



18 October 2022

Deputy Matt Shanahan
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Our Ref: GM/Communications

PQ48308.22: To ask the Minister for Health the present status of the BreastCheck mobile scanning unit in relation to the time and schedule that it has made available in Waterford city and county (details supplied); and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy,

I refer to the above Parliamentary Question.

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 Infirmaroy 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.

BreastCheck screens on an area-by-area basis every two years. We call this process a screening 'round'. If a woman has missed her appointment with BreastCheck while we were screening in her area, she is invited to contact BreastCheck to see if there are any alternative locations that may be suitable. Alternatively, we will invite her again when we are in her area during the next screening round.

In each screening round we carry out screening from two sites in Waterford: Waterford City (Waterford Regional Sports Complex), and Waterford County (Dungarvan Community Hospital). We have been offering screening from these sites in county Waterford since the national expansion of BreastCheck in 2008.

The Waterford City mobile screening unit completed its most recent screening round between 04 November 2020 and 01 April 2022. It is due to begin screening again in the city in early 2023. A second unit was screening in Dungarvan from 06 December 2021 until it completed its round in July 2022.

We note that there was inaccurate media coverage of this matter recently. We have written to the newspaper concerned to request a correction. I hope you find the information above useful as you discuss breast screening with constituents and colleagues.

We continue to ask women of every age to look out for symptoms. If a person has any concerns or symptoms concerning their breasts, they should 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. The sooner she notices a change the better because if cancer is found early, treatment is more likely to be successful. We recommend women get into the habit of looking at, and

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feeling, their breasts, at least once a month. There is more information on techniques for checking one's breasts on breastcheck.ie.

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

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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