

Executive Summary

Improving equity in screening

A STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK 2023-2027

Who we are

The NSS delivers four national population-based screening programmes. We screen for breast, cervical and bowel cancer, and for retinopathy in people with diabetes.



NSS Mission

We deliver population screening programmes that help prevent, reduce the risk of, and assist the recognition of, disease in Ireland.

What is Health Equity?

Health equity is when everyone has the opportunity to be as healthy as possible. Health inequities are differences in health status or in the distribution of health resources, between population groups, which are avoidable and unfair.

Why we developed this framework?

This framework sets out how we can understand and improve equity in our screening programmes. We know that some of the population groups that don't participate in screening are the same ones with a higher incidence of disease. People can experience barriers at any point on the screening pathway and we want to continue to better understand and address these barriers. We want everyone to understand what screening is and to participate in screening, if they want to.

How we developed this framework

The framework was developed using a co-production approach. Multiple consultations were held with partners from the community, voluntary and statutory sector, patient representatives and with NSS staff.

Our priority areas

We identified the following 5 priority areas for improving equity in screening:



Priority Area 1 Research & Data

NSS understands the importance of reviewing and applying an evidence-based approach to our work in improving equity in screening. Consultation pointed to the importance of conducting research, gathering feedback from screening participants and identifying opportunities for capturing additional equity-related data, where possible.

AREA OF FOCUS

QUALITATIVE & QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH | ACCURATE DATA | EQUITY STRATIFIERS* | EVIDENCE-BASED APPROACH | CAPTURE EXPERIENCE | MONITORING AND EVALUATION



Priority Area 2 Education, learning & development

Enhancing the education, learning and development needs of HSE staff, screening providers and other stakeholders is essential. This may be done through raising awareness of existing content or the development of new content, if necessary.

AREA OF FOCUS

LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT FOR HEALTHCARE WORKERS | EDUCATING PUBLIC & SCREENING PARTICIPANTS | TOOLS & RESOURCES | SHARED LEARNING



Priority Area 3 Partnership

NSS is not alone in wanting to improve health equity; through a partnership approach, we can build capacity, capability, and potential. We will apply the principles and practice of an appropriate model of partnership in this work for example, a community development approach.

AREA OF FOCUS

HSE PARTNERSHIPS | NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS | PATIENT & PUBLIC PARTNERSHIPS | POLICIES & LEGISLATION



Priority Area 4 Accessibility and inclusivity

By understanding the screening pathway from a participants' perspective, we can better understand service barriers and enablers and act to address them, for example through providing reasonable accommodations. Applying technological innovations and creative solutions could improve accessibility and inclusivity.

AREA OF FOCUS

SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH | TARGETING SPECIFIC GROUPS | TAILORED INTERVENTIONS | ADAPTATIONS AND FLEXIBILITY | EXPLORE NEW TECHNOLOGIES/INNOVATIONS



Priority Area 5 Communication

Communication can be a barrier to accessing screening for some people. By understanding and responding to the communication needs of audiences, we can address this barrier. Developing and testing content in partnership with our stakeholders is key to achieving this.

AREA OF FOCUS

FLEXIBLE AND EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION | HEALTH LITERACY | STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT | BEHAVIOURAL SCIENCE

What we will do next

An Equity Oversight Committee will be established, and they will play a key role in overseeing the development, implementation and monitoring of action plans.

How to get involved or find out more

Please email equity@screeningservice.ie