



An tSeirbhís Náisiúnta Scagthástála
National Screening Service

25 February 2022

Deputy Holly Cairns
holly.cairns@oireachtas.ie

Our Ref: HM/GM/Communications

PQ8984/22: To ask the Minister for Health his plans ensure that a BreastCheck service is available in Bantry Hospital; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy,

I refer to the query above.

BreastCheck, the HSE National Breast Screening Programme, offers population-based breast screening to eligible women on an area-by-area basis every two years.

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 units. A new mobile unit was added to the national BreastCheck fleet in 2021 and a further two mobile units have been commissioned to facilitate screening appointments around the country. We update our breast screening locations regularly on our website, [here](#).

BreastCheck invites and screens women in Bantry and its surrounding areas at a mobile located on the grounds of Bantry General Hospital. The Bantry mobile unit has been returning to this location during each screening round since 2009.

Most recently, this mobile provided screening services in Bantry from July 2021 to November 2021. It has now been rotated on schedule to provide women in another area equitable access to our breast screening service. The unit is scheduled to return to Bantry during the next screening round, in 2023.

Women who were unable to take up the invitation of screening in Bantry at that time are being offered screening at the nearest or most convenient alternative location. If they contact us (details below) we will endeavour to find the most suitable location, date and time for them to attend.

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 with 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.

It is important that every woman is breast aware. This means knowing what is normal for

Teach Óstaí an Rí, 200 Sráid Parnell, Baile Átha Cliath D01 A3Y8. King's Inn House, 200 Parnell Street, Dublin 1, D01 A3Y8.
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women so that if any unusual change occurs, they will recognise it. The sooner they notice a change the better because if cancer is found early, treatment is more likely to be successful. It is important for women to get into the habit of looking at and feeling their breasts at least on a monthly basis. More information on techniques for checking your breasts is available on www.breastcheck.ie

Women in the Bantry area who have additional questions regarding breast screening can contact the BreastCheck Southern unit on 021 464 9700 Monday to Friday between 8am–5pm; 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, should you have any further queries please contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Grace Turner

Grace Turner
Head of Strategy, Business and Projects
National Screening Service

On behalf of Fiona Murphy, Chief Executive, National Screening Service

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