

Appendix A

Increasing uptake in Breast Screening in Kent and Medway – a Primary Care Guide

Introduction

This guide is aimed at supporting practices and PCNs in their work to improve the uptake of breast screening in their eligible populations.

Breast screening in Kent and Medway is delivered by three units:

- Canterbury – covering the East Kent ICP area. There is one static site at Canterbury Hospital and 3 mobile vans
- Maidstone – covering the West Kent ICP area. There is one static site at Maidstone Hospital and 2 mobile vans
- Medway – covering the DGS and Medway and Swale ICP areas. There is one static unit at Medway Hospital and 3 mobile vans

The vast majority of screening is delivered on vans which move around the area to screen the eligible population in every GP practice once every three years. When the van moves into an area, a number of practices are included in the 'round'. The van stays in an area long enough to offer appointments to the whole eligible population.

The eligible population for breast screening are women aged from 50 years until their 71st birthday. They are screened routinely every 3 years. Trans men with breast tissue are eligible for screening and will be invited if they are registered as women. If they are registered as male they will not be automatically invited because the national system excludes males from the programme. Screening is by appointment only and if patients have any concerns with their appointment, they can contact their local breast screening unit.

The impact of screening in rounds every three years means that

- Women will be invited for their first screening test between the ages of 50 and 53 years
- Women who move into the practice in between rounds may be invited to a van further away or a static site to ensure they don't miss their 3 yearly due date

What you can do at practice level

1. Prior to the screening round as the van is moving into your area

Practices will be informed by the screening unit directly prior to the van moving into their area to invite and screen their eligible population (via the information packs). At this time the practice can undertake the following:

- Identify women within the eligible cohort who are NOT eligible for screening. This will include those who have had double mastectomies. This information should be shared with the unit to avoid causing distress
- Identify women within the eligible cohort who require reasonable adjustments to attend for screening. This could be women with learning disabilities, dementia or physical disabilities who require adjustments to allow them equal opportunity to attend for screening.
- Ensure the entire practice staff are aware and sufficiently informed about the programme to inform or signpost when questions are raised
- Consider displaying promotional material like posters, videos, leaflets in reception, waiting areas and clinical rooms (see links to videos below)
- Consider paying a visit to the van to get familiar with layout to better reassure patients when asked
- Consider sending a text message to women who are eligible and due for screening. The wording used in the text should be clear and accurate to avoid confusion – please refer to the sample text message section below for a template which can be used. It is important that this message is sent only to those between 50 – 71yrs

2. During the screening round

Practices will receive weekly updates via post on screening attendance from the screening unit. The information will be a list of those who attend or DNA their appointment. At this time the practice can undertake the following:

- Send text messages to those who have not attended to encourage attendance or offer a discussion if helpful (see sample text 2 below)
- Update patient records to allow for opportunistic reminding where possible
- Liaise with the unit to highlight any particular access issues, directly or via the Screening and Immunisation Team
- Ensure the entire practice staff are aware and sufficiently informed about the programme to inform or signpost when questions are raised
- Display promotional material like posters, videos, leaflets in reception, waiting areas and clinical rooms (see links to videos below)

3. In between screening rounds

The practice can undertake the following:

- Update patient records (including alerts) with outcomes as communicated by the unit through the weekly GP reports
- Continue to have opportunistic conversations with women to encourage attendance during next round, identify and record barriers to access to communicate to unit in future and address any concerns raised
- Sign post the eligible population to the links below for further information

Sample text messages

Sample text message 1 – prior to the screening round for those who are eligible and due to be invited

“Dear [Name of patient], you may in the coming months receive an invitation letter for breast screening. If you’ve been screened in the last 2yrs, please disregard this. We encourage you to attend; if you don’t wish to or are unable to attend, please inform the breast unit of your reason as this will help to improve the service”.

Sample text message 2 – during screening round for those who DNA

“We have been notified that you did not attend your recent breast screening appointment. If you have since attended please disregard this message. If you haven’t and wish to discuss any concerns with us, please get in touch via [insert email address for your relevant breast screening unit or GP contact number]” **(please do not use the phone number for the breast screening unit in this text message)**

Further information and links

Population Screening Leaflets (includes easy read and picture story) – [Breast screening: information leaflets - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Information for Trans and Non-Binary People - [NHS population screening: information for trans and non-binary people - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

NHS Choices on Breast Screening - [Breast screening \(mammogram\) - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](#)

Kent and Medway Breast Screening Overview Video – <https://vimeo.com/reddoorfilmandmedia/review/707701486/56cad64463>

Breast Screening Posters - [Breast screening: awareness posters - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Contacts

NHSE Kent and Medway Screening and Immunisation Team – phst@nhs.net

Canterbury Breast Screening Unit – ekh-tr.breastscreening@nhs.net **01227 783000**

Maidstone Breast Screening Unit – mtw-tr.bsu@nhs.net **01622 710185**

Medway Breast Screening Unit - met-tr.medwaybreastscreening@nhs.net **01634 825036**

Last updated – 6 March 2024

