



To:  
Trust CEO  
Trust Medical Directors

Operations and Information Directorate  
Quarry House  
Quarry Hill  
Leeds  
LS2 7UE

**Publications Gateway Reference 08023**

Dear Colleague,

**Re: Breast Screening Incident**

You will have received information from Public Health England (PHE) about an issue with the NHS Breast Screening Programme, which has led to some women who were due to be invited for mammography between their 68<sup>th</sup> and 71<sup>st</sup> birthday, missing their final invitation. PHE has provided detail on the issue, how it is being managed, and the arrangements for PHE's Patient Notification Exercise (PNE). This letter sets out actions we are asking provider organisations to take in respect of breast screening units and breast care services. Please cascade this information as appropriate within your organisation. I am also copying this to the Chairs of the Cancer Alliances.

PHE has also written in detail to breast screening units to outline the issue and how the patient notification exercise will operate. NHS England has followed this with specific action for breast screening units, copied to Trust CEOs.

**Action**

In respect of breast screening units, our collective priority is making sure that the women who have missed their final screen get access to one as quickly as possible. NHS England in collaboration with NHS Improvement will be leading the NHS response and you will need to identify additional capacity to provide screens to women. This must not impact adversely on the current programme and disadvantage women between 50-70.

Regional teams have established key contacts to handle the service response, acting on behalf of NHSE and NHSI and they will be in touch with you to share names and contacts. They will lead the capacity response with you directly and share the details of women affected and numbers with your breast screening unit. This will require significant capacity planning, an implementation exercise and robust monitoring. Your region will confirm the detail of this.

In respect of breast care services, we expect there to be two areas of action. Firstly PHE will redirect any women with breast cancer who have been affected by this incident to their local breast cancer service. Your service will need to be ready to respond in accordance with clinical advice from PHE. Secondly you will need to plan

for larger than usual numbers of women being referred to breast cancer services, following a catch up screen, creating additional activity throughout the breast cancer pathway. Your region will lead this work and we will be asking for capacity planning returns.

Thank you sincerely for your support in planning the response to this incident. This letter is the first communication that sets out the overall steps and more detailed advice and guidance will follow. We appreciate the pressure this will place on your service and staff and would like to thank you in advance for the efforts you will make to provide screening services to women affected by this incident.

Yours sincerely

Neil Permain  
Director of Operations and Delivery  
NHS England

Dr. Kathy McLean  
Executive Medical Director and Chief  
Operating Officer  
NHS Improvement

Cc  
Regional Directors (NHSE & NHSI)  
Regional Leads for BSP response  
Chairs Cancer Alliances