



Breast Screening

1. Introduction

Breast screening is a method of detecting breast cancer at a very early stage. Since 1988, the NHS Breast Screening Programme (NHSBSP) has screened more than 19 million women in the UK and detected approximately 117,000 cancers. The programme saves around 1,400 lives a year in England alone.¹ The Breast Cancer Screening Programme offers screening to all women between the ages of 50 and 70, once every three years.

From 2012, the NHSBSP will be extended to include women between the ages of 47 and 73 years. This means that all women will receive an additional two screening invitations in their lifetime. Hounslow is due to extend the NHSBSP during 2011 as part of the age extension pilot, ahead of the official full roll out time line of 2016.

2. The Local Picture

2.1 Prevalence of breast cancer

Breast cancer is the most prevalent type of cancer in Hounslow, with 120.5 cases per 100,000 women. This does not significantly differ from the UK average of 123.6 per 100,000 women.

2.2 Mortality from breast cancer

One-year survival rates are significantly higher than the UK average, with 97.9% of women in Hounslow still alive one year after diagnosis, compared with 95.6% of women in the UK as a whole. This indicates that an earlier diagnosis has a positive impact on survival at one year. The three-year survival rates for Hounslow are not significantly different from the UK average, at 88.5% and 89% respectively. However, Hounslow's five-year survival rates fall below the UK average, at 77.2% compared with 83.4%. Female mortality rates from breast cancer are not significantly different from the UK average, at 26.5 deaths per 100,000 women with breast cancer compared with 26.

2.3 Breast screening

Screening for breast cancer is crucial in facilitating early diagnosis and improving survival rates. However, uptake of screening in London is poor. The Borough of Hounslow is not currently meeting the 70% uptake target for London, attaining 68% for the three year period prior to March 2010. ([Table 1](#))

The numbers of women invited for screening in Hounslow varies, with between 1,200 to 3,200 invitations per quarter (2010/11). Around 3 out of 5 invited women are screened; the remaining women miss crucial opportunities for cancer to be picked up, greatly reducing their chances of survival. ([Table 2](#)) Greater action must be taken to improve uptake.

The number of detected cancers within the West London region (1.63 Standardised Detection Rate (SDR)) does not vary greatly from the England (1.47 SDR) or London rates

¹ NHS Breast Screening Review 2008

(1.43 SDR) for women aged 50-64 years. The picture is similar for women aged 50-70 with an SDR rate of 2.5 for West London, on par with the London rate and slightly lower than the national rate of 2.8 for prevalence screening (referring to women who are invited for the first time).

The benign biopsy rate for West London is higher than both the London and England rates at 3.2 per 1,000 women, compared to 2.1 and 1.9 per 1,000, respectively. The assessment rate does marginally exceed the recommended standard of 10%, at 10.3% for women aged 50-60 years and 10.4% for women aged 50-70 years.

Figures vary slightly for incidence screens (women re-invited for screening), with a West London SDR detection rate of 1.13 for 50-64 year olds, compared with 1.32 nationally and 1.22 in London. The trend is similar for those aged 50-74 years, with 1.29 SDR for West London, 1.34 SDR in London and 1.44 SDR nationally. ([Table 4](#))

West of London Breast Screening Service activity report for Quarter 1 shows uptake for Hounslow sitting at 61%; the highest among the West of London Breast Screening Consortium members (the lowest being Hammersmith and Fulham with an uptake of 41%). The average uptake rate of the consortium was 58%. The screening service re-invites an average of 97% of women within 33 months (99% of Hounslow women). ([Table 5](#))

The activity report on cancer outcomes for the period from January to March 2010/11 shows that there were 2,056 women invited for screens in Hounslow. Of these, 99 were referred for follow-up assessment, 95% of whom were within the recommended guidelines. Cancer was detected in 14 women. ([Table 6](#))

The Heart of Hounslow static mammography unit was opened in June 2010. The opening of this static site has seen an increase in the uptake of breast screening, as not only is it more convenient for patients, it is an improved environment and round calls can be planned well in advance with minimal changes.

3. Strategic Leadership and Collaboration

The West of London Breast Screening Service (WoLBSS) is commissioned by the West of London Breast Screening Consortium to carry out screening of women. The Consortium is made up of the following PCTs: Hounslow, Ealing, Hammersmith and Fulham, Hillingdon, Westminster and Kensington and Chelsea. Ealing PCT acts as lead commissioner, while the Director Commissioning and Performance from the Outer Sub-cluster chairs the monthly strategic meetings. These meetings have full representation from all PCTs and Trusts and the London Quality Assurance Reference Centre (QARC). QARC carries out yearly quality assurance visits to the Consortium to monitor commissioning and operational issues, with any recommendations implemented by the Trusts. There are ongoing discussions to provide centralised call/recall, to go live in 2012.

A local health improvement initiative was carried out June 2010 in Hounslow, led by Health Trainers. The initiative addressed ethnic differences in uptake; Health Trainers received training on breast awareness and screening procedures and then attended local events. Hounslow will align Health Trainers with GP surgeries whose patients are due to be called when the round call plan has been updated to include age extension.

Enhanced Healthcare (EH) has been commissioned from Feb 2011 to June 2011 to conduct a pilot with women in Hounslow and Kensington and Chelsea who do not attend their

screening appointment. EH sent pre-invite letters and followed up women who missed appointments with a multi-lingual telephone service which provided in-depth screening advice. This has seen 32 women given new appointments, but has highlighted large inaccuracies in contact information.

The WoLBSS monitors reasons for cancelled appointments, with the most common reason being that the first appointment time offered is inconvenient.

NHS Hounslow has an action plan in addition to the WoLBSS collective plan to improve breast screening. The action plan aims to improve access to services for women with physical and sensory disabilities. The services also aim to:

- Improve experience of the screening services;
- Reduced rates of non-attendance; and
- Undertake list cleaning and database validation exercises.

4. Priorities

During 2011/12, Hounslow will:

- Implement the age-extension plan;
- Consider alternative screening providers (risk to commissioning if one PCT pulls out);
- Ensure that MJog text messages (automated appointment reminder service) are sent to all clients;
- Improve uptake of screening through increased health promotion activities; and
- Undertake collaborative Outer North West London Cluster screening promotion through the 'Screen for Life' site.

5. Summary of Need

The following table summarises the needs in Breast Screening in the London Borough of Hounslow.

SUMMARY OF NEED: CHECKLIST	
Is need increasing over time?	No
Is need greater than the London average?	No
Is there qualitative intelligence indicating that need is substantially unmet?	No
Is there an external inspection or report suggesting need is unmet?	Yes
Are quality indicators worsening over time?	No
Are quality indicators worse than the London average?	No
Is there an intervention of proven effectiveness to address the need which is not currently delivered in Hounslow (or not delivered enough)?	Yes

