



England

Bowel Cancer Awareness Month

Communications Toolkit

April 2025



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About this toolkit

This toolkit is designed to support communications around Bowel Cancer Awareness Month in April 2025.

Every April, Bowel Cancer Awareness Month gives us a chance to raise awareness about bowel cancer and bowel cancer screening.

It's a crucial opportunity to educate people about the disease and its symptoms, and to support people affected by bowel cancer.

Please use the materials to increase awareness of the importance of bowel cancer screening among your networks by:

- Ensuring relevant health services have this toolkit to support their communications
- Including information in your newsletters
- Incorporating messages in internal communications (eg email and staff bulletins and intranets)
- Ensuring information on bowel cancer screening is up to date.



Key messages – bowel cancer screening

- Bowel cancer is the 3rd most common type of cancer.
- Bowel cancer screening is now available to everyone aged 54 to 74 when they become eligible. It is gradually expanding to include 50 to 53 years olds with the aim of completing this in 2025.
- The NHS automatically invites people once they become eligible for bowel cancer screening.
- Bowel cancer screening is offered every two years.
- The FIT kit is more convenient to use than the previous routine bowel cancer screening test.
- 97 or 98 out of 100 people who use their bowel cancer screening kit do not need further tests.
- 2 or 3 in 100 people are asked to go to hospital for further tests.
- 7 to 10 in every 100 people who have a colonoscopy turn out to have bowel cancer.
- Download the [NHS App](#) to get your future messages about bowel cancer screening straight to your smart device.
- Public information about bowel cancer screening is available on the [NHS website](#).



Key messages – completing your FIT kit

- If a FIT kit is sent to you, it's meant for you. Even if you don't have symptoms, it can detect signs of cancer of bowel cancer before you do.
- The kit can be completed in the privacy of your own home by following the simple step-by-step instructions on the underside of the box lid.
- You only need to collect one tiny sample of poo using the plastic stick provided. Pop it in the sample bottle and post it back for free, to be tested.
- Maybe you think it's messy or awkward, but by following a few simple steps, a tiny sample is all it takes.
- Your next poo could save your life. So, if you're sent a kit, join the millions completing theirs.
- If you receive a kit when you're eligible, help yourself by remembering to complete it. Put it by the loo. Don't put it off.



Key messages - Lynch syndrome


- An estimated 1 in 400 people in England have Lynch syndrome (around 175,000 people), but just 5% are aware they are living with the condition.
- People with Lynch syndrome have a higher risk than the average person of getting bowel cancer.
- Around 1,100 bowel cancers are caused by Lynch syndrome each year in England.
- People diagnosed with Lynch syndrome are invited for a colonoscopy to check for signs of bowel cancer by the NHS Bowel Cancer Screening Programme.
- People with Lynch syndrome will be automatically invited for a surveillance colonoscopy every 2 years.
- Out of 100 people with Lynch syndrome, colonoscopy surveillance every 2 years prevents between 40 and 60 people from getting bowel cancer.



Useful information

- The Faecal Immunochemical Test (FIT) kit is available through the NHS Bowel Cancer Screening Programme to everyone aged 54 to 74 and is expanding to include all over 50s.
- People aged 75 and over can request a kit by phoning the NHS Bowel Cancer Screening helpline on 0800 707 60 60.
- Since the FIT kit was introduced into the screening programme in 2019, national uptake has increased from 65.2% to 67.8% ([Q1 2024/25](#)).
- The FIT kit is convenient to use as it only requires one sample which is done in the privacy of your own home and returned in a sealed bottle.
- In the UK, every 30 minutes, someone dies from bowel cancer.
- Bowel cancer screening is offered to eligible people every two years.
- Find out more about bowel cancer screening at nhs.uk/bowel

Posters



NHS

Have you done your bowel cancer screening test?

If you're 54 to 74, you'll receive an NHS bowel cancer screening kit every two years.

Returning your home kit reduces your chances of getting seriously ill from bowel cancer.

So if you receive a kit in the post, put it by the loo. Don't put it off.

nhs.uk/bowel



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nhs.uk/bowel



NHS

Have you been diagnosed with Lynch syndrome?

Having a colonoscopy when the NHS invites you could save your life.

That's because people with Lynch syndrome are more likely than the average person to get bowel cancer.

But regular surveillance helps to catch cancer early, reducing your chances of getting seriously ill from it.

nhs.uk/bowel

Download these posters on [CommsLink](#) , [Future NHS](#), or the [Campaign Resources Centre](#)

Digital display screen assets

For screens in public areas including GP and hospital waiting rooms



NHS

Have you done your bowel cancer screening test?

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www.nhs.uk/bowel



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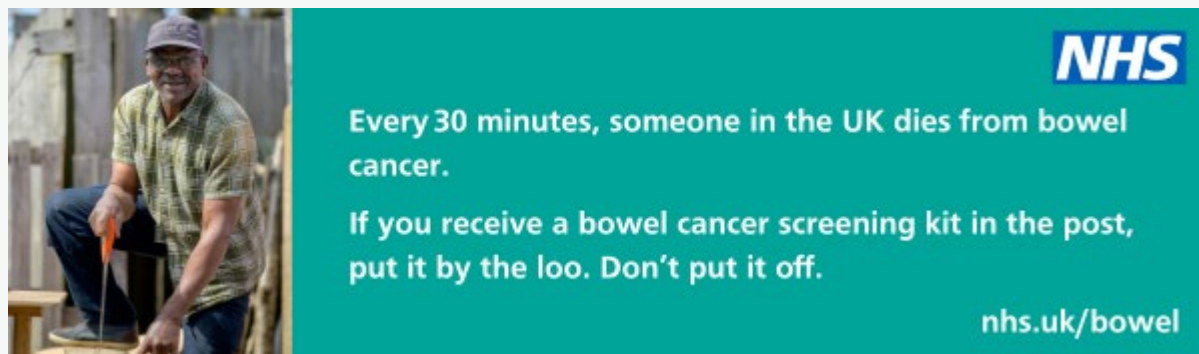
www.nhs.uk/bowel

Have you done your bowel cancer screening test?

Download a selection of display screens on [CommsLink](#), [Future NHS](#) or the [Campaign Resources Centre](#)

Email signature banners

Include a banner in your email signature to promote the uptake of screening



Download a selection of social cards on [CommsLink](#), [Future NHS](#), or the [Campaign Resources Centre](#)



Social media assets

Suggested text to accompany these social cards are on the next slide



Download a selection of social cards on [CommsLink](#), [Future NHS](#), or the [Campaign Resources Centre](#)

Example posts

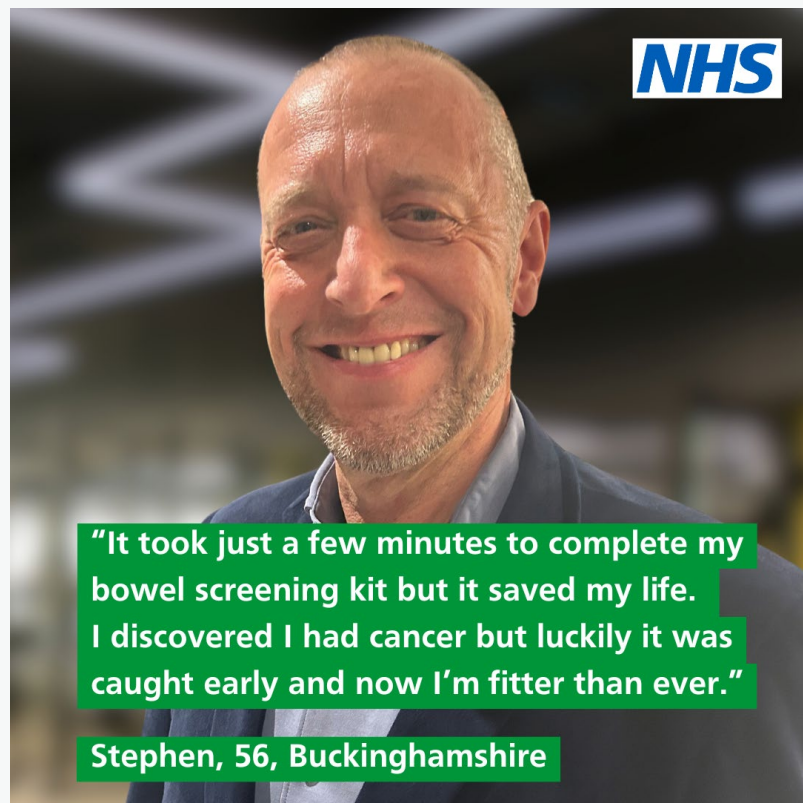
Suggested text to accompany the social media assets on the previous slide

- If you've had a #BowelCancer testing kit through the post, don't forget to send it back. Your next poo could save your life. Find out more: nhs.uk/bowel
- If you're 54 to 74, the NHS will send you a #BowelCancer testing kit. Catching bowel cancer early reduces your chances of getting seriously ill from it. So, don't just leave it in the back of a drawer - send it back today. Find out more: nhs.uk/bowel



Case study - Stephen

Share Stephen's story to encourage people to take up the offer of screening



"It took just a few minutes to complete my bowel screening kit but it saved my life. I discovered I had cancer but luckily it was caught early and now I'm fitter than ever."

Stephen, 56, Buckinghamshire

"I've always been in good health and eaten well so I never thought I'd get cancer. But I did.

When I received an NHS bowel screening home test kit in the post I made sure I completed it.

I assumed everything would be ok... but a couple of weeks later I was invited for a colonoscopy and they found a malignant tumour in my bowel. I couldn't believe it - I had no symptoms.

It turned out I had stage 2 bowel cancer. I was devastated.

Soon after, I had bowel surgery. It was successful and luckily the cancer hadn't spread. I've recovered and have started boxing. I feel as fit as I was before my diagnosis and surgery.

If you do have bowel cancer, finding out early is crucial because the sooner it's found, the better the outcome.

So, if you've got a test kit at home in the back of a drawer, do it today. The chances are there's nothing to worry about. But it might just save your life!"

Case study - Phil

Share Phil's story to encourage people to take up the offer of screening



"I was 69 and in the best of health. I had no symptoms. I did wonder if my poo was looser and a bit more frequent, but the change wasn't alarming.

I was due my bowel screening test and usually got a letter a few weeks later saying everything's fine. Not this time. Very quickly I had a colonoscopy appointment at the Royal North Devon Hospital.

I discovered that I had stage 3 lower rectal adenocarcinoma spreading into two or more local lymph nodes.

Treatment was chemotherapy and radiotherapy five days a week, for six weeks. I had three big operations. As the stoma nurses say, 'We take a year of your life – and then give you back your life.'

Looking on the bright side is the most important advice I could give anyone. Depression, worry and fear is as much an enemy as the cancer itself.

If you're nervous about bowel screening I'd say why are you waiting? Grab the opportunity. It can save your life. Symptoms or not, put your mind at rest. It's a no-brainer.

Now my stomas have been removed. I had one of the worst stages of cancer but thanks to screening, I'm clear of cancer, and I'm here."



Bowel cancer screening example copy

Suggested newsletter text to encourage people to take up the offer of screening

Is your bowel cancer screening kit sitting at the back of a drawer?

If you're 54 to 74, you should have received your NHS bowel cancer screening (FIT) kit through the post. That's because the NHS automatically sends a kit every two years to everyone in that age range and is gradually including people aged 50 to 53 too.

Out of every 5,000 people who use their test kit, nine turn out to have cancer. But if it's spotted earlier, the chances of recovering from bowel cancer are higher.

The test can be done in the comfort of your home and only needs a tiny sample of poo to test for signs of cancer.

April is Bowel Cancer Awareness Month so there's no better time to dig out the bowel cancer testing kit that you hid in that bottom drawer or look out for it in the post. And then put it by the loo. Don't put it off.

Find out more about bowel cancer screening at nhs.uk/bowel.

Bowel cancer screening carousel

Available in 12 languages to encourage uptake in underserved communities





This social media carousel post is available in English as well as in Arabic, Bengali, Farsi, Gujarati, Hindi, Polish, Punjabi, Romanian, Somali, Turkish, and Urdu.

Download these social cards on [CommsLink](#)

Social media quote cards

These quote cards can be downloaded from [CommsLink](#) and shared to reinforce wider messages about bowel cancer and the importance of screening.



If bowel cancer is diagnosed early, it might be easier to treat and cure. If you or anyone in your family receives a test kit, we encourage you to do it – **it really can save your life**

Professor Frank Chinegwundoh MBE
Consultant Surgeon and
Chairman of Cancer Black Care



As a GP and **bowel cancer survivor**, I know it's important to talk to your GP practice about any symptoms without delay.

Early diagnosis saves lives.

Dr Anisha Patel
GP diagnosed with bowel cancer in 2018

Articles on bowel cancer and screening

These articles have been published in the publications listed below to encourage screening uptake across several communities.

[Weekly Desh \(Bengali\)](#)

[Potrika \(Bengali\)](#)

[Daily Jang \(Urdu\)](#)

[Asian Express \(English\)](#)

[Asian Standard \(English\)](#)

[Asian Leader \(English\)](#)

[The Voice \(English\)](#)

[Cooltura \(Polish\)](#)

[Le Petit Journal \(French\)](#)



Useful links

[Bowel screening information – nhs.uk/bowel](https://nhs.uk/bowel)

[Bowel cancer symptoms – nhs.uk](https://nhs.uk)

[Bowel cancer screening leaflet – gov.uk](https://gov.uk)

[Lynch-syndrome leaflet – gov.uk](https://gov.uk)

[Future NHS bowel cancer screening folder](#)

[CommsLink bowel screening folder](#)

[GP interview on bowel cancer for black and Asian radio stations on CommsLink](#)

[Talking about bowel movements isn't embarrassing – it can save our lives, blog post by Dr Anisha Patel](#)

[NHS England's latest bowel cancer screening age extension phasing press release](#)

[Bowel Cancer UK Bowel Cancer Awareness Month toolkit](#)

[Cancer Research UK bowel cancer pages](#)

[Macmillan Cancer Support Bowel Cancer Awareness Month page](#)



The bowel cancer screening social media cards, posters, digital screen assets and email signatures in the previous slides are available on [CommsLink](#), [Future NHS](#), and the [Campaign Resources Centre](#).