



14 April 2023

Deputy Johnny Guirke
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Our Ref: GM/Communications

PQ15590.23: To ask the Minister for Health the number of individuals who received an invitation to take part in CervicalCheck on a quarterly basis from Q1 2020 and to date in 2023; the percentage of individuals who accepted an invitation and subsequently attended a screening appointment in each of the specified months; and if he will provide that information in tabular form.

Dear Deputy,

I refer to the above Parliamentary Question.

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.

CervicalCheck invites women to attend for screening by booking an appointment with any registered sample taker at a time that suits them. However, women within the eligible age range do not need an invitation to attend for screening; they can check the register online and book an appointment with a registered sample taker if their screening test is due.

You ask for the percentage of individuals who accepted an invitation and subsequently attended an appointment per quarter since 2020. This is the coverage rate. Coverage is defined as the proportion of unique women who have had at least one satisfactory screening test taken within the defined screening interval, expressed as a percentage of the total number of eligible women in the population. The international standard for recording coverage in cervical screening is over five years, not monthly. Therefore the following table shows the number of participants who received an invitation for screening from CervicalCheck in 2020, 2021 and 2022; and the **five-year coverage rate** for 2019, 2020 and 2021. Further figures are not yet verified.

Recording coverage over five-year periods helps reduce anomalies that can occur in quarter-to-quarter and year-to-year figures, when a woman might be invited in one quarter or year but choose to attend in another.

	2019	2020	2021	2022
Number of CervicalCheck invitations issued	187,329	175,617*	279,405	288,589
Programme five-year coverage at end of year (age range in years)	79% (25-60)	77% (25-60)*	78.4% (25-60) 73% (25-65)	Not verified

* Screening age range changed mid-2020 from women aged 25-60 years, to women aged 25-65





An tSeirbhís Náisiúnta Scagthástála
National Screening Service

The change in age range of eligible women mid-2020 led to an immediate increase in the number of women in the population eligible for screening, without a corresponding rise in the number who had taken a screening test. The coverage figure for those aged 25–60 for 2020 and 2021 remains comparable with previous years.

Please note, that despite the many restrictions the pandemic placed on our operations, the programme has been up to date with invitations since the end of 2020. We conducted as many screening tests in the two-year period up to the end of 2021 as we had in in any previous two-year period.

Cervical cancer elimination

I would like to take this opportunity to let you know that this year the National Screening Service has joined forces with the National Cancer Control Programme and National Immunisation Office to launch Ireland's roadmap to eliminate cervical cancer. Eliminating cervical cancer as a public health problem means that the number of people who get cervical cancer will become very low. The current rate of cervical cancer in Ireland is around 11 cases per 100,000 people. The World Health Organization (WHO) defines elimination as fewer than four cases per 100,000.

[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 WHO 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, should you have any further queries please contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Fiona Murphy
Chief Executive
National Screening Service

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An tSeirbhís Náisiúnta Scagthástála
National Screening Service



An Clár Náisiúnta Scagthástála Cioch
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 Riatróil do Dhiabéitigh
The National Diabetic Retinal Screening Programme