

# Press release: Women offered NHS breast screening after missed invitations

The decision follows analysis by Public Health England (PHE) dating back to 2009, which found that a number of invitations for a final test had not been sent out to women, between their 68th and 71st birthday. The total number of older women affected since 2009 is estimated to be approximately 450,000.

The routine NHS breast screening programme invites more than 2.5 million women every year for a test, with women between the ages of 50 to 70 receiving a screen every 3 years up to their 71st birthday. Around 2 million women take up the offer.

The problem was identified in January 2018 whilst reviewing the progress of the age extension trial (AgeX). It then became apparent that a similar impact has resulted from long term problems with the routine programme as well. In addition, some local services have not invited everyone for a final screen in the 3 years before their 71st birthday.

PHE has carried out a thorough investigation including a detailed analysis of data going back to 2009 and has been advised by experts and clinicians. The fault has now been identified and fixed and women who did not receive their final routine invitation and are registered with a GP are being contacted and offered the opportunity to have a catch up screen. All of these women will be contacted by the end of May 2018. Women can seek advice by calling the helpline on 0800 169 2692. We anticipate that all rescreens will be completed by the end of October 2018 and extra capacity is being identified so that routine screening will not be affected.

Dr Jenny Harries, PHE Deputy Medical Director said:

On behalf of NHS breast screening services, we apologise to the women affected and we are writing to them to offer a catch-up screening appointment. They and their families' wellbeing is our top priority and we are very sorry for these faults in the system.

A complex IT problem with the breast screening invitation system has led to some women not being invited for their final screen between their 68th and 71st birthdays. We have carried out urgent work to identify the problem and have fixed it. Additional failsafe systems have been introduced to ensure the problem does not reoccur.

The NHS breast screening programme is a world leading prevention service for women in England detecting around 18,400 cancers per year and saving 1,300 lives.

Local breast screening services are currently working closely with NHS England and PHE to ensure that all of the women affected are contacted and offered the opportunity for a screen.

The Secretary of State for Health and Social Care has commissioned an independent review of the NHS breast screening programme to look at issues, including its processes, IT systems and further changes and improvements that can be made to the system to minimise the risk of any repetition of this incident.

The review will be chaired by Lynda Thomas, Chief Executive of Macmillan Cancer Support and Professor Martin Gore, Consultant Medical Oncologist and Professor of Cancer Medicine at The Royal Marsden, and is expected to report in 6 months.

## **Background**

1. It is estimated that 450,000 women since 2009 were not invited for a screen and 309,000 women were not invited for a screen and are alive.
2. The long term clinical research trial called AgeX, led by Oxford University, is ongoing to assess reliably the risks and benefits of offering an extra screen to women aged 71 to 73 and between 47 to 49 years.
3. All women that were not sent an invitation for their final screen will be given the opportunity for a new screening appointment. All women under 72 years old who are affected will receive an appointment letter informing them of their time and date. Women aged 72 years old and above will be able to contact a dedicated helpline to discuss whether a screen could benefit them.
4. There are 79 local NHS breast screening services across the country. Women are routinely screened every three years, with the number of women invited per screening service ranging from 25,738 to 254,645.
5. An independent panel concluded in 2012 that, while routine breast screening at ages 50 to 70 confers significant benefit to UK women, the advantages and disadvantages of starting breast screening at younger or older ages were uncertain. A clinical trial, AgeX led by Oxford University, is ongoing to assess reliably the risks and benefits of offering an extra screen to women aged 71 to 73 and between 47 to 49 years.
6. The total number of women screened in 2016 to 2017 was 2.2 million (2,199,342). The number of women invited was 2.9 million (2,959,979).

7. In developing its response to this issue, PHE consulted an expert clinical group including radiologists, consultant breast surgeons, oncologists and epidemiologists.

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## **Company fined after worker loses tip of finger**

A metal fabrication company was sentenced today after a worker was injured when using a vertical milling machine.

Sunderland Magistrates' Court heard how, on 7 December 2016, an employee of Complete Maintenance Solutions Limited was using the machine to drill a hole in a number of metal fence posts. While doing this the glove on her right hand touched the spinning drill bit and became entangled with it. This entanglement resulted in the amputation of the tip of her right ring finger to the first knuckle.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found the company had not properly guarded the machine to prevent accidental contact with the moving spindle and drill bit.

Complete Maintenance Solutions Limited of Tower Road, Glover Industrial Estate, Washington pleaded guilty to breaching Regulation 11(1)(a) of The Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 and was fined £4,000 with £957.65 in costs.

Speaking after the hearing, HSE inspector Christopher Lucas said: "This injury could easily have been prevented had the company put in place simple guarding measures. This should serve as a lesson to others in the metalworking industry about the importance of effectively guarding their machinery to stop others being similarly injured."

**Notes to Editors:**

1. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) is Britain's national regulator for workplace health and safety. We prevent work-related death, injury and ill health through regulatory actions that range from influencing behaviours across whole industry sectors through to targeted interventions on individual businesses. These activities are supported by globally recognised scientific expertise. [hse.gov.uk](http://hse.gov.uk)
2. More about the legislation referred to in this case can be found at: [legislation.gov.uk/](http://legislation.gov.uk/)
3. HSE news releases are available at <http://press.hse.gov.uk>

Journalists should approach HSE press office with any queries on regional press releases.

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## [Declaration by the High Representative, Federica Mogherini, on behalf of the EU on the occasion of the World Press Freedom Day, 3 May 2018](#)

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On this day we celebrate the **World Press Freedom Day** in a difficult context for journalism. Freedom of expression and Freedom of the press are threatened around the world.

Attacks against media and journalists are attacks against democracy, against the freedom of all of us. We pay tribute to all journalists in Europe and worldwide who have lost their lives in the exercise of their profession. We call on all states to condemn violence against journalists, to take action to improve the safety of journalists with particular attention to women journalists, and to bring perpetrators and instigators of such violence to justice.

The European Union is founded on the values of democracy, human rights and

the rule of law, on free and pluralistic media as enshrined in the EU's fundamental rights charter. Press freedom plays a crucial role in promoting good governance, transparency, and accountability. Independent journalism is vital to hold states accountable and to monitor democratic processes. Free, diverse and independent media, both online and offline, are pillars of a pluralistic and open society, and they bear the great responsibility to guarantee checked and correct news to the public.

Respect for freedom of expression is integrated in all EU policies and development programmes. EU legislation, policies and instruments have been designed to strengthen media freedom across the union and to improve transparency, credibility and diversity of information online. The EU will continue funding targeted projects in third countries enhancing quality of journalism, access to public information and freedom of expression.

We will consistently condemn violence against journalists and oppose – in bilateral contacts with third countries as well as in multilateral and regional fora – any legislation, regulation or political pressure that limits freedom of expression and will take concrete steps to prevent and respond to attacks against journalists and bloggers, including emergency assistance to protect human rights defenders at high risk, sometimes by means of relocation.

Today we reaffirm EU's determination to keep protecting and promoting freedom of opinion and of expression as rights to be exercised by everyone everywhere, based on the principles of equality, non-discrimination and universality, through any media, within our borders and beyond.

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## March 2018 – Euro area unemployment at 8.5% – EU28 at 7.1%

The **euro area** (EA19) seasonally-adjusted unemployment rate was 8.5% in March 2018, stable compared with February 2018 and down from 9.4% in March 2017. This is the lowest rate recorded in the **euro area** since December 2008. The **EU28** unemployment rate was 7.1% in March 2018, stable compared with February 2018 and down from 7.9% in March 2017. This is the lowest rate recorded in the **EU28** since September 2008. These figures are published by **Eurostat, the statistical office of the European Union**.

[Full text available on EUROSTAT website](#)

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# **Summary of Conclusions Management Board meeting 22 March 2018**

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