

07 October 2025

Deputy Emer Currie
emer.currie@oireachtas.ie

Our Ref: GM/Communications

PQ48004.25: To ask the Minister for Health the number of people currently eligible for BreastCheck screening who are waiting for their first mammogram in the Dublin northwest HSE area of Dublin 7, 11, and 15; the number of individuals currently awaiting follow-up appointments in the same area, in tabular form; and if she will make a statement on the matter.

PQ48005.25: To ask the Minister for Health the details of the current operational status of a BreastCheck mobile unit [at Blanchardstown Shopping Centre]; the number of women screened on a monthly basis since it opened; the number of women currently awaiting breast screening appointments at this mobile unit; and if she will make a statement on the matter; and if she will make a statement on the matter.

PQ48006.25: To ask the Minister for Health the actions her Department is taking to reduce waiting times and increase capacity of a service in Dublin [BreastCheck]; and if she will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy,

I refer to the above three Parliamentary Questions. I propose to answer them together and trust that you are happy with that approach. In my response to these queries in February 2025, I outlined background information about BreastCheck and would refer you to that response.

About 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 have 4 regional BreastCheck centres – 2 in Dublin, 1 in Cork and 1 in Galway, all accredited in 2025 to the highest quality standard by EUREF, the European Reference Organisation for Quality Assured Breast Screening and Diagnostic Services. We have 24 mobile units that move between 54 locations across the country. We provide access to appropriate care for those who need further tests and treatment. We work to make BreastCheck services accessible to all; for example, providing longer or group appointments, and information in braille and additional languages.

BreastCheck appointments

We aim to offer women their first screening appointment within two years of them becoming eligible or when they are registered with BreastCheck. For most women this is by the age of 52. In some cases, this may be 53, depending on when we are screening in their area. After the first mammogram we invite women back every 2 to 3 years.

As of 1 October, there are no women over the age of 52 in the Blanchardstown area, Dublin 7 or Dublin 11, waiting for their first screening mammogram invitation. Additionally, all women due their second or subsequent screening mammogram have been invited within our 2-to-3-year target timeframe.

We continue to offer further appointments to women who do not attend their appointment/s.

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

In Q3 2025 in Blanchardstown, we sent appointments to 1,727 women who routinely do not attend. 312 of these women attended their appointment or let us know they would not attend. This is an uptake rate of only 18%. We would appreciate if you would use your influence to promote the importance the BreastCheck within your constituency and encourage women to choose to attend their screening mammogram appointments. Finding cancer early means treatment is more effective.

Information for women wishing to attend

Eligible women who are due a screening mammogram, or who have been unable to take up a previous screening invitation, can contact our BreastCheck Eccles Unit by email at eccles@breastcheck.ie, or by phoning [01 882 6200](tel:018826200), Monday to Friday between 8am–5pm, and we will aim to find the most suitable place, date and time for them to have their screening appointment.

Reducing waiting times and increasing capacity

We are facing several challenges that mean some women face a delay in being called for breast screening.

Challenges affecting breast screening invitations

- **COVID-19 impact:** Screening time lost during the pandemic and the catch-up programme when [we offered screening to more women](#) led to some women waiting longer than the standard two years.
- **Population growth:** More women are now eligible for BreastCheck, but staffing has not grown at the same pace. Global shortages of radiology and radiography staff also affect delivery.
- **Unattended appointments:** Almost half of women invited for their first mammogram don't attend, meaning valuable screening time is lost that could be offered to others.

How we are addressing these challenges

- **Expanding our team:** Since 2023 we have recruited new consultants and senior radiographers, gained approval to fill key posts, and secured funding for further recruitment in 2025. We are also expanding training places and advertising internationally.
- **More mobile units:** Three new mobile screening units have been added since 2020, with plans for more as funding and staffing allow. We are putting on extra sessions nationally get to everyone as quickly as possible.
- **Better technology:** A new patient database launched in 2024 is freeing up staff time for direct patient care. We are also preparing to pilot AI to continue to improve efficiency and quality.
- **Maximising appointment use:** We now send text reminders and appointment details through the HSE Health App, making it easier for women to confirm, change or consent to appointments and helping ensure no screening slot goes unused.
- **Mobilising stakeholders:** This Breast Cancer Awareness Month we have provided all our stakeholders with information packs with key messages about breast screening, and we have funded a national awareness campaign as we seek to reduce non-attendance and ensure we fill every appointment slot.

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- **Prioritising access:** We are focused on inviting women at higher risk, those waiting longest, newly eligible women, and women from marginalised groups who may face barriers to screening.
- **Improving equity:** Our [website](#) provides information on how we are working to improve equity in screening. This includes the Traveller Health Project where we partnered with Pavee Point and the National Cancer Control Programme to address the cancer prevention, early detection, and screening needs of the Traveller community in the Finglas and Blanchardstown area. You may be interested to read more about this work on our [website](#).

Being breast aware

BreastCheck is a screening service for women aged 50-69 who do not have symptoms of breast cancer. Women with concerns or symptoms concerning their breast health should not wait for or attend screening and should instead contact their GP who will give them the appropriate advice.

It is important that every woman is breast aware. This means knowing what is normal for her so that if any unusual change occurs, she will recognise it. If cancer is found early, treatment is more likely to be successful. It is therefore important for women to get into the habit of looking at and checking their breasts, at least on a monthly basis. More information on checking breasts, and on how a woman can reduce her risk of breast cancer, is available on hse.ie/breastcheck.

Women who have additional questions regarding breast screening can contact Freephone 1800 45 45 55 from 9am-6pm, Monday to Friday; or email info@breastcheck.ie.

Yours sincerely,

Fiona Murphy,
Chief Executive.