

NCCP Early Diagnosis of Symptomatic Cancer Plan 2022-2025

Implementation Report – April 2022/April 2023

Early Diagnosis Function, Community Oncology Division, NCCP:

Dr Heather Burns, Specialist in Public Health Medicine, Public Health Lead for Early Diagnosis

Dr Una Kennedy, GP Advisor to NCCP

Áine Lyng, Cancer Prevention Officer, NCCP

Target Action	2022/23 Target Output	Delivered
Develop and publish an evidence-based strategic Plan/Framework for the Early Diagnosis Function of the Community Oncology Division, NCCP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop Plan • Publish Plan • Agree implementation plan (including workplan for 2022) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NCCP Early Diagnosis of Symptomatic Cancer Plan 2022-2025 developed and published on NCCP webpage (May 2022) - available at www.hse.ie/cancerearlydetection • Webinar delivered to launch the Plan (May 2022) • Implementation Plan agreed • Work plan for 2022 finalised (subject to change)
Objective I: Strategic planning and collaboration		
Action Ia: Constitute an internal NCCP Early Diagnosis of Cancer Working Group to facilitate collaborative working within NCCP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constitute Group • Aim to meet quarterly, at a minimum, and coordinate/ collaborate on early diagnosis initiatives • Minutes of meetings will describe work of internal NCCP ED Working Group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group was constituted, and Terms of Reference agreed, in 2021 • NCCP Early Diagnosis Working Group met on five occasions in 2022 • Multiple early diagnosis projects discussed/advanced
Action Ib:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop evidence-based framework 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Framework developed

<p>Develop a prioritisation framework to guide the prioritisation of cancers for the design and implementation of early diagnosis programmes of work</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use framework to determine which tumour type(s) to focus on initially 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lung cancer determined as initial priority, with additional tumour specific ad-hoc projects as required
<p>Action 1c: Convene an Early Diagnosis of Symptomatic Cancer Steering Group to collaborate in delivery of the NCCP Early Diagnosis of Symptomatic Cancer Plan 2022-2025</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree Group membership/invitees • Convene Group • Draft and agree TOR • Minutes of meeting will describe work of Steering Group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Membership agreed • Steering Group convened • TOR agreed • Steering Group met on two occasions in 2022 • Multiple early diagnosis projects discussed/advanced
<p>Building the network</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build network, nationally and internationally 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NCCP Public Health, including Early Diagnosis Function, regularly engages with key stakeholders including HSE Health & Wellbeing, the National Cancer Registry Ireland, and the National Screening Service. • NCCP Early Diagnosis Function represented on multiple relevant groups including Cervical Cancer Elimination Strategic Group. • Attended Cancer and Primary Care Research International Network (Ca-PRI) Conference (March 2023)
<p>Objective II: Empower people and communities to recognise and act on signs/symptoms of cancer</p>		
<p>Action 1a: Identify national and target population barriers to recognising and acting on signs/symptoms of</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver National Survey of Cancer Awareness & Attitudes • Plan/commence equivalent research with underserved population • Assess the evidence base for 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Survey on Cancer Awareness and Attitudes delivered – published on NCCP website September 2022 – available at www.hse.ie/cancerearlydetection • Data from National Survey analysed, including project undertaken by Dr Celia O’Hare, Specialist Registrar in Public Health Medicine, analysing

<p>cancer</p>	<p>impact/effectiveness of cancer awareness campaigns</p>	<p>sociodemographic disparities in beliefs about cancer in people aged 50 and older. Findings disseminated to multiple stakeholders, including membership of NCCP Early Diagnosis of Cancer Steering Group.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engaged with Pavee Point to commence work to deliver cancer awareness and attitudes research with Irish Travellers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Steering and Working Groups established ○ Literature review undertaken to collate and appraise research amongst Irish Travellers ○ Tender process undertaken and contract awarded to academic institution ○ Work will continue in 2023 • In-house literature review undertaken regarding impact/ effectiveness of cancer awareness campaigns. Results highlight the paucity of evidence for effectiveness of campaigns, particularly in impacting cancer outcomes such as stage at diagnosis and survival. Most impact was observed for multi-pronged, multi-year interventions, e.g. ‘Lung cancer stage-shift following a symptom awareness campaign’, Kennedy et al, Thorax, 2018 – available at https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/29950525/ This highlights the need to consider the most effective strategies for awareness raising and behaviour change, and build the evidence base in this regard.
<p>Action 11b: Work with stakeholders to design and deliver interventions to address barriers to recognising and acting on signs/symptoms of cancer</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner with stakeholders to design and deliver early diagnosis initiatives, including awareness campaigns 	<p>Awareness-raising (national): Multiple awareness-raising initiatives were undertaken by NCCP in 2022/23 - Examples are provided:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social media cancer risk reduction and early detection campaign delivered in collaboration with HSE Communications, Q2-Q4 2022, with paid advertising on Facebook and Instagram and organic (unpaid) content on Twitter. The early detection elements of the campaign aimed to raise awareness of cancer signs/symptoms and prompt timely help-seeking among people aged 50 and older (In Ireland, approximately 86% of invasive cancer cases ex-NMSC occur in people aged 50 and older). The campaign included messaging relevant to multiple tumour types, with new content released on a monthly basis. An analysis undertaken by HSE Communications demonstrated that campaign performance was strong,

		<p>with over 70% of the target audience reached with early detection content on Facebook.</p> <p>A 2023 social media campaign commenced in February 2023, and will run to December 2023, with new content released on a monthly basis.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaboration with Irish Cancer Society - Interview on Ireland AM in relation to breast cancer awareness, signs/symptoms, how to check your breasts (October 2022). • Interview on KCLR radio (Kilkenny & Carlow) on the importance of acting on cancer signs/symptoms (June 2022), available at: https://kclr96fm.com/kclr-live-know-the-signs-and-save-a-life-why-is-it-important-to-act-on-potential-signs-or-symptoms-of-cancer/ <p>Targeted awareness-raising:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborated with HSE National Screening Service to develop an evidence-based resource for service users – ‘Breast cancer prevention and early detection information from BreastCheck’ – available at https://www.screeningservice.ie/publications/Breast-cancer-prevention-and-early-detection-information-for-the-screened-population.pdf • Educational session on breast cancer delivered to Irish Travellers in collaboration with Pavee Point • Presentation delivered to Pavee Point Primary Health Care Workers on Breast Cancer signs symptoms and self-examination • Targeted early detection of cancer resources created for farmers, in collaboration with ‘An Feirm Ground’ • Early Diagnosis resources (posters, factsheets etc.) provided for distribution at the National Ploughing Championships 2022 • Information on early detection of cancer created for The Camogie Association player welfare booklet • Early diagnosis education session provided to Irish Cancer Society (ICS) nurses to support delivery of the ICS ‘Your Health Matters Roadshow’ • Public-facing resources, including ‘know the signs of cancer’ posters and factsheets developed and made available on the NCCP website at www.hse.ie/cancerearlydetection and via www.healthpromotion.ie
--	--	--

		<p>Building the workforce & meeting local need:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> NCCP secured funding for a network of 6 Health Promotion and Improvement Officers – Cancer, within the Health & Wellbeing Division of the HSE. In 2022, the first HPIO – Cancer post was filled with the appointment of Lisa O’Donnell in CHO9. NCCP works closely with the HPIO to determine the needs of the local population and design/deliver cancer risk reduction and early diagnosis initiatives to target cohorts in the community.
<p>Action IIc: Develop and maintain a dedicated ‘early diagnosis of cancer’ webpage on the NCCP website, offering evidence-based information and resources for the public/patients</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to maintain NCCP early detection of cancer webpage Create a short url for webpage Develop Early Diagnosis resources (posters, factsheets etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Early detection webpage in operation Q4 2021 Short URL created January 2022 www.hse.ie/cancerearlydetection Public-facing resources, including ‘know the signs of cancer’ posters and factsheets developed and made available on the NCCP website at www.hse.ie/cancerearlydetection and via www.healthpromotion.ie Early detection of cancer videos for male, female and lung cancer added to web page – created in collaboration with staff of the Dublin City Community Co-operative, including Catherine Heaney, Healthy Communities Project Coordinator
<p>Objective III: Support community healthcare professionals (HCPs) to recognise and refer people with signs/symptoms of cancer</p>		
<p>Action IIIa: Identify community HCP barriers to recognising and referring people with signs/symptoms of cancer</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commission research in relation to community HCP barriers to early detection of lung cancer Work with HCP representatives to determine educational requirements and opportunities to address these, e.g. via contributing to Continuing Professional Development (CPD) sessions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commissioned qualitative research project to explore community HCP barriers to early detection of lung cancer. Report and associated peer-reviewed academic publications are available via the NCCP website under the ‘Published Research’ heading www.hse.ie/cancerearlydetection Worked with HCP groups to identify educational opportunities
<p>Action IIIb:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with community HCP stakeholders to develop and deliver 	<p>Multiple initiatives were developed and delivered to community HCPs in 2022/23. Examples include:</p>

<p>Work with stakeholders to design and deliver interventions to address HCP barriers to recognising and referring people with signs/symptoms of cancer</p>	<p>interventions, including educational interventions</p>	<p>All community HCPs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New eLearning Programme on Early Diagnosis of Cancer for primary and allied healthcare professionals was developed and made available via HSeLand (www.hseland.ie) May 2022. NCCP worked with stakeholders to publicise the Programme among the target audience. A Learning Impact Study was commissioned to assess whether the programme was meeting the needs of the target audience, with results reported in December 2022. In the 7 month period between 10 May 2022 and 15 November 2022, a total of 290 healthcare workers completed the eLearning Programme. Another 72 were still in progress and an additional 184 had enrolled but not started. This gives a total engagement number of 546. Among the 290 people who completed the programme, overall feedback was very positive, with average scores of approximately 4.4 out of 5.0 across a range of metrics, including ‘The programme was relatable and applicable to my role’ (4.3/5.0), ‘Having completed this eLearning programme, I am more knowledgeable about the topics covered’ (4.5/5.0), and ‘I have learned practical skills that I will apply in my area of work’ (4.2/5.0). • Article on prevention and early detection of Melanoma Skin Cancer published in the Medical Independent, July 2022 https://www.medicalindependent.ie/clinical-news/oncology/melanoma-skin-cancer-prevention-and-early-diagnosis/ • Article on cancer prevention and early diagnosis published in Update Oncology & Haematology Journal, Vol 8 Issue 2, 2022. • Multiple articles were drafted and published to highlight the importance of early diagnosis of cancer and the publication of the NCCP Early Diagnosis of Symptomatic Cancer Plan 2022-2025, e.g. article in ‘Health Matters’ (June 2022) https://issuu.com/ashvillemedia/docs/hse_full_issue_links?fr=sYjRmMTQ4NjQyMjQ; Article in HSE Health & Wellbeing newsletter (June 2022) https://email.ezine.ie/t/ViewEmail/t/1D15034D904ABFC32540EF23F30FEDD/2857AAE80445242E2438807772DD75D1?alternativeLink=False
--	---	---

		<p>GPs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NCCP provided funding toward development of skin cancer components of Community Dermatology Module for GPs developed by ICGP. Three modules delivered to GPs annually. In 2022, each module was attended by 120-130 GPs. • Educational session delivered in collaboration with ICGP as part of ICGP Community Gynaecology course, March 2022. • Article on colorectal cancer published in ICGP Forum Magazine, December 2022 https://www.icgp.ie/go/library/forum?spid=D67CC9CB-B9CB-486A-80535EE2DC7C0D8C <p>General Practice Nurses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worked with Irish General Practice Nurses Education Association to include a cancer section on their website, with appropriate resources • Article on early diagnosis of cancer published in World of Irish Nursing and Midwifery (Sept 2022) • Article on early diagnosis of cancer published in General Practice Nurse Magazine (Sept 2022) <p>Pharmacists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Webinar on Men’s Cancers delivered to pharmacists in collaboration with the Irish Institute of Pharmacy (IIOP) • Education session delivered to undergraduate pharmacy students in RCSI • Lung cancer early diagnosis article published in Irish Pharmacy News : https://www.pharmacynewsireland.com/the-role-of-the-pharmacist-in-referring-clients-with-lung-cancer-alarm-signs-and-symptoms/ <p>Other:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education sessions delivered via Tallaght Oncology Nurse Education Programme <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Early Detection of Cancer (April 2022) ○ Cancer Epidemiology, National Cancer Screening Programmes in
--	--	--

		<p>Ireland (September 2022)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early diagnosis education session provided to Irish Cancer Society (ICS) nurses to support delivery of the ICS ‘Your Health Matters Roadshow ‘
<p>Action: IIIc: Develop and maintain a dedicated ‘early diagnosis of cancer’ webpage on the NCCP website, offering evidence-based information and resources for HCPs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See Action IIc 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Webpage created and maintained, includes both public-facing and professional materials www.hse.ie/cancerearlydetection
<p>Objective IV: Identify and address system factors that impact timeliness of diagnosis of symptomatic cancer</p>		
<p>Action Iva: Identify health system factors that impact timeliness of diagnosis of symptomatic cancer</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with stakeholders, including clinicians, to identify health system barriers to early diagnosis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NCCP routinely works 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.
<p>Action IVb: Work with stakeholders to design and deliver interventions to address health system factors that impact timeliness of diagnosis of symptomatic cancer</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan and pilot audit of pathways to lung cancer diagnosis in Ireland • Work with internal and external stakeholders to address system issues impacting timelines of cancer diagnosis, including referral guidelines and pathways 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pilot audit of pathways to lung cancer diagnosis undertaken in collaboration with colleagues in Galway University Hospital. Pilot demonstrated key barriers to completion of a national audit, included issues around access to relevant data, data quality and completeness, and resources to deliver the project. This specific project has been discontinued and consideration has been given as to how the work can be progressed via alternative projects, including development of a primary care cancer research database. • Members of the Early Diagnosis Function, Community Oncology Division, NCCP, routinely 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.
<p>Action IVc: Identify systemic inequities impacting timeliness of diagnosis of symptomatic cancer for defined patient cohorts and design/contribute to/advocate for interventions towards ensuring equitable service provision</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See Actions IVa and IVb • See Action IIa - work to deliver cancer awareness and attitudes research with Irish Travellers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See actions IVa and IVb • See Action IIa - work to deliver cancer awareness and attitudes research with Irish Travellers
<p>Objective V: Identify knowledge gaps and undertake research to inform development of early diagnosis initiatives</p>		
<p>Action Va: Identify knowledge gaps relevant to the early diagnosis of cancer</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with stakeholders to identify knowledge gaps 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NCCP works with multiple stakeholders, including clinicians and academics, to identify knowledge gaps
<p>Action Vb: Undertake, commission and support research to address knowledge gaps and inform development and implementation of early diagnosis initiatives</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake, commission and support research 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See research actions and deliverables reported under Actions IIa and IIIa

Objective VI: Monitor and evaluate the implementation and impact of the NCCP Early Diagnosis of Symptomatic Cancer Plan 2022-2025

<p>Action VIa: Develop a monitoring and evaluation framework for the NCCP Early Diagnosis of Symptomatic Cancer Plan 2022-2025</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a monitoring and evaluation framework for the NCCP Early Diagnosis of Symptomatic Cancer Plan 2022-2025 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring and evaluation framework will report on delivery of projects under each action area of the Early Diagnosis Plan
<p>Action VIb: Publish an annual report to update on the implementation and impact of the Plan</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Publish annual implementation report for 2022/23 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draft report prepared – for publication Q2 2023
<p>Action VIc: Incorporate recommendations from annual report into work plan for following year</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider 2022/23 implementation report; develop recommendations; Incorporate recommendations from 2022/23 annual report into work plan for 2023/24 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See recommendations below

Recommendations arising from Implementation Report 2022/23

- Large volume of activity delivered – need to strategically define annual priority projects; Build capacity for delivery of Early Diagnosis Function.
- **Objective I** – Continue to build network, both nationally and internationally, attend relevant conferences etc.; Identify further opportunities for collaborative working with stakeholders including those working in diagnostics (radiology, endoscopy) and academia.
- **Objective II** – In light of paucity of evidence for impact of cancer awareness campaigns on cancer outcomes, consider how best to deliver

awareness raising/behaviour change initiatives to target cohorts; Build network of HPIOs - Cancer and build capacity within NCCP to support/coordinate the HPIOs.

- **Objective III** – Consider strategic priorities for supporting HCPs to achieve earlier diagnosis – e.g. through addressing systems issues (Objective IV), in addition to providing targeted educational interventions through CPD programmes etc.
- **Objective IV** – Work with internal and external stakeholders to address systems issues, e.g. through inputting to work of NCCP Evidence and Quality Hub in designing/updating referral guidelines and pathways; Ensure NCCP Early Diagnosis Function representation on key stakeholder groups, e.g. HSE Acute Operations Endoscopy Programme Steering Group; Undertake a Needs Assessment to explore options for achieving faster diagnosis in people presenting with non-specific symptoms of cancer in Ireland.
- **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** – Consider impact measures for each project delivered and how these can be captured and reported on.