NHS
Wessex
Cancer Alliance












Earlier Diagnosis of Cancer Primary Care Local Improvement Scheme 26/27

Bowel Screening Requirement

Contents

This guidance document is intended to support you to deliver the screening requirement in the Wessex Cancer Alliance Earlier Diagnosis LIS 26/27.

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- Templates to record activity
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LIS Requirement 4: Improving bowel cancer screening uptake in your PCN population

Detail of activity required

- PCNs to identify bowel screening non-responders for a 6-month period from October 25 – March 26 and send a bulk text message reminder to all.
- PCNs to carry out telephone follow up calls to non-responders in the 50-59 year age group that do not respond following the text message intervention
- PCNs to complete one additional intervention of their choice to improve bowel screening uptake – see page 12 for some ideas.

LIS Requirement 4: Improving bowel screening uptake

July 26

Run report provided to identify non-responders to bowel screening invite **aged 50-59** from Oct 25 – Mar 26

→ Send bulk text reminder to non-responders **aged 50-59**
SNOMED CT - Advice given about bowel cancer screening programme 382161000000102

Aug 26

→ Send non-responder numbers to Vicki Wright vicki.wright@wca.uhs.nhs.uk by 30th July 2026

Sept 26

Oct 26

Run report to identify all non-responders Oct 25 - Mar 26.

Nov 26

50-59 year olds - Carry out follow up telephone calls on remaining non-responders aged 50-59. Example script provided in resource pack.
Successful call made (spoke to patient): SNOMED CT - Bowel cancer screening programme telephone invitation 862011000000104
Replacement kit requested: SNOMED CT -Bowel Screening Programme replacement faecal immunochemical test kit requested 1218761000000105
Patient declined: SNOMED CT - Bowel cancer screening declined 294201000000109

60-74 year olds - Send bulk text reminder to non-responders aged 60-74
SNOMED CT - Advice given about bowel cancer screening programme 382161000000102

Dec 26

Jan 27

Feb 27

Mar 27

Re-run the reports for total non-responders and those aged 50-59 and submit numbers as part of your LIS evaluation report

Identifying bowel screening non-responders

Ardens searches to identify non-responders have been provided to you for importing in both SystmOne and EMIS. These include exclusions such as people who already have a diagnosis or who are receiving palliative care.
If you need any support to run the searches please contact us.

Coding

Please code any screening follow up activity with the following SNOMED Codes:

- **Bowel screening reminder text message sent to patient**

- SCTID 382161000000102 Advice given about bowel cancer screening programme

- **Successful call made (spoke to patient):**

- SCTID 862011000000104 Bowel cancer screening programme telephone invitation

- **Replacement kit requested for patient**

- SCTID 1218761000000105 Bowel Screening Programme replacement FIT requested

- **Patient declines screening**

- Bowel cancer screening declined SCTID 294201000000109

Text message reminder to non-responders

Text-message reminders have emerged as a useful and low-cost strategy for supporting screening uptake, offering higher assurance of delivery than traditional postal reminders and the ability to directly share information and educational materials.
On the next two pages are some suggested messages however please feel free to amend as needed.

Dear {insert patient name}
Our practice records show that you did not complete your most recent bowel cancer screening test.
The doctors at {insert practice name} support bowel screening as an important part of looking after your health. Screening can identify problems before they become more serious and when they are easier to treat.
If you need to request a new kit from the screening hub you can email rsc-tr.bcspsouthernhub@nhs.net or telephone 0800 707 60 60. See this Cancer Research UK video for how to complete the test.
Screening is for people with no symptoms. If you have any bowel symptoms, contact us for an appointment.
Thanks.

The bowel screening hub have requested that bulk text messages are **not sent on a Monday** as this is their helpline's busiest day

Evidence suggests GP endorsements can encourage people to take screening more seriously. Where appropriate, use a GP endorsement in reminder messages.

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Text message reminders to non-responders

You can also utilise digital, mobile friendly surveys embedded within text message reminders to make it as easy as possible for patients to respond.
Consider the number of people you are contacting and the capacity needed to track and action the survey responses.

Text message

Dear {insert patient name}
I tried calling today to chat about your recent bowel screening test as our records show you did not complete it. We encourage patients to do the test as it's an important part of looking after your health. We understand that life gets busy and it's easy to forget. Keeping the test by your toilet can be a handy reminder.
If you've lost your test we can request a replacement for you. Please use the attached questionnaire to respond.

Please complete this questionnaire: (link will appear here)

Thanks, {insert Doctors name)

Survey

Would you like us to request another kit for the bowel cancer screening programme to be posted to your home?
Yes/No

If you selected no, would you like a call to discuss the Bowel Cancer Screening Programme?
Yes – I would like a call to discuss the Bowel Screening Programme
No – I do not wish to have a call to discuss the Bowel Screening Programme

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Understanding the barriers to participation in the bowel screening programme

Evidence shows some of the common barriers include:

- **Fear and denial around the test outcome**
- **A misconception that the test is for people with symptoms of bowel cancer**
- **Concerns around the practicalities and cleanliness of the test**
- **Low individual risk perception or limited consideration of future consequences of bowel cancer**
- **Forgetting to complete the test**
- **Difficulty accessing information on the test or bowel cancer due to low health literacy or language barriers**

Non-responder follow up telephone calls

Telephone calls to bowel screening non-responders can improve participation through supporting **informed consent,** giving patients a direct opportunity to understand the screening process, ask questions, and make an active informed choice.

This CRUK script can be adapted to meet your needs

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[CRUK Bowel Screening Good Practice Guide]

A guide to having a conversation with someone who has not completed their bowel cancer screening kit

It might be helpful to have the following in front of you:
the benefits and harms of bowel cancer screening and **ways to collect your poo**

Hello, [verify who speaking with]
My name is… I am phoning from… [insert name of GP practice]
There's nothing to worry about, I'm phoning about the bowel cancer screening programme.
Is it okay to have a chat with you about this? [If not, arrange convenient time to call back]

We understand that you didn't return your bowel cancer screening test kit.
Can I just check that you received your kit?
[Mention date it was sent from the screening hub]

Yes

Can I ask why you didn't return the kit?
[Record why – we would be interested to hear about any barriers to screening you encounter. Email SEinbox@cancer.org.uk to let us know.]

Wants to participate but didn't get around to it

Suggest practical tips to complete the kit. See our step-by-step patient guide to bowel cancer screening

Unsure whether to complete or not

Discuss benefits and harms of screening

Wishes to participate

Doesn't want to participate

Doesn't want to participate

Let them know there's a formal opt-out process for the programme and offer further information.

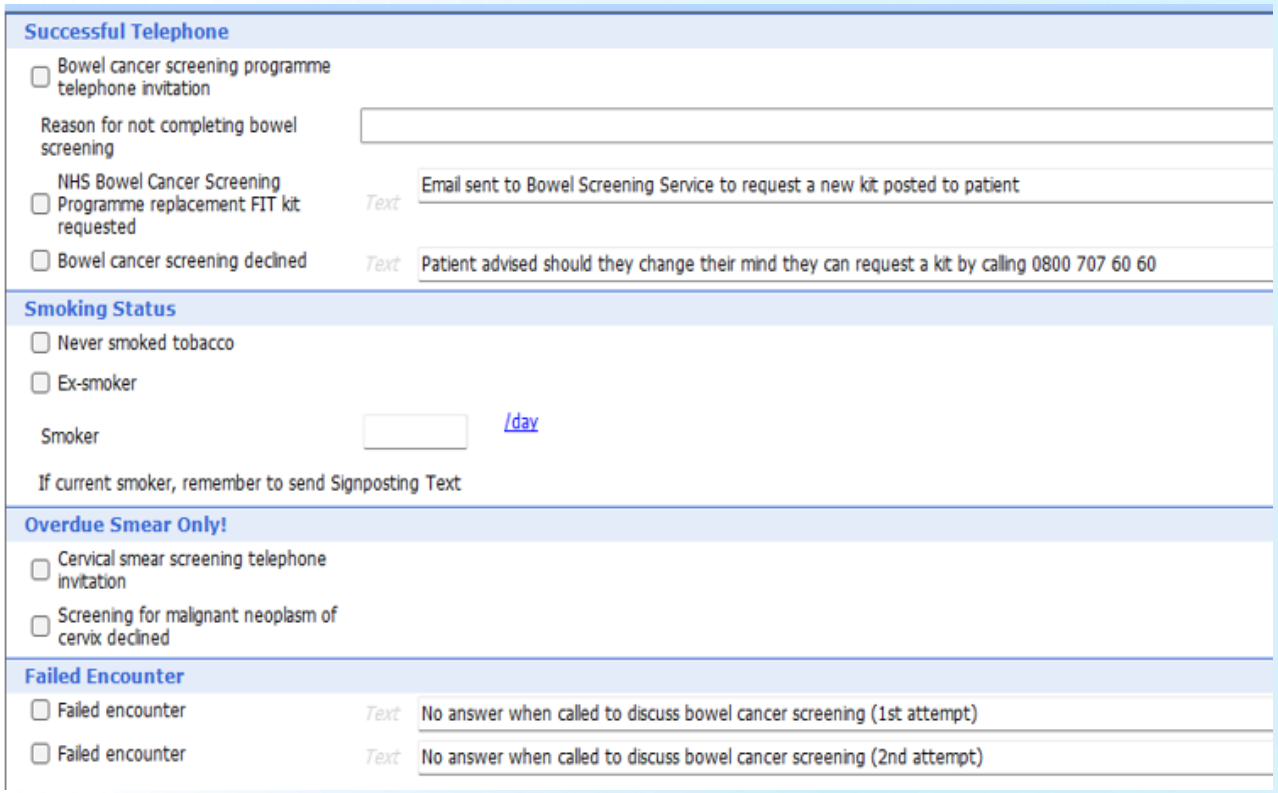
Give them the number of the bowel cancer screening helpline. See **appendix 5**.

No

- Check if the address is correct
- Encourage the person to call the helpline number
- You can order a replacement kit on their behalf (consent required)

Order replacement kit. See **appendix 5**.

Non-responder follow up telephone calls - Template



Successful Telephone

- ☐ Bowel cancer screening programme telephone invitation
- Reason for not completing bowel screening
- ☐ NHS Bowel Cancer Screening Programme replacement FIT kit requested — Text: Email sent to Bowel Screening Service to request a new kit posted to patient
- ☐ Bowel cancer screening declined — Text: Patient advised should they change their mind they can request a kit by calling 0800 707 60 60

Smoking Status

- ☐ Never smoked tobacco
- ☐ Ex-smoker
- Smoker /day
- If current smoker, remember to send Signposting Text

Overdue Smear Only!

- ☐ Cervical smear screening telephone invitation
- ☐ Screening for malignant neoplasm of cervix declined

Failed Encounter

- ☐ Failed encounter — Text: No answer when called to discuss bowel cancer screening (1st attempt)
- ☐ Failed encounter — Text: No answer when called to discuss bowel cancer screening (2nd attempt)

You may find it helpful to record details of telephone follow up activity in a template with the relevant coding embedded.

Exported versions of the pictured template have been shared with you or you may want to develop your own.

Recent local projects found that the phone calls presented an **opportunity for wider health promotion** hence the inclusion of fields for smoking and cervical screening, however this is optional.

Replacement tests can be requested by primary care on behalf of patients (with their consent) by emailing the bowel screening hub on rsc-tr.bcspsouthernhub@nhs.net. Some practices have found it easier to wait until they have a list of patients and send them all in one email.

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Non-responder follow up telephone calls

Telephone Follow Up Education Session – Date TBC

A session will be held in September for non-clinical leads and team members who will be involved in the non-responder follow up telephone calls.

This session will cover the key messages and information needed to carry out the calls, including answers to common questions you may be asked.

You will also hear from practices with experience of following up their screening non-responders, what has worked well for them and what were the challenges.

Additional bowel screening improvement activity

Please implement one additional bowel screening activity of your choice and tell us about it.
Please see some suggestions below, and links to useful resources on the following page.

- Set up regular text message reminders for people who are coded as non-responders
- Create IT system alerts in the patient record to support opportunistic reminders
- Utilise available translated and easy read resources to support participation from groups who may be less likely to participate in screening
- Incorporate screening reminders into long term condition reviews e.g. diabetes
- Consider attaching a video message to reminder text messages e.g. with a practice GP explaining why they support bowel screening
- Send a GP letter on or around the patient's 50th birthday to make people aware they will soon receive an invitation from the bowel screening programme
- Carry out engagement activities within practices and/or your local area to raise awareness of bowel cancer screening

Useful resources

Data

Bowel screening data can be found on OHID Fingertips.

Cancer Research UK has developed a local bowel screening tool which enables practices to understand how their screening coverage compares to predicted levels based on socio-demographics.

Evidence

The Cancer Research UK Bowel Screening Grid brings together the evidence on the effectiveness of different interventions in groups with lower participation.

Primary Care Guidance

Bowel Cancer Screening Primary Care Good Practice Guide (Cancer Research UK)

Patient information

Video - How to do the FIT bowel screening test (Cancer Research UK)

Video – Using your bowel screening kit (NHS) – Simple animation available in BSL and subtitles for 10 other languages

Your guide to bowel screening (NHS) and Instructions for using the screening kit (NHS) are available in 30 different languages

Bowel cancer screening: easy guides - GOV.UK - Easy read guides for people with learning disabilities