



Adults and Health Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Committee Meeting

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| Title | NHS Cancer Screening Programmes update |
| Date of meeting | 15 th May 2024 |
| Report of | Dr Janet Djomba, Interim Director of Public Health janet.djomba@barnet.gov.uk |
| Wards | All |
| Status | Public |
| Urgent | No |
| Appendices | Appendix A – NHS Cancer Screening Programmes update – full paper |
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Summary

This report outlines the delivery of cancer screening programmes in Barnet. It provides information about:

- Cervical screening, breast screening, bowel cancer screening and targeted lung health checks
- Inequalities in cancer screening and barriers to uptake
- Current and planned work to increase cancer screening in Barnet

Cervical, bowel and breast screening coverage in Barnet is generally higher than the NCL average and lower than the England average. Targeted lung health checks have started in Barnet, for people who are eligible. There is current and planned work to increase participation in the cancer screening programmes, and reduce inequalities in uptake in Barnet.

Recommendations

1. That the Committee note the report
2. That the Committee provide feedback on the report

1. Reasons for the Recommendations

INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This is the first update on the NHS Cancer Screening Programmes in Barnet since the Adults and Health Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Committee was established. For this first update, we have provided an overview of the cancer screening programmes. **The full report is added as Appendix A.**

NHS CANCER SCREENING PROGRAMMES

- 1.2 The three national cancer screening programmes in England are cervical, bowel and breast screening. In addition, targeted lung health checks are being rolled out across England and are now available in Barnet. Targeted Lung Health Checks will eventually transition into the fourth national cancer screening programme by 2028.
- 1.3 Cervical screening is offered to people with a cervix from 25 to 64 years of age. In Barnet, cervical screening coverage is higher in people aged 50 – 64 years, compared with those aged 25 – 49 years. Coverage is generally below the England average, and higher than the North Central London (NCL) average.
- 1.4 The NHS Bowel Cancer Screening Programme is offered to everyone aged 60-74. Since 2021, the age eligibility started to expand to include people aged 50 - 59 years. In Barnet, people aged 54 years and above are being invited. Bowel screening coverage has increased over recent years, and coverage did not decline during the COVID-19 pandemic. Coverage of bowel screening in Barnet is lower than the England average, but generally higher than the NCL average.
- 1.5 Breast screening is offered to women aged 50 until their 71st birthday in England. There was a decrease in breast screening during the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2022/23, breast screening coverage in Barnet was higher than the NCL average, but lower than the England average.
- 1.6 Targeted lung health checks are available in Barnet now and people are eligible if they are aged between 55 and 74 years and are a current or former smoker. Data on the programme is yet to be publicly available. Recent service level data (up to January 2024) shows that the uptake of the programme across NCL is similar to the national average.

INEQUALITIES IN CANCER SCREENING

- 1.7 There is evidence nationally, that people living in areas of higher deprivation are less likely to complete bowel, cervical and breast screening. People with learning disabilities and people with severe mental illness are less likely to participate in cancer screening. Men have lower uptake of bowel screening, compared with women. Data analysis from NCL (Camden, Islington, and Haringey) also found cancer screening was lower in areas of higher deprivation. In Barnet, there

have been challenges with primary care data extraction, and we do not have borough-specific demographic data for cancer screening uptake.

- 1.8 Barriers to cancer screening need to be addressed to tackle inequalities in cancer screening. These include stigma about cancer screening, practical barriers such as difficulties booking a screening appointment, or difficulties attending an appointment (for cervical and breast screening) due to other responsibilities or cost.

WORK TO INCREASE CANCER SCREENING IN BARNET

- 1.9 The North Central London Cancer Prevention, Awareness and Screening (PAS) Strategy 2023-2028 and Action Plan 2023-2025 is in place. For cancer screening, the strategy aims to increase participation in the screening programmes, reduce inequalities in uptake, and adapt screening improvement activities in line with national and regional work to meet local needs.
- 1.10 Current work in Barnet includes engaging with PCNs with low screening uptake to improve patient participation. There is also focused work with population groups where cancer screening coverage is low and in areas of highest deprivation, including people experiencing homelessness, people with learning disabilities and people with severe mental illness.
- 1.11 There is work to increase participation in each of the screening programmes – bowel, breast, and cervical screening – and the targeted lung health checks programme.
- 1.12 There is planned work to promote cancer screening and cancer awareness through community engagement work in Barnet.

2. Alternative Options Considered and Not Recommended

- 2.1 That the committee does not provide feedback. We do not recommend this option as we believe that the Adults and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee can provide feedback and steer which will support and improve delivery of the cancer screening programmes.

3. Post Decision Implementation

- 3.1 We will consider the committee's feedback and implement as appropriate. We will continue supporting delivery of cancer screening programmes in collaboration with our partner organisations.
- 3.2 3.2 We will provide a further update on the delivery of cancer screening programmes as per the committee's advice.

4. Corporate Priorities, Performance and Other Considerations

Corporate Plan

- 4.1 The delivery of cancer screening programmes is contributing towards the area "Caring for People" of Barnet's corporate plan. Specifically, it's supporting following outcomes:
- Tackling inequalities
 - Living well

Although cancer screening is not included directly in outcome measures, it contributes to living well. Work to promote equity of access and uptake of cancer screening contributes to tackling inequalities.

Corporate Performance / Outcome Measures

- 4.2 The Barnet Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2021 to 2025 states ‘we will work on cancer prevention through addressing inequalities in uptake of national screening programmes and increasing awareness of common risk factors, signs and symptoms in underserved groups.’ Cancer screening data is included on the Public Health Dashboard and in the new Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, which provides intelligence for strategic decision making. Data on cancer screening uptake is also reported at the NCL level and nationally.

Sustainability

- 4.3 Not applicable

Corporate Parenting

- 4.4 At aged 25 years, people with a cervix are eligible for cervical screening, including care leavers. There is work to reduce inequalities in cervical screening uptake in Barnet.

Risk Management

- 4.5 A risk related to cancer screening is included in the Public Health Directorate risk register as ‘Influencing NHS England about national screening programmes in Barnet’:
- a) If Public Health fail to influence NHS England, this could lead to low uptake, resulting in an increase in conditions that could have been treated earlier.
 - b) The inherent risk is rated as medium/high (9) and the residual risk is rated currently as medium/low (6).
 - c) Control and mitigation measures include:
 - Barnet Public Health participates in the NCL Cancer Prevention, Awareness and Screening Working Group and Delivery Group, with NHS England representatives, to mitigate these risks at sector level, where uptake and coverage are monitored and remedial actions agreed.
 - Barnet Public Health provides project support for local projects, including delivery of NCL Improving Cancer Screening for People with Learning Disabilities, and NCL Cancer Public Awareness Campaigns with local voluntary and community sector organisations.

Insight

- 4.6 Data on cancer screening coverage is reported by the Office of Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID) at the level of GP practice, Primary Care Network, Integrated Care Board. Detailed demographic information about cancer screening requires local data collection and this is available from some North Central London boroughs. There have been data extraction challenges with Barnet primary care data. There is also information about specific programmes available from the North Central London Cancer Alliance. Available data for cancer screening uptake in Barnet is presented in the full report in Appendix A.

Social Value

- 4.7 Barnet Public Health does not commission services or providers to deliver cancer screening programmes.

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| 5. | Resource Implications (Finance and Value for Money, Procurement, Staffing, IT and Property) |
| 5.1 | Supporting cancer screening programmes is included in the Public Health workplan, so resources (staff and finances) are included in the Public Health Directorate financial and business planning. External funding has been available and used for specific, time limited projects. |
| 6. | Legal Implications and Constitution References |
| 6.1 | Section 73A(1) of the National Health Service Act (the 2006 Act) gives the Director of Public Health responsibility for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> all of their local authority's duties to take steps to improve the health of the people in its area |
| 6.2 | The Adults and Health Overview and Scrutiny Sub-Committee shall perform the overview and scrutiny role and function in relation to: <p>12.1.1 All matters as they relate to Adults Social Care</p> <p>12.1.2 Reviewing and scrutinising, matters relating to the planning, provision and operation of health services in Barnet including inviting the relevant Chief Executive(s) of NHS organisations to account for the work of their organisation (s) as set out and required by the Health and Social Care Act 2001 and related primary and secondary legislation.</p> |
| 7. | Consultation |
| 7.1 | The full report in Appendix A was reviewed by partners at the North Central London Cancer Alliance and the North Central London Integrated Care Board. No consultation has taken place. |
| 8. | Equalities and Diversity |
| 8.1 | Considering and protecting equalities and diversity shapes the delivery of cancer screening programmes and work to increase participation in the programmes. We use evidence, expertise, and intelligence to tackle inequalities in cancer screening between different population groups. Further information is in the full report in Appendix A. |
| 9. | Background Papers |
| 9.1 | Directors of public health in local government: roles, responsibilities and context - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) |
| 9.2 | National Health Service Act 2006 National Health Service Act 2006 (legislation.gov.uk) |