

## National Cancer Control Programme (NCCP) Early Diagnosis of Symptomatic Cancer Plan 2022-2025 (extended to 2027)

### Implementation Report – April 2024-April 2025

Early Diagnosis Function, Community Oncology Division, NCCP:

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Target Action	2023/24 Target Output	Delivered
<b>Develop and publish an evidence-based strategic Plan/Framework for the Early Diagnosis Function of the Community Oncology Division, NCCP</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop work plan for 2024-2025</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work plan for 2024-2025 agreed</li> <li>Agreement with NCCP Internal Management Forum and NCCP Early Diagnosis of Symptomatic Cancer Steering Group to extend NCCP Early Diagnosis of Symptomatic Cancer Plan 2022-2025 to 2027</li> </ul>
<b>Objective I: Strategic planning and collaboration</b>		
<b>Action Ia: Constitute an Internal NCCP Early Diagnosis of</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Aim to meet quarterly, at a minimum, and coordinate/ collaborate on early diagnosis initiatives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meeting 8<sup>th</sup> May 2024</li> <li>Meeting 17<sup>th</sup> July 2024</li> <li>Meeting 1<sup>st</sup> October 2024</li> </ul>

<b>Cancer Working Group to facilitate collaborative working within NCCP</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Minutes of meetings will describe work of internal NCCP ED Working Group</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meeting 20<sup>th</sup> February 2025</li> </ul>
<b>Action Ib:</b> <b>Develop a prioritisation framework</b> to guide the prioritisation of cancers for the design and implementation of early diagnosis programmes of work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Framework developed 2022</li> <li>Use framework to determine which tumour type(s) to focus on initially</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Framework developed</li> <li>Lung cancer determined as initial priority, with additional tumour specific ad-hoc projects as required</li> </ul>
<b>Action Ic:</b> <b>Convene an Early Diagnosis of Symptomatic Cancer Steering Group</b> to collaborate in delivery of the NCCP Early Diagnosis of Symptomatic Cancer Plan 2022-2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to update group on ongoing early diagnosis of cancer projects</li> <li>Continue to identify and develop opportunities to collaborate on early diagnosis of cancer projects</li> <li>Minutes of meeting will describe work of Steering Group</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meeting 2nd Oct 2024. Update on implementation of Early Diagnosis of Symptomatic Cancer Plan and opportunities for collaboration on early diagnosis projects discussed.</li> <li>Meeting dates 2025 arranged</li> <li>Meeting 9th April 2025 Update on implementation of Early Diagnosis of Symptomatic Cancer Plan agreement to extend plan to 2027.</li> </ul>
<b><u>Building the network</u></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Build network, nationally and internationally</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NCCP Public Health, including Early Diagnosis Function, regularly engages with key stakeholders including HSE Health &amp; Wellbeing, the National Cancer Registry Ireland, the HSE National Screening Service, Healthy Ireland, Department of Public Health and Health Improvement.</li> <li>NCCP Early Diagnosis Function represented on relevant groups including Cervical Cancer Elimination Strategic Group.</li> <li>Collaborating with RCSI PRiCan Research Group.</li> <li>NCCP collaborated with HSE Health &amp; Wellbeing to develop the National Men's Health Action Plan, Healthy Ireland - Men 2024-28, including specific data and tasks in relation to cancers in men.</li> <li>NCCP delivered presentations to CCI4EU team on Cancer Early Diagnosis and Primary Care 12/11/24.</li> </ul>

## Objective II: Empower people and communities to recognise and act on signs/symptoms of cancer

<p><b>Action IIa:</b> <b>Identify national and target population barriers</b> to recognising and acting on signs/symptoms of cancer</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deliver National Survey of Cancer Awareness &amp; Attitudes</li> <li>• Plan/commence equivalent research with underserved population</li> <li>• Assess the evidence base for impact/effectiveness of cancer awareness campaigns</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NCCP leading on development of Cancer H&amp;WB Population Profiles for each HSE Health Region including data on stage of diagnosis of cancers.</li> <li>• Survey on Awareness and beliefs around cancer amongst the Traveller Community commenced in collaboration with UCD research team: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ UCD Presentation to National Traveller Health Network, Pavee Point September 2024</li> <li>○ UCD Presentation at the Irish Cancer Prevention Network Symposium October 2024.</li> <li>○ Abstract 'Smoking &amp; vaping prevalence and awareness of smoking as a risk factor for cancer in the Traveller Community, a minority ethnic group in Ireland' accepted for e-poster at World Tobacco Conference June 2025.</li> <li>○ Abstract accepted for oral presentation UCD School of Nursing Midwifery and Health Sciences Research Conference 22-23 August 2024. Titled 'A co-designed research project in collaboration with the Traveller Community in Ireland with the aim of decreasing cancer related morbidity and mortality among Irish Travellers.'</li> <li>○ Abstract: Smoking and awareness of smoking as a risk factor for cancer in the Traveller Community in Ireland accepted as a short oral presentation at the Faculty of Public Health Medicine Summer Scientific meeting May 2024. Awarded the Kevin Kelleher medal for best talk</li> <li>○ Abstract titled "Co-designed study with the Traveller Community in Ireland to determine cancer awareness &amp; attitudes" accepted for a poster presentation at the EUPHA conference in November. The abstract was published in October 2024 in the European Journal of Public Health.</li> <li>○ Abstract "Uptake of cervical screening and acceptability of HPV self-sampling in Irish Traveller women" has been accepted for the European Public Health Association Conference 2024</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
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<p><b>Action IIb:</b> Work with stakeholders to <b>design and deliver interventions</b> to address barriers to recognising and acting on signs/symptoms of cancer</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Partner with stakeholders to design and deliver early diagnosis initiatives, including awareness campaigns</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 2024 Early diagnosis of cancer social media public awareness campaign delivered with support from HSE Communications. Paid advertising on meta platforms, with new content released on a monthly basis. Over 3 million impressions and reach of &gt;1.5m</li> <li>● Supported Irish Network for Gynaecological Oncology (INGO) public awareness campaigns on World Ovarian Cancer Day 8<sup>th</sup> May 2024 by funding public awareness promotion materials. INGO campaign included social media posts, media engagement with reach of &gt;9,000,000</li> <li>● Supported INGO public awareness campaign (dip or dance) for Gynaecological Cancer Month Sept 2024.</li> <li>● Funded and moderated INGO public webinar on gynaecological cancer. Post-webinar survey demonstrated that 100% of respondents (n=48) felt that the webinar had met their expectations. INGO was awarded winner of the Patient Project of the Year Award at the Irish Healthcare Awards Dec 4th 2024</li> <li>● On World Cancer Day, NCCP attended the Garda Síochána Living Well Expo, providing material and engagement on early diagnosis of cancer, and participating in a panel discussion.</li> <li>● Provided subject matter expertise for updating content on HSE public webpage, including information on colorectal cancer, cervical cancer and lung cancer (June-July 2024)</li> <li>● 2025 Early Diagnosis of Cancer social media calendar planned in collaboration with HSE Communications for roll-out through 2025.</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public resources, including ‘know the signs of cancer’ posters and factsheets developed, updated and made available to download and order free hardcopies <a href="http://www.healthpromotion.ie">www.healthpromotion.ie</a></li> <li>• Collaborating with external stakeholders on development of a patient information leaflet on Lynch Syndrome</li> <li>• Targeted Lung Cancer Public Awareness Campaign completed. Piloted a first campaign in North Dublin, targeted at smokers, passive smokers, ex-smokers, aged &gt; 50 years. Ads placed in North Dublin on bus shelters, ad boxes, pharmacy screens. Complemented by a social media campaign and a campaign pack disseminated to over 800 North Dublin stakeholders. Campaign outcomes evaluated to inform future work.</li> <li>• 2025 lung cancer awareness social media campaign planned.</li> <li>• Planning commenced for lung cancer awareness campaign 2026 learning from piloted campaign.</li> <li>• Articles published in the Community Impact Network, co-ordinated by Alone, newsletter in July and August 2024</li> <li>• <a href="#">Breast awareness educational video</a> developed in collaboration with NSS and Technological University of the Shannon (TUS). Video promoted during breast cancer awareness month 2024 and included on breast cancer awareness resources, including the NCCP breast aware hanger</li> <li>• Collaborated with Bord Bia to hold a skin cancer prevention and early diagnosis webinar for Bord Bia auditors, to promote skin cancer awareness amongst farming families, in addition to providing resources on early signs and symptoms of cancer.</li> <li>• NCCP fund regional Senior Health Promotion and Improvement Officers – Cancer Prevention (SHPIO-CP). 5/6 posts recruited, each delivering early diagnosis of cancer initiatives locally as part of their remit. NCCP provides support, including ongoing education and resources to each of the posts. Across 2024 SPHIO-CPs have delivered education sessions with HSE staff (30), community organisations (118), and the general public (52). They have established partnerships/ collaborations with a range of stakeholders e.g. Men’s and Women’s Sheds, Age Active Ireland, GAA Healthy Clubs, HSE Health and Wellbeing Priority programmes (total n=60) and embedding</li> </ul>
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		initiatives in organisations
<b>Action IIc:</b> Develop and maintain a dedicated ‘ <b>early diagnosis of cancer</b> ’ <b>webpage on the NCCP website</b> , offering evidence-based information and resources for the public/patients	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to maintain NCCP early detection of cancer webpage</li> <li>Create a short url for webpage</li> <li>Develop Early Diagnosis resources (posters, factsheets etc.)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Created and published webpages dedicated to public information <a href="http://www.hse.ie/findcancerearly">www.hse.ie/findcancerearly</a> and <a href="http://www.hse.ie/checkthatcough">www.hse.ie/checkthatcough</a></li> <li>Updated and published dedicated health and social care professional webpage, <a href="http://www.hse.ie/cancerearlydetection">www.hse.ie/cancerearlydetection</a></li> <li>Public awareness resources developed and updated, available to order freely on <a href="http://www.healthpromotion.ie">www.healthpromotion.ie</a></li> <li>Public awareness videos available to use on social media on <a href="#">NCCP youtube channel</a></li> </ul>
<b>Objective III: Support community healthcare professionals (HCPs) to recognise and refer people with signs/symptoms of cancer</b>		
<b>Action IIIa:</b> <b>Identify community HCP barriers</b> to recognising and referring people with signs/symptoms of cancer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with HCP representatives to determine educational requirements and opportunities to address this, e.g. via contributing to Continuing Professional Development (CPD) sessions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Worked with HCP groups to identify educational opportunities, see Action IIIb for details.</li> <li>National Survey on Awareness and beliefs around cancer amongst the Traveller Community includes qualitative data with HCP identifying barriers for this community to recognise and act on potential early signs of cancer</li> </ul>
<b>Action IIIb:</b> Work with stakeholders to <b>design and deliver interventions</b> to address HCP barriers to recognising and referring people with signs/symptoms of cancer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with community HCP stakeholders to develop and deliver interventions, including educational interventions</li> </ul>	<p>Multiple initiatives were developed and delivered to community HCPs in 2024/25. Examples include:</p> <p><b>All HCPs</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Early Diagnosis of Cancer e-learning modules on <a href="http://www.hseland.ie">www.hseland.ie</a> online to all HCPs. 160 completions in 2024</li> </ul> <p><b>GPs:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Dermatological Cancer:</b> Irish College of General Practitioners (ICGP) Community Dermatology educational course for GPs, funded by NCCP provided three modules to GPs in 2024 on skin cancer.</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Gynaecological Cancer:</b> Contributed to ICGP Community Gynaecology Education module. Reviewed and updated online educational module.</li> <li>• <b>Article:</b> Contributed to Forum Magazine article on Bowel screen audit in a general practice published to Forum Magazine in May 2024</li> <li>• <b>ICGP CME Modules:</b> CME small group module on non-specific symptoms of cancer (co-designed by NCCP) was most utilised ICGP small group cpd module in 2023.</li> <li>• <b>Article:</b> Forum Magazine article on Breast Cancer published July 2024 edition.</li> <li>• <b>World Bowel Cancer Awareness Month April 2024:</b> April 2024 Bowel cancer information sheet circulated to all GPs and Healthmail users nationally together with a partner pack on bowel cancer screening produced by NSS.</li> <li>• <b>World Organisation of National Colleges, Academies and Academic Associations of General Practitioners/Family Physicians (WONCA) conference 2024</b> abstract submitted April 2024, titled 'Lung cancer public awareness campaign amongst high-risk population in an urban setting'. Presented at WONCA in September 2024.</li> </ul> <p><b>General Practice Nurses:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Irish General Practice Nurse Educational Association (IGPNEA):</b> April 2024, Bowel cancer information sheet circulated to IGPNEA and Healthmail users nationally together with a partner pack on bowel cancer screening produced by NSS with input from NCCP</li> <li>• <b>Bowel cancer</b> information sheet forwarded to all Practice Nurse Development Co-ordinators to circulate to their members.</li> <li>• <b>IGPNEA Annual Conference:</b> Stand at IGPNEA conference to raise awareness of prevention and early diagnosis of cancer October 11<sup>th</sup> &amp; 12<sup>th</sup> 2024. 200+ Practice Nurses attended conference.</li> <li>• <b>IGPNEA Annual Conference:</b> Presentation on Non-Specific Symptoms of Cancer October 12<sup>th</sup> 2024. 200+ Practice Nurses attended conference.</li> </ul>
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		from event: 95% of attendees agreed that the webinar increased or greatly increased their knowledge, 74% agreed the information provided had 'application in daily life', and 93% stated that they would use the resources provided to them in the webinar.
<b>Action: IIIc:</b> Develop and maintain a dedicated ' <b>early diagnosis of cancer</b> ' webpage on the NCCP website, offering evidence-based information and resources for HCPs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>See Action IIc</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Updated and published dedicated health and social care professional webpage, <a href="http://www.hse.ie/cancerearlydetection">www.hse.ie/cancerearlydetection</a></li> <li>Public awareness resources developed and updated, available for HCPs to order freely on <a href="http://www.healthpromotion.ie">www.healthpromotion.ie</a></li> </ul>
<b>Objective IV: Identify and address system factors that impact timeliness of diagnosis of symptomatic cancer</b>		
<b>Action IVa:</b> <b>Identify health system factors</b> that impact timeliness of diagnosis of symptomatic cancer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with stakeholders, including clinicians, to identify health system barriers to early diagnosis</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NCCP submission to National Radiology Review July 2024, outlining current and anticipate future demand for radiology services to improve early diagnosis of cancer in Ireland.</li> <li>NCCP continued to work with stakeholders to identify system factors that influence timeliness of diagnosis, through forums including the NCCP Early Diagnosis of Symptomatic Cancer Steering Group, the NCCP Evidence and Quality Hub, and Clinical Leads Groups for specific tumour types.</li> </ul>
<b>Action IVb:</b> <b>Work with stakeholders to design and deliver interventions</b> to address health system factors that impact timeliness of diagnosis of symptomatic cancer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with internal and external stakeholders to address system issues impacting timelines of cancer diagnosis, including referral guidelines and pathways</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Members of the Early Diagnosis Function, Community Oncology Division, NCCP, continued to work with internal and external stakeholders to address system issues impacting timelines of cancer diagnosis, including through development of new referral guidelines and pathways and updates to existing guidelines/pathways. Current/ongoing work includes collaborating with NCCP Evidence and Quality Hub on the development of:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Update of Lung Cancer GP Referral Guideline, e-referral form and pathway</li> <li>-Squamous Cell Skin Cancer National GP Referral guideline, e-referral form</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

		and pathway
<b>Action IVc:</b> <b>Identify systemic inequities</b> impacting timeliness of diagnosis of symptomatic cancer for defined patient cohorts and design/contribute to/advocate for interventions towards ensuring equitable service provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• See Actions IVa and IVb</li> <li>• See Action IIa - work to deliver cancer awareness and attitudes research with Irish Travellers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• See actions IVa and IVb</li> <li>• See Action IIa - work to deliver cancer awareness and attitudes research with Irish Travellers</li> </ul>
<b>Objective V: Identify knowledge gaps and undertake research to inform development of early diagnosis initiatives</b>		
<b>Action Va:</b> <b>Identify knowledge gaps</b> relevant to the early diagnosis of cancer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with stakeholders to identify knowledge gaps</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NCCP works with multiple stakeholders, including clinicians and academics, to identify knowledge gaps</li> </ul>
<b>Action Vb:</b> <b>Undertake, commission and support research</b> to address knowledge gaps and inform development and implementation of early diagnosis initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undertake, commission and support research</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Systematic Review of Effectiveness, and cost-effectiveness of public awareness cancer campaigns completed in 2024. Published on NCCP website:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <a href="#">Systematic Review: Interventions to enhance public awareness and timely help-seeking for cancer symptoms, full report, November 2024</a></li> <li>○ <a href="#">Systematic Review: Interventions to enhance public awareness and timely help-seeking for cancer symptoms, infographic, November 2024</a></li> </ul> </li> <li>• NCCP has commissioned RCSI PRiCan Research Group to carry out a scoping</li> </ul>

		<p>review of international primary care databases. Results are expected by Q4 2025</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Epidemiology of early-onset colorectal cancer in Ireland report completed Nov 2024 (Dr Sile Kelly, SpR Public Health)</li> <li>• 'Giving gynaecological cancer a voice in Ireland: The power of collaboration in the Irish Network for Gynaecological Oncology'. Poster presented by INGO at IGCS October 15th 2024.</li> </ul>
<b>Objective VI: Monitor and evaluate the implementation and impact of the NCCP Early Diagnosis of Symptomatic Cancer Plan 2022-2025</b>		
<b>Action VIa:</b> <b>Develop a monitoring and evaluation framework</b> for the NCCP Early Diagnosis of Symptomatic Cancer Plan 2022-2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a monitoring and evaluation framework for the NCCP Early Diagnosis of Symptomatic Cancer Plan 2022-2025</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitoring and evaluation framework will report on delivery of projects under each action area of the Early Diagnosis Plan</li> </ul>
<b>Action VIb:</b> <b>Publish an annual report</b> to update on the implementation and impact of the Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Publish annual implementation report for 2024/25</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2023-2024 Implementation report finalised and published on website <a href="http://www.hse.ie/cancer">www.hse.ie/cancer</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">NCCP Early Diagnosis of Symptomatic Cancer Plan Implementation Report 2023-2024</a></li> </ul>
<b>Action VIc:</b> <b>Incorporate recommendations</b> from annual report into work plan for following year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incorporate recommendations from 2023/24 annual report into work plan</li> <li>• Develop recommendations for 2024/25 report</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incorporated recommendations from 2023/24 report into 2024 workplan</li> <li>• See recommendations below for 2023/25 report</li> </ul>

## Recommendations arising from Implementation Report 2024/25

- Large volume of activity delivered: For 2025/26 aim to strategically identify priority projects.
- **Objective I** – Continue to build network, re-enforcing established networks and identifying opportunities to work with stakeholders.
- **Objective II** – Continue to develop and deliver initiatives to promote public awareness of cancer, taking into account the findings of the Systematic Review of Interventions to Enhance Public Awareness and Timely Help-Seeking for Cancer (2024). Support and co-ordinate with network of SHPIO-CPs to provide targeted initiatives in the community. Utilise learnings from 2024 lung cancer awareness campaign and plan to expand.
- **Objective III** – Identify systems-related and education-related priority actions to support HCPs to achieve earlier diagnosis.
- **Objective IV** – Work with internal and external stakeholders to address systems issues. Ensure NCCP Early Diagnosis Function representation on key stakeholder groups.
- **Objective V** – Deliver research in relation to knowledge and awareness of cancer among Irish Travellers; Work with academic partners to explore knowledge gaps, e.g. in relation to primary care and diagnostic experience of people diagnosed with cancer in Ireland; Ensure NCCP Early Diagnosis Function representation on key groups, e.g. NCCP National Cancer Research Group.
- **Objective VI** – Continue to evaluation work completed and publish 2025/26 implementation report.