

Cancer Screening Survey

Schedule

Timeline	
April to June	<input type="checkbox"/> Surveyed Patients at GP surgery <input type="checkbox"/> Focus group discussion at Bristol Court Extra Care Housing <input type="checkbox"/> Focus group discussion with VIP lunch club at Royal British Legion
Areas covered	
GP surgeries Care home/assisted living VIP lunch club for the visually impaired	<input type="checkbox"/> Cranford <input type="checkbox"/> Heston <input type="checkbox"/> Hounslow <input type="checkbox"/> Feltham
Major themes	
Awareness Invitation Barriers Suggestions/Encouragement Stories/Comments	<input type="checkbox"/> Are you aware about the screening programs? <input type="checkbox"/> Have you ever been invited for screening? <input type="checkbox"/> What do you think are the potential barriers to cancer screening? <input type="checkbox"/> How can you be encouraged for screening? Do you have any suggestions for other people who are reluctant to go? <input type="checkbox"/> Do you have any stories/comments to share?
Total population	
89 participants overall Ethnicity Age	<input type="checkbox"/> Men: 33; Women: 56 <input type="checkbox"/> Asian British (majority) > White English > Other <input type="checkbox"/> Men: 40-74 years; Women: 35-74 years mostly
Audience	
Awareness > Lack of awareness Invitation sent by GP > anywhere else Women Cervical screening (mostly eligible) > Breast screening > Bowel screening Men Other tests to detect prostate/testicular cancer prompted by their doctors > Bowel screening	<input type="checkbox"/> Patients at GP surgeries <input type="checkbox"/> Vulnerable adults, and people with learning difficulties at Extra Care Housing <input type="checkbox"/> Blind and visually impaired

Concerns

- Some women who are eligible did not receive invitation for cervical cancer screening. Similarly, a few men also did not receive invitation for bowel screening.
- It was assumed from our end that people know what cancer symptoms look like.
- Could any advancement be introduced to the testing procedure to make it less painful for women's screening?
- Visually impaired people need assistance to read the invitation letter. Could larger prints or easy-read versions be sent for vulnerable people?
- Some people require assistance to do things. Could people buddy up to go for screening (can also act as motivation)?

<h2>Summary</h2>	✓	More than half the respondents have been invited for screening
	✓	More than half the respondents were aware about the screening programs
	✓	People who previously went for screening are likely to go again for the next one

Acknowledged Barriers

**FEAR OF OUTCOME. INVASIVE PROCEDURE.
INCONVINIENCE. BUSY SCHEDULE. NO
SYMPTOMS. OTHER PRIORITIES. EXISTING
HEALTH NEEDS**

Barriers to screening

Where many people have gone for their screening, some have not. However, we have asked everyone what they think the potential barriers are. Some answers are summarized below:

Fear of finding out the outcome

People don't want to learn about their diagnosis and fear a positive outcome.



Discomfort around the procedure; Stigma-religious/cultural

Women specifically aren't comfortable about the procedure and finds it intrusive & embarrassing. Some think cervical screening breaks virginity and impedes their religious belief



Existing health issues

People prioritize their existing health issues for which they are suffering



Longer waiting times

People lack confidence in the healthcare system. Nobody wants to wait for longer intervals



Inconvenience of travelling

Commuting to their appointment is hard for some people and thus, they need access to transportation or any assistance to take them to the centre.



No symptoms felt

No immediate symptoms are felt that correlate with cancer



Busy schedule

People tend to have hectic work life and have different commitments of higher priorities



Suggestions for encouragement

We have asked people how can they or people who are reluctant to go for screening be encouraged. Many have shared their views which are summarized below.

Sharing life changing stories

People who went for screening and found out sooner could share their experiences.



Advertisements and awareness

Use of social media, TV, religious sites for targeted communities and age groups



Flexible appointments

Provision of flexible appointments, e.g. weekend slots



Reach out to people

- by experienced professionals,
- by friends/family, or someone from their social circles
- in private spaces, like religious gathering
- by their GPs



Initiating reward mechanism

Monetary incentive or any other reward to encourage them



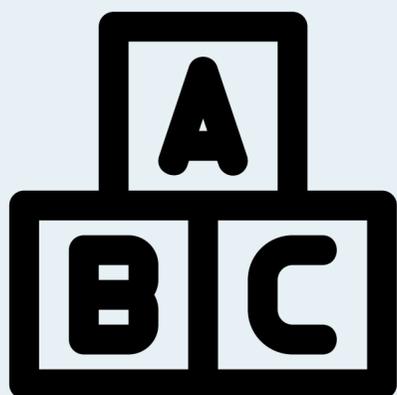
Send in easy-read, BIG printed invitations

Cater to people with learning disabilities, blind or visually impaired



Rewording "screening"

Reword screening with a simpler term like "prevention" for better understanding

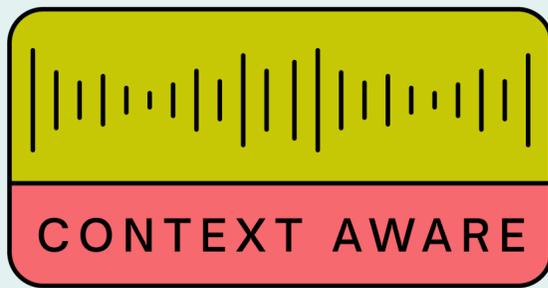


Observations

After accounting for all the interactions with different people, the following observations were made:

Lack of awareness

About screening program and screening procedure



Not understanding the terminology "screening"

Many people didn't understand the term screening even though they have gone through the process. Upon further explanation of the process to women specifically, they said they had done it.



Some people of eligible age not receiving invitation

Few women of age >25 years didn't receive invitation for cervical screening.



People who got screened are comfortable and goes periodically

Women go every 3 years for cervical & breast screening. Some even do regular bowel screening too!



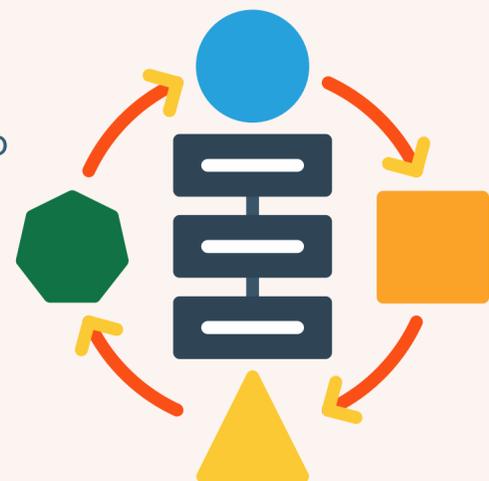
Bowel testing procedure seems "disgusting"

Some men commented how the procedure puts them off, whereas, some women throws away the kit sent to them at home



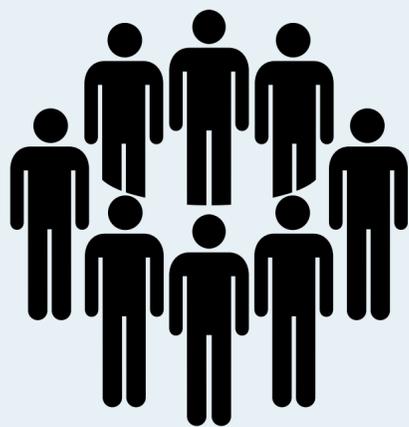
People tend to not go for screening for fear of both the procedure and outcome

People who are reluctant to go for screening, are either afraid of finding out the result as they associate cancer with death; or, find the process to be painful and intrusive



Some communities face difficulty with the invitation

Vulnerable adults and visually impaired people can't read the invitation well. Many need assistance in doing things or in terms of travelling.



STORIES/ COMMENTS

healthwatch
Hounslow

"I didn't go for cervical screening because I'm not fully aware of the procedure. I know it breaks virginity."
- F, 25-34 years, Asian British

"I have had two ladies in my circle who'd throw away the bowel kits sent to them via post. But, then I explained to them the importance of testing and now they do it."
- F, 65-74 years.

"I was invited for prostate cancer screening. The procedure is hectic and annoying with the long hours of fasting and running up and down. The waiting time during appointment is crazy. Most people don't have a problem with the scan but I think nobody is willing to wait that long. I'm fine to wait for half an hour but beyond that is unbearable." - M, 65-74 years.

"I am not bothered because I have so many other issues going on with me. I don't want to get screened." - Man, 74-84 years, English.

"Maybe advertising stories of people who went for screening and it changed their lives."
- F, 35-44 years, Pakistani.

"I rely on my GP for my health, so anything that comes from them I'll comply." - M, 55-64 years, Indian.

STORIES/COMMENTS -VISUALLY IMPAIRED + LD

healthwatch
Hounslow

"It would be good if I could get a recorded message in the text sent by NHS or If I could get a call from my GP regarding the screening. I am unable to read the letters as I am partially sighted and have a learning disability. I have family around who helps me to understand the instructions but I want to be able to do it on my own" - F, 50 years

"I could not read the letter/instructions on my own and had to call my friend over to understand it. It would be better if I could do it on my own as I don't like being a burden on others." - 62 years

"It would be good if they could provide transport for disabled people like us. So that we can actually make it to these appointments."
-F, 59 years

"I had to use a magnifying glass to read the NHS letter, but I am worried about those who do not have the ability. It would be good if NHS could send us (partially sighted/blind) letters in big fine print. Along with this, NHS should also send a recorded message (in a CD) like my bank does. It makes things so much easier"
M, 72 years

"I don't want to go for screening. I don't feel the need for it."

"It would be better if the process of cervical screening could be made pain free."
-F, 59 years

STORIES/ COMMENTS

healthwatch
Hounslow

"How would I know if I had any symptoms that relate to cancer?" -
M, 55-64 years

"I had bowel cancer. When I felt the symptom, I went to the GP to get screened but they said I wasn't old enough for that/didn't qualify for the age bracket. So, another GP referred me later for the two weeks procedure about the bowel cancer after which I was diagnosed and got my surgery privately. If I'd had just gone away, it'd have spread so much by now. Since I got my diagnosis and treatment privately, I can't tell you about NHS." -F

"I had lymphoma for which I went to my GP but they didn't take me seriously. I waited for months to get an appointment so I asked a referral of a consultant as they asked me to go to ENT. So, I then went there and, because I had initiated the process, I was able to get diagnosed sooner."
- F, 45-54 years,
Philipino

"Maybe a little push would help me because I'm an anxious person in general so if I experience anything I'd go right away."
-F, 35-44 years, White

"I have gone for breast and cervical cancer screening and to my surprise, it wasn't uncomfortable or painful as people had described. But, for my cervical screening, the lady was not experienced. She was very fidgety which made me uncomfortable. She kept trying until she had to call someone else to do it. That specimen they sent to the lab could not be tested so I had to do it again. If the person screening you isn't experienced, it makes you uncomfortable and less confident."
-F, Black, 35-44 years