

**National Screening Service (NSS) update – March 2023**

**April is Bowel Cancer Awareness Month (BCAM)**

"Put it by the loo, don't put it off" is the key message for the first burst of activity of this year's annual Bowel Cancer Awareness Month campaign, which starts on Saturday 1 April. Approximately 20% of people who accept their invitation for screening, and receive a test, don't complete it. The campaign seeks to address this by motivating people to place their test kit close to the toilet when it arrives, as a regular reminder.

Through an extensive social media, press, stakeholder engagement, and advertising campaign, we will support people throughout the month to make a positive choice to protect their own health.

You can support our campaign by sharing our key messages when the opportunity arises, and by interacting with our online content on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).

We will also publish blogs during the month. The first is one is titled *The ins and outs and ups and downs of a colonoscopy*, by Advanced Nurse Practitioner Deirdre Clune. It can be viewed in the News section of our new-look website ([screeningservice.ie](http://screeningservice.ie)), by clicking [here](#).

**The Coombe Hospital pauses HPV and cytology sample processing**

The Coombe Hospital has paused HPV and cytology sample processing for CervicalCheck while it completes its final accreditation documentation, as required by the Irish National Accreditation Board. During the pause, all CervicalCheck samples are being tested in Quest Diagnostics Inc. in the USA. Sampletakers can continue to send their samples to the programme in the usual way, and women and their GPs will receive their CervicalCheck results in the same way, and within the usual timeframe. For more information, please see the News section of [screeningservice.ie](http://screeningservice.ie), [here](#).

**Successful campaign to mark HPV Awareness Day**

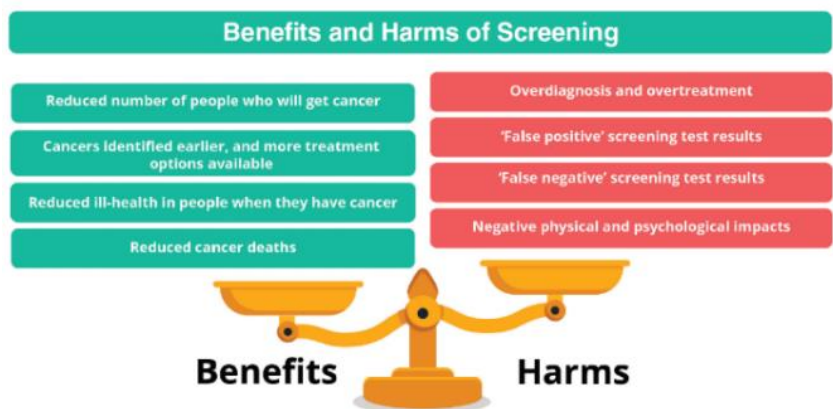
Expert voices from the NSS Public Health team, CervicalCheck programme and the National Cervical Screening Laboratory (NCSL) came together to answer common questions about HPV for World HPV Awareness Day on March 4. CervicalCheck Clinical Director Professor Nóirín Russell and CervicalCheck Primary Care Clinical Advisor Dr Sarah Fitzgibbon were quoted in articles in the [Irish Examiner](#) and [Irish Independent](#), alongside NSS Specialist in Public Health Medicine Dr Laura Heavey, and NCSL Interim Director Dr Cillian De Gascun.

We have published a blog that explains some of the most-asked questions about HPV and cervical cancer, such as: What is HPV and who can get it? You can read the blog [here](#).

**Visual guides to help community level engagement**

We have created three new visual guides for health and social care professionals, and community workers, to help them in their work delivering the screening message to their respective communities.

The guides are the work of the NSS Public Health department and are titled: *Benefits and Harms of Screening* (see right); *What are cancer screening programmes?*; and *The Screening Pathway*. If you would like to order them, please email [health.promotion@screeningservice.ie](mailto:health.promotion@screeningservice.ie)



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](mailto:info@screeningservice.ie) [www.screeningservice.ie](http://www.screeningservice.ie)

### NSS joins the conversation on Twitter

The NSS is delighted to announce the launch of our new Twitter page, [@NSShse](https://twitter.com/NSShse). We will use the platform to connect and engage with people online, improve communications with our stakeholders, and broadcast and highlight the activities of the NSS to our followers. Our conversations will be driven by the central message of our new strategy - **#ChooseScreening**.

### Endoscopy services following Wexford General Hospital fire

BowelScreen endoscopy services have resumed at Wexford General Hospital following the recent fire. The NSS would like to acknowledge the huge effort by hospital management, the endoscopy team, and in particular Advance Nurse Practitioner Debbie Stammers, to ensure BowelScreen services resumed as quickly as possible and with minimal interruption for BowelScreen participants.

### Cervical Cancer Elimination Strategic Group holds inaugural meeting

The Cervical Cancer Elimination Strategic Group held its first meeting on 3 March to discuss the ongoing work to eliminate cervical cancer as a public health problem in Ireland.

Chaired by NSS Director of Public Health Dr Caroline Mason Mohan, the group includes senior staff from the NSS and other key partners including the National Immunisation Office (NIO), National



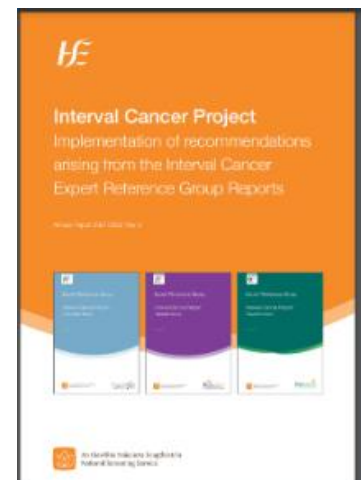
Cancer Control Programme, Department of Health, and National Cancer Registry Ireland (NCRI); as well as representatives from the 221+ Patient Support Group, the Marie Keating Foundation, and Patient and

Public Partnership Representatives.

At the meeting, from left: Dr Caroline Mason Mohan; NIO Director Dr Lucy Jessop; NSS Specialist in Public Health Medicine Dr Laura Heavey; Director of the NCRI Dr Deirdre Murray; and CervicalCheck Primary Care Clinical Advisor Dr Sarah Fitzgibbon.

### In other news this month...

The NSS has published *Interval Cancer Project: Implementation of recommendations arising from the Interval Cancer Expert Reference Group Reports; Annual Report 2021-2022 Year 2*. The report outlines the substantive progress made during the second year of implementing the recommendations arising from the 2020 Expert Reference Groups' interval cancer reports. The report is available for review and download in the Publications part of our new-look website ([screeningservice.ie](https://screeningservice.ie)), [here](#).



We value your feedback. Please contact us with your questions or suggestions at: [communications@screeningservice.ie](mailto:communications@screeningservice.ie).

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