

Brief:

To support Bowel Cancer Awareness Month across Wessex, with messages to the public about Bowel Cancer, Signs, Symptoms and Symptomatic FIT

Method

Share information with Primary Care for dissemination to their patients.

Share information with ICB's to disseminate through their contacts (external and internal).

Support and share messaging from Bowel Cancer UK throughout the month.

Develop social media and web-based content to share across the month.

Use patient stories to emphasise the importance of earlier diagnosis.

Signpost people to Cancer Matters Wessex website for further help/support and information.

Host webinar alongside Bowel Cancer UK, to support the campaign.

Channels

Facebook (GP Practices, NHS Dorset, Cancer Matters Wessex, HIOW ICB)

Twitter (GP Practices, Wessex Cancer Alliance, Cancer Matters Wessex, HIOW ICB and NHS Dorset)

LinkedIn (Wessex Cancer Alliance, HIOW ICB, NHS Dorset Bowel Cancer UK and any other primary care LinkedIn accounts)

Websites (Wessex Cancer Alliance, Cancer Matters Wessex, ICB websites, Bowel Cancer UK) - <https://cancermatterswessex.nhs.uk/bowel-cancer/>

Videos – Patient Stories (Ian and Sarah) and message from NHS Dorset: Jake Foster

GP Screens

Events/Engagement opportunities with public (TBC)

Bowel Cancer UK resources

Webinar – jointly with BCUK, to host a webinar for businesses and public sector workers, to learn more about the signs and symptoms of Bowel Cancer.

Target Audience

For this campaign there are a number of audiences the messaging will be relevant to.

- People registered with a GP in Wessex, who have been to the doctor with symptoms that required a FIT kit to be sent to them but have not returned it.
- Men and Women living in Wessex, who may be putting off going to their GP, with possible symptoms of Bowel Cancer.
- Businesses in Wessex

- HIOW and Dorset ICB workforce

Useful resources for Primary Care

Please consider using the following information during Bowel Cancer Awareness month:

- **Wessex Cancer Alliance Quality Improvement toolkit** for Bowel Cancer: [Bowel-Cancer-Screening-QI-Project-FINAL-2.pdf](#) – this toolkit provides details of two projects that can be used to improve uptake of bowel screening in your Practice.
- **Webinar with Bowel Cancer UK:** in April 2024, we arranged a webinar with Bowel Cancer UK for ICB staff and colleagues, which explains some of the key signs and symptoms as well as why it is important to complete your FIT.
Please consider sharing this webinar with your colleagues **(please email for a link to this recording. The webinar is not for sharing on social media please as the presenter is a patient who has not consented for public use.)**
- **GatewayC** – Bowel Cancer resources can be found on the GatewayC website:

<https://www.gatewayc.org.uk/webinars/>

<https://www.gatewayc.org.uk/courses/colorectal-cancer/>

Access GatewayC's free CPD resources this Bowel Cancer Awareness Month. Resources cover earlier detection, screening and FIT. Available to all primary care clinicians [here](#).

- For details of the Wessex colorectal pathway and FIT guidance please see our dedicated page here:
[Symptomatic FIT - Welcome to Wessex Cancer Alliance](#)
- FIT & Lower GI referrals: Watch our 2024 Lunch and Learn webinar here:
<https://youtu.be/QGvnhLubb14>
- Information for your patients about FIT and completing the test can be found here:
<https://cancermatterswessex.nhs.uk/fit-test/>
- Poster: Please consider printing and displaying a poster in your GP Practices for patients to see
 - [Poster 1](#)
 - [Poster 2](#)
 - [Poster 3](#)

Facts & Figures*

- Bowel cancer is the fourth most common cancer in the UK.
- Almost 43,000 people are diagnosed with bowel cancer every year in the UK.
- Around 268,000 people living in the UK today have been diagnosed with bowel cancer.
- 1 in 15 men and 1 in 18 women will be diagnosed with bowel cancer during their lifetime.
- More than nine out of ten new cases (94%) are diagnosed in people over the age of 50. But bowel cancer can affect anyone of any age.
- Bowel cancer is treatable and curable especially if diagnosed early.

(*Source – Bowel Cancer UK)

Messaging

New for 2025:

Please see the [NHS South West Bowel Screening campaign toolkit for new imagery and suggested social media copy, to encourage people to complete their Bowel screening when it is sent to them in the post. View toolkit here: https://wessexcanceralliance.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/South-West-Bowel-Screening-campaign-toolkit.pdf](https://wessexcanceralliance.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/South-West-Bowel-Screening-campaign-toolkit.pdf)

[Bowel Cancer UK](https://www.bowelcanceruk.org.uk/support-us/bowel-cancer-awareness-month/) have also developed their new campaign for 2025 called Pass it on. All their digital and social assets can be found here: <https://www.bowelcanceruk.org.uk/support-us/bowel-cancer-awareness-month/>

Below is suggested Bulletin/Newsletter/Web copy:

Symptomatic FIT message:

Bowel Cancer Awareness Month

Across Dorset, a test called the FIT test; that is used to rule out possible bowel cancer, is not being returned by some of the people that doctors have given it to.

This is a test that can detect possible bowel cancer before it becomes harder to treat. We want to raise awareness of the importance of this test, and how you can complete it, if your doctor has asked you to.

Bowel Cancer is the fourth most common cancer in the UK. About 43,000 people are diagnosed with bowel cancer each year. If it is detected early, treatment is more successful and there is a good chance of recovery. It is important that you go to your doctor, with any signs or symptoms so they can help to rule out bowel cancer.

The FIT (Faecal Immunochemical Test) is a test that looks for blood in a sample of your poo. It looks for tiny traces of blood that you might not be able to see and which could be a sign of cancer. Traces of blood in your poo can be caused by other medical conditions and doesn't mean you have cancer.

If you go to see your GP, they might ask you to carry out this test as part of the investigation for your symptoms. The FIT results help your doctor decide whether to refer you for more tests. The test could be given to you by the GP, or it may also arrive in the post, once it has been decided this is a test you need to do. It is really important that you return it to your GP surgery, as soon as possible, after you receive it.

The following video provides a guide about how to complete and return your FIT kit. If you need any further advice or support, please let your doctor know so they can support you to get the right tests.

<https://cancermatterswessex.nhs.uk/fit-test/>

Non-Symptomatic Message

Bowel Cancer Awareness Month

April is Bowel Cancer Awareness month and we are working with Wessex Cancer Alliance to raise awareness of the signs and symptoms of bowel cancer, and the importance of seeking advice from your GP, if you have any concerns.

Bowel Cancer is the fourth most common cancer in the UK. About 43,000 people are diagnosed with bowel cancer each year. If it is detected early, treatment is more successful and there is a good chance of recovery. It is important that you go to your doctor, with any signs or symptoms so they can help to rule out bowel cancer.

It is really important to speak to your GP, if you have noticed a change to your 'normal' and it has lasted for three weeks or more. Symptoms to look out for include;

- Bleeding from your bottom and/or blood in your poo
- A persistent and unexplained change in bowel habit
- Unexplained weight loss
- Extreme tiredness for no obvious reason
- A pain or lump in your tummy

Ian Girling lives in Dorset, and last year, during investigations for a bad back, his consultant reported that he was not happy with the shape of Ian's bowel. Ian was asked to complete a poo test at home and return this in the post. This is a test that detects small amounts of blood in your poo and can be an early indicator of bowel cancer.

Ian's results came back positive and he had to have some polyps removed from his bowel but was given the all clear following this procedure. Listen to Ian's story here:

<https://youtu.be/wHPPQnBEC0w>

9 times out of ten, your symptoms, like Ian's will not mean you have cancer, but it is better to know as early as possible, so you can rule out cancer or get the treatment you need, quickly.

When Sarah went to the GP with symptoms that needed investigating, she found out that she did have bowel cancer. She received treatment for this and was given the all clear just over 10 years ago. Bowel cancer is treatable, and you can live a life after a cancer diagnosis, but an early diagnosis is key to this success. Watch Sarah's story here: <https://youtu.be/A4gkml5w7BQ>

For further information and details of support available in your area, please visit our dedicated website <https://cancermatterswessex.nhs.uk/bowel-cancer/>

Social Media

Below, are some suggested social media posts that you can use during Bowel Cancer Awareness month. These have been split into Symptomatic FIT messaging (ideally shared by Primary Care directly) and non-symptomatic messaging (signs/symptoms and awareness raising).

FIT SYMPTOMATIC Social Media posts**

- It is very important that you do your FIT (poo test) as soon as possible after you receive it. Your doctor needs your results to decide whether to send you for more tests. <https://cancermatterswessex.nhs.uk/fit-test/> #ReturnYourFIT
- If your GP has asked you to complete a FIT Kit (poo test) please remember to return this as soon as possible. Catching cancer early, saves lives. <https://cancermatterswessex.nhs.uk/fit-test/> #ReturnYourFIT
- Colorectal Surgeon, Jake Foster has this message for Bowel Cancer Awareness month https://youtu.be/_cOTmmNMCEo #ReturnYourFIT
- Ian Girling got the all clear after he had some tests to rule out cancer. In this video, he describes how simple the FIT (poo test) was to complete <https://youtu.be/1ZsxqkVuY1c> #ReturnYourFIT

For GP social media

- When we give you a test to complete at home, it is really important that you return them as soon as possible, so we can get your results. If you have had a FIT kit given to you by your doctor (see image above) please let us know if you are having any difficulty getting this back to us. [Insert poster 1,2 or 3 as image]
- A FIT (poo test) looks for blood in your poo sample and tells us if we need to investigate your symptoms with more tests, to help rule out cancer. Please remember to return your FIT tube to us, if your doctor has given you one.
- If you have been given a FIT test by your doctor after talking to them about your bowel symptoms it is really important that you do the test, even if you have recently completed the same test sent to you in the post as part of the bowel cancer screening programme.

(**Risk – people may get confused between FIT kits sent to them as part of bowel screening programme and FIT kits sent to them by GP. The more GP-led this part of the campaign is, the better chance of the right people seeing the messaging.)

AccuRX has some automated text message reminders you can send to patients (they are called [FIT sample reminder](#)). If you do not have access to these, please see some suggested text messages GP's could send to people who have been sent a FIT Kit:

- Hi [INSERT PATIENT NAME] As we discussed today, it is important that you return your FIT (poo/stool) sample as soon as possible. This will help your clinical team decide whether you need an urgent follow up test. There is a link below with information on how to do the test <https://cancermatterswessex.nhs.uk/fit-test/>.
- Reminder: you have been sent a test to help us understand the symptoms you discussed with your doctor. Please remember to return this to us as soon as possible. Thank you.
- Your recent doctor's appointment requires you to complete a test that you have been given. Please remember to return this as soon as possible or contact us if you have any questions.

The link below has information about how to do the test:

<https://cancermatterswessex.nhs.uk/fit-test/>

- You have recently been given a test we need you to return to us as soon as you can. This video might be helpful if you are not sure how to complete the test:

<https://cancermatterswessex.nhs.uk/fit-test/>

Non-Symptomatic/Awareness Raising social media posts

- April is Bowel Cancer Awareness month and we are raising awareness of the signs & symptoms and when you should speak to your GP. #BowelCancer #WessexBowelCancerCampaign



[\(Download this image here\)](#)

- This Bowel cancer awareness month, make sure you know what the possible signs and symptoms are, and when to go see your doctor. You know your normal, so if something has changed, get it checked: <https://youtu.be/6LVJQnwgY8c> #WessexBowelCancerCampaign
- Are you concerned about Bowel Cancer? Speak to your GP as it might not be cancer but it is best to find out so you can get the treatment you need. #WessexBowelCancerCampaign Watch Ian's story: <https://youtu.be/wHPPQnBEC0w>
- Is there life after bowel cancer? Sarah is 10 years cancer free – watch her story and seek help if you have noticed a change that doesn't seem right. <https://youtu.be/A4gkml5w7BQ> #WessexBowelCancerCampaign
- Consultant Colorectal Surgeon, Jake Foster tells us all about the signs/symptoms of bowel cancer and when to see your GP. <https://youtu.be/6LVJQnwgY8c>

#WessexBowelCancerCampaign

- Sarah is a bowel cancer survivor. If caught early, cancer is treatable and survivable. Watch Sarah's story here: <https://youtu.be/A4gkml5w7BQ> #WessexBowelCancerCampaign
- 9 times out of 10 – it isn't bowel cancer. Watch Ian's story and don't delay going to your GP. Get the reassurance you need. <https://youtu.be/wHPPQnBEC0w> #WessexBowelCancerCampaign
- Talking about your bowel habits may seem embarrassing but it might just save your life.... Sarah says she was treated with respect at all times: <https://youtu.be/CkomspVyw9E> #BowelCancer #WessexBowelCancerCampaign

Social Media Tags:

X (formerly Twitter)

@NHS_WCA

@CancerMatters

@NHSDorset

@bowelcanceruk

Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/dorsetchamber/>

<https://www.facebook.com/CancerMattersWessex>

<https://www.facebook.com/bowelcanceruk>

Videos for the campaign:

- **Ian**

Ian Girling was given the all clear after having some tests to check for Bowel cancer. He has kindly shared his story and encourages others to see their GP if they have concerns:

<https://youtu.be/1ZsxqkVuY1c>

<https://youtu.be/wHPPQnBEC0w>

- **Sarah**

Sarah is a bowel cancer survivor and she wants others to see there is life after cancer. Sarah has shared her cancer journey with us, along with a few messages about seeing your GP and not letting cancer rule her life!

Sarah's Story: <https://youtu.be/A4gkml5w7BQ>

<https://youtu.be/CkomspVyw9E>

https://youtu.be/eZ_YbWbZF8o

<https://youtu.be/gLzNJttniwU>

- **Jake**

Jake is a Colorectal Surgeon and he has supported the campaign with the following videos to use for Bowel Cancer Awareness month:

<https://youtu.be/1I86s2IMIQk>

<https://youtu.be/6LVJQnwgY8c>

<https://youtu.be/52boUZkp3Sg>

https://youtu.be/_cOTmmNMCEO

Further information/Resources

There are a number of cancer charities, some specifically for Bowel Cancer, that can provide support and advice to patients who have been diagnosed with Bowel Cancer. There are also many resources that can be downloaded, printed or ordered for delivery, to support awareness raising. We have listed some of these below;

Bowel Cancer UK: <https://www.bowelcanceruk.org.uk/>

Bowel Cancer Research: <https://www.bowelresearchuk.org/>

Guts UK: https://gutscharity.org.uk/advice-and-information/conditions/bowel-cancer/?gad_source=1&gclid=CjwKCAjwte-vBhBFEiwAQsv_xZDhq6IP-JwLdvnLFzTD1-RLPmbDfZgixwD_fcXuptdPStm5j_4P3BoCG6wQAvD_BwE

Cancer Research UK: <https://www.cancerresearchuk.org/about-cancer/bowel-cancer>

NHS Bowel Cancer Information: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/bowel-cancer/>

Macmillan: <https://www.macmillan.org.uk/cancer-information-and-support/bowel-cancer>

Cancer Care Map: <https://www.cancercaremap.org/>

Information supporting Symptomatic FIT:

<https://cancermatterswessex.nhs.uk/fit-test/>