



11 March 2024

Deputy Róisín Shortall
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Our Ref: GM/Communications

PQ9227.24: To ask the Minister for Health the number of individuals who received an invitation to take part in BreastCheck on a quarterly basis from Q1 2016 to the end of 2023; and the absolute number and percentage of individuals who accepted an invitation and subsequently attended a screening appointment in each of the specified months, in tabular form.

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.

However, not all eligible women wish, or are able, to travel to one of these regional units. An important principle for the BreastCheck programme is to offer screening services locally to women in counties and locations convenient to where they live. To achieve this, each of the four screening units operates in tandem with mobile units. The majority of women participating in BreastCheck have their mammogram in one of these 24 units.

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](#). The units stay in each location until they have invited all eligible women in that area.

BreastCheck data

The table on the following page shows the number of eligible BreastCheck participants who were invited and screened from 2016 to the third quarter of 2023, as well as the uptake rate for each of those quarters. The invitation data for the last quarter of 2024 is not yet available.

The people screened in a particular quarter are not necessarily those who were invited that quarter. It is normal for a person to be invited in a particular quarter, but be screened the following one, or the one after.

Uptake refers to the proportion of people invited in a particular time period who participated in screening at any time thereafter. In the following table, uptake refers to people who attended screening up to the end of the quarter following their invitation. BreastCheck's national target uptake rate is 70%.

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BreastCheck Invitation and Uptake Figures (2016-2023)

		Q1	% uptake	Q2	% uptake	Q3	% uptake	Q4	% uptake
2023	Invited	58,544	74.4%	68,467	61.4%	59,470	62.0%	Not yet available	Not yet available
	Screened	45,382		44,223		38,629		38,298	
2022	Invited	50,391	69.0%	52,446	76.0%	60,851	63.5%	57,997	68.1%
	Screened	36,433		41,727		39,198		39,428	
2021*	Invited	8,017	85.9%	45,847	79.7%	51,824	69.6%	56,737	69.4%
	Screened	8,979		39,629		37,512		41,170	
2020*	Invited	56,679	58.6%	Not available		Not available		10,195	87.1%
	Screened	38,153		Not available		Not available		18,117**	
2019	Invited	61,887	72.2%	52,564	69.3%	56,860	75.9%	61,886	65.3%
	Screened	45,694		40,037		43,715		41,511	
2018	Invited	51,771	76.3%	53,712	76.2%	54,975	71.1%	63,190	68.4%
	Screened	40,450		44,524		41,137		44,472	
2017	Invited	55,609	70.5%	51,145	74.9%	53,223	71.5%	61,225	70.3%
	Screened	40,965		39,309		39,434		44,479	
2016	Invited	53,992	65.7%	44,206	72.6%	46,557	72.8%	48,873	70.6%
	Screened	36,348		34,820		34,752		35,962	

* BreastCheck paused for several months due to COVID-19 during this period

** Numbers screened exceeded number invited owing to post-COVID catch-up

Being breast aware

We continue to emphasise that BreastCheck is a screening service for women aged 50-69 who do not have symptoms of breast cancer. If a person has any concerns or symptoms concerning their breast health, they 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



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National Screening Service

Finally, you may be interested in our [programme reports and publications](#) that provide data about our screening programmes, and information about our work in areas including quality assurance, equity in screening and research.

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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