



Public Health
England



Quality Assurance visit to Warrington, Halton, St Helens and Knowsley Breast Screening Service

14 July 2016

Public Health England leads the NHS Screening Programmes

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PHE Screening, Floor 2, Zone B, Skipton House, 80 London Road, London SE1 6LH

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About PHE Screening

Screening identifies apparently healthy people who may be at increased risk of a disease or condition, enabling earlier treatment or better informed decisions. National population screening programmes are implemented in the NHS on the advice of the UK National Screening Committee (UK NSC), which makes independent, evidence-based recommendations to ministers in the 4 UK countries. The Screening Quality Assurance Service ensures programmes are safe and effective by checking that national standards are met. PHE leads the NHS Screening Programmes and hosts the UK NSC secretariat.

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Executive summary

The findings in this report relate to the quality assurance (QA) review of the Warrington, Halton, St Helens and Knowsley Breast Screening Service held on 14 July 2016.

Purpose and approach to Quality Assurance

The aim of QA in the NHS Breast Screening Programme (NHSBSP) is to maintain minimum standards and promote continuous improvement in breast screening. This is to ensure that all eligible women have access to a consistent, high-quality service wherever they live. QA visits are carried out by the PHE Screening Quality Assurance Service (SQAS) comprising QA staff and a team of professional and clinical advisers (PCAs).

The evidence for this report is derived from the following sources:

- routine monitoring data collected by the NHS screening programmes
- data and reports from external organisations as appropriate
- evidence submitted by the provider(s), commissioner and external organisations as appropriate
- information collected during pre-review visits, including a review of patient case notes, relevant pathology, radiological images and reports
- information shared with the QA team as part of the visit process

2. Description of local screening service

The Warrington, Halton, St Helens and Knowsley Breast Screening Service has an eligible screening population of 101,155 women aged 47-73 within the geographical area of Warrington, Halton, St Helens and Knowsley. The clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) covered by the service include Warrington, Halton, St Helens and Knowsley.

The service is provided by the Warrington and Halton Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust. NHS England North (Merseyside and Cheshire) is the commissioner for the service. Screening is carried out at 4 static sites across the patch and via a mobile screening service to 5 other sites. All mammographic equipment is fully digital and the service commenced the randomised trial for age expansion in July 2011. Assessment services are delivered from both the Warrington and St Helens sites and surgical treatment is then carried out at hospitals in Warrington, Halton, Whiston or St Helens.

3. Key findings

The immediate and high priority issues are summarised below as well as areas of good practice. For a complete list of recommendations, please refer to the related section within this report.

3.1 Shared learning

The review team identified several areas of practice that are worth sharing:

- well-organised MDT meeting using video conferencing to link clinical teams across 4 geographical sites
- postcard reminders are used as a measure to increase screening uptake
- assistant practitioners are all accredited with the Society of Radiographers
- breast care nurse involvement in health and wellbeing roadshows and holistic needs assessment audit

3.2 Immediate concerns for improvement

There were no immediate concerns for improvement noted at the visit.

3.3 High priority issues

The review team identified two high priority themes as summarised below:

- strategic planning is required particularly in relation to staffing, equipment replacement and accommodation. Current radiographic staffing levels are well below NHSBSP recommended levels and need to be addressed without delay. There are various equipment issues across the service that need to be addressed and the current accommodation at Warrington is inadequate; specifically the waiting area and the availability of essential counselling facilities
- policies and procedures should be reviewed and updated, then implemented and adhered to. Incident reporting should be implemented across all sites. The service needs to review and audit its own practice on a regular basis

4. Key recommendations

A number of recommendations were made related to the high priority issues identified above. These are summarised in the table below. Additional high priority recommendations, with these themes, are contained within the report.

Priority	Theme	Description of recommendations
High	Strategy	Develop a strategic plan for the screening service
High	Staffing	Radiographic establishment should be increased to take account of the NHSBSP recommended level of 12.1 WTE. Nurse staffing to be increased to allow attendance in assessment clinics
High	Strategy/Policy	Develop an equipment replacement policy for Warrington, Halton and St Helens that complies with NHSBSP guidance
High	Strategy	Improve conditions in the film reading room which is currently unsuitable for the task
High	Policy	Update assessment clinic policy to conform to national guidance and update MDT policy to ensure representative calcification is present or re-biopsy performed. Once policies are implemented, ensure adherence and audit compliance
High	Strategy	MDT structure and length to be reviewed to incorporate increased time for the workload

5. Next steps

Warrington, Halton, St Helens and Knowsley Breast Screening Service is responsible for developing an action plan to ensure completion of the recommendations contained within this report.

NHS England North (Merseyside and Cheshire) Screening and Immunisation Team (SIT) will be responsible for monitoring progress against the action plan and ensuring all actions are implemented.

SQAS (North) will support this process and the ongoing monitoring of progress.