

24 February 2023

Deputy Duncan Smith TD
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Our Ref: GM/Communications

PQ6779.23: To ask the Minister for Health if he has plans to introduce a national lung cancer screening service; if he has received any proposals for such a service; the projected annual cost for such a programme; the annual cost for each individual cancer screening service currently in place; the estimated number of projected people each will screen in 2022 and 2023 respectively, in tabular form; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy Smith,

I understand the first three parts of the above Parliamentary Question, which refer to a possible lung cancer screening service, are being answered by the Department of Health's Population Health Screening Unit. I refer to the parts of the question that refer to the costs and numbers screened in the National Screening Service's population-based screening programmes BreastCheck, CervicalCheck and BowelScreen.

The allocation for each of these screening programmes for 2022 are as follows:

Year	2022
BreastCheck allocation (€million)	38.69
Cervical Check allocation (€million)	53.02
BowelScreen allocation (€million)	12.74

The following table shows the number of people screened in each of the three cancer screening programmes in 2022; and the numbers we expect to screen in 2023, as submitted by the National Screening Service to the HSE's *National Service Plan 2023*.

Programme	Detail	Actual numbers screened in 2022	Expected activity 2023
BreastCheck	No. of women in the eligible population who have had a complete mammogram	156,786	185,000
CervicalCheck	No. of unique women who have had one or more satisfactory cervical screening tests in a primary care setting	248,369	264,000
BowelScreen	No. of people who have completed a satisfactory BowelScreen FIT test	125,529	140,000

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National Screening Service

The purpose of cancer screening is both to reduce the number of people who develop cancer, and also to enable early detection of cancer so that an early treatment or intervention can be offered.

The National Cancer Registry of Ireland, in its *Cancer Trends* report of September 2022, says there is substantial evidence showing that the introduction of screening programmes results in a greater proportion of early stage (stage I and II) cancers being detected, and that earlier diagnosis results in improvements in survival time at an individual level and on cancer mortality rates in the longer term.

The *Cancer Trends* report can be viewed on ncri.ie, or by clicking [here](#).

I would like to take this opportunity to remind you that the National Screening Service has joined forces with the National Cancer Control Programme and National Immunisation Office to launch this month Ireland's roadmap to eliminate cervical cancer.

[Ireland's roadmap](#) shows the strides made so far towards this global goal, and signposts the future direction we will take, breaking this ambitious journey into achievable stages. The global goals have been developed by the World Health Organization and set key targets that all countries are asked to strive towards in HPV vaccination, cervical screening and early treatment. Ireland is one of the first countries to commit to cervical cancer elimination.

You can read more about cervical cancer elimination on screeningservice.ie, or by clicking [here](#).

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
National Screening Service

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