

National Breast Screening incident:

FAQs

How will I know if I missed a screen?

The women who have missed a screening invitation will now be aged between 70 -79 years. Women being offered the opportunity for a screen will be informed by letter from Public Health England by the end of May 2018. If you choose to take up the offer of a screen, information on what you need to do will be provided in your letter.

What should I do now?

As usual, you should continue to be aware of any changes to your breasts and if you have any concerns you should see your GP.

If you **do not** receive a letter from PHE by the end of May 2018, and are registered with a GP in England, you can be reassured that you did not miss a screen.

If you **do** receive a letter from PHE informing you that you are affected, you will be offered the opportunity for a screen. To help you choose you may find it helpful to read the following leaflet: [Breast Screening For Women Over 70](#)

If you do choose to have a screen, information on what you need to do will be provided in your letter.

Should I contact my GP?

You do not need to contact your GP as all women affected will receive a letter from PHE by the end of May, which will provide information about what you need to do if you choose to have a screen.

At all times women should continue to be aware of any changes to their breasts and if changes occur, then you should see your GP.

Why wasn't I sent my screening appointment at the right time?

During work to upgrade the NHS Breast Screening computerised invitation system, PHE identified a number of complex issues, which overtime have contributed to variations in how local breast screening services send out their invitations.

The issues identified have only impacted on invitations to women when they were at the upper age limit of the programme, aged 68 – 71 years.

What is being done to ensure breast screening invitations are issued on schedule in future?

Urgent work has been carried out on the computerised invitation system and an additional failsafe has been introduced to ensure that the problem does not reoccur.

We are confident that all the issues have now been fixed and no further women will be affected. All the women registered with a GP in England who did not receive their final invitation will be written to by PHE and offered the opportunity for a catch up screen.

Is anyone under age 70 or over 80 affected?

No. A thorough review of the NHS breast screening invitation system has shown that only a small proportion of women at the upper age limit of the NHS programme, who were aged between 70 -71 years were affected.

What are the symptoms for breast cancer?

- a lump in the breast
- a change in the size or shape of the breast
- dimpling of the skin or thickening in the breast tissue
- a nipple that's turned in (inverted)
- a rash (like eczema) on the nipple
- discharge from the nipple
- swelling or a lump in the armpit
- pain or discomfort in the breast that doesn't go away.

A lump in the breast is the most common symptom of breast cancer.

Most breast lumps are not cancer. They are usually fluid-filled lumps (cysts) or a fibroadenoma, made up of fibrous and glandular tissue. But it is important to get anything that is unusual for you checked by your GP. The earlier breast cancer is treated, the more successful treatment is likely to be.

For more information on the symptoms please see:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/breast-cancer/symptoms/>

For general information about the NHS breast screening service, including when screening is needed, see [here](#).