



An tSeirbhís Náisiúnta Scagthástála
National Screening Service

18 March 2021

Deputy David Cullinane
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Our Ref: HM/Communications

PQ12042/21: To ask the Minister for Health the number of screenings conducted by each of the national screening programmes in each of the years 2017 to 2020 and in January 2021; and if he will make a statement on the matter

Dear Deputy,

I refer to the above Parliamentary Question.

The data in the table below shows the numbers of people screened by each of the national screening programmes for 2017 to 2020, and with the provisional figures for January 2021.

BreastCheck	2017	2018	2019	2020	Jan 2021 provisional
Number of women screened	164,187	170,583	170,957	56,270	0
CervicalCheck	2017	2018	2019	2020	Jan 2021 provisional
No. of unique women who have had one or more smear tests in a primary care setting	259,099	339,161	206,315	143,334	11795
BowelScreen	2017	2018	2019	2020	Jan 2021 provisional
Number of clients screened	120,764	105,416	122,724	49,889	8220
Diabetic RetinaScreen	2017	2018	2019	2020	Jan 2021 provisional
Number of clients screened with final grading result	102,522	101,693	107,898	62,281	6642

The three population-based cancer screening programmes BreastCheck, CervicalCheck and BowelScreen were paused on public health advice in March 2020, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. CervicalCheck restarted at the beginning of July, BowelScreen restarted in August and BreastCheck restarted in October.

Since screening restarted, we are ensuring all parts of the system have sufficient capacity to process the volume of tests during the restart period. We are taking measures to protect both participants and staff, and monitoring the restart to ensure their continuing safety. For this reason, we are unable to screen people at the same numbers we did pre-COVID-19. We continue to follow Public Health guidelines and are adapting our planning accordingly. The health and safety of our participants continues to be our top priority.

CervicalCheck

As of 01 July, CervicalCheck had an additional 100,000 invites to issue. Please note that this was the number of outstanding invites due to the pause in screening, not the final number of people who

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☎ 353 1 865 9300 ✉ info@screeningservice.ie www.screeningservice.ie



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BreastCheck
An Clár Náisiúnta Scagthástála Coek
The National Breast Screening Programme



CervicalCheck
AN CLÁR NÁISIÚNTA SCAETHÁSTÁLA CERVICÉAC
THE NATIONAL CERVICAL SCREENING PROGRAMME



BowelScreen
An Clár Náisiúnta Scagthástála Putóige
The National Bowel Screening Programme



Diabetic RetinaScreen
An Clár Náisiúnta Scagthástála Seilíní de Dhiabéiteag
The National Diabetic Retinal Screening Programme



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will come forward for screening. By December 2020 all women who were due to be invited in 2020 had received their first invite letter and our labs were processing samples at capacity.

BowelScreen

BowelScreen continues to match invitations to participate to colonoscopy capacity, and is working with host hospitals to maximise the volume of follow-up procedures they can accommodate safely during COVID-19.

BreastCheck

Although breast screening resumed in late October last year, in early 2021, many women who were due routine screening had their invitation delayed due to unprecedented levels of virus in the community. We are pleased to inform you that routine breast screening is again operating nationwide, with invites being sent out to eligible women for screening appointments dated from last Monday 08 March 2021. The focus of the resumption of routine screening is to achieve a maximum invitation rate that is compatible with a safe and controlled follow-up assessment and our treatment capacity within the health service.

Diabetic RetinaScreen

Diabetic RetinaScreen continues to invite participants to attend screening. We are working with providers to ensure screening is delivered safely, in line with Public Health guidelines, for staff and participants.

On 16 February 2021, DRS introduced a two-yearly screening pathway for screening participants who are deemed eligible. Until now, DRS invited programme participants for diabetic retinal screening once a year. This has changed to a two-yearly appointment for people who fulfil certain criteria. If a person has received a result of 'no retinopathy' from their previous two screenings, their next DRS screening invitation will be two years from the time of their last screen.

The new pathway will reduce the number of screening appointments and reduce unnecessary clinic visits and examinations. Other countries that offer two-yearly screening intervals include Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland and Scotland.

We are continuing to invite participants for screening, with regional variations in screening capacity at this time. We are working with the host hospitals as they make local decisions on their referral capacity. All urgent referrals are being seen in the treatment centres.

Screening is a population health measure for people who are presumed healthy and do not have symptoms. The aim of a population screening programme is to reduce the incidence of disease in a population. Screening is not a diagnostic tool and no screening test is completely accurate.

The NSS continues to encourage all people who are between screening appointments, or waiting for rescheduled appointments, to be aware of, and act upon, any symptoms associated with the conditions for which they are being screened. We ask that those people contact their GP, who will arrange appropriate follow-up care.

For other queries patients can call the Freephone information line on 1800 45 45 55, email: info@screeningservice.ie or contact their clinic directly.

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An Clár Náisiúnta Scagthástála Coik
The National Breast Screening Programme



AN CLÁR NÁISIÚNTA SCAETHÁSTÁLA CEBHEACS
THE NATIONAL CERVICAL SCREENING PROGRAMME



An Clár Náisiúnta Scagthástála Putóige
The National Bowel Screening Programme



An Clár Náisiúnta Scagthástála Retiní de Dhiabéiteigh
The National Diabetic Retinal Screening Programme



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

Fiona Ness

Fiona Ness on behalf of Fiona Murphy
National Screening Service

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Diabetic
RetinaScreen
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