



08 April 2025

Deputy Pádraig Rice
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Our Ref: HM/Communications

PQ19830/25: To ask the Minister for Health the total number of BowelScreen invitations issued, by county, in 2024; the corresponding number of people, per county, who returned a completed faecal immunochemical test in 2024, in tabular form; and if she will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy,

I refer to the above Parliamentary Question.

About BowelScreen

BowelScreen offers free bowel screening to people aged 59 to 70 every two years. When the person gives us their consent to take part, we send them a faecal immunochemical test (or 'FIT kit') to do at home and return by post at their convenience. We invite people for screening within two years of us receiving their details, and re-invite them at two-year intervals thereafter.

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

Data on tests returned

After being invited, people can consent to take part, request a test kit and return it at a time that suits them. This means that people can be issued a test in one year and return it the following year. Programme data is published in our BowelScreen Programme reports. These reports capture tests issued in the reporting period, and the numbers returned. For the most recent published data please see [BowelScreen Programme Report 2022 – 2023](#).

The figures in the table below show a breakdown of data from the programme report for 2022 – 2023 and show the number of invitations issued, per county, for each year, and tests returned.

Table 1: BowelScreen invitations issued, by county, in each of the years from 2022 to 2023, in tabular form; and the number of people, by county, who returned a completed FIT test in the same years.

County	Total Invited 2022	Number of people who returned completed FIT Kit 2022	Total Invited 2023^	Number of people who returned completed FIT Kit 2023
Co Carlow	7,214	3,033	10,954	3,963
Co Cavan	4,908	1,693	4,196	2,326
Co Clare	10,759	4,333	7,425	3,644



Co Cork	38,096	15,339	31,480	16,922
Co Donegal	11,094	5,100	11,783	5,944
Co Dublin	74,766	27,204	74,445	35,207
Co Galway	10,977	5,275	22,832	9,837
Co Kerry	10,645	5,471	12,911	5,678
Co Kildare	8,460	3,798	14,007	6,666
Co Kilkenny	5,874	2,508	6,251	3,523
Co Laois	2,946	1,211	4,542	2,045
Co Leitrim	3,097	1,410	2,467	1,185
Co Limerick	16,381	6,447	12,548	5,871
Co Longford	3,980	1,696	2,048	750
Co Louth	6,986	3,206	10,068	4,539
Co Mayo*	9,862	5,244	11,174	4,647
Co Meath	11,024	4,536	10,434	5,587
Co Monaghan	3,460	1,525	5,074	2,248
Co Offaly	4,713	2,011	5,085	2,071
Co Roscommon	5,331	2,427	4,121	1,964
Co Sligo	4,912	2,859	5,165	2,104
Co Tipperary	12,488	4,131	11,448	5,837
Co Waterford	7,760	2,898	8,919	4,536
Co Westmeath	6,893	2,909	5,736	2,450
Co Wexford	10,742	5,240	10,269	4,645
Co Wicklow	9,389	3,995	9,504	5,186
Totals	302,757	125,499	314,886	149,375

*In April 2022 we further expanded to offer endoscopy services in Mayo University Hospital.

^In October 2023 BowelScreen expanded the eligible age range to include people aged 59.

Validated data for 2024 is not yet available and will be published in our next programme report. We also publish activity and performance data, tracking participation and screening activity across our four screening programmes. This data is preliminary and may be updated in the future. We publish our data quarterly in arrears and the most recent data for BowelScreen for 2024 is available on our [website](#).

Our work to increase uptake

Our goal is for half of those we invite to complete the test. Our [BowelScreen Programme Report](#) for the years 2022 - 2023 shows that we had an uptake rate of 46.4%. This is similar to the uptake rate for the previous two years (2020 to 2021), and slightly below our programme target of 50%.

The uptake rate among people who previously completed a BowelScreen home screening test is 89.2%. We know that once people have done one test they are likely to return to screening, so encouraging first-time participation is a focus of our work.

Read more about [our work to support people to choose screening](#).

Being symptom aware

We continue to emphasise the importance of being symptom aware, no matter what age you are. Information on symptoms is available on our [website](#). We encourage anyone with symptoms to contact their GP who will give them appropriate advice on follow-up care.

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☎ 353 1 865 9300 ✉ info@screeningservice.ie www.screeningservice.ie



An tSeirbhís Náisiúnta Scagthástála
National Screening Service

For other queries, programme participants can call our Freephone information line on 1800 45 45 55 or email: info@bowelscreen.ie.

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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