTIs, exacerbated by menopause and culminating in a chronic diagnosis in 2023. Overcome with emotion, Gardner shared with her colleagues the profound impact the condition has had on her life, stating, “At my worst, I really wondered how I could go on.” This sense of despair resonates with many sufferers, including those present in the public gallery who had travelled from across the UK, illustrating the broad community affected by this often-overlooked ailment.

The debate was part of a wider campaign led by various advocates, including 24-year-old Phoebe Price, whose efforts to engage her local MP, Luke Taylor, were pivotal in bringing the issues surrounding chronic UTI to a parliamentary platform. Price encapsulated the sentiment of many when she remarked on the struggle of living with an “invisible illness” that nonetheless wreaks havoc on personal and professional lives. This collective advocacy has paved the way for a promised meeting with the Government to discuss treatment guidelines and funding, revealing a growing recognition of the challenges faced by those with chronic UTIs.

Taylor, in opening the debate, described chronic UTIs as turning lives into “living nightmares.” He called out the systemic failures that prevent women's pain from being taken seriously, emphasising the urgent need for specific treatment protocols and the removal of barriers to research funding. His sentiments echo broader calls for a shift in how medical systems understand and respond to women's health issues, a point further amplified by Labour's health minister, Ashley Dalton. While Dalton offered assurances of support and the necessity for research, she did not commit to formalising guidelines specifically for chronic UTIs, leaving many advocates wary.

The urgency for improved understanding and care for chronic UTIs is underscored by recent findings published in medical literature. A consensus statement from JAMA Network Open outlined significant challenges in establishing clear directives for the prevention and management of UTIs, highlighting the need for high-quality studies to address gaps in knowledge. Similarly, guidelines from the American Urological Association stress the importance of tackling multi-drug resistant bacteria and exploring non-antibiotic prevention strategies, including promising innovations like vaccines.

Research initiatives, such as the Chronic and Recurrent Urinary Tract Infection Priority Setting Partnership led by Antibiotic Research UK, are actively seeking input from patients and health care professionals to refine research priorities. This engagement is crucial as the community grapples not only with the pain of the condition but also the pressing concern of antibiotic resistance that has emerged as a global health crisis.

The tone of frustration with the health system has been echoed in various forums, including recent pieces in The Guardian, which explore the agony faced by chronic UTI sufferers. Advocacy groups like the Alliance for Patient-Centred UTI Research are also calling for better guidelines and patient-focused research, reflecting a growing acknowledgment that current approaches do not meet the needs of those affected.

As Gardner continues to rally for the rights and recognition of UTI sufferers, the discussions in Parliament mark a significant step in addressing what many see as a long-overdue acknowledgment of women's health issues. Her journey, from patient to advocate, underscores a vital mission: to ensure that the experiences of women suffering from chronic conditions like UTI are heard and acted upon, fostering a future where their pain is met with care and compassion.

This advocacy, paired with emerging research and a commitment from some government officials, holds the promise for a more informed and responsive health care landscape for those suffering from chronic urinary tract infections.

### Reference Map

1. Paragraphs 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
2. Paragraph 2
3. Paragraph 3
4. Paragraph 4
5. Paragraph 5
6. Paragraph 4
7. Paragraph 6

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://inews.co.uk/news/chronic-uti-mp-reason-allison-gardner-3706514> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamanetworkopen/fullarticle/2825634> - A consensus statement published in JAMA Network Open discusses the challenges in providing clear recommendations for the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of urinary tract infections (UTIs). Despite reviewing nearly 1,000 studies, the authors highlight significant gaps in knowledge, particularly regarding the impact of clinical improvement without resolution of bacteriuria. The statement emphasizes the need for more precise terminology in describing infection sites and stresses the importance of high-quality prospective studies to validate novel diagnostic methods and optimize treatment durations.
3. <https://www.auajournals.org/doi/10.1097/JU.0000000000000296> - The American Urological Association (AUA) and Canadian Urological Association (CUA) have updated their guidelines on recurrent uncomplicated urinary tract infections (UTIs) in women. The guidelines address the global crisis of multi-drug resistant bacteria and the need for comprehensive randomized controlled trials for non-antibiotic prevention therapies. They also highlight the importance of developing novel technologies, such as vaccines for urinary pathogens, and the use of mannosides to prevent bacterial adhesion to the urothelium.
4. <https://www.antibioticresearch.org.uk/chronic-and-recurrent-uti-priority-setting-partnership/> - Antibiotic Research UK, in partnership with The Urology Foundation and Bladder Health UK, has launched the Chronic and Recurrent Urinary Tract Infection (UTI) Priority Setting Partnership. Running throughout 2025, the project aims to identify the top 10 most important research questions related to chronic and recurrent UTIs. The initiative seeks input from individuals living with chronic UTIs, carers, and healthcare professionals to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the challenges faced by those affected.
5. <https://www.healio.com/news/infectious-disease/20241111/wikiguidelines-group-publishes-first-new-uti-guidance-in-14-years> - The WikiGuidelines collaborative has published its third clinical practice guidance on the prevention, diagnosis, and management of urinary tract infections (UTIs). After reviewing over 900 articles, the group provided clear recommendations for six out of 37 questions about UTI care. Notably, the guidelines suggest abandoning the terms 'uncomplicated' and 'complicated' UTIs, marking the first UTI guideline update in over 14 years. The collaborative emphasizes the need for standardized clinical care amidst existing uncertainties.
6. <https://www.scribd.com/document/729198110/EAU-Guidelines-on-Urological-Infections-2024> - The European Association of Urology (EAU) has released updated guidelines on urological infections, including urinary tract infections (UTIs). The guidelines cover various aspects such as prophylaxis with D-mannose, endovesical instillation therapies, and the management of recurrent UTIs. They provide evidence-based recommendations to improve patient outcomes and address challenges like antimicrobial resistance. The document serves as a comprehensive resource for healthcare professionals involved in the diagnosis and treatment of urological infections.
7. <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/article/2024/jun/02/agony-and-the-urge-to-pee-the-growing-evidence-giving-hope-to-chronic-uti-sufferers> - An article in The Guardian discusses the growing evidence offering hope to chronic urinary tract infection (UTI) sufferers. It highlights the challenges in treating chronic UTIs, including concerns about antimicrobial resistance and the need for alternative treatments. The piece also mentions the formation of the Alliance for Patient-centred UTI Research, a collaboration between advocacy groups in Australia and the US, aiming to address the lack of effective UTI guidelines and promote patient-centered research.