

## Bowel Cancer UK national screening survey

Populus interviewed a sample of 2,113 UK adults aged 18+ from its online panel between 3-8 February 2016. Surveys were conducted across the country and the results have been weighted to the profile of all adults. Populus is a founder member of the British Polling Council and abides by its rules. Further information at [populus.co.uk](http://populus.co.uk)

### How screening works

If you're registered with a GP and aged 60-74 (50-74 in Scotland), you will receive an NHS bowel cancer screening test in the post every two years.

Screening can detect bowel cancer at an early stage in people with no symptoms, when it is easier to treat. Sometimes it can prevent bowel cancer from developing in the first place by picking up non-cancerous growths (polyps) which could become cancerous in the future.

Bowel cancer is treatable and curable especially if diagnosed early. Nearly everyone diagnosed at the earliest stage will survive bowel cancer. However, this drops significantly as the disease develops. Taking part in bowel cancer screening is the best way to get diagnosed early.

Survey findings

### Awareness of the screening programme

- In Scotland, 99% of people aged over 50 were aware of the Scottish Bowel Screening Programme
- The home nation with the lowest awareness of their screening programme among those eligible was Wales with 88% of those over 60 saying they were aware of it. The figures were 95% in Northern Ireland and 93% in England
- Over half (57%) of people questioned are aware of the screening programme in their country
- There is less awareness of the screening programmes among lower socio-economic groups, 45% of people from social grades C1/C2/DE were unaware of the programme compared to 37% of those questioned from social grade AB
- Four out of 10 (43%) people in the UK are unaware of the screening programme in their country
- Almost half (49%) of men and just over a third (38%) of women are unaware of the screening programme in their country
- In London and the South West of England, half of those questioned (51% and 50% respectively) are unaware of the screening programme in their country

### Awareness of what age range receives bowel cancer screening tests

- Almost two thirds (65%) of people in England, Wales and Northern Ireland and four out of ten in Scotland (45%) either say the wrong age or don't know at what age bowel cancer home screening tests are sent to people in the UK

- Among those of screening age, four out of ten (39%) people questioned don't know bowel cancer home screening kits are sent every two years (27% in Scotland, 28% in Wales, 61% in Northern Ireland, 33% in England)
- Seven out of ten (68%) people questioned across the UK who were of screening age either don't know how often bowel cancer home screening kits are sent or don't know they are sent every two years (34% in Scotland, 42% in Wales, 68% in Northern Ireland, 46% in England).
- Among those of screening age, only one third (32%) of people in Northern Ireland know that screening kits are sent every two years (66% in Scotland, 58% in Wales, 54% in England)
- More men than women (32% v 25%) don't know how often bowel cancer home screening kits are sent to people in the UK
- Almost a quarter (23%) of people in the UK say that kits are sent every year or less (26% in Scotland, 20% in Wales, 43% in Northern Ireland, 22% in England)
- Northern Ireland has the lowest awareness for how often bowel cancer home screening kits are sent to people, with one in five (22%) saying it's every two years (49% in Scotland, 39% in Wales, 31% in England)

### **Awareness of how often people receive screening tests in the post**

- Almost half of those in England of screening age (46%) either don't know how often bowel cancer home screening tests are sent or don't know they are sent every two years (34% in Scotland, 42% in Wales, 68% in Northern Ireland)
- Almost two thirds (65%) of people of all ages in England, Wales and Northern Ireland and four out of ten in Scotland (45%) either say the wrong age or don't know at what age bowel cancer home screening tests are sent to people in the UK
- There are more men than women who don't know at what age bowel cancer home screening tests are sent to people in the UK – 21% of men were unaware of the age versus 13% of women
- London has the lowest awareness of the screening age, with almost one in four (24%) of those questioned saying they don't know at what age bowel cancer home screening tests are sent to people in the UK
- Almost one in four people (23%) questioned in England said the screening age is 50-74 (55% in Scotland, 21% in Wales and 18% in Northern Ireland)
- One in six (15%) people questioned in Scotland said the screening age is 60-74 (30% in Wales, 54% in Northern Ireland, 28% in England)

### **Awareness of the benefits of taking part in screening**

- Four out of five (80%) people agree that regularly taking part in bowel cancer screening is likely to reduce your chances of dying from bowel cancer
- Almost one in six (13%) say that if you don't have any symptoms and feel well you don't need to take part in bowel cancer screening
- Almost one in six (13%) say that an abnormal bowel cancer screening result means you have bowel cancer
- Almost nine in ten (87%) people questioned say that regularly taking part in bowel cancer screening can lead to detecting cancer early when chances of survival are at their highest

(91% in Scotland, 93% in Wales, 90% in Northern Ireland, 86% in England and lowest in UK is London at 80%)

- Around nine of out ten (92% Scotland, 86% in Wales, 91% in Northern Ireland and England) people questioned in the age group eligible for bowel cancer screening say that regularly taking part in screening is likely to reduce your chances of dying from bowel cancer
- One in ten (9%) of those in social grade DE did not know that regularly taking part in a bowel cancer screening programme is likely to reduce your chances of dying from bowel cancer - compared to almost one in 20 (4%) in social grade AB
- More men than women (15% v 11%) say that if you don't have any symptoms and feel well you don't need to take part in bowel cancer screening
- In England almost one in 10 people (8%) of screening age say that if you don't have symptoms and feel well you don't need to take part in bowel cancer screening (11% in Wales, 15% in Northern Ireland, 6% in Scotland)
- One in five (20%) either don't know or were unsure whether not having any symptoms and feeling well meant that you don't need to take part in a bowel cancer screening programme (11% in Scotland, 17% in Wales, 11% in Northern Ireland, 21% in England)
- More men than women (15% v 10%) said that an abnormal bowel cancer screening result means you have bowel cancer
- 13% said an abnormal bowel cancer screening result means that you have bowel cancer (9% in Scotland, 13% in Wales, 7% in Northern Ireland and 13% in England).
- Among those eligible for bowel cancer screening, well over nine out of ten (98% Scotland, 96% Wales, 92% Northern Ireland, 95% England) people said that regularly taking part in screening can lead to detecting bowel cancer early when chances of survival are at their highest

### Interested in finding out more?

Visit us at [bowelcanceruk.org.uk](http://bowelcanceruk.org.uk)

Call us on **020 7940 1760**

### Join in the conversation



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**We are determined to save lives from bowel cancer but we can't do this without you. Support vital research and lifesaving work to stop bowel cancer. Visit [bowelcancer.org.uk/donate](http://bowelcancer.org.uk/donate)**

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