



11 March 2025

Deputy Sorca Clarke  
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Our Ref: HM/Communications

**PQ8052/25: To ask the Minister for Health the number of breast screening units, per county, in tabular form.**

**PQ8054/25: To ask the Minister for Health the number of people who are eligible for a cervical check; and the number of cervical checks that have taken place in 2024 to date, per county, in tabular form.**

**PQ8053/25: To ask the Minister for Health the number of people in Longford-Westmeath registered for bowel screening; and the number of people, according to the census, who are eligible for bowel screening.**

**PQ8055/25: To ask the Minister for Health the number of diabetic retina screening units, per county in tabular form; and the way she plans on improving access and registration processes for diabetic retina screening.**

Dear Deputy,

I refer to the above Parliamentary Questions. I will answer them together and trust that you are happy with that approach.

### BreastCheck

BreastCheck is Ireland's free breast screening programme. We screen women who have no symptoms of breast cancer so that we can find and treat breast cancer at the earliest possible stage. We aim to invite women for their screening test by age 52 and every two years after that, up to the age of 69. Some women may be 53 when they are offered their first appointment and some will have three years between appointments, depending on when we are screening in their area.

There are four regional centres responsible for the delivery of BreastCheck throughout the country: Eccles Street and Merrion Road in Dublin; Newcastle Road in Galway; and Infirmary Road in Cork.

Each of the four screening units operates in tandem with our mobile units. Most women participating in BreastCheck have their mammogram in one of these 24 mobile units that move between 54 different locations across the country. Mobile units stay in each location until we have invited eligible women in that area for breast screening. We provide an up-to-date list of our current locations in tabular form by county on our [website](#).

### 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 programme is up to date with invites for cervical screening. Once eligible, it is up to each person to make an appointment with a registered sample taker. Women can check if they are eligible for their free screening test [here](#). The number of people eligible for cervical screening in Ireland is 1.3 million.





We publish [quarterly data reports](#) on the numbers of people taking part in screening. These reports are published quarterly in arrears. From January to September 2024, there were 156,635 cervical screening tests processed within the programme. Please note that this figure is preliminary data and are subject to verification and change.

Our [CervicalCheck Programme Report 2020-2022](#) provides more detail in relation to the performance of the programme, including screening coverage by county (page 17).

### **BowelScreen**

BowelScreen offers free bowel screening to people aged 59 to 69 every two years. The primary 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. Once the person gives their consent to participate, they are sent a faecal immunochemical test (or 'FIT kit') which is a test done at home and returned by post.

Our register contains the details of people whose information is provided to us by the Department of Social Protection, and people who self-register online. We report on the total number of people aged 59-69 on our register nationwide, rather than on a county-by-county basis. As of 26 Feb 2025, we had 620,872 people on our BowelScreen register. The number of people estimated to be aged 59-69 in 2025, based on Census 2022, is 615,423.

Please note the Census number does not take account of people who may have migrated or are deceased. Also, some people represented in the Census data may be ineligible for BowelScreen based on certain medical conditions, for example, having been previously diagnosed with colorectal cancer.

### **Diabetic RetinaScreen**

Diabetic RetinaScreen is Ireland's free diabetic retinopathy screening programme for people with type 1 and type 2 diabetes aged 12 years and over. Diabetic retinopathy is a complication of diabetes. It is caused by high blood glucose (sugar) levels damaging the back of the eye (retina) and can cause blindness if left undiagnosed and untreated.

Screening is a way of detecting any changes to the retina. If retinopathy is found early, treatment can reduce or prevent damage to a person's sight.

We aim to provide screening in an equitable way to everyone who is eligible, in over 140 community-based locations that are as convenient as possible for as many people as possible. In screening locations that are co-located with our treatment centres we provide additional digital surveillance screening locations, as special photography equipment is required for this screening pathway.

We provide an up-to-date list of our current locations in tabular form by county on our [website](#).

There are two ways of registering with the programme;

1. People can self-register through [www.diabeticretinascreen.ie](http://www.diabeticretinascreen.ie)
2. GPs or healthcare professionals can refer their patients for diabetic retina screening by contacting our call centre on 1800 45 45 55 or online at [www.diabeticretinascreen.ie](http://www.diabeticretinascreen.ie).





We work to provide more [equitable pathways for accessing screening](#) and identify what stops people from accessing screening and to remove these barriers. We communicate and share information in different ways to improve health literacy in screening. We want to enable everyone who is eligible to make an informed choice to take part in screening. We have created:

- [accessible information](#) about our 4 screening programmes
- [videos about our screening programmes](#) in multiple languages
- [factsheets](#) about our screening programmes in multiple languages

### Information on our screening programmes

Our [website news section](#) provides frequent updates on our work. As referenced above, we publish [quarterly data reports](#) on the numbers of people taking part in screening across our screening programmes, and uptake. Our [programme reports](#) provide more detail in relation to the performance of our screening programmes.

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

Yours sincerely,

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Fiona Murphy,  
Chief Executive.

