

REPORT TO: Health and Wellbeing Board

DATE: 7th May 2014

REPORTING OFFICER: Director of Public Health

PORTFOLIO: Health and Wellbeing

SUBJECT: Breast Screening Programme Performance
Issues at Warrington, Halton, St Helens and
Knowsley

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To inform the Board of the details of performance issues identified at the Warrington, Halton, St Helens and Knowsley Breast Screening Programme.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION:

- 1. to note content of report; and**
- 2. to note a recovery plan is underway and there is judged to be minimal clinical impact.**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 Screening for breast cancer is offered to all women aged 50-70 years on a three yearly cycle which invites women from GP practices in turn. The basic test is an x-ray of the breast called a mammogram.

3.2 Cheshire, Warrington and Wirral Local Area Team of NHS England (CWW Area Team) are the lead commissioners for the service. The Area Team is required to assure the Director of Public Health that NHS England maintain high coverage and uptake of national immunisation and screening programmes

3.3 The quality assurance team (QA) collect and collate data about the performance and outcomes of the breast screening programme as well as organise quality assurance visits. The aim of quality assurance is to maintain minimum standards and to improve the performance of all aspects of breast screening

3.4 The advent of digital mammography has led to an extension of the age range so in some areas women are now invited from age 47 to 73 years. This started in 2010 and is expected to be complete by 2016. This is referred to as age extension

3.5 Age extension has started at Warrington, Halton, St Helens and Knowsley Breast Screening Programme with a completion date of July 2014

expected.

- 3.6.1 The long term effectiveness of the Breast Screening Service is dependent on women in the target age group continuing to be screened at regular intervals
- 3.6.2 The national guidelines state that 90% of women invited should be offered an appointment within 36 months of their previous screen, 90% of women should receive their appointment within two weeks and a minimum of 90% of women must (if required) be assessed within three weeks.
- 3.6.3 The programme is currently under performing in all three of these areas (see Table 1) and it was recognised that unless this situation was quickly addressed performance would continue to show a deteriorating picture

Table 1. Performance Report for February 2014

Criteria	Month	Minimum Standard	Achieved	Comments	Outlook for improvement
Time from being screened to results being read	February 2014	90% within 2 weeks	46%	Breached	Good
Time from being screened to date of first assessment	February 2014	100% offered within 3 weeks	49%	Breached	Good
Time from being screened to assessment	February 2014	90% assessed within 3 weeks	56%	Breached	Good
Round Length	February 2014	90% invited within 36 months	88.9%	Breached	Good

- 3.7 The CWW Screening Lead has given assurance that thus far the programme performance issues have been identified early and a recovery plan is in place. The recovery plan is underway and will be achieved in full by October 2014. The majority of women (all areas) are being invited within 37-38 months so the clinical impact of the breach is minimal. It should be noted that the service ensures that all women that have results most suggestive of malignancy are expedited into assessment to minimise the risk of clinical impact from delay.
- 3.8 The Warrington/St Helens Breast Screening Service has historically experienced robust performance results and has consistently achieved above the 90% minimum target.
- 3.9 The recent slippage in performance is the result of a combination of radiographic staffing issues that has impacted upon radiographic capacity.

The service has identified these issues promptly and provided a comprehensive recovery plan to the regional quality assurance team and the commissioner (NHS England).

- 3.10 The key elements of the recovery plan are:
- Recruitment of a Band 7 Radiographic Clinical Lead in Breast Screening including four managerial administration sessions. This post has been advertised and interim measures are in place until this post is filled.
 - Recruitment of additional 3 WTE radiographers in line with QA guidance. One individual has been recruited and will be in post in 4-6 weeks with funding approved for two further full time training posts commencing April 1st.
 - Additional admin session allocated to the role of the unit QA radiographer.
 - The service will be providing comprehensive monthly update reports to benchmark progress

Breast screening performance recovery has been prioritised within the Trust and resources are being made fully available. The Trust has undertaken additional work on succession planning and have put additional processes in place to ensure that there is an sustainable workforce plan to minimise the risk of similar repeat. #

- 3.11 Overall the service has a realistic and robust recovery plan in place and the staff are working very hard to achieve improvements in performance as soon as possible and this should be commended. The commissioners have been given sufficient assurance about current service provision, performance breeches are being actively managed and as a result the breeches are judged to have minimal clinical impact. The CWW Area Team will continue to monitor programme performance monthly and unless further issues arise will fully benchmark progress at the forthcoming Breast Screening Programme Board on 14th May

4.0 **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 N/A

5.0 **OTHER/FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 There is no financial risk to the organisation

6.0 **RISK ANALYSIS**

6.1 Screening saves lives; in the UK, having a breast screening programme means that about 1,300 breast cancer deaths are prevented each year. As such an ineffective programme puts women lives at risk. The recovery plan is realistic and achievable and should mitigate this risk.

7.0 **EQUALITY & DIVERSITY ISSUES**

7.1 Only women are called for breast screening.

Glossary

Round Length

Round length measures that women are recalled for screening at appropriate intervals women whose first offered appointment is within 36 months of their previous screen

Screen to Assessment

Screen to assessment measures the interval between a woman's screening mammogram and the date of her first attended assessment

This is broken down into

Date of First Offered Appointment" (DOFOA)

Date of First Attended Appointment" (DOFAA),