

Freedom of Information request 64-19

Request

Please provide information on:

1. What is your time limit for providing results to patients on a) cervical screening b) bowel screening c) breast cancer screening and d) aortic aneurysm screening?
2. Further to question 1, in each of the last 3 years (January 2015 – December 2018), what percentage of patients received their results for a) cervical screening b) bowel screening c) breast cancer screening and d) aortic aneurysm screening within the specified periods?
3. In each of the last 3 years (January 2015 – December 2018), what was the (i) average and (ii) longest time taken to send results to patients on a) cervical screening b) bowel screening c) breast cancer screening and d) aortic aneurysm screening?
4. What activities has your NHS Board undertaken to increase cervical screening attendance over the last 3 years (January 2015-December 2018) broken down by year and do you have any evidence, such as reports, documenting the outcomes of such activities?

Response

1. Time limit for providing screening results are set at National level, NHS Borders does not determine the time limit for providing results to patients for each of the screening programmes. National standards for each of the programmes is provided with links to the referenced standards:
 - a) Cervical Screening: Essential - 80% of women are sent the result within four weeks (20 working days) of the smear test being taken. Desirable - 100% of women are sent the result within six weeks (30 working days) of the smear test being taken.
http://www.healthcareimprovementscotland.org/previous_resources/standards/cervical_screening.aspx
(Cervical Screening Standards 2002, pg.31)
 - b) Bowel Screening: People, whose identifiable screening test (name, community health index number and kit number) is received in the laboratory, are sent an outcome letter within 10 working days.
http://www.healthcareimprovementscotland.org/our_work/cancer_care_improvement/programme_resources/bowel_screening_standards.aspx (Bowel Screening Standards 2015, pg.21)
 - c) Breast Screening: Women are sent confirmation of their routine screening results from the screening service within 2 weeks of an adequate screen in line with the NHS Breast Screening Programme consolidated standards: acceptable: ≥95%, and achievable: 100%.
http://www.healthcareimprovementscotland.org/our_work/cancer_care_improvement/programme_resources/breast_screening_standards.aspx (Breast Screening Standards 2018, pg.16)

d) AAA Screening: Essential - A minimum of 97% of men undergoing the AAA screening test receive a provisional verbal screening test result (either positive or negative) and standardised patient information at the time of the screening episode. All men are sent written confirmation of the screening test result within 20 working days of the scan being completed.

http://www.healthcareimprovementscotland.org/our_work/cardiovascular_disease/screening_for_aaa/aa_a_screening_standards.aspx (AAA Screening Standards 2011, pg.22)

2. For Bowel, Breast and Cervical Screening - the 'turnaround' time from sample/image to result is monitored by the national laboratories/centre that receives the samples/images from across Scotland. Board specific data by 1) full calendar year and 2) percentage is unavailable at local level; however, where possible we have provided reference to published national data for the reporting period.

a) Cervical: NHS Borders cervical screening samples are processed and resulted in Lothian Cytology Laboratory. Table 1 - Average reporting times for cervical screening tests for Borders for the period 1st Jan 2015 to 31st March 2018 by mean number of days by quarter has been extracted from the national report available from ISD (SCCRS Laboratory Report ISD_NEW_3 report :

https://www.isdscotland.org/Health-Topics/Cancer/Publications/2018-09-04/Reporting_times.xlsx .

Table 1 - Average reporting times for cervical screening tests for Borders for the period 1st Jan 2015 to 31st March 2018 by mean number of days by quarter

	2017/2018	2016/2017	2015/2016	2014/2015
Q4	20	29	20	24
Q3	21	35	20	
Q2	26	28	23	
Q1	33	27	26	

For Scotland as a whole, Laboratory Turn around performance is published in the Scottish Cervical Screening Programme Statistics 2017/18 Annual update to 31 March 2018 (pg.14)

<https://www.isdscotland.org/Health-Topics/Cancer/Publications/2018-09-04/2018-09-04-Cervical-Screening-Report.pdf> (pg.14) Data source for Turnaround times by NHS Laboratory published on ISD website but not by NHS Board under SCCRS Laboratory Report 004.

b) Bowel Screening: NHS Borders does not hold locally or receive Board level data about the time taken for results to be received by individuals being screened, and therefore cannot provide the requested data under this FOI request. Board level information about the results 'turn around' time is not routinely sent to, nor is routinely available to each Board in Scotland by the national centre in Dundee.

c) Breast Screening: NHS Borders does not hold locally or receive Board level data about the time taken for results to be received by individuals being screened, and therefore cannot provide the requested data under this FOI request. The Breast Screening Programme is a commissioned service delivered to eligible women in the Borders by the regional basis by the South East of Scotland Breast Screening Service. Data is only available by screening centre and not broken down by Board.

Performance management and data for this screening programme can be found via

<https://www.isdscotland.org/Health-Topics/Cancer/Breast-Screening>

d) AAA Screening: Results are provided verbally as part of the screening appointment, to every male aged over 65 years who attends when invited or if they self-refer.

3. Please refer to Q2 regarding the availability of reporting at local level for each of the national screening programmes. Board specific data by 1) full calendar year and 2) percentage is unavailable at local level; however, where possible we have provided reference to published national data for the reporting period.

a) Cervical – As above, Average days by quarter is provided in Table 1. There is no available data for longest time taken.

b) Bowel - NHS Borders does not hold locally or receive Board level data about the time taken for results to be received by individuals being screened, and therefore cannot provide the requested data under this FOI request. Board level information about the results 'turn around' time is not routinely sent to, nor is routinely available to each Board in Scotland by the national centre in Dundee.

- c) Breast - NHS Borders does not hold locally or receive Board level data about the time taken for results to be received by individuals being screened, and therefore cannot provide the requested data under this FOI request. The Breast Screening Programme is a commissioned service delivered to eligible women in the Borders by the regional basis by the South East of Scotland Breast Screening Service. Data is only available by screening centre and not broken down by Board.
 - d) AAA - Results are provided verbally as part of the screening appointment, to every male aged over 65 years who attends when invited or if they self-refer.
4. NHS Borders has a programme of initiatives to increase participation in cervical screening and reduce inequalities in access to this programme with an overview of the following activities. Where appropriate, evidence, such as reports, documenting the outcomes of such activities mentioned below are in the process of or have been created:

2015

- ****Continual programme of work under the banner of the national programme of Detect Cancer Early (DCE) to raise awareness of early detection of cervical cancer and in line with national campaigns through existing Networks, such as Healthy Living Network HLN, Health Improvement, Borders Alcohol & Drug Addiction Service, Mental Health, Learning Disabilities Service and third sector partners. Communication and engagement in line with activity programme and schedule building on existing work to promote health literacy within local communities. This includes supporting National cervical screening campaigns as well as Jo's Trust.**

2016

- As (**) above – this work is core and continues over the period requested.
- In addition to the continual programme of work above, following a scoping exercise a number of key actions and activities were identified in order to reduce inequalities and increase engagement with the cervical screening programme. In particular, in late 2016, Borders commenced a 3 year programme of initiatives. This included Local awareness and educational activities will be tailored to raise awareness and promote the benefits of cervical screening and educate individuals with the correct information about screening which they can share opportunistically with colleagues, patients, family, friends, encouraging “early” participation or even “re-engagement” with the screening programme. A strong aim was to engender a culture of “Normalisation and Talkability” around cervical screening so women are informed and supported, thus empowering those women in particular who missed their last screening appointment, or have never been screened. Particular planning commenced on:
 - **Within staff groups (supported by Health Promoting Health Service (HPS))**
Lower paid staff, e.g. Domestic staff, Porters, Canteen Staff, Bank workers, Health Care Support Workers and staff on low-hour contracts. The initial phase commenced in December 2017 with a focus on NHS Staff. Pilot planning on developing a staff screening clinic, so that staff are able to have a smear in the work place.
 - **Specific Smear Taker Training and GP Practice Staff**
Development and delivery of CPD programme in partnership with Health Improvement and Scottish Borders Rape Crisis to cover sessions to raise awareness, with a focus on lesbian, bisexual women, the transgender community; female genital mutilation; childhood sexual abuse; rape & sexual assault and domestic abuse. The first session was planned to be delivered in mid 2017.

2017

- As (**) above – this work is core and continues over the period requested
- Introduction of staff smear clinics commenced, average of 1 clinic per month available to staff to have a smear at work.

- Development and delivery of targeted specific activities to ensure that vulnerable groups such as people with learning disabilities will have additional support and increased engagement with services through joint working with NHS Borders Joint Health Improvement Team LD lead, LD Nurses and the Borders LD Provider Forum. This includes updating of an existing screening leaflet and use of other support resources for people with learning disabilities, making use of the Desmond and Daisy dolls to play act scenes related to screening call and recall and cervical screening.
- Delivery of CPD session with support of Borders Rape Crisis.
- Sept/Oct Activities within Burnfoot Hub – Hawick to raise awareness of programme and commence survey with residents of the area to better understand barriers to the programme.
- Work with pilot GP practice on targeted letters to encourage women that have defaulted to make an appointment.
- Development of CPD programme and tool kit resources to staff to and developing skills and knowledge that leads to having confident conversations around participation in the cervical screening programme – target audience staff and external agencies for Learning Disabilities.

2018

- As (**) above – this work is core and continues over the period requested
- Continuation of Staff Cervical Screening Clinics
- Review of access to cervical screening for patients with mental health conditions undertaken and a programme of work developed within mental health to increase access to screening/information and training for staff.
- Continued delivery of CPD programme and tool kit resources to staff to and developing skills and knowledge that leads to having confident conversations around participation in the cervical screening programme. Delivered to staff and external agencies for Learning Disabilities and mental health.
- Oct 2018 Focus on learning disabilities – NHS Borders held a “screening and learning disabilities conference” was well attended by staff from across Scotland. This was a forum used to focus on reducing barriers and increasing access to screening.

If you are not satisfied with the way your request has been handled or the decision given, you may ask NHS Borders to review its actions and the decision. If you would like to request a review please apply in writing to, Freedom of Information Review, NHS Borders, Room 2EC3, Education Centre, Borders General Hospital, Melrose, TD6 9BS or foi.enquiries@borders.scot.nhs.uk.

The request for a review should include your name and address for correspondence, the request for information to which the request relates and the issue which you wish to be reviewed. Please state the reference number **64-19** on this request. Your request should be made within 40 working days from receipt of this letter.

If following this review, you remain dissatisfied with the outcome, you may appeal to the Scottish Information Commissioner and request an investigation of your complaint. Your request to the Scottish Information Commissioner should be in writing (or other permanent form), stating your name and an address for correspondence. You should provide the details of the request and your reasons for dissatisfaction with both the original response by NHS Borders and your reasons for dissatisfaction with the outcome of the internal review. Your application for an investigation by the Scottish Information Commissioner must be made within six months of your receipt of the response with which you are dissatisfied. The address for the Office of the Scottish Information Commissioner is, Office of the Scottish Information Commissioner, Kinburn Castle, Doubledykes Road, St Andrews, Fife.