



8 November 2023

Deputy Aodhán Ó Ríordáin
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Our Ref: GM/Communications

PQ47580.23: To ask the Minister for Health if the mobile BreastCheck unit is still operating from Leopardstown Hospital; whether there were changes in its operation; if the service will be restored to previous levels; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy,

I refer to the above Parliamentary Question.

About BreastCheck

There are four regional centres responsible for the delivery of BreastCheck throughout the country: Eccles Street and Merrion Road in Dublin; Newcastle Road in Galway; and Infirmary Road in Cork.

As not all eligible women wish, or are able, to travel to one of these regional units, the BreastCheck programme offers screening services locally. To achieve this, we have 24 mobile units, including three new units added since 2020. The majority of women participating in BreastCheck have their mammogram in one of these units. We update our breast screening locations regularly on our website, [here](#).

Screening in Leopardstown

We do not have a mobile unit at Leopardstown Hospital at present. Our mobile unit is scheduled to return to Leopardstown in 2024. However, we have continued to offer a breast screening service to women from Leopardstown catchment area in 2023. Women from this area are being invited to attend screening nearby at our static Merrion Unit. This is located on the grounds of St Vincent's Hospital, Dublin 4.

Our Merrion Unit staff are happy to assist any woman who has questions about her appointment. The unit can be contacted at 01-2235800, Monday to Friday from 8am–5pm.

How we invite women for breast screening

We invite women aged from 50 to 69 years for breast screening on an area-by-area basis every two years (a screening 'round'). Our mobile units move around the country, depending on the number of women eligible for screening in each area. Our unit stays in location until all eligible women in the catchment area have been invited, before moving on to the next area.

BreastCheck and changes in operation due to COVID-19

Along with many public services, BreastCheck was impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Almost a year of screening time was lost and because of this, it is taking longer to complete the current screening round. Our mobile unit schedule has been adapted to maximise our capacity to screen as we complete the screening round. We are grateful to our participant women who continue to work with us to ensure as many appointment slots as possible are filled. Despite the ongoing challenges in recruitment and retention of staff, and COVID-19 related absences,

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we are pleased to report that BreastCheck is back to nearly normal numbers attending for screening daily.

Being breast aware

We continue to emphasise to our participants that BreastCheck is a screening service for well women within the population age range (50-69 years) and is not for women who have symptoms. If a person has any concerns or symptoms concerning their breasts, they should not attend screening and should instead contact their GP who will give them the appropriate advice.

Women who have additional questions regarding breast screening can contact Freephone 1800 45 45 55 from 9am-6pm, Monday to Friday; or email info@breastcheck.ie.

I trust this information is of assistance to you, but should you have any further queries please contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Fiona Murphy,
Chief Executive

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