



Scottish Bowel Screening Programme Statistics

For the period of invitations from May 2023 to April 2025

An Accredited official statistics release for Scotland

Publication date: 7 April 2026

About this release

This report by Public Health Scotland (PHS) provides an annual update to key performance indicators for the Scottish Bowel Screening Programme. The report includes uptake, laboratory and clinical outcomes of screened individuals, for those invited from May 2023 to April 2025.

Main points

For the two-year period from 01 May 2023 to 30 April 2025, over 1.9 million people were invited to complete a home bowel screening test:

- Two-thirds of people successfully returned their kit (65.2% uptake), meeting the programme minimum uptake target of 60%. Uptake was higher in females (67.7%) than males (62.7%).

Uptake by deprivation category and sex, May 2023 to April 2025



- There was a 22.1 percentage point gap between uptake in the most (52.3%) and least (74.4%) deprived population quintiles as measured by the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD). Uptake for both men and women in the most deprived areas was below the programme target of 60%.
- 34,676 people (2.8% of the tests) had a positive result and were referred for a colonoscopy – a more detailed investigation. Three-quarters received a colonoscopy, while most of the remaining quarter either chose not to proceed or had medical reasons that made it unsuitable. This was similar to last year’s report.
- While waiting times for screening colonoscopies have improved generally, only four out of 10 (41.5%) people received their colonoscopy within four weeks of their positive referral. This was an increase of 12.7 percentage points since last year’s report. However, two out of 10 people (18.6%) waited more than eight weeks for their colonoscopy. This was a reduction of 10.0 percentage points since last year’s report.
- Overall, 5.0% (1,295 people) of those having a colonoscopy following a positive screen were found to have bowel cancer. Three out of five cancers (63.4%) were diagnosed at the earliest two stages, when treatment is most likely to be successful.
- In people eligible to participate, about one third of bowel cancers are identified through screening. These cancers are often at an earlier, more treatable stage which is why anyone sent a bowel screening test is encouraged to complete the test and return using the pre-paid envelope provided. For further information, visit [NHS Inform](#).

Background

The Scottish Bowel Screening Programme invites those aged 50 to 74 to be screened every two years. Participants are sent a test kit to their home and return a sample from a bowel motion to the Scottish Bowel Screening Laboratory. Those with a positive test result are referred to their NHS board of residence for follow-up, with the majority receiving a colonoscopy.

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Further information

Our statistical practice is regulated by the Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR). These accredited official statistics were independently reviewed by the Office for Statistics Regulation in November 2010. They comply with the standards of trustworthiness, quality and value in the Code of Practice for Statistics and should be labelled ‘accredited official statistics’.

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Accredited official statistics are called National Statistics in the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007. Visit the UK Statistics Authority website for more information about the [Code of Practice](#) and [Accredited official statistics](#).

Visit our website for [further information about our statistics and PHS as an Official Statistics producer](#).

Data from this publication are available from the [publication page](#) on our website.

The next release of this publication will be March 2027.

Other formats of this publication are available on request by calling 0131 314 5300 or emailing phs.otherformats@phs.scot.

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