



24 April 2024

Deputy Holly Cairns
holly.cairns@oireachtas.ie

Our Ref: HM/Communications

PQ17106/24: To ask the Minister for Health if his attention has been drawn to the current lack of a mammogram service in West Cork; to provide a reasoning for the suspension of the availability of the mobile BreastCheck mammogram service in Bantry; and whether he would ensure the provision of a mammogram service in West Cork to ensure access to care for those unable to drive long distances.

Dear Deputy,

I refer to the above Parliamentary Question.

About BreastCheck

BreastCheck is Ireland's free breast screening programme. We screen women who have no symptoms of breast cancer so that we can find and treat breast cancer at the earliest possible stage. We aim to invite women aged 50 to 69 for screening every two years and provide access to appropriate care for those who need further tests and treatment. We work to make BreastCheck services accessible to all, for example, providing longer or group appointments, and information in braille and international languages.

We have four BreastCheck screening units in hospitals and 24 mobile clinics across the country. Since 2020, we have introduced three additional mobile units to increase capacity. We are looking at introducing more units to further reduce barriers for women, enabling greater access to screening. We update our breast screening locations regularly on our [website](#).

Provision of BreastCheck in West Cork

Mobile clinics enable us to provide breast screening for more women across the country. They stay at a location for between three months and two years and we invite eligible women living in the area for screening. The units then move to another location, where we invite eligible women in that area. In this way we work to ensure that no unit is sitting idle for periods of time and that all women in Ireland have an equal and equitable opportunity to attend screening close to where they live.

We most recently had a mobile unit in Bantry between June 2023 and September 2023, which stayed in place until eligible women in the area had been invited for screening and those who chose screening had their appointments.

We aim to invite women for screening every two years. We had a mobile unit in Bantry between July and November 2021, followed by June to September 2023 as outlined above, and we anticipate that the mobile unit will be back in Bantry in spring/early summer 2025. **I am pleased to confirm that there has been no suspension of BreastCheck in West Cork and we continue to offer screening in the area as women become eligible, every two years.**

Ensuring and improving access to our screening programmes is a central part of our work and a focus of our strategic plan [Choose Screening](#). Women who have been unable to take up a previous screening invitation can contact the BreastCheck Southern Unit on 021 464 9700,

Teach Óstaí an Rí, 200 Sráid Parnell, Baile Átha Cliath D01 A3Y8. King's Inn House, 200 Parnell Street, Dublin 1, D01 A3Y8.
☎ 353 1 865 9300 ✉ info@screeningservice.ie www.screeningservice.ie





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Monday to Friday between 8am–5pm, and we will aim to find the most suitable place, date and time for them to attend.

Being breast aware

BreastCheck is a screening service for women aged 50-69 who do not have symptoms of breast cancer. Women with concerns or symptoms concerning their breast health should not wait for or attend screening and should instead contact their GP who will give them the appropriate advice.

It is important that every woman is breast aware. This means knowing what is normal for her so that if any unusual change occurs, she will recognise it. If cancer is found early, treatment is more likely to be successful. It is therefore important for women to get into the habit of looking at and checking their breasts at least on a monthly basis. More information on checking your breasts, and on how you can reduce your risk of breast cancer, is available on www.breastcheck.ie

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. I note your interest in our screening programmes, particularly BreastCheck, and I would welcome the opportunity to meet you to discuss our work and hear your views. If you would like to arrange a meeting, please contact XXXXXX

Yours sincerely,

Fiona Murphy,
Chief Executive.

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