



**HEALTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE –
WEDNESDAY 14 JUNE 2023**

**QUESTIONS SUBMITTED UNDER STANDING ORDER 7(3) and
(5)**

The following questions are to be put to the Chairman of the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Questions by Mrs. Amanda Hack CC:

There was a report on screening that came to Health Scrutiny last June and 12 months on I have a few follow up questions:

<https://politics.leics.gov.uk/documents/s169502/Screening%20Report%20HOSC%20150622%20V2.pdf>

Breast Screening

1. The report indicated that Breast Screening was expected to report as recovered in July 2022. Was this target met?
2. Have all of the community locations that were in existence prior to the Pandemic for Breast Screening been re-established? If not which ones have not returned?
3. What % of women taking up the opportunity to attend breast screening, are attending?
4. Are there areas of the County where take up of breast screening is low?
5. In addition, Breast Cancer screening (as well as Cervical Cancer coverage) was highlighted to have declined for 5 months in the most recent performance report sent to Health Scrutiny in March, what work has been done to improve screening rates?

Bowel Screening

6. The report highlighted that there was a change in age for screening to start from 50 rather than 56 and that this objective would be achieved by August 2022, was this key date met?
7. In light of Bowel Screening changing to 50, what has been the take up in this age category?

Reply by the Chairman:

I have forwarded your questions to NHS England who are responsible for commissioning the National Screening Programmes and they have provided me with the following answers:

Breast Screening

1. The Breast Screening service was able to recover in June 2022, which meant it had cleared the backlog that that built up because of the Covid-19 pandemic. In addition to this achievement, of the screening round length – women called for their repeat screening within 36 months of their previous screen - is over 97% - this is the other measure of recovery and is linked to patients being invited in a timely manner.
2. The programme operates on a 3-year screening cycle and calls women based on the GP they are registered with – this means that the mobile vans will be located in the most appropriate locations for the population who are being called at that time. Now that the service is fully up and running again, all available locations will be used for screening. In addition to this the programme has received additional resources for an additional new mobile screening unit to be brought online from October 2023 with locations still to be determined.
3. The most recent data is to the end of March 2023 and that figure was 61.7% uptake for the programme, which is an improvement on previously reported figures.
4. The latest available data we have access to at lower tier local authority data is from October 2022 – this indicates uptake at the following levels:
 - Oadby and Wigston 62.8%
 - Hinkley and Bosworth 66.6%
 - North West Leicestershire 66.7%
 - Charnwood 67.3%
 - Harborough 68.9%
 - Blaby 69.9%
 - Melton 72.9%

This information would indicate that Oadby & Wigston has a lower rate than other areas in the County, but if we compare this to Leicester City which was at 44.4% for that period then the position does not seem to be a cause for concern. The nationally derived achievable standard is 70% and work is ongoing locally and with national support/focus to increase uptake.
5. Uptake rates for a number of screening programmes is challenging and this is often replicated across England. Both screening programmes highlighted fully participate in the national awareness weeks that take place annually and continue to constantly monitor uptake and look at ways of targeting areas of declining uptake. Examples of this are a targeted campaign to highlight the importance of breast screening for people with a learning disability and additional access for cervical screening via sexual health clinics and targeting areas with low uptake.

Bowel Screening

6. The reduction in the age for the eligibility for bowel screening is being phased over a 4-year period, with this being completed by March 2025. The August 2022 date was for 58-year-olds to be introduced into the programme, however due to ensuring that the service was in a position to take on these additional patients the actual go live date was the 17 October 2022. 54-year-olds will be eligible to be part of the programme this year and for Leicestershire the plan is that this will commence in September / October 2023 if not earlier.
7. The most recent available data is up to quarter 4 for the 2022/23 financial year – end of March 2023. This shows the uptake for the original age cohort of 60–74-year-olds at 67.48%, the 56-year-olds at 58.72% and for the 58-year-olds this is at 54.97%. The trend of a reduction in uptake as the age cohorts are being rolled out is being seen across England. It is the view that this will continue as the reduction in age to 50 progresses and will be monitored closely.

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