

GP Communications for Breast Screening – South East London

The *Five Year Cancer Commissioning Strategy for London* noted how the city has the lowest coverage and uptake for cancer screening. It aims to increase the coverage, uptake and equity of screening (particularly breast screening as a priority) by:

☑ Increasing public awareness and engagement with cancer screening programmes.

BENEFITS:

1. Early Detection better for patients and their GPs

2. 85.4% of screen detected cancers are stage 1 &2

62% screen detected cancer is stage 1 with 5 year survival 99.1%

23.4 % screen detected cancers are stage 2 with 87.6% 5 year survival

*Lower uptake and survival in lower in areas of deprivation and BAME especially black African community.

Due to the pandemic, routine breast screening invitations were paused from the end of March to mid-September. Due to the backlog of invitations caused by the pandemic and the capacity of London's Breast Screening Hub (which manages the administrative process of sending invitations and booking appointments), the following changes have been made:

- 1) Patients will **no longer be sent timed appointment invitations**. Instead, they will be asked to contact the Breast Screening Hub to book an appointment. This is called an **open invitation**. This was a decision taken nationally by the Breast Screening Programme to optimise the reduced capacity at each screening centre (due to IPC measures).
- 2) Invitations are sent out from the Breast Screening Hub in batches to each South East London (SEL) borough(s).

The move to open invitations aims to reduce the number of DNAs to the service, but is likely to significantly reduce screening uptake and coverage, especially in hard-to-reach groups in SEL, due to women having to book their own appointment rather than being sent a timed appointment.

We are asking PCNs to engage with their eligible screening cohorts by:

1. Reinforcing the benefits of screening and that it is safe to come to screening - infection control procedures adopted to make a safe environment.
2. Making Every Contact Count – GP/nurse informs and encourages all women over 52 years and 11 months that they may receive an invitation and they should call and make an appointment. Attempt to make every conversation into an actual appointment for screening. The hub contact number is **0203 758 2024**.
3. Identifying any patients who may require support to make an appointment and inform the screening service of any invitees that they should approach (**for example patients where English is not their first language or they have a learning or physical disability**). Email **Gerry Kirby, Programme manager** (geraldine.kirby@nhs.net) and use the invitation schedule below to search for patients due for screening.
4. Displaying posters and leaflets in waiting areas and on CCG/GP websites.
5. Ensure that women who are due /overdue for screening and women over 71 years are aware that they can self-refer themselves for a screening appointment.