

02 February 2023

Deputy Neasa Hourigan
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Our Ref: HM/Communications

PQ3591/23: To ask the Minister for Health the number of persons who were waiting for a colonoscopy through the BowelScreen programme by waiting time period for each quarter in each of the years 2019 to 2022, respectively.

Dear Deputy,

I refer to the above Parliamentary Question.

People are eligible to take part in the BowelScreen programme once they reach the age of 60. Once the person gives consent they are issued with a FIT kit (screening) which is a test done at home and returned by post at their convenience.

People who receive a positive FIT result are contacted by a dedicated nurse from a BowelScreen endoscopy centre for a pre-assessment to establish their suitability for colonoscopy. This pre-assessment includes a telephone interview enquiring about their general health, any co-morbidities, and any medication they may be taking. This colonoscopy is known as an index colonoscopy.

Colorectal cancer screening is a preventative health measure. The primary objective of BowelScreen is to reduce people's risk of developing bowel cancer in the future, by detecting and removing pre-cancerous adenomas in the lining of the bowel. Also, if bowel cancer is found early through bowel screening, it's easier to treat and there's a better chance of recovery.

Please note that BowelScreen was paused between March and August 2020 due to the impact of COVID-19. We restarted issuing invites for screening to eligible people on a phased basis in August 2020. During COVID-19 restrictions, endoscopy services did not operate at full capacity. The programme managed capacity and issued invites on that basis. During this time, BowelScreen announced that Mayo University Hospital (MUH) is now performing colonoscopies on behalf of the programme. Fifteen hospitals across Ireland are now delivering this vital screening service for the national bowel screening programme.

The following data reports on FIT positive men and women in the eligible age range.

2019

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Number of FIT positive clients deemed suitable for a colonoscopy and for whom an appointment was scheduled	604	825	949	857
Number clients scheduled <= 20 working days	502	769	723	664
Number clients scheduled > 20 and <= 30 working days	80	46	126	85

Number clients scheduled > 30 working days	22	10	100	108
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2020*

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Number of FIT positive clients deemed suitable for a colonoscopy and for whom an appointment was scheduled	729	154	147	601
Number clients scheduled <= 20 working days	641	111	134	521
Number clients scheduled > 20 and <= 30 working days	46	4	13	31
Number clients scheduled > 30 working days	42	39	0	49

* Please note that BowelScreen was paused between March and August 2020 due to the impact of COVID-19.

2021

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Number of FIT positive clients deemed suitable for a colonoscopy and for whom an appointment was scheduled	617	728	619	589
Number clients scheduled <= 20 working days	599	671	552	472
Number clients scheduled > 20 and <= 30 working days	17	41	48	75
Number clients scheduled > 30 working days	1	16	19	42

2022

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Number of FIT positive clients deemed suitable for a colonoscopy and for whom an appointment was scheduled	631	761	892	890
Number clients scheduled <= 20 working days	583	702	733	666
Number clients scheduled > 20 and <= 30 working days	31	38	86	92
Number clients scheduled > 30 working days	17	21	73	132

Screening

We continue to emphasise the importance of being symptom aware for all of our screening services. We encourage anyone with symptoms to contact their GP who will give them appropriate advice on follow-up care.

Teach Óstaí an Rí, 200 Sráid Parnell, Baile Átha Cliath D01 A3Y8. King's Inn House, 200 Parnell Street, Dublin 1, D01 A3Y8.
☎ 353 1 865 9300 ✉ info@screeningservice.ie www.screeningservice.ie



An tSeirbhís Náisiúnta Scagthástála
National Screening Service

For other queries, programme participants can call the Freephone information line on 1800 45 45 55; email: info@bowelscreen.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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An tSeirbhís Náisiúnta Scagthástála
National Screening Service



An Clár Náisiúnta Scagthástála Ciock
The National Breast Screening Programme



AN CLÁR NÁISIÚNTA SCAGTHÁSTÁLA CERIBHEACS
THE NATIONAL CERVICAL SCREENING PROGRAMME



An Clár Náisiúnta Scagthástála Púitige
The National Bowel Screening Programme



An Clár Náisiúnta Scagthástála Rialaithe do Dhiabaitigh
The National Diabetic Retinal Screening Programme