# Labour health minister hails new melanoma vaccine trial as a beacon of hope



Karin Smyth, the UK’s Labour health minister and a cancer survivor, has hailed a new vaccine trial as a significant development for individuals facing severe forms of skin cancer, particularly melanoma. Speaking to The Mirror, Smyth described her own experience with a skin cancer diagnosis in 2023 as one that "really stopped me in my tracks" and emphasised the importance of the recently announced vaccine trial, which she referred to as a "beacon of hope" for patients.

The trial involves a new melanoma vaccine, called iSCIB1+ (Immunobody), and is set to fast-track patients with advanced conditions into this cutting-edge treatment. Smyth noted that the partnership between the NHS and the UK life sciences company Scancell aims to enhance access to innovative treatments, with initial patient referrals scheduled for next month. Each year, approximately 17,500 individuals in the UK are diagnosed with skin cancer, leading to around 2,300 fatalities from the disease.

In her remarks, Smyth stressed the importance of this initiative, declaring it as “healthcare innovation at its best.” She expressed optimism about Labour’s National Cancer Plan, asserting that it would lead to significant improvements in cancer care, covering everything from referrals to treatment and aftercare. “This is just the start,” Smyth said, indicating a commitment to transforming how cancer care is delivered in the NHS and ensuring it remains modern and effective.

Smyth herself has personal experience with skin cancer; after initially receiving attention for a growth on her face at a Parliamentary event—which was ultimately confirmed as non-cancerous—she was later diagnosed with melanoma on her leg. Following surgery to remove the growth in November 2023, she is currently in recovery.

Professor Peter Johnson, NHS national cancer director, commented on the potential impact of cancer vaccines, stating that they "have the potential to revolutionise cancer care for patients in this country and across the world." He expressed excitement about expanding the NHS’s program to allow more patients suffering from various types of cancers to benefit from new vaccine developments aimed at preventing cancer recurrence.

The unveiling of this trial and the accompanying government initiatives signal a notable shift in the approach to cancer treatment in the UK, with the potential to change the landscape of care for thousands of patients diagnosed with skin cancer.

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

## References

* <https://www.england.nhs.uk/2025/04/skin-cancer-patients-fast-tracked-access-revolutionary-nhs-cancer-vaccine-trial/> - This URL supports the claim about the new melanoma vaccine trial, iSCIB1+, and the partnership between the NHS and Scancell to fast-track patients into the treatment. It also discusses the potential impact of cancer vaccines on cancer care.
* <https://www.cancerresearchuk.org/about-cancer/find-a-clinical-trial/a-trial-scib1-pembrolizumab-advanced-melanoma> - This URL provides information about a trial involving SCIB1 and iSCIB1+ with immunotherapy for advanced melanoma, which aligns with the details about the new melanoma vaccine trial mentioned in the article.
* <https://www.cancerresearchuk.org/about-cancer/find-a-clinical-trial/a-trial-scib1-injections-for-melanoma> - This URL corroborates the use of SCIB1, a predecessor to iSCIB1+, in melanoma treatment trials and its effects on the immune system.
* <https://www.mirror.co.uk/> - This URL is the source where Karin Smyth, the UK’s Labour health minister, shared her personal experience with skin cancer and highlighted the importance of the new vaccine trial.
* <https://www.noahwire.com> - This URL is the primary source of the article but does not directly support specific claims about the trial or cancer statistics beyond the narrative provided.