

04 July 2023

Deputy Róisín Shorthall
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Our Ref: HM/Communications

PQ30073/23: To ask the Minister for Health the number and proportion of people who attended BreastCheck in each quarter in each of the years 2017-2023, in tabular form.

PQ30074/23: To ask the Minister for Health the number and proportion of people who attended CervicalCheck in each quarter in each of the years 2017-2023, in tabular form.

PQ30075/23: To ask the Minister for Health the number and proportion of people who attended BowelScreen in each quarter in each of the years 2017-2023, in tabular form.

Dear Deputy,

I refer to the above Parliamentary Questions, which I intend to answer as one. I trust you are agreeable with this approach.

Ireland's three national cancer screening programmes – BreastCheck, CervicalCheck and BowelScreen – invite people to take part in screening at regular intervals from the time they become eligible for screening.

A screening test is designed for people who do not have symptoms. It aims to identify those who are at a higher risk of developing disease and provides an opportunity for those who have a positive screen to receive further checks and, if needed, go on to diagnosis and treatment.

Uptake of screening is crucial to ensuring screening is effective. It is a priority for us that all eligible people can access our services. Ensuring the delivery of a participant-centred service is a central tenet of our new 5-year strategy, [Choose Screening](#).

BreastCheck

BreastCheck invites eligible women aged from 50 to 69 years for breast screening on an area-by-area basis every two years. We call this process a screening 'round'.

The following table shows the number of women who attended for screening with BreastCheck from 2017 to 2022, and to the end of the first quarter of 2023; and the uptake percentage. The programme's national target coverage rate is 70%.

	2017	2018	2019	2020*	2021*	2022	2023**
Q1	40,965	40,450	45,694	38,153	8,979	36,433	45,382
Q2	39,309	44,524	40,037	0	39,629	41,727	N/A
Q3	39,434	41,137	43,715	0	37,512	39,198	N/A
Q4	44,479	44,472	41,511	18,117	41,170	39,428	N/A
Uptake	73.8%	74.3%	71.6%	74.4%	62.4%^	69.9%^	N/A

* programme paused due to COVID-19

** provisional data not yet validated

^provisional unpublished

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CervicalCheck

CervicalCheck offers free primary HPV cervical screening every three years to women and people with a cervix aged 25 to 29; and every five years to those aged 30 to 65 years.

The following table shows the number of people who attended for screening with CervicalCheck from 2017 to 2022, and to the end of the first quarter of 2023; and the uptake percentage. The programme's national target coverage rate is 80% and the latest available figures from CervicalCheck show a five-year coverage rate (ending 31 March 2020) of 78.5%.

	2017	2018 [^]	2019	2020 [*]	2021	2022	2023 ^{**}
Q1	79,855	79,307	56,250	39,005	88,979	70,597	70,436
Q2	61,960	114,447	49,190	387	95,578	59,592	N/A
Q3	62,169	80,603	52,665	34,898	74,972	62,517	N/A
Q4	55,115	64,804	48,210	69,044	58,962	55,663	N/A
Coverage 25-60	80.1%	79.1%	77.1%	77.1%	78.4%	78.3%	N/A
Coverage 25-65	N/A	N/A	N/A	73.0%	73.0%	73.1%	N/A

[^] offer of out-of-cycle screening tests

^{*} programme paused due to COVID-19; age range extended from 25-60yrs to 25-65yrs.

^{**} provisional data not yet validated

BowelScreen

Bowel screening is available to all people aged 60 to 69 years living in Ireland. The BowelScreen test is done in the person's home, with a testing kit that arrives in the post, and is returned in the post.

The following table shows the number of people who took part in screening with BowelScreen from 2017 to 2022, and to the end of the first quarter of 2023; and the uptake percentage. The programme's national target coverage rate is 45%.

	2017	2018	2019	2020 [*]	2021	2022	2023 ^{**}
Q1	33,324	25,751	24,507	21,063	19,950	23,770	41,016
Q2	28,466	34,168	32,545	758	30,353	29,961	N/A
Q3	30,448	24,046	34,292	5,481	21,236	38,623	N/A
Q4	28,526	21,451	31,380	22,587	19,990	33,175	N/A
Uptake	43.2%	41.2%	43.1%	42.4%	49.8%	43.8%	N/A

^{*} programme paused due to COVID-19

^{**} provisional data not yet validated

Screening updates

We provide updates on breast, cervical and bowel screening on www.breastcheck.ie, www.cervicalcheck.ie, and www.bowelscreen.ie respectively. People can also contact us on Freephone 1800 45 45 55 and by email at info@breastcheck.ie, info@cervicalcheck.ie, and info@bowelscreen.ie.

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



An tSeirbhís Náisiúnta Scagthástála
National Screening Service

Yours sincerely,

Fiona Murphy,
Chief Executive

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