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<p>Cancer patients who currently travel abroad for a special type of radiotherapy will be able to get it in the UK from 2018.</p>

<p>Public health minister Anna Soubry said £250 million of Government funding is being committed to hospitals in Manchester and London to deliver proton beam therapy.</p>

<p>The therapy targets tumours more precisely, causing less damage to surrounding tissue and fewer side-effects.</p>

<p>Some very rare cancers including tumours affecting the base of skull or spine can especially benefit from the therapy.</p>

<p>The treatment is also suitable for some complex childhood cancers.</p>

<p>At present, children and adults needing proton beam therapy are sent to the United States but the new service will mean more patients will be treated.</p>

<p>From 2018, it will be offered to up to 1,500 cancer patients per year at the Christie NHS Foundation Trust in Manchester and University College London Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust.</p>

<p>Ms Soubry said: "We want the NHS to have the best cancer treatments available in the world.</p>

<p>"By investing in proton beam therapy facilities, we will be able to treat more patients in the UK and reduce the stress placed on families who have had to travel to the United States to receive this innovative treatment.</p>

<p>"This is a huge milestone for the NHS - not only will proton beam therapy help save more lives, it will also ensure that patients experience fewer side-effects and have a better quality of life."</p>

<p>Emma Greenwood, Cancer Research UK's head of policy, said: "This innovative treatment has important benefits over conventional radiotherapy for patients with several types of cancer, such as brain tumours in children.</p>

<p>"But we're still a long way from fulfilling the Prime Minister's ambition that all cancer patients in England should now have access to the most effective radiotherapy for their cancer.</p>

<p>"This includes other forms of advanced radiotherapy like intensity modulated radiotherapy (IMRT) and image guided radiotherapy (IGRT).</p>

<p>"This announcement is a welcome development, but we need continuing commitment from Government to ensure that these newer and better radiotherapy treatments are available to all patients who need them."</p>

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