

DETECT CANCER EARLY

BREAST SCREENING: COMMUNICATIONS GUIDE

CONTENTS

Background p.2

Key Messages p.2

The Essentials p.2 – 4

- Signposting Women
- Digital Assets
- Primary Care Engagement
- Case Studies

PR Thought Starters p.4 – 6

Communications Checklist p.6

Templates p.7 – 12

- Press Releases
- Suggested Copy

Evaluation p.13 – 14

- Evaluation Grid
- GP Feedback



BACKGROUND

Breast cancer is the most common cancer found in women living in Scotland and remains one of the major causes of death - over 1,000 women die of breast cancer every year.

Breast screening is the best way to detect breast cancer early, as it can detect tiny cancers that women or health professionals could never see or feel. Finding tiny cancers when they are easier to treat means that women diagnosed through screening are more likely to survive breast cancer. It is estimated that breast screening saves around 130 lives every year in Scotland.

All women between 50 and 70 are invited for breast screening every three years but it's their personal choice whether to attend or not.

Recent statistics indicate a decline in the uptake of breast screening in some areas across Scotland. This guide has therefore been pulled together to act as a check-list for local screening centres and teams, when it comes to promoting screening cycles, provide communication suggestions and to ultimately ensure that all women invited for breast screening are receiving the same information, to help them make an informed decision.

KEY MESSAGES

There's a lot of information around breast screening out there so here's a core set of messages that we recommend you use and include where possible for consistency:

- One in nine women in Scotland will be diagnosed with breast cancer in their lifetime
- You're five times more likely to survive breast cancer if it's diagnosed and treated at the earliest stage

- Breast screening can detect tiny tumours before you or your GP can see or feel them, often at the earliest stage
- Be aware of any changes to your breasts between screenings and don't delay in making an appointment with your GP if you spot anything unusual or persistent
- For more information visit www.getcheckedearly.org or call your local breast screening centre.

THE ESSENTIALS

Signposting Women

When signposting women to additional information – where they can find more details – use the following sources:

Online:

For more information on the Scottish Breast Screening Programme, breast screening process or the signs of breast cancer visit:

- www.getcheckedearly.org/breast-cancer
- www.nhsinform.co.uk/screening/breast/

Call:

To speak to someone about your next screening appointment – or to reschedule a time or location that suits you best – call your local breast screening centre on...

South East of Scotland - 0131 537 7400
South West of Scotland - 01294 323 505
West of Scotland - 0141 800 8800
East of Scotland - 01382 425 646
North East of Scotland - 01224 550 570
North of Scotland - 01463 705 416

Digital Assets

There's an array of digital assets available for you to utilise on websites and social media channels you know women visit and

engage with. These can be accessed via www.getcheckedearly.org/resources



There's also a short film showing Elaine C Smith going for her mammogram available for use in this section – consider where this can be placed (TV screens and websites). As well as being available in English, it's also available in Polish and Urdu.

Primary Care Engagement

Pink packs have been developed for you to use when visiting GP surgeries ahead of women in their practice being invited. As well as encouraging them to display and use the materials included – in the surgery and on their website/online channels - there are a few other suggestions you can mention:

- Adding alerts to the clinical system to raise breast screening opportunistically with eligible women.
- Sending a letter from the practice to eligible women – or just when they turn 50 even – outlining their support of the Programme.
- Using reminder phone calls or texts to women invited so they're less likely to not attend or forget.
- Holding an information event in the practice in conjunction with a voluntary sector partner.

As well as engaging eligible women invited, practices can also follow up with women who simply don't attend. There are no set READ codes when coding a patient's response to screening however, agreeing a set for their practice will help ensure all data is captured consistently, which is beneficial when carrying out audits and

reviewing response rates/the effectiveness of interventions adopted.

Case Studies

You may have heard this term used before but what does it mean? Essentially case studies are individuals who have a personal experience of a particular subject matter, in this instance, breast screening.

Using the stories and experiences of women who regularly attend breast screening can connect with others who have been invited, inform them of the process and lead to them reviewing their decision of whether to attend or not. These stories can be shared with media via available social media channels (i.e. your health board's) or face-to-face at information events.



These women don't need to have been diagnosed with breast cancer via screening - they just need to attend screening and be happy to share their experience/reason why they go.

There are a number of ways you can source these stories however experience shows that the most efficient option is briefing the breast screening centre's receptionist, as they meet and greet all women when they arrive and leave.

Explain to them what you're trying to achieve then leave it to them to judge which women they broach the subject with (nobody that's stressed about their appointment or who is being referred for additional tests etc.)

All they need to do is take a note of the details of women happy to be contacted about the possibility of sharing their screening experience (their name and number is fine). At the end of each week, call the women on the list and reassure them that you will only use/place their story if they're fully comfortable with appearing online or in the media. It is a sensitive subject to talk about so it won't be for everyone which is fine. If that's the case, simply thank them for their time.



Here are a few key questions to ask potential case studies:

- Are you married/children/grandchildren?
- Do you work? If so, where?
- Why do you attend screening?
- Do you know anyone that's been affected by breast cancer?
- What would you say to women swaying over whether to attend or not?
- What were you most surprised about when you attended your first appointment (quick process, all female mammographers)?

PR THOUGHT STARTERS

Promoting screening – and informing women of their options - doesn't need to be expensive. Below you'll find some PR ideas and opportunities you should consider for your area.

Picture opportunities (i.e. Screen Stars)

You don't always have to think about drafting a press release to get your point across - a picture paints a thousand words. So, consider what you want to say then think about a picture that captures it. You might need a prop or two but it doesn't have to be costly, for example:

- Source a mini chalk board and get case studies to write why they choose to attend screening (i.e. "I choose to do it so I can see my daughter get married")
- Use staff at the screening centre to bring a new stat/figure to life (if latest figures show four in ten women who are invited for screening in an area attend, line up 10 members of staff and put four in a different coloured top)

The Detect Cancer Early (DCE) team has developed a 'Screen Stars' picture tactic which has attracted media attention both regionally and nationally.

It sees women who regularly attend screening lending their name to a Hollywood Walk of Fame prop (see below), as they encourage others to find out more about breast screening and consider attending, like them. The idea of putting women in the spotlight and making them the star of a different kind of screen (not the 'big screen'), has paid dividends in column inches.

This prop is available for use for free – all that's needed is the name of a woman happy to front it – so get in touch with the DCE team if this is something you'd like to see in your area.



Screening cycle announcement

A template press release has been developed - below - that can be sent to local media covering the area due to be invited for screening, announcing how many women are being called forward. This should ideally go out around the same time as invites drop, or just before. Remember – don't forget about radio. Offer a spokesperson to go into the studio for the benefit of listeners that are unsure of whether to attend or not.

Opinion piece

Opinion pieces are most interesting when there's something new to comment on (i.e. digitalisation of the breast screening service) as people are always keen to know how it will affect them. Alternatively, you can use a calendar hook to make it relevant i.e. Breast Cancer Awareness Month or simply a current screening cycle.

For example, if you're able to externally share how many women have attended their appointment half-way through the cycle you can base an opinion piece on this. This would help give women a sense of collective participation which we know is often well received – they won't feel like

they're alone. This would be most relevant coming from the screening centre's manager or clinical lead.

Backing from local businesses

Many eligible women invited for screening are still in employment so engaging them through their place of work can be effective. You could host an information day, a Q&A session/drop-in with someone from the service or simply ensure information is readily available to them in staff areas. Alternatively, you may want to suggest that the employer sends a letter to eligible employees to say they're supportive of the breast screening programme and reassure women that they're flexible when it comes to them needing to leave work to attend their appointment.

Also think about businesses you know women use – hair salons, beauticians, women's fashion shops etc.

This activity also provides you with a PR hook and fodder. When you have a handful of businesses on board, issue a press release announcing their support in informing those eligible in the area about breast screening. You may want to do a picture opportunity at one, for example a woman in the hairdressers with a pink gown on with the number of women invited in the latest cycle, or getcheckedearly.org URL, on the back.

Please find a template press release below that you can tailor accordingly to your area, depending on the businesses you secure support from.

Piggyback on existing events

Find out what events are coming up in the area and see if there are any opportunities to include breast screening messages, for example having thingymaboobs at place settings/in goody bags, an advert in the programme or speaker/stand opportunities.

Q&A

There are a lot of misconceptions around breast screening so, to ensure women have all the right information, in order for them to make an informed choice, why not consider holding a Q&A session via social media. You will need to pre-promote this for a few weeks, to ensure people know it's happening, however it's cheap and allows women to ask any questions they may otherwise not ask in person.

If you're not comfortable doing this on social media you could host it with a radio station programme you know has a high female audience.

COMMUNICATIONS CHECKLIST

Here's a short check-list for you to ensure you've considered all available channels and routes when it comes to engaging eligible women and promoting an upcoming screening cycle:

Pre-screening Cycle

- Announce the upcoming screening cycle – including how many women will be invited – to local media, using the template press release below.
- Primary care engagement - visit surgeries whose patients are due to be invited for screening and discuss their role in informing eligible women, making the most of the pink packs provided.
- Distribute available DCE assets in venues/locations you know the target audience are and visit (bingo halls, shopping centres, libraries, hairdressers, beauty salons, leisure centres, cafes etc.)
- Use the wealth of template copy available to place in newsletters, intranets, community websites etc.

again, that you know the target audience read and consume.

- If you have quite a few areas close to each other being invited for screening at the one time, and not a lot of media, why not approach a paper and discuss the opportunity of running a partnership.

During Screening Cycle

- Set-up an opinion piece commenting on attendance so far/any other anecdotal feedback that's different and insightful (i.e. is bad weather impacting on women attending or are more women requesting to move their appointment closer to work than normal – not everyone will know they can do this, so use this as a hook).
- Announce local businesses support of the programme, outlining what they're doing to encourage eligible women to consider attending.
- Share the stories of women who choose to attend screening, to encourage others to consider. Don't forget about the Screen Stars prop that can be utilised, or consider another picture opportunity.
- Piggyback on national news stories about breast screening offering comment to local media, where you can weave in where the van is currently screening.

Post Screening Cycle

- Capture a full evaluation of all activity undertaken, noting what worked/didn't so you can improve future plans. Feel free to use the table below as a starter for ten.

If you have any questions on how to source/use case studies effectively, undertake PR activity in your area or access Detect Cancer Early resources please contact Diane.Primrose@gov.scot

TEMPLATES

Press release – announcing the cycle

***Amend as appropriate so all content is accurate**

Press release [insert date]

BREAST SCREENING HITS HOME AS [insert number] WOMEN IN [insert area] INVITED TO ATTEND

Women in [insert area] will be invited to attend breast screening over the coming weeks, as part of a national programme to find breast cancer early and save more lives.

The earlier breast cancer is found, the easier it is to treat, with statistics showing women are five times more likely to survive if it's caught early.

Women aged between 50 and 70 in the area will receive a letter through the post inviting them to attend a mammogram at [insert static centre/mobile unit, location]. The mammogram itself takes around ten minutes and can help pick up tiny cancers that can't be seen or felt, often when they are less advanced. Breast screening saves around 130 lives in Scotland every year.

With the appointment letter comes information on what will happen at the mammogram so those invited have all the facts and feel prepared. It's up to each woman whether she chooses to attend or not.

One in nine women will develop breast cancer in their lifetime - the combination of breast screening and regular checking gives women the best chance of being diagnosed early and surviving breast cancer.

[insert name], from the [insert screening centre] said:

“Breast cancer is the most common cancer in Scottish women, but it is the most treatable if caught early. That's why we're inviting women in [insert area to attend] to come along and take part.

“Some women may feel anxious and nervous about screening – especially if it's their first appointment – but all our mammographers are female and go above and beyond to make women feel comfortable on the day.

“If you decide to come along to your next appointment, I can reassure you that you won't be alone. Most women invited for screening choose to go as it could save their life. Know the facts and don't get scared, get screened.”

Women over 70 are still welcome to go for screening every three years, although will not be automatically invited. For more information visit www.getcheckedearly.org, where you can also see a video of what happens at a screening appointment with Elaine C Smith, or call [insert local screening centre name and number].

- ENDS -

For further information contact [insert name] and [insert number].

Notes for editors:

- Women who have missed an appointment in the last two years can call their regional screening centre on [insert number] to rearrange a time.
- The Scottish Breast Screening Programme is part of a UK-wide programme providing free mammographic screening for breast cancer since 1988 with the aim of reducing deaths from the disease.

Press release – announcing local business support

*Amend as appropriate so all content is accurate

Press Release [insert date]

[insert area] BUSINESSES UNVEIL BREAST SCREENING SUPPORT

[insert number] companies in [insert area] have teamed up with [insert breast screening centre name] to ensure all eligible employees invited for breast screening know the facts.

As well as holding awareness days and informing staff of the benefits and risks of breast screening, employers have reassured women that they can leave work early, or come in late, in order to attend their appointment.

[insert number] women have recently been invited to take part in breast screening in [insert area].

Breast cancer is the most common cancer that affects women in Scotland - around [insert number] are diagnosed in [insert NHS Board area] every year. Early detection is key – you're five times more likely to survive breast cancer when it's detected at an early stage, compared to a late stage.

Breast screening can detect tiny tumours – often at the earliest stage - before they can be seen or felt by a woman or her GP. It saves around 130 lives every year in Scotland.

[insert name] from [insert breast screening centre name] said:

“It's great to see this group of employers leading by example. Breast screening appointments are largely undertaken during office hours mid-week so this reassurance and support could well result in more women attending.

“Many women also don't realise they can move their screening appointment to nearer their place of work, rather than home, so it's a better fit with their everyday life. All they need to do is give us a call and we can work round what's best and easiest for them.”

All women between 50 and 70 are invited for breast screening every three years. However, due to the three year cycle of the screening programme, women may not receive their first invite until they're nearly 53.

As well as knowing the facts about screening – so a woman can make an informed choice of whether to attend or not – the importance of regularly checking their breasts for any changes is also being stressed. Only then does a woman have the best chance of being diagnosed early and surviving breast cancer.

Women over 70 are still welcome to go for screening every three years, although will not be automatically invited. For more information on breast screening or the common signs of breast cancer, visit www.getcheckedearly.org To discuss your next appointment, call (insert breast screening centre name) on (insert number).

-ENDS-

For further information contact [insert name] and [insert number].

Notes for editors:

- Women who have missed an appointment in the last two years can call their regional screening centre on [insert number] to rearrange a time.
- The Scottish Breast Screening Programme is part of a UK-wide programme providing free mammographic screening for breast cancer since 1988 with the aim of reducing deaths from the disease.

Template copy – short

BREAST SCREENING – DO YOU KNOW THE FACTS?

Women aged between 50 and 70 in (insert area) are currently being invited to attend breast screening. It's up to a woman whether she attends or not however, most invited tend to go, so you won't be alone. To help you make your decision, know the facts. For example, did you know:

- One in nine women in Scotland will be diagnosed with breast cancer in their lifetime
- You're five times more likely to survive breast cancer if it's diagnosed and treated at the earliest stage
- Breast screening can detect tiny tumours before you or your GP can see or feel them, often at the earliest stage
- However, mammograms do not find all cancers
- There is a possibility of being diagnosed with a cancer that may not otherwise cause you harm (it may not grow or develop) so you may have to make some difficult decisions about treatment
- All mammograms are done by female mammographers, none are male
- Your breast screening appointment will usually take no more than half an hour and the mammogram itself only takes around ten minutes and could save your life.

As well as regularly attending screening, it's important to continue to check your breasts for any changes. Only then do you have the best chance of being diagnosed early and surviving breast cancer.

To find out more about breast screening and know the signs of breast cancer visit getcheckedearly.org

To speak to someone about your next appointment, or to rearrange for a time/location that suits you best, call your local screening centre on (insert number).

Don't get scared, get screened.

Template copy – long

BREAST SCREENING SAVES LIVES

All women aged between 50 and 70 are invited for breast screening every three years - (insert number) of women in (insert area) are currently being invited.

1 in 9 women in Scotland will develop breast cancer but, if found early enough, it is treatable. In fact, you're five times more likely to survive breast cancer if it's caught in its earliest stage.

Breast screening alone saves around 130 lives every year in Scotland, helping pick up tiny cancers that can't be seen or felt, often when they are less advanced.

As with any screening programme, there are risks as well as benefits to taking part however, most women invited choose to go so you won't be alone. Like, (insert name) from (insert area). She regularly attends breast screening and is encouraging others to consider their decision: *(please amend the following quote depending on who it's attributed to)*

"When my first breast screening invite came through the door I didn't quite know what to think. You don't get to my age without hearing and reading lots about breast cancer and the pros and cons of mammograms. But, at the end of the day I thought it's better to be safe than sorry – yes, it's not the most comfortable few minutes of your life but it could find cancer early. Need I say more."

As well as regularly attending screening appointments, it's important to continue to check your breasts for any changes. Only then do you have the best chance of being diagnosed early and surviving breast cancer.

If you do notice any changes in your breasts, it's important to see your GP. There's no need to feel embarrassed - your doctor is there to help you but if you would prefer, you can request to be seen by a female doctor or practice nurse. You could even take a friend along with you - the most important thing is to get checked.

(insert name), said:

"Breast cancer is the most common cancer for women in Scotland but more people are surviving than ever before thanks to earlier detection, research breakthroughs and treatment advances. All women should know the common signs – other than lumps – to be aware of and seriously consider attending screening to give them the best chance of beating the disease. Cancer isn't what it used to be but early detection is key so don't get scared, get screened."

For more information visit getcheckedearly.org

To speak to someone about your next breast screening appointment, or to rearrange for a time/location that suits you best, call your local screening centre on (insert number).

EVALUATION

Evaluation Grid

While uptake figures will be a key metric to measure success, here are some additional points to keep note of as you go about your promotional activity – flesh this out where possible:

Key Metric	Result	Comments/anecdotal feedback & notes
PR: number of press releases issued		
PR: opinion pieces placed		
PR: value of space secured (media will be able to provide you with this)		
PR: reach/audience figures (media again will be able to provide you with this - it's dependant on the positioning of the piece(s) and the day it runs on)		
Volume of assets disseminated (leaflets, posters, thingymaboobs) and where worked best/worst		
Number of locations the Elaine C Smith film was placed (if it's being pulled through from YouTube we can monitor how many views it received on particular days)		
Number of local business supporters secured (include the number of eligible employees engaged, activity undertaken)		
Number of case studies recruited		
Case studies placed/ used externally		
Events attended		
GP practices visited		
Number of questions received for any Q&A activity		

GP Feedback

It's essential to capture all comments and feedback from practices you visit/engage with around screening cycles. This will prove useful for the next time you visit the area while also helping other teams - sharing learnings that they too could also try/adopt in their area.

Here are a few key questions to ask. We suggest you fill out one sheet for each GP practice, and keep it on file.

GP practice name:

Date of screening cycle (beginning and end):

Was there a mobile unit in the area?

Number of women invited:

Previous activity/promotion undertaken with eligible women invited (if any):

Activity/promotion undertaken at this latest phase of screening?

What materials did you use from the breast screening pack provided?

What one thing worked best?

What one thing did you think was missing in the pack that you'd find useful?

What one thing are you going to do differently the next time women from your practice are invited to screen?

DON'T GET SCARED, GET CHECKED

For more information on anything in this document
please contact Diane.Primrose@gov.scot