

DUDLEY HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD

Agenda Item no. 7(a)

DATE	14 th March 2024
TITLE OF REPORT	Joint Health, Wellbeing and Inequalities Strategy 2023-28 Breast Screening Deep Dive
Organisation and Author	<p>Project leads:</p> <p>David Pitches, Consultant in public health and head of service, healthcare public health, Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council</p> <p>Joanne Essex, Program Manager, Dudley, Wolverhampton and South Staffordshire Breast Screening Programme</p> <p>with kind assistance from several other contributors</p> <p>Contact officer details – David Pitches, <i>Head of service, Health Care Public Health, DMBC</i> (<i>David.pitches@dudley.gov.uk</i>)</p>
Purpose	<p>This report is to:</p> <p>a) Brief the Board on breast screening uptake and coverage in Dudley, and what is currently being done to tackle this problem.</p> <p>b) To explore barriers, challenges and system solutions to improving screening uptake and coverage for discussion by the Board.</p>
Background	On 8 June 2023, Dudley's Health and Wellbeing Board (HWB) agreed to select breast screening as one out of three of its priority goals for inclusion within Dudley's Joint Health, Wellbeing and Inequalities Strategy 2023-28.
Key Points	Women between the ages of 50 and 70 are invited once every three years to attend breast screening at a mobile unit which endeavours to be located not far from their GP practice. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic there was a temporary drop in screening opportunities that the service has been working hard to overcome since. Within that there is considerable variation in the proportion of women who attend screening, with those living in areas of higher levels of deprivation in general being less likely to attend.

	<p>We undertook an analysis of the available data to increase our understanding of the reasons why breast screening rates had fallen, and the extent to which this was a temporarily and recoverable issue driven by COVID versus a more systemic inequality. We identified certain areas that, based on their previous track record, were likely to recover well, so instead of taking a blanket approach across the borough, we prioritised a small area of the borough within Dudley and Netherton Primary Care Network (PCN). We established that this area had some of the highest levels of socio-economic disadvantage in the borough, and historically was under-served by the screening service as it was one of only two of six PCNs not to have identified a location for the screening mobile unit.</p> <p>We discussed with women and primary care staff in the areas and recognised that transport to other parts of the borough to attend the van presented a real barrier to some women.</p> <p>In partnership with the breast screening service, we identified a potentially suitable site for the mobile unit in central Dudley on local authority-owned land and negotiated to host it there in the spring of 2024 on a pilot basis to improve accessibility for women in three practices.</p> <p>With the assistance of local women, we co-produced promotional materials which are being distributed by local pharmacies and displayed in healthcare premises and local hairdressers and beauty salons.</p> <p>We have supported several local health promotional activities and day events in partnership with other groups to raise awareness of the breast cancer screening program.</p> <p>The latest data validates our approach and shows that overall, the coverage (proportion of eligible women who have been screened within the past three years) for Dudley is significantly better than the England average, but that Dudley and Netherton PCN remains significantly below the England value.</p>
Emerging issues for discussion	<p>Overall, the breast screening coverage in Dudley is significantly better than the England value but remains significantly lower than England for one PCN. We believe</p>

	<p>this validates our approach to developing very localised, targeted support to a small area to improve screening rates. Lessons learned and the transferrable skills and partnership being developed to improve breast screening could be adapted to take a similar approach to improving other cancer screening programs too. Both bowel cancer and cervical cancer in 50–64-year-olds have the most potential to gain by targeting Dudley and Netherton PCN.</p>
Key asks of the Board/wider system	<p>Continuing support to primary care and the breast screening service to promote breast screening awareness, especially in areas of high levels of deprivation;</p> <p>Sharing learning of what works well across the wider health and care system;</p> <p>Consideration to how transferable skills learned during the breast screening improvement project could be used to help improve other screening programs.</p>
Contribution to H&WBB key goals: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving school readiness • Reducing circulatory disease deaths • More women screened for breast cancer 	<p>Directly contributes to increasing the number of women screened for breast cancer.</p>
Contribution to Dudley Vision 2030	<p>Directly contributes to Dudley being a place of healthy, resilient, safe communities with high aspirations and the ability to shape their own future and the 2030 goal of improved health outcomes and higher wellbeing.</p>

Contact officer details

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