

SPEAK UP
against cancer!

Breast Cervical Bowel

screening information for
transgender service users.



**Albion in the
Community**



NHS
*Brighton and Hove
Clinical Commissioning Group*

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This booklet is for transgender service users and health advisors in Brighton and Hove. It tells you about the adult cancer screening programmes that are available in Brighton and Hove (cervical, bowel and breast) and explains who we invite for screening. National screening programmes are not available for all cancers so if you are worried about testicular cancer, for example, please speak to your GP.

You can find further general screening information on the government website:

www.gov.uk/topic/population-screening-programmes

This booklet has been produced by Albion in the Community and written by Brighton and Hove Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) with input from the Screening and Immunisation Team Public Health England South East / NHS England – South (South East).

It is based on work undertaken by Public Health Wales (Screening Division) in 2014 in partnership with Unique Transgender Network, Transgender Awareness Wales and The NHS Centre for Equality and Human Rights.

Engagement with transgender networks was sought by both Brighton and Hove CCG and Public Health Wales to coproduce this booklet.

Speak Up Against Cancer is Albion in the Community's cancer awareness project in the city of Brighton and Hove, commissioned by Brighton & Hove City Council (Public Health) and Brighton and Hove CCG.

For more information please visit:

www.speakupagaincancer.org and
www.albioninthecommunity.org.uk

BREAST SCREENING

What is breast screening?

Breast screening is a free NHS test that is carried out at breast screening centres and at easy-to-access mobile breast screening units across England.

About breast screening

Breast screening can find cancers when they are too small to see or feel. Finding and treating cancer early gives you the best chance of survival.

Screening will miss some cancers, and some cancers cannot be cured.

Taking part in breast screening is **your** choice. You can find out more information from your GP or by visiting the NHS Choices website:

www.nhs.uk/conditions/breast-cancer-screening/pages/introduction.aspx

Where will you go for screening?

East Sussex and Brighton & Hove Breast Screening,
2nd floor, 177 Preston Road, Brighton, BN1 6AG.

Tel: 01273 664966

Email: breastscreening@bsuh.nhs.uk

Who should have breast screening?

The breast screening service invites people who are eligible for routine breast screening, and are registered with a GP, every three years. When you are due for breast screening, they will send you an invitation letter.

Breast screening is currently offered to women aged 50 to 70 in England. However, the NHS has extended the programme as a randomised trial, offering screening to some women aged 47 to 49 and 71 to 73.

You will usually first be invited for screening between your 50th and 53rd birthday, although in some areas you may be invited from the age of 47 as part of the age extension trial of the programme.

Women aged 50 to 70 who are registered with a GP and live in England are invited for a breast x-ray called a mammogram every three years. Women over the age of 70 can ask for a breast screening appointment.

If you are a **female to male / trans man aged 50 to 70 who is registered with a GP as male**, you will not be invited for breast screening. If you have not had chest reconstruction (top surgery) we suggest that you talk to your GP to arrange a referral to your local breast screening centre to have a mammogram. If you have had chest reconstruction (top surgery) and you still have breast tissue, you will need to talk to your GP to arrange for a referral to your local breast screening centre.

If you are a **female to male / trans man aged 50 to 70 who is registered with a GP as female**, you will be routinely invited for breast screening. We recommend that you still have breast screening if you have not yet had a chest reconstruction (top surgery) or still have breast tissue. If you are worried about going

to a breast centre you can ring the appointments line on **01273 664966** to arrange a more suitable appointment. We can arrange for you to have an appointment at the beginning or end of a clinic.

If you are a **male to female / trans woman aged 50 to 70 who is registered with a GP as female**, you will be invited for screening. Long-term hormone therapy can increase your risk of developing breast cancer so it is important that you go for breast screening when you are invited.

If you are a **male to female / trans woman aged 50 to 70 who is registered with a GP as male**, you will not be invited for breast screening. If you register as female with your GP, you will be routinely invited for breast screening.

If you have been on long-term hormone therapy you may be at increased risk of developing breast cancer and should go for screening when invited. If you are registered with your GP as male, you may want to speak to your GP about having a mammogram. This will be done at your local centre.

If you are a transgender person, it is important that you or your GP lets East Sussex and Brighton & Hove Breast Screening know so that you are invited for screening correctly.

If you do not want to be invited for breast screening, you will need to contact your local breast screening office. They will explain how you can opt out of breast screening.

It is important that you feel that you are treated with dignity and respect at all times. Let the breast screening service know if you would like your appointment at the beginning or end of a clinic. You can take someone with you if you are concerned.

What does the test involve?

A breast x-ray called a mammogram is used to look for signs of cancer. Your breasts are pressed firmly between the plates of an x-ray machine for a few seconds. The pressure is needed to get good images and also reduce the radiation dose. Your test will be carried out by a specially trained female mammographer.

Some people find having a mammogram is uncomfortable and a few may find it painful, but the discomfort should pass quickly.

If you wear a binder then you will need to remove this before having your mammogram. Private changing rooms will be available so that you can remove your binder just before having your mammogram. If you have any concerns about your appointment, you can contact your local breast screening office.

If you have breast implants mammography can be less effective because the x-rays cannot 'see' through the implant to the breast tissue behind it. You will usually be able to have a mammogram, but please let the screening centre know before you attend.

For most people the results are normal. If changes are seen on your x-ray, you will be invited to an assessment clinic for more tests which will include a breast examination, more x-rays or ultrasound scans. You may also have a biopsy, where a small sample of tissue is taken from your breast with a needle.

Sometimes breast screening can pick up cancers that would never have caused harm, so people are treated for breast cancer that would never have been life-threatening. The balance of possible benefits and risks are explained in more detail here:

www.nhs.uk/conditions/breast-cancer-screening/pages/why-its-offered.aspx

What can I do to reduce my risk?

Take part in breast screening every three years, especially if you have taken hormone therapy and even if you have had a previous normal breast screening result.

Get to know how your breasts normally look and feel. If you notice any changes report them to your GP.

Speak to your GP if you are worried about breast cancer running in your family.

CERVICAL SCREENING

What is cervical screening?

Cervical screening (which used to be called the 'smear test') is a free NHS test that is carried out at your GP surgery or at some sexual-health clinics. The test looks for early changes in the cells at the neck of the womb.

About cervical screening

Cervical screening aims to prevent cervical cancer from developing in the cervix at the neck of the womb.

It is important to go for your cervical screening test (which used to be called the 'smear test') as finding changes before they become cancer gives you the best chance of successful treatment.

Screening will not prevent all cancers and not all cancers can be cured.

Taking part in cervical screening is **your** choice. You can find out more information from your GP. You can also find more information by visiting the NHS Choices website:

www.nhs.uk/conditions/cervical-screening-test/pages/introduction.aspx

www.nhs.uk/livewell/transhealth/pages/transhealthhome.aspx

Who should have a cervical screening test?

The NHS invites women for a cervical screening test every three years from the age of 25 and every five years from the ages of 50 to 64.

If you are a **female to male / trans man aged 25 to 64 who is registered with a GP as male**, you will not be invited for your cervical screening test. However, if you have not had a hysterectomy and still have a cervix, you should still have your cervical screening test. This is especially important if you have had any abnormal cervical screenings in the past. Please speak to your GP to arrange a test.

If you are a **female to male / trans man aged 25 to 64 who is registered with a GP as female**, you will automatically be invited for your cervical screening test. We recommend that you still have your cervical screening test if you have not yet had a hysterectomy and still have a cervix.

If you are a **male to female / trans woman aged 25 to 64 who is registered with a GP as female**, you will be invited for your cervical screening test unless you or your GP have already told us about your change of gender. However, as you do not have a cervix, you will not need to be screened. If this applies to you, let your GP know. We can update your records so you are not invited unnecessarily.

If you are a **male to female / trans woman aged 25 to 64 who is registered with a GP as male**, you will not be invited for a cervical screening test and will not need to be screened.

If you are a transgender person it is important that your GP lets Primary Care Support England know so that you are invited for cervical screening tests correctly. If you do not want to be invited

for your cervical screening test you should contact your GP, they will be able to tell you how you can opt out of the cervical screening programme.

How will I be invited?

You will receive an invitation letter when you are due for your cervical screening test, asking you to make an appointment.

If you are a **female to male / trans man** who is registered with a GP as a male, you will not automatically receive an invitation, but if you still have a cervix it is important that you have a cervical screening test. If this applies to you, let your GP or practice nurse know so they can talk to you about having a cervical screening test.

What does the test involve?

The nurse or doctor will put an instrument called a speculum into your vagina to help them see your cervix. They will then take a sample of cells with a soft brush.

If you still have a cervix but your cervix is no longer accessible via the vagina then you will not be able to have a cervical screening test. You may want to discuss this with your GP or practice nurse to consider alternative options.

If you are a **female to male / trans man** who has taken long-term testosterone, your cervical screening test may be uncomfortable or painful. You may want to talk to your doctor or nurse about using a different size speculum and some extra lubrication.

We know this can be an anxious time for you as there may be physical changes taking place to your body and in particular to your

genital area. It is important that you feel that you are treated with dignity and respect at all times. If you are worried about having your cervical screening test, talk to your doctor or practice nurse.

Cervical cancer is most often caused by a virus called human papilloma virus (HPV) which is passed on by sexual contact. It does not matter whether you are a virgin (this means you have never had sex) or not or whether you are in a different-sex or same-sex relationship, you should still come for your cervical screening test when we invite you. If you are worried about your risk of developing cervical cancer you may want to speak to your GP or practice nurse.

For most people the test results are normal. If cell changes are found, your sample may be tested for the HPV. Depending on the results you may need a hospital appointment at the colposcopy clinic where the neck of the womb is looked at in detail.

What can I do to reduce my risk?

Go for your cervical screening test every time you are invited, even if you have had a previous normal result. Let your GP or practice nurse know if you think you should be invited for a cervical screening test.

Even if you have had the HPV vaccine you will still need to go for your cervical screening test when invited.

Stop smoking, as smoking increases your risk of cervical cancer. If you have symptoms such as unusual vaginal discharge or bleeding, or pain during or after sex, go to the doctor even if you have had a normal cervical screening result.

BOWEL SCREENING

What is bowel screening?

Bowel screening is a free NHS test that you can do in your own home. The test looks for hidden blood in your bowel movements (also known as faeces, stools or poo).

About bowel screening

Bowel screening reduces your risk of dying from bowel cancer.

It is important to take part in bowel screening as you may feel well even if you have early bowel cancer. Finding cancer early gives you the best chance of survival.

Screening will miss some cancers, and some cancers cannot be cured.

Taking part in bowel screening is **your** choice. You can find out more information from your GP.

If you are 75 or over you can ask for this test every two years by calling the freephone helpline on **0800 707 60 60**.

Please visit the NHS Choices website for more information:

www.nhs.uk/conditions/bowel-cancer-screening/pages/introduction.aspx

National NHS Bowel Cancer Screening website at:

www.cancerscreening.nhs.uk/bowel

Who should take part?

Unlike other screening programmes, everyone aged 60 to 74 is invited to take part in bowel screening every two years.

What does the test involve?

A bowel screening test kit and information pack will be sent to you when you are due for screening.

You are asked to collect small samples of your stools (poo) and put them on the test kit provided.

Once you start, you will need to complete the test kit within ten days and return it by post in the specially designed envelope.

The test looks for tiny amounts of blood in the sample which you may not be able to see and which could be a sign of bowel cancer. If you have lost your test kit, made a mistake or have any concerns about completing the test, you can contact the free helpline on **0800 707 60 60**.

If blood is found, you will be referred for further tests if you have a strong positive result or asked to complete another test kit if you have a weak positive result. The further tests may involve you having a colonoscopy, which looks at the lining of the bowel using a flexible camera. If you are a **female to male trans man** or a **male to female trans woman** who has had gender-reassignment surgery, you may find having a colonoscopy more uncomfortable. You may want to talk to your specialist screening practitioner or your GP about this.

What can I do to reduce my risk?

Take part in screening every two years, even if you have had a previous normal result.

Keep a healthy weight, eat a high-fibre diet with plenty of fruit and vegetables & eat less red meat and less processed meat, take regular physical exercise, keep alcohol intake to a minimum and stop smoking.

It is important to visit your GP if you notice blood in your stools (poo), a change in your bowel habit over a number of weeks or unexplained weight loss.

Bowel cancer can run in families. If you are worried about your risk speak to your GP.

BOWEL SCOPE SCREENING

What is bowel scope screening?

Bowel scope screening is a new free test to help prevent bowel cancer. It does this by finding and removing any small growths, called polyps, in the bowel that could eventually turn into cancer.

About bowel scope screening

Bowel scope screening helps prevent bowel cancer.

It is important to take part in bowel scope screening if you are invited as you may feel well even if you have early bowel cancer. Finding cancer early gives you the best chance of survival.

For every 300 people screened, it stops two from getting bowel cancer and saves one life from bowel cancer.

Taking part in bowel scope screening is **your** choice. You can find out more information from your GP or by calling the freephone helpline on **0800 707 60 60**.

Please visit the NHS Choices website for more information:

www.cancerscreening.nhs.uk/bowel

Who should take part?

The NHS will offer bowel scope screening to everyone aged 55.

If you decide not to have bowel scope screening when you are first invited, you can still have it at any time up until your 60th birthday. Just call the freephone helpline number **0800 707 60 60** to ask for an appointment.

What does the test involve?

If you choose to have a bowel scope screening appointment your bowel cancer screening centre will write to you. The letter will include an enema and instructions for using it. The enema is a liquid used to clear the poo out of your large bowel. This is so the nurse or doctor can get a good look at your bowel.

Bowel scope screening is done by a specially trained nurse or doctor at a bowel cancer screening centre. He or she puts the thin flexible tube into your anus and looks inside your large bowel using the tiny camera. Bowel scope screening looks at the lower part of the large bowel because that's where most polyps are found.

If they find any polyps, they usually remove them straight away. Sometimes the nurse or doctor takes a tiny piece of the bowel (a biopsy) to be looked at under a microscope. Neither removing a polyp nor having a biopsy are painful.

If you are a **female to male trans man** or a **male to female trans woman** who has had gender-reassignment surgery, you may find having a bowel scope procedure more uncomfortable. You may want to talk to your specialist screening practitioner or your GP about this.

What can I do to reduce my risk?

Bowel scope screening is the best way to lower your chances of getting bowel cancer. Also partaking in the bowel screening programme at age 60.

You can also eat a high-fibre diet with plenty of fruit and vegetables, take regular physical exercise, keep a healthy weight, eat less red meat and less processed meat, keep alcohol intake to a minimum and stop smoking.

It is important to visit your GP if you notice blood in your stools (poo), a change in your bowel habit over a number of weeks or unexplained weight loss.

Bowel cancer can run in families. If you are worried about your risk speak to your GP.

TELL US WHAT YOU THINK

It is important that everyone is treated with dignity and respect. If you feel that you have not been treated in this way or if you want to share with us your experience, good or bad, we would like to hear from you.

For complaints or raising concerns please contact the organisation the issue is with in the first instance. You can get support in raising a complaint through your local Healthwatch by calling them on **03000 68 3000** or by email: enquiries@healthwatch.co.uk

WHERE CAN I FIND MORE INFORMATION?

Public Health England, Screening Programmes:

www.gov.uk/topic/population-screening-programmes

NHS Choices: www.nhs.uk

NHS Equality and Diversity Council:

www.england.nhs.uk/about/gov/equality-hub/edc/

Health Trainers (healthy eating, physical activity, alcohol, smoking support) **Tel: 01273 296877**

www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/content/health/healthy-lifestyle/health-trainers

The Clare Project: (Transgender Support and Social Group)

www.clareproject.org.uk

The Gender Trust - Transgender directory:

www.gendertrust.org.uk/directory/support-organisations

Macmillan Cancer Support:

www.macmillan.org.uk/information-and-support/diagnosing/how-cancers-are-diagnosed

Mylife Brighton & Hove (online directory of support services):

www.mylifebh.org.uk

Speak Up Against Cancer:

www.speakupagainstcancer.org

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