

Improving cancer screening
access and participation
for people experiencing
homelessness



North Central London
stakeholder toolkit



**YOUR
HEALTH
FIRST**



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What is Your Health First all about?

Your Health First is a communications campaign within a wider project to improve access and participation into the three national cancer screening programmes (bowel, breast and cervical) for people experiencing homelessness (PEH).

The activities are taking place across the North Central London boroughs of Barnet, Camden, Enfield, Haringey and Islington.

The campaign also aims to raise the importance of being registered with a GP and/or keeping contact details up to date in order to be invited for screening.

- Key workers play a vital role in helping PEH know they have the same rights and access to cancer screening as anyone else.
- Many people experiencing homelessness find information about the cancer screening process unclear, or they may be nervous about doing a test or going for an appointment, or screening may seem unrelatable compared to other life problems.
- As a trusted intermediaries, key workers can help facilitate discussions about cancer screening with PEH, and reassure them that screening is quick, easy and can save lives.

NCL Campaign timeline:

w/c 9th September – 10th October 2024

How Your Health First was developed

In spring 2024 Claremont spoke with 23 people experiencing homelessness at a day centre and two hostels in North Central London.

They also carried out 9 interviews with practitioners who work at the forefront of helping people experiencing homelessness.

Claremont listened to their stories, experiences and concerns around accessing healthcare services and cancer screening. They asked them where cancer screening sits in their day to day lives, how likely they are to attend, and how they would like to receive information.

The core approach of Your Health First reflects three main insights:

1. **Need for clear information** – Provide pragmatic information in a concise, jargon-free way
2. **Power of peer-to-peer** – Work with trusted intermediaries and peers to share messages
3. **Fatalism, fear and a full plate** – We need to provide reassurance about the process and use real life, honest case studies

Your Health First campaign toolkit provides a selection of materials that will help key workers create moments, opportunities and prompts for talking about cancer screening. The tone of these campaign materials is designed to be reassuring, empathetic and direct. The materials have been developed so that messages continue to be visible beyond the campaign period.

Messaging guidance

These are key takeaway messages we want key workers to communicate through the campaign.

We would like key workers to feel equipped to use this information in conversations too.

Step 1 – Get registered

Keep your contact details up to date with your GP practice, so you'll get invited for screening every 2–5 years depending on whether it's for cervical, breast or bowel cancer screening.



Step 2 – Get screened

Depending on the type of screening, you'll be sent a test kit with instructions or information about having an appointment at your GP surgery or local screening site.



Step 3 – Get your results

You will usually receive results in the post within 2 weeks. Most screening tests find no problems, but if follow up tests are needed, your letter will explain the next steps.



How to register with a GP

People need to be registered with a GP surgery to access a screening (step 1 & 3).

Key workers can help their client(s) to download the family doctor services registration form (GMS1), fill it out by hand, and hand it into the GP surgery:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/gms1>.

Everyone has the right to access healthcare.

Their clients **do not need ID or a fixed address** to register with a GP and their **immigration status does not matter**.

It is important that the GP has accurate information about their client(s), in particular:

- full name
- date of birth
- gender
- contact details e.g. mobile number and an agreed address for their health letters to go to e.g. care of (c/o) address.

The cancer screening invitations will be in a letter sent to the address your client has provided to their GP surgery.

Further guidance on [how to register with a GP](#).

Cancer screening programme summary

The following eligibility criteria apply to each type of cancer screening:

Breast

Who? Anyone registered as female with their GP aged 50-71*

When? Every three years

Where? various screening sites

London Breast Screening Service

Hub number: 020 3758 2024



Bowel

Who? Everyone aged 54-74*
(reducing to age 50 by March 2025)

When? Every two years

Where? In your own space
(access to toilet required)

Bowel Cancer Screening Programme

Hub number: 0800 7070 6060



Cervical

Who? Women and people with a cervix aged 25-64

When? Every three years from 25-49; every five years from 50-64

Where? GP practice and some sexual health services



*Breast and bowel cancer screening can be requested beyond the age criteria

Downloadable poster – typographic



Three simple steps to access free NHS cancer screening:

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You can find out more at smallc.org.uk

Downloadable poster – testimonial-led



“ I attended my cervical screening for my own sake – I want to know what’s happening to my body. It gave me relief.”

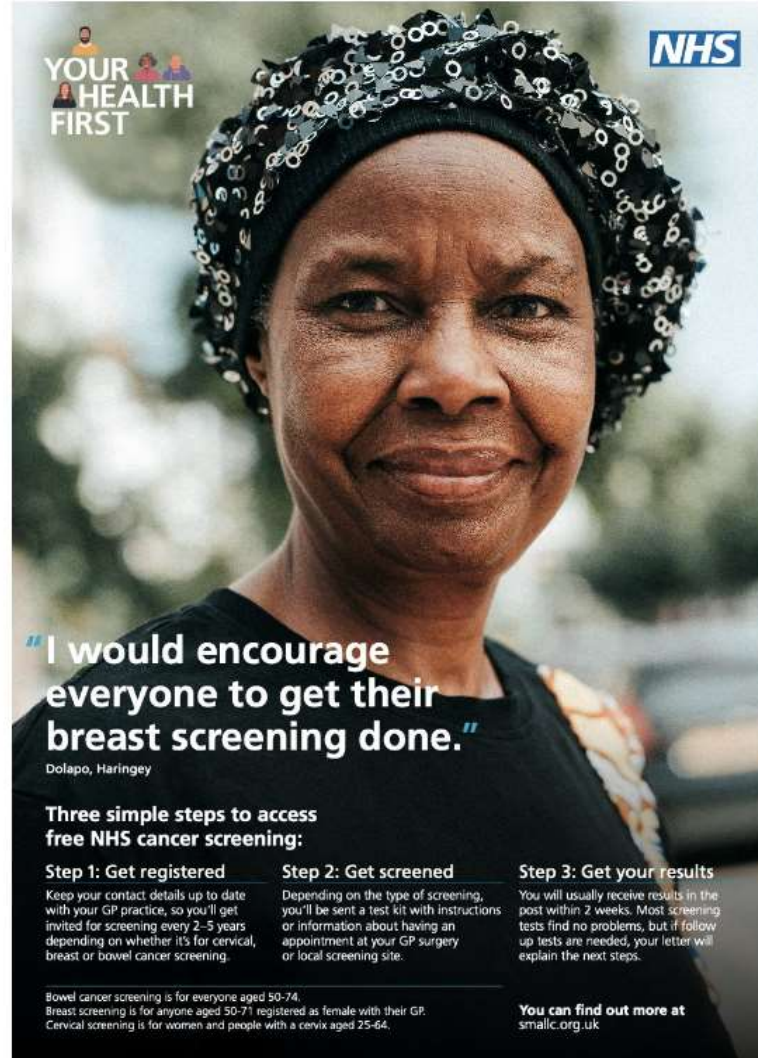

Joana, Islington

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Bowel cancer screening is for everyone aged 50-74.
Breast screening is for anyone aged 50-71 registered as female with their GP.
Cervical screening is for women and people with a cervix aged 25-64.



“ I would encourage everyone to get their breast screening done.”

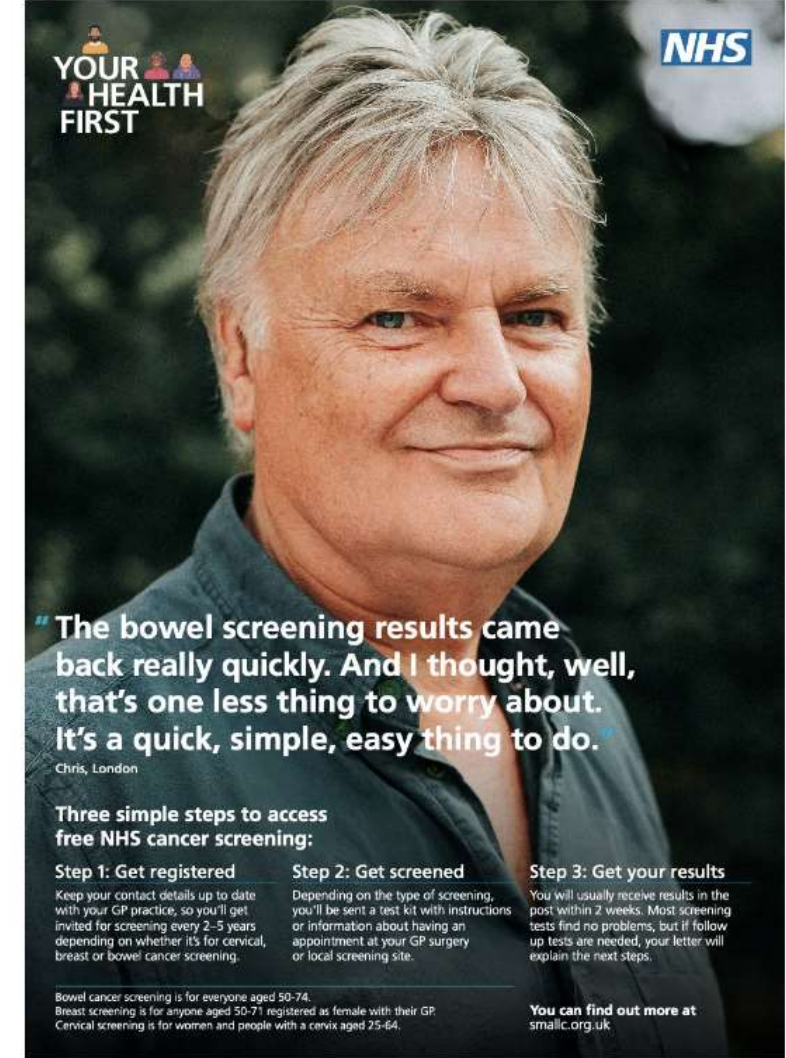

Dolapo, Haringey

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Chris, London

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Z-cards

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Screening was quick and easy – and a weight off my mind once it was done.



smallc.org.uk

Breast screening:

Breast screening is for anyone aged 50–71 registered as female with their GP, every three years. For more information call the NHS London breast screening hub on 020 3758 2024.



Bowel cancer screening:

The NHS offers bowel cancer screening to everyone aged 50–74, every two years. For more information call the free NHS bowel cancer screening helpline on 0800 707 6060.



Cervical screening:

The NHS offers cervical cancer screening to women and people with a cervix aged 25–64, every three years from 25–49 and every five years from 50–64. For more information call or visit your GP or nearest sexual health service that offers cervical screening.



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Chris, London



Mugs



Campaign communications

We're creating pavement art

The pavement art will be a version of the Your Health First logo. We are strategically placing the pavement art outside Mulberry Junction, a well-known day centre in Haringey before service-users enter the building, to remind them that their health matters in the community and create a sense of connectedness between the individual and the NHS.

We'll be capturing a timelapse film of this and sharing with everyone to use across social media platforms.

Media relations

There will be a press release for London-wide and local media.

Social Media

There will be social media posts using our messaging, and images of the materials created. The hashtag will be #YourHealthFirst

Frequently asked questions

Bowel cancer screening

Bowel cancer screening
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Who is eligible for bowel cancer screening?
Everyone aged 60 to 74 who is registered with a GP and lives in England is automatically sent a free NHS bowel cancer screening kit every two years. Londoners who were 50 after 31 March 2021 or 58 after 15 May 2022 are now also included. By April 2025, it will be for everyone aged 50 to 74 in England.

I am over 75 and I want to use a bowel cancer screening kit. What should I do?
If you are 75 or over, you can ask for a free NHS bowel cancer screening kit every two years by phoning the free bowel screening helpline: 0800 707 9060.

Why won't people under 50 get bowel cancer screening?
By April 2025, free NHS bowel cancer screening kits will be sent every two years to everyone aged 50 to 74 who is registered with a GP and lives in England. Although people of any age can get bowel cancer, more than 9 out of 10 cases are in people aged 50 and over.

It is important for everyone, whatever their age, to be aware of bowel cancer symptoms and to contact a GP if they have these symptoms for three weeks or more:

I don't have any symptoms. Do I still need to complete the bowel cancer screening kit?
Even if you don't have any symptoms of bowel cancer, you should still complete the home testing kit when you receive it. In the past, bowel cancer screening can identify bowel cancer at an early stage when it is much easier to treat and can prevent cancer from developing.

How can I take part in bowel cancer screening?
You need to be registered with a GP to take part in screening. Everyone has the right to access healthcare. You do not need ID or a fixed address to register with a GP and your immigration status does not matter.

It is important that the GP has accurate information about you, in particular full name, date of birth, gender and contact details (e.g. mobile number and an agreed address for your health letters to go to).

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to order a free NHS

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g is supplied. No stamp

ending off your kit.

I am accessible what to

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lower (SP), you can

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6060

ing benefits and risks?

Bowel cancer screening - An easy read guide
assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/646d3c24515700136f01842823.04.17_rhs-bowel-screening_FT_EasyRead-Leaflet-Web4cc.pdf

Breast screening

Breast Screening
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Breast cancer is the most common cancer in the UK, and 55,920 people are diagnosed with it every year (Cancer Research UK, 2018).

What is breast cancer?
Breast cancer is a condition where cells in the breast grow and reproduce uncontrollably. The cancerous cells can invade and destroy surrounding healthy tissue, including organs. Cancer sometimes begins in one part of the body before spreading to other areas (metastasis).

Can a healthy lifestyle reduce the risk of developing breast cancer?
23% of breast cancers are preventable (Cancer Research UK, 2018), which means by making healthy choices you can reduce your risk of developing a breast cancer. This includes: maintaining a healthy weight, avoiding drinking alcohol, exercising regularly and having a low intake of saturated fat.

What is breast awareness?
Breast awareness is getting to know what looks and feels normal for you, so that you can confidently spot any changes. People of any age or gender can develop breast cancer, so it is important for everyone to practice breast awareness. There is no specific technique, but you should make sure to feel the entire breast, under the arm, and all the way up to the collar bone. You should also look at your breasts and chest to see if you can see any changes. If you notice any unusual changes, you should tell your GP.

What is the NHS five-point code?
The NHS five-point code explains how you can look after your breast health:

1. Know what's normal for you
2. Look at your breasts and feel them
3. Know what changes to look for
4. Report any changes to a GP without delay
5. Attend routine screening if you're aged 50 to 70

Who can have breast screening?
Anyone registered with a GP as female and between the ages of 50 and 71 will be invited for NHS breast screening every three years, and their first invite will arrive before their 52 birthday. Women over 71 will still offer every three years by calling the helpline to make an appointment (see details on the next page).

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easier to treat.

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our breast guide

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NHS Easy guide to breast screening
assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/116056/Nhs_easy_guide_to_breast_screening_june23.pdf

Breast Cancer Now: Touch, look, check video
www.youtube.com/watch?v=talLx02YafE

Cervical screening

Cervical screening
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is cervical screening?
Cervical screening is a free health test available on the NHS as part of the national cervical screening program. It helps prevent cervical cancer. A nurse takes a specimen and a small brush to take a sample of cells from the cervix that are sent to a laboratory and tested. It usually only takes a few minutes.

Who is eligible for cervical screening?
Anyone registered as female with a GP between the ages of 25-65. Invitations are sent every three years between the ages of 25-49, and then every five years until the age of 64. You may get your first invitation as late as 8 months before you turn 25.

How do I book a test?
As long as you are registered as female with a GP then you will be invited automatically when you are eligible. This may be by letter or text message. You do not need to wait for an invitation if you missed your last cervical screening. If you think you may be eligible for screening but have not been invited, speak with your GP.

Where do I go for cervical screening?
Cervical screening usually takes place at the GP. You can book an appointment online, use the phone or on the NHS app. Some sexual health clinics and walk-in services also offer cervical screening. There are also specialist services available for trans and non-binary people to have their cervical screening. It is up to you when you have your cervical screening.

What are the symptoms of cervical cancer?
In most cases, unexplained vaginal bleeding is the first symptom of cervical cancer. This may occur between monthly periods, during or after sex, or after the menopause. Other symptoms of cervical

Can cervical screening prevent cancer before it starts?
There's why it is important to attend your screening, even if nothing is wrong.

Does cervical screening hurt?
Everyone's experience of cervical screening is different. For most people the procedure is painless but for some it can feel uncomfortable. Some people experience discomfort when the speculum is inserted. Some people experience a mild stinging sensation while the sample is being taken - which

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**If cervical screening
What should I do?**
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had a bad experience before,
read anything that makes the
along the person doing the test
to give you the right support.
If you don't feel comfortable
by writing to us.

**Sexually assaulted in
it should I do?**
need sexual therapy, you may
experience worry or fear or you
avoided. You may also deny if
these feelings and reactions
physically no pressure to
the appointment. But if
it is, it might be helpful to
if they are aware, they may
how to help you through the

What should I do?

0300 8060

Cervical screening: leaflet for women considering screening - available in different languages
www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/116056/Nhs_easy_guide_to_breast_screening_june23.pdf

NHS Cervical screening
www.nhs.uk/conditions/cervical-screening

Further information

The Your Health First campaign can be accessed via www.smallc.org.uk

Information on screening for people experiencing homelessness, FAQs and additional materials can be accessed via the [cancer screening resource directory](#).

If you have any queries, please email:

uclh.nclcanceralliance@nhs.net

