

# 'Help Us, Help You' Bowel Cancer Screening Campaign

Screening  
saves  
lives

Help us  
help you



# PR TOOLKIT

Updated 27<sup>th</sup> February 2023

# Campaign Overview

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The latest phase of NHS England's 'Help Us, Help You' campaign aims to encourage people who are sent the NHS bowel cancer screening home test kit to complete and return it. The campaign launched on Monday 20th February and runs until 31st March 2023. It is supported by Cancer Research UK.

Bowel cancer is the fourth most common cancer in the UK. [1] Yet the latest data shows that almost one third of people who were sent an NHS bowel cancer screening kit in England last year did not go on to complete it. [2] Early diagnosis is vital as detecting bowel cancer at the earliest stage makes you up to 9 times more likely to be successfully treated. [3]

The campaign is designed to increase the numbers of people completing the bowel cancer screening test by raising awareness that it can detect signs of cancer before they notice anything wrong and addressing the barriers preventing people from completing the test.

Campaign activity is targeting people aged 56 to 74, to align with the age of eligibility for being invited to complete the test. The campaign will also focus on those from lower socio-economic groups and ethnic minorities as these groups have been shown to be less likely to complete the screening kit.

The campaign will run in England and includes TV, Video on Demand (VOD), online video, community radio, search, PR, partnerships, and social media. There will be activity targeted to ethnic minority audiences including Black and South Asian communities, and engagement with disability organisations to reach disabled audiences, with alternative formats being available for partners.

A toolkit for the wider campaign and links to sharable assets are available on the [Campaign Resource Centre](#).



# PR Activity: 7th March

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The PR activity in support of the campaign launches on Tuesday 7th March.

As part of the launch, new attitudinal data from a survey of over 1,000 eligible adults in England revealed that 98% acknowledge that the test is important, and 1 in 5 said that they wouldn't do a bowel cancer screening test because they would be embarrassed, too disgusted, or wouldn't want to look at their poo (see slide 10).

Additionally, new video content featuring ex-Groundforce co-hosts, Alan Titchmarsh and Tommy Walsh, will also launch across NHS social media channels to encourage people who have been sent an NHS bowel cancer screening kit to complete the test.

The new film will be supported by targeted PR activity involving spokespeople such as TV and GP doctor, Dr Sarah Jarvis, and case studies, who are willing to speak about their experiences of bowel cancer and the importance of early diagnosis. They will participate in media interviews to encourage more people to complete the NHS bowel screening kit and ultimately help catch bowel cancer early.



# Campaign Support

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This toolkit includes campaign key messages, long and short copy and links to suggested social media posts.

Resources will also be made available for partners to use, including posters, social media assets, translations and alternative formats. These 'Help Us, Help You' resources can be downloaded free of charge from the [Campaign Resource Centre](#).

## How you can help

- 1 Produce localised media releases to support the [national media release](#).
- 2 Download our campaign resources and share with your colleagues, local communications networks and community organisations
- 3 Share our campaign messages on social media, email, and staff intranets to reach as wide an audience as possible.



# Key Messages

## Primary Campaign Messages

- Your next poo could save your life. \*
- Just a tiny sample detects signs of bowel cancer before you notice anything wrong.
- If you're sent an NHS bowel cancer screening kit, put it by the loo. Don't put it off.

\*An alternative to 'Your next poo could save your life' is:

- The NHS bowel cancer screening testing kit can save your life

## Secondary Messages

- Bowel cancer is the fourth most common cancer in the UK. [1] Yet the latest data showed that almost one third of people who were sent an NHS bowel cancer screening kit in England last year did not go on to complete it. [2]
- The NHS bowel cancer screening kit detects signs of cancer before you notice anything wrong.
- Detecting bowel cancer at the earliest stage makes you up to 9 times more likely to be successfully treated. [3]
- If you're aged 60 to 74, live in England and are registered with a GP practice, you'll be sent a kit in the post automatically, every two years. As part of plans to lower the age of people that receive the test to age 50 by 2025, 56-year-olds are also now sent the test kit and it is currently being rolled out to 58-year-olds.
- The kit is simple to complete and can be done in the privacy of your own bathroom using the step-by-step instructions on the box.
- You only need to collect one tiny sample of poo using the plastic stick provided, pop it in the sample bottle and post it for free, to be tested.
- If something is found, you will be invited to have further tests, usually at a hospital.
- The test works by checking for tiny traces of blood, which may not be visible to the naked eye.
- Blood in your poo is one of the signs of bowel cancer, but does not always mean cancer. Instead, it could be a sign of piles or polyps (growths in the bowel). Polyps are not cancer but could develop into cancer over time.
- Data show that NHS England is diagnosing a higher proportion of cancers at an early stage now than before the pandemic. [4]
- If you're sent the kit, help yourself by remembering to complete it. Put it by the loo. Don't put it off.

# Content (1)

Below are some examples of short and longer copy that should be used when communicating with audiences about the campaign. Please use the copy for any newsletters, emails or other materials, including websites, e-bulletins, press releases and social media.

## Long Copy (214 words)

In a new 'Help Us, Help You' campaign that is the first of its kind nationally, NHS England is encouraging people who have been sent an NHS bowel cancer screening kit to complete the test.

Bowel cancer is the fourth most common cancer in the UK, [1] and detecting it at the earliest stage makes you up to nine times more likely to be successfully treated. [3] But, almost one third of people who were sent an NHS bowel cancer screening test in England last year did not go on to complete it – despite a new survey showing that 98% of those eligible for the test agree that the test is important. [2]

Just a tiny sample detects signs of cancer before you notice anything wrong. The test is simple to complete and can be done in the privacy of your own bathroom. Anyone aged 60 to 74, who lives in England and is registered with a GP practice will be sent a test in the post automatically, every two years. NHS England is also extending this to include all 50 to 59 year-olds by 2025.

As part of the campaign, [a new film](#) featuring ex-Groundforce co-hosts, Alan Titchmarsh and Tommy Walsh, has launched to encourage anyone who is sent a bowel cancer screening kit to remember to complete it.

Your next poo could save your life. Put it by the loo. Don't put it off.

Visit [nhs.uk/bowel-screening](https://nhs.uk/bowel-screening) for more information



# Content (2)

## Short Copy (142 words)

In a new 'Help Us, Help You' campaign that is the first of its kind nationally, NHS England is encouraging people who have been sent an NHS bowel cancer screening kit to complete the test.

Detecting bowel cancer at the earliest stage makes you up to nine times more likely to be successfully treated. [3]

The test detects signs of cancer before you notice anything wrong, is simple to do and can be done in the privacy of your own bathroom.

As part of the campaign, ex-Groundforce co-hosts, Alan Titchmarsh and Tommy Walsh, are adding their voices to the call with a [new film](#) that urges people to complete their tests – saying 'you owe it to your family, and yourself'.

If you're sent a bowel cancer screening kit... Put it by the loo. Don't put it off.

Visit [nhs.uk/bowel-screening](https://nhs.uk/bowel-screening) for more information.



# Assets

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Assets include:

- [A new press release](#) announcing that TV presenters, Tommy Walsh and Alan Titchmarsh, are supporting our first-of-its-kind NHS awareness campaign by featuring in a new film discussing the importance of completing the NHS bowel cancer screening test.
- Survey data of 1,023 56–74-year-olds in England relating to attitudes around the NHS bowel cancer screening test.
- [New PR film](#), featuring Alan Titchmarsh and Tommy Walsh answering questions - written on loo roll - on how the NHS bowel cancer screening programme in England works. The pair remark how the public “owes it to your family and yourself” to complete the test, which can help detect the early signs of bowel cancer.
- Social cut down film of Alan Titchmarsh and Tommy Walsh answering one of the questions written on the loo roll about the NHS bowel cancer screening programme.
- Images of Alan Titchmarsh and Tommy Walsh

All the assets mentioned above be available on the Campaign Resource Centre.





# Social Media

We will be supporting the campaign by posting across NHS social media channels including Twitter and Instagram.

Please help us get the message out there by using your social media channels to support the campaign. Social media assets (cutdown videos and static images etc) will be available on the [Campaign Resource Centre](#) and a calendar of suggested social posts is available [here](#).



# Key Facts & Statistics

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## Attitudinal Data

The latest attitudinal data show that:\*

- 89% of 56-74 year olds said they would be likely to take a screening test that could help find signs of cancer at an earlier stage (when it's easier to treat).
- Only 2% said they would be unlikely to take this test
- 81% of 56-74 year olds said they would talk to their GP if they had any concerns about doing a screening test, with 3 in 10 (30%), saying they would speak to a family member
  - 6% would not talk to anyone about their concerns
- 98% of 56-74 year olds, said they thought it was important (75% very important; 23% quite important).
  - Only 2% said a bowel cancer screening test was not important
- More than a quarter of 56-74 year olds were unaware that they are automatically sent a bowel cancer screening test which can detect early signs of cancer.
  - 75% were aware
- When asked what would prevent them from taking a bowel cancer screening test, 1 in 5 said they would be embarrassed, too disgusted, or wouldn't want to look at their poo.
- *The research was conducted by Censuswide, among a sample of 1,023 respondents aged 56-74, with a minimum of 250 in the South Asian community and 150 in the Black community. The data were collected between 16.12.2022 – 30.12.2022. Censuswide abides by and employs members of the Market Research Society and follows the MRS code of conduct which is based on the ESOMAR principles.*
- *Regional breakdown of attitudinal saved [here](#).*



## Cancer Diagnoses

Data show that NHS England is diagnosing a higher proportion of cancers at an early stage now than before the pandemic [4].

# References

1. <https://www.bowelcanceruk.org.uk/about-bowel-cancer/bowel-cancer/#:~:text=Bowel%20cancer%20is%20the%20fourth,been%20diagnosed%20with%20bowel%20cancer.>
2. <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/q1-1-april-to-30-june-2022-annb-and-ypa-screening-kpi-data/young-person-and-adult-screening-kpi-data-q1-summary-factsheets-1-april-to-30-june-2022-html#bowel-cancer-screening>
3. <https://www.england.nhs.uk/bowel-screening>
4. [http://www.ncin.org.uk/collecting\\_and\\_using\\_data/rcrd](http://www.ncin.org.uk/collecting_and_using_data/rcrd)

# The bowel cancer screening kit can save your life

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