Scottish Bowel Screening Programme
Statistics
For the two-year period of invitations between 1 May 2017 and 30 April 2019

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About this release
This release by Information Services Division (ISD) provides an update of the Scottish bowel screening statistics up to 30th April 2019 including uptake, positivity and clinical outcomes.

A new bowel screening test, the Faecal Immunochemical Test (FIT), was launched on 20th November 2017, replacing the Faecal Occult Blood Test (FOBT). This summary compares programme performance using almost 18 months of data for each of these tests. Statistics reported for the FOBT and FIT tests are for the comparable time periods of 20th November 2015 to 30th April 2017 (FOBT) and 20th November 2017 to 30th April 2019 (FIT). An accompanying report describes programme performance for the full two-year reporting period.

Main Points

- Uptake of bowel screening has increased from 56.2% to 64.1%, for comparable 18-month periods before and after the introduction of FIT. Prior to this new screening test, national uptake had never previously reached the standard of 60%.

![Monthly % uptake of bowel screening over three years up to 30 April 2019](chart.png)
• Inequality in uptake has reduced with the introduction of the new test, although there remain substantial differences between demographic groups. Specifically, uptake using FIT remains lower in men (61.8%) than in women (66.4%), but the gap using FIT (4.6 percentage points) is smaller than it was using FOBT (6.3 percentage points).

• Similarly, uptake using FIT remains lower among people from the most deprived areas (51.8%) compared to people from the least deprived areas (72.9%). However, the increase in uptake after the introduction of FIT was greatest among people from more deprived areas. As a result, the difference between the most and least deprived has reduced from 23.1 percentage points to 21.2 percentage points.

• The percentage of people testing positive was higher using FIT, with those referred for further investigation increasing from 2.2% using FOBT to 3.0% using FIT.

• As a result of increases in both uptake and positivity, the total number of people testing positive and therefore being referred for further investigation increased by 70% from 15,911 individuals using FOBT to 26,970 individuals using FIT.

• Consequently, the number of people diagnosed with cancer increased by 34% from 795 individuals using FOBT to 1,061 individuals using FIT.

Background
Bowel cancer is the third most commonly-occurring cancer in Scotland and the second most common cause of death from cancer. The purpose of screening is to identify bowel cancer at an early stage, when treatment is more likely to be effective. Bowel screening can also identify benign growths (adenomas) that can be removed. The removal of these benign growths has been shown to reduce a person’s risk of developing colorectal cancer.

This publication relates to eligible men and women aged between 50-74 years old, who are invited to be screened every two years. Eligible people are posted a test kit which is completed at home. Since 1st April 2013, those aged 75 and over can also self-refer and opt into screening.

Further information on the new screening test is available from Cancer Research UK.

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Further Information
Data from this publication is available to download from our web page. For more information on Detect Cancer Early see the relevant section of our website. For related topics, please see the cancer pages.

The next release of this publication will be August 2020.

ISD and Official Statistics
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