

North London Breast Screening Services Report



August 2011

V1.1

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1. Introduction

Harrow Local Involvement Network (LINK) received intelligence expressing concern about accessing breast-screening services operated by the North London Breast Screening Service (NLBSS). The service is one of the largest breast screening services in England and is hosted by Barnet and Chase NHS Trust and managed from the Breast Screening unit at Edgware Community Hospital. The service is commissioned by six Primary Care Trusts covering Barnet, Brent, Enfield, Haringey, Harrow and West Herts and aims to invite all women aged between 50 and 70 for free screening for breast cancer. An age-extension pilot programme, recommended by the Cancer Reform Strategy (2007), commenced in December 2010 to include screening invitations to women aged 47 to 49 and 71 to 73 years olds. Routine screening tests are done by invitation and by an appointment system only.

Harrow LINK conducted a brief survey within its network to establish if women:

- ◆ Were aware of the revised age parameters
- ◆ What experiences they had of their screening test
- ◆ What challenges or fears they had when accessing services

2. Methodology

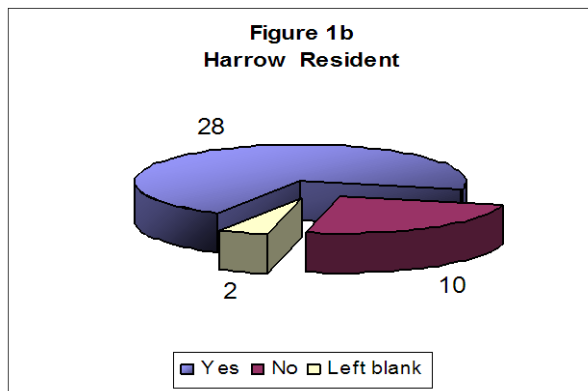
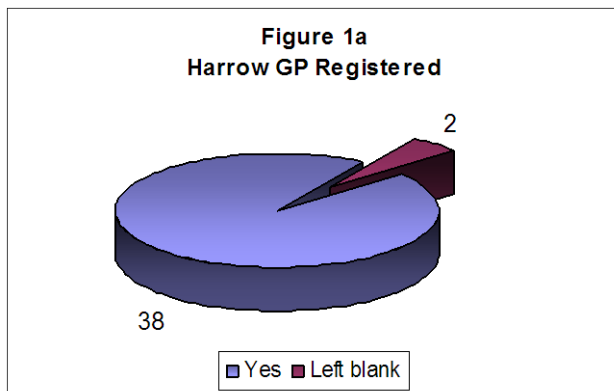
110 questionnaires were distributed to LINK Participants* including 50 to network** members eligible to receive the screening service. For the benefit of this report, percentage figures have been rounded up.

40 responses (36%), predominately from the South Asian and White communities, were received. A large number of respondents either left some of the questions unanswered or cited 'don't know' or 'other' in their responses. The LINK has therefore decided not to make any recommendations but has invited the service provider (NLBSS) to decide if there are opportunities for service improvement.

3. Analysis

Question 1 - General Information

95% of the women responding to this survey stated they were registered with a local GP; 70% of the respondents lived in Harrow and 25% lived outside the borough. 5% did not indicate if they were registered with a Harrow GP or whether they lived in Harrow.



* Participants are those who have registered themselves as LINK members.

** Network members are those who are part of an organisation or a community who may receive information about the LINK but may or may not be represented by a LINK Participant directly.

Question 2 – Awareness of Breast Screening Services

Nearly two thirds (63%) of the women who responded to this question were aware of the age extension and that the service offered was free. 28% did not know that the service was free or had been extended to include a wider age group (fig 2a). Over two thirds (68%) of the women had previously used the service (fig 2b) and for some, it was their second or third time to the clinic (fig 2d). 30% stated they were using the service for the first time.

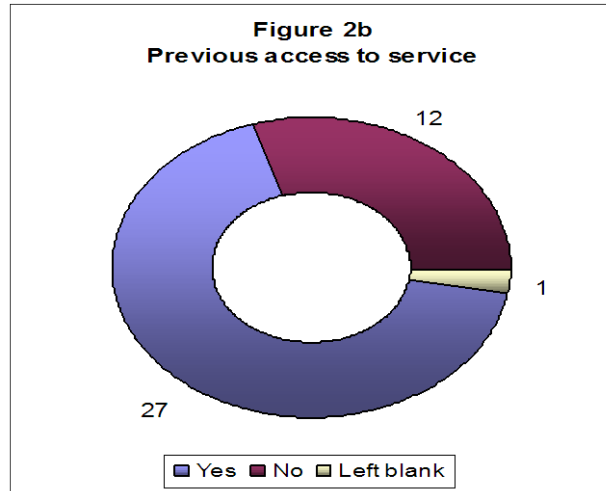
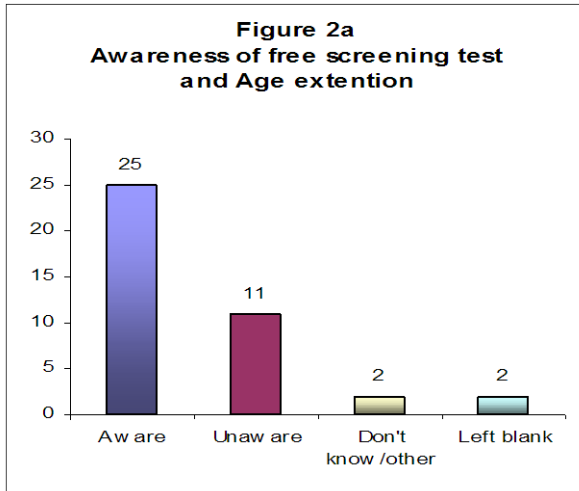
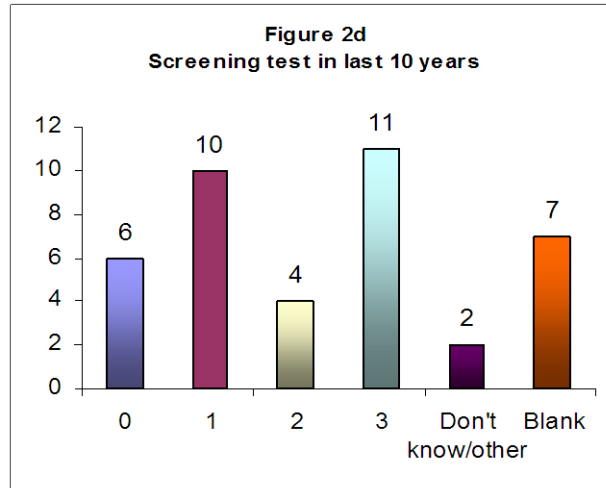
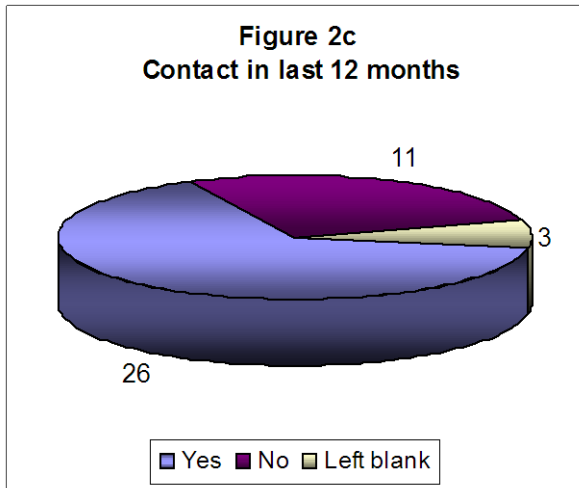


Fig 2c: 65% of women had been contacted for a screening test in the past twelve months. 25% (fig 2d) had a screening test done once in the previous ten years, and 28% had a screening test at least three times in the same period.



Question 3 - Pre-screening information, Appointment and Location:

Respondents were asked if they had received any screening-process information prior to their appointment, if the appointment time was convenient to them (and if not did they ask for it to be changed), if the location for the test was suitable (and if not was an alternate site was offered).

It should be noted that changes to appointment times and locations can be requested via NLBSS website at:

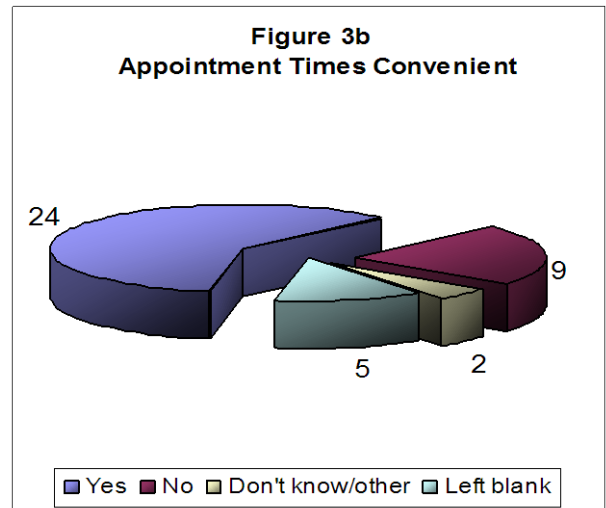
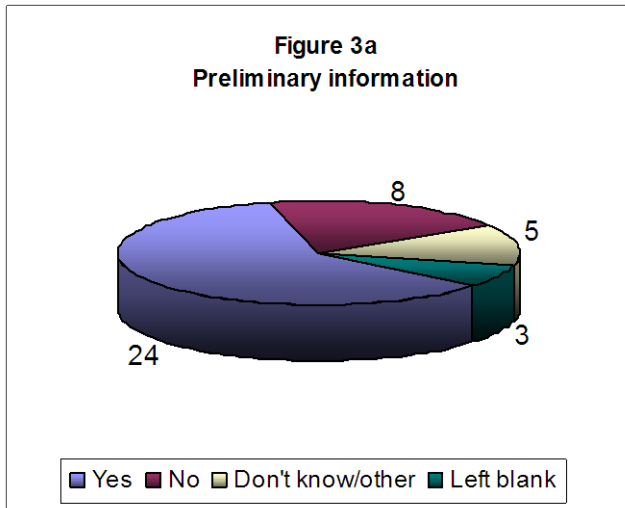
<https://www.bebreastscreened.org.uk/nlondon/ChangeAppForm.aspx?site=eba>

Preliminary information

60% (fig 3a) of women surveyed stated that they had received information about what to expect during their breast-screening test. 20% indicated that they had not received any information and a further 13% couldn't recall or cited other reasons for not receiving information. 3 people left the question unanswered.

Appointment time

Fig 3b indicates that 60% found their appointment time convenient but nearly 23% stated otherwise of which 89% (8 out of 9 people) changed it to suit their needs. 13% left the question unanswered.

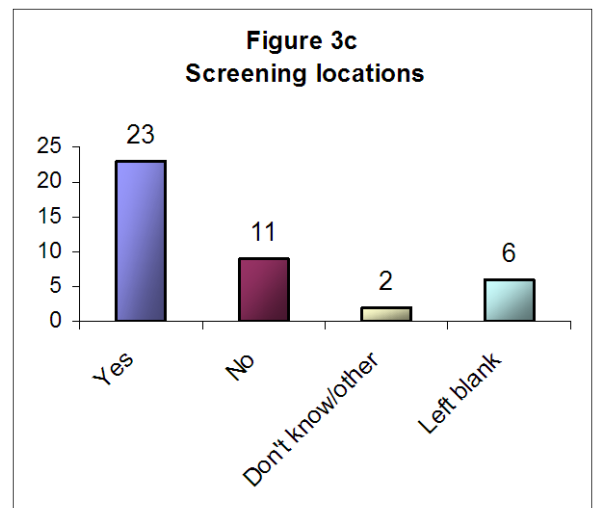


Screening Locations

When asked if the screening locations were suitable, over half (58%) found the locations sites (fig 3c) acceptable. 28% (11 people) stated the location was not suitable to them and only one person was offered an alternate site. 5 of the 11 people (13%) said they were not offered a choice. There is a possibility that some women did not know they could request an alternate location.

suitable, over half (58%) found the

A static screening unit is sited at the Edgware General Hospital. A mobile screening unit travels around the borough and can be accessed on pre-set dates and times at various sites including the car park at Alexandra Avenue Health and Social Care Centre, the car park at Morrison supermarket in Hatch End and the car park at Northwick Park Hospital.



Q 4 - Screening Test Experience

Respondents were asked if the screening process was adequately explained to them prior to their screening and if their experience was as expected. They were also asked if they felt that they were treated with dignity and care they expected from the professional healthcare staff attending them.

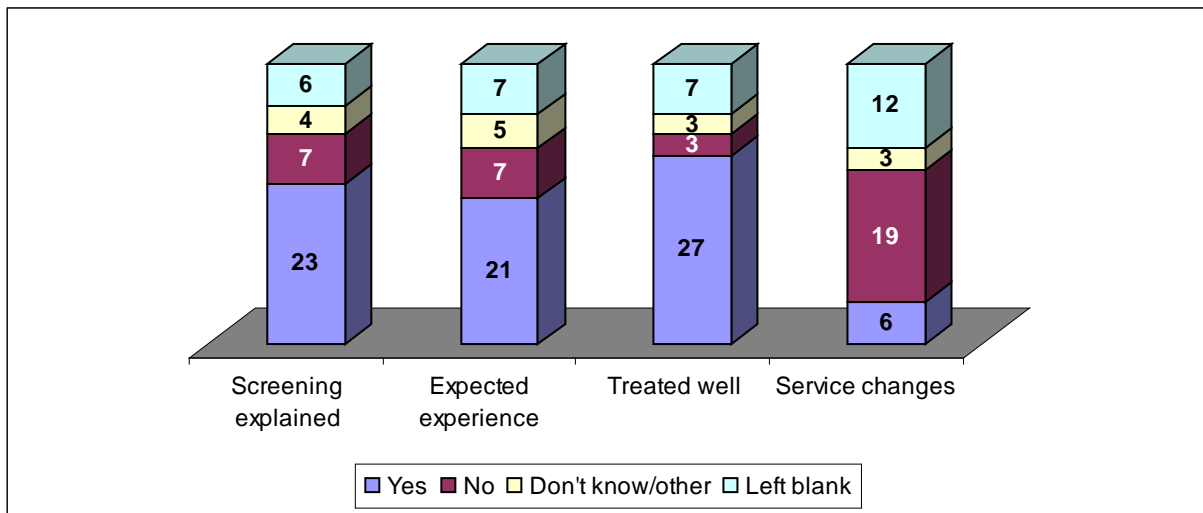
Screening process explained, experience and treatment satisfaction

Over half (58%) felt the screening process was adequately explained and that their experience was as expected. However, 18% indicated that the process could have been better explained and the experience did not meet their expectation.

68% (27) of the respondents' felt they were treated with dignity and professionalism expected whereas only 8% (3) were unsatisfied or did not know. 18% did not comment.

Service Changes

Although majority (48%) of respondents were happy with the service provided only 6 (15%) felt changes should be brought in. 30% did not offer any comment.



Question 5 - Service accessibility challenges:

Respondents were asked to respond to a series of statements as what they perceived were their main challenges to accessing the services. Their response has been tabulated below. 'Res' indicates number of responses received. All percentage (%) figures have been rounded up. Numbers in blue indicate the highest challenges perceived.

What are the main challenges to accessing breast-screening services		Yes		No		Don't know / other		Left Blank	
		Res	%	Res	%	Res	%	Res	%
5a	Beliefs	4	11	3	8	7	18	26	65
5b	Child Care	5	13	3	8	4	1	28	70
5c	Culture	7	18	3	8	2	5	28	70
5d	Dependent on others/carers	4	10	1	3	4	10	31	78
5e	Disability	5	13	1	3	4	10	30	75
5f	Does not affect me	5	13	2	5	4	10	29	73
5g	Fear of knowing the result	13	33	1	3	3	8	23	58

What are the main challenges to accessing breast-screening services (cont)		Yes		No		Don't know / other		Left Blank	
		Res	%	Res	%	Res	%	Res	%
5h	Finance related issues	2	5	2	5	3	8	33	83
5i	Gender of staff	9	23	2	5	3	8	26	65
5j	Hectic life style	7	18	4	10	5	13	24	60
5k	Inexperienced staff	4	10	4	10	4	10	28	68
5l	Insensitive staff	5	13	3	8	5	13	27	68
5m	Insufficient information or publicity on service	6	15	3	8	5	13	26	65
5n	Lack of confidence	4	10	4	10	5	13	27	68
5o	Lack of privacy at assessment unit	6	15	4	10	5	13	25	63
5p	Language barrier	3	8	4	10	5	13	28	70
5q	Location and accessibility of assessment unit	6	15	4	10	5	13	25	63
5r	Not interested in having a screening test	2	5	3	8	5	13	30	75
5s	Previous bad experience of service	2	5	4	10	5	13	29	73
5t	Religion	2	5	4	10	6	15	28	70
5u	Transport or travel issues	4	10	3	8	6	15	27	68
5v	Unable to take time off work	5	13	4	10	6	15	25	63
5w	Unsuitable appointment times	7	18	3	8	6	15	24	60

The largest concern perceived as a major challenge was 'fear of the result' to 33% of the respondents. 58% did not offer a comment to this statement.

The gender of the staff was regarded as the next highest challenge to 23% of the respondents, with only 2% stating that this did not worry them, however 65% offered no comment.

18% reported that 'leading a hectic lifestyle' and 'unsuitable appointment times' were challenges to attending a screening appointment. A further 18% indicated that cultural issues played a part in accessing the screening services. Although optional information on ethnicity, age, faith/belief etc was requested from respondents, only a few provided some of the information, therefore further analysis by grouping was rendered inconclusive.

Question 6: Improving Service Access

The table below expresses how women feel that access to the service could be improved.

Improving Service Access: How do you feel access to the service could be made easier?		Yes		No		Don't know / other		Left Blank	
		Res	%	Res	%	Res	%	Res	%
6a	Drop in at screening unit to make an appointment	20	50	3	8	2	5	15	38
6b	No appointment needed - just arrive at unit	19	48	5	13	3	8	13	33
6c	Appointment via text messaging	16	40	8	20	1	3	15	38
6d	Appointment via online diary	17	43	4	10	3	8	16	40
6e	Appointments at supermarkets, shopping centre's etc	6	15	14	35	1	3	19	48
6f	Appointment confirmation via text message	13	33	9	23	1	3	17	43

The top four suggested improvements to access the service are:

- Drop in at a local mobile or static screening unit to make an appointment (6a)
- Be seen at a mobile or static unit without an appointment (6b)
- Make an appointment through an online diary managed by NLBSS (6d)
- Make an appointment via text messaging system (6c)

A large number (38%) of respondents did not have an opinion to the statement relating to making appointments by text (6c). However 40% felt this was a good idea but 20% clearly were against the idea.

The responses indicate there is a need for more flexibility in making available appointments to suit people's lifestyles. There is sufficient feedback to suggest that respondents preferred not to use public places to make an appointment.

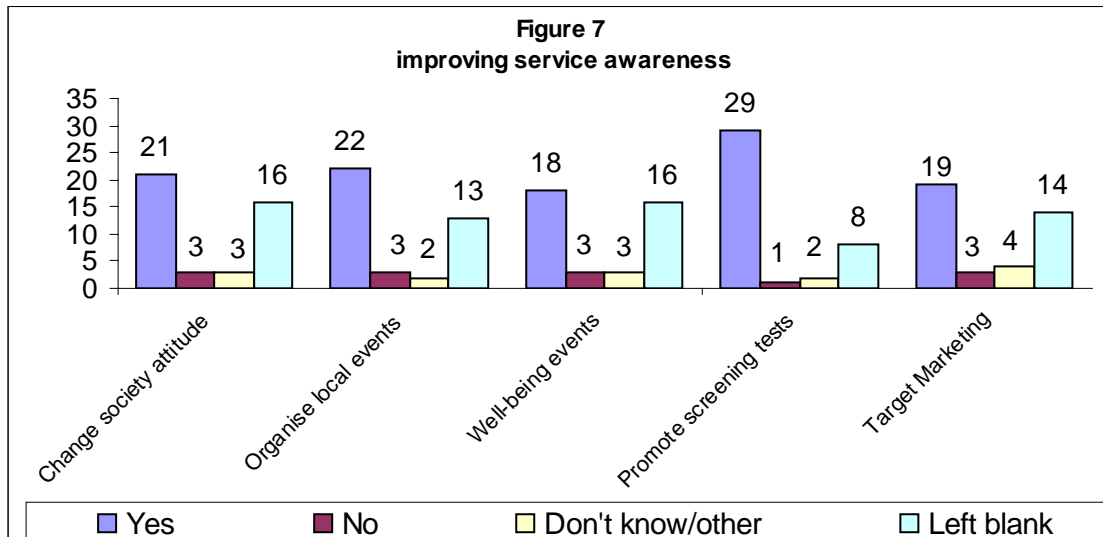
Question 7: Improving Service Awareness

Respondents were asked for their opinions on what would encourage women to participate in screening. They were invited to choose from:

- Change society's attitude towards breast screening
- Hold organised activities within local communities to promote the benefits of breast screening
- Hold well-being events at public places

- Promote screening tests as part of general health screening
- Target marketing (media, leaflet drops etc)
- Make their own suggestion – see appendix B

As figure 7 shows, most respondents favoured promotion of screening tests as part of general health.



4. Recommendations

Whilst it is not the LINK's intention to make recommendations to the service provider (NLBSS), they suggest that the provider will benefit from commissioning a joint survey later in the year with all the LINKs covering their service area.

5. Conclusion

Based on information received from the forty respondents who participated in this survey, this report supports several key themes:

- That women were generally aware of service
- That a significant number of respondents use the service
- Respondents were generally happy with the location of screening units but preferred appointment times and locations to suit their busy life styles
- Respondents' screening experiences are generally positive through they seemed apprehensive of being seen by male staff
- Difficulties respondents face in accessing the service stem largely from personal beliefs and perceptions, these need to be addressed to ensure more women accessed the services.

The report concludes that based on the evidence from the survey, whilst NLBSS provided a good level of service, issues regarded, as challenges need to be addressed.

Harrow LINK thanks all those who contributed to this survey and looks forward to receiving a response from the service provider (NLBSS).

- ❖ Appendix A is the questionnaire used for the survey
- ❖ Appendix B is additional comments to questions 1 to 7 in the questionnaire

Breast Screening Services Survey



Harrow LINK (Local Involvement Network) is conducting a survey from **14th February 2011 to 12th March 2011** to explore how easy it is for you to access North London's Breast Screening Service which covers Barnet, Brent, Enfield, Haringey, Harrow and West Hertfordshire sector of London.

Please take a few minutes to complete our survey, your feedback will help us to determine whether there are particular concerns that we should highlight to improve services.

Confidentiality

This survey is conducted in complete confidentiality and anonymity. All data will be used in a form that will make it impossible to determine the individual identity of respondents.

Breast Screening - the Facts

The North London Breast Screening Service (NLBSS) is part of the National Breast Screening Programme. It is one of the largest breast screening services in England and provides a free breast screening service for women. Women **aged 50 to 70 years** are invited for **Breast Screening every 3 years**, however from December 2010, the age range has been extended to include those aged 47 years to 70 years of age.

Screening takes place at one of two static units (one being Edgware Community Hospital) or at one of the five mobile units. The mobile units move around the area staying at each site for a few months at various locations. You are normally invited to a location within the area of your GP's surgery.

On completion, please return this questionnaire (a stamp is not required) to:

Harrow LINK Freepost (RSEA – HTLA – ZBLJ) 5 – 9 Headstone Road, Harrow HA1 1PD
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If you want to know the outcome of this survey please provide your details on page 5.

Please indicate your answer by placing an 'x' where appropriate

Q 1	General Information	Yes	No	Don't know / other
1a	Are you registered with a local GP?			
1b	Do you live in the London Borough of Harrow?			

Q 2	About Breast Screening Services	Yes	No	Don't know / other
2a	Did you know that the screening test is available free of charge to any woman aged 47 and above?			
2b	Have you used the Breast Screening Service before?			
2c	Have you been contacted for a screening test in the past 12 months?			
2d	How many times have you had a screening test done in the last 10 years?	Indicate your response below 0, 1, 2, 3, Don't know or other		

Q 3	Appointment and Location	Yes	No	Don't know / other
3a	Did you receive any information about the screening process before your appointment?			
3b	Was the time of your appointment convenient to you?			
	If no, did you ask for it to be changed?			
3c	Was the location of the unit convenient to you?			
	If no, were you offered an alternate location?			

Q 4	Experience – Screening Experience	Yes	No	Don't know / other
4a	Was the screening process explained to you?			
4b	Was your experience of the screening test as you expected?			
4c	Were you treated with dignity and care expected from professional healthcare staff?			

Q 4 cont	Experience – Screening Experience	Yes	No	Don't know / other
4d	Would you change anything to make your experience better? If yes, comment below			
4e				

Q 5	Challenges – what are your main challenges to accessing breast-screening services, if any?	Yes	No	Don't know / other
5a	Beliefs			
5b	Child care			
5c	Culture			
5d	Dependent on others / carer			
5e	Disability			
5f	Does not affect me			
5g	Fear of knowing the result of the test			
5h	Finance related issues			
5i	Gender of medical professionals			
5j	Hectic life style – unable to find time for an appointment			
5k	Inexperienced staff			
5l	Insensitive staff			
5m	Insufficient information or publicity on service			
5n	Lack of confidence			
5o	Lack of privacy at assessment unit			
5p	Language barrier			
5q	Location and accessibility of assessment units			
5r	Not interested in having a screening test			
5s	Previous bad experience of service			

Q 5 cont	Challenges – what are your main challenges to accessing breast-screening services, if any?	Yes	No	Don't know / other
5t	Religion			
5u	Transport or travel issues			
5v	Unable to take time off work			
5w	Unsuitable appointment times			
5x	Other - please describe:			

Q 6	Access – how do you feel access to the Breast Screening service be made easier?	Yes	No	Don't know / other
6a	Drop in at a local mobile or static unit to make an appointment			
6b	Be seen at a mobile or static unit without an appointment			
6c	Make an appointment by text messaging			
6d	Make an appointment using an online diary managed by the Breast Screening service			
6e	Make an appointment using secured terminals at local supermarkets, shopping centres or bus / rail terminals			
6f	Receive notification of appointment by text messaging from the Breast Screening service			
6g	Other – please describe:			

Q 7	Awareness - what would encourage women to participate in screening?	Yes	No	Don't know / other
7a	Change society's attitude towards breast screening			
7b	Hold organised activities within local communities to promote benefits of screening			
7c	Hold well-being events at public places			
7d	Promote screening tests as part of general health			
7e	Target marketing			
7f	Other – please describe:			

Optional - Information

Name	
Address	
Post Code	
Email address	
Phone number	

Q 8	Disability	Yes	No	Prefer not to state
8a	Do you have a disability?			

Q 9	Your Age Group	Please indicate with 'x'
9a	Age 47- 57 years	
9b	Age 58 – 70 years	
9c	Prefer not to state / other	

Q 10	About your sexuality	Please indicate with 'x'
10a	Do you define yourself as heterosexual / straight	
10b	Do you define yourself as lesbian	
10c	Do you define yourself as bi-sexual	
10d	Prefer not to state	

Q 11	Your Faith / Belief	Please indicate with 'x'
11a	Buddhist	
11b	Christian (including Catholic & Protestant)	
11c	Hindu	
11d	Jain	
11e	Jewish	
11f	Muslim	

Q 11 cont	Your Faith / Belief	Please indicate with 'x'
11g	Sikh	
11h	None	
11i	Other / Prefer not to state	

Q 12	Ethnicity	Please indicate with 'x'
12a	White British	
12b	White Irish	
12c	White Other	
12d	Mixed Black and White African	
12e	Mixed Black and White Asian	
12f	Mixed Black and White Caribbean	
12g	Mixed other	
12h	Asian or Asian British - Indian	
12i	Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	
12j	Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	
12k	Asian or Asian British – Other	
12L	Black or Black British – African	
12m	Black or Black British – Caribbean	
12n	Black or Black British – Other	
12o	Chinese	
12p	Other / Prefer not to state	

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.

Additional Comments

Question 4e: Would you change anything to make the experience better?

- The screening experience would be improved if more appropriate gowns were provided – the ones that tie around the waist.
- Have not used the service, so don't know what to expect
- Site should have nearby adequate parking
- Better access to unit.
- More explanation of the process would be useful.
- Screening once a year will be ideal
- More privacy and care of patients.

Question 5x: What are your main challenges to accessing breast-screening services, if any?

- Lack of information that the service is available, and who to contact for an appointment.
- Not sure how to make an appointment. I am 50 and feel I should be checked, but have not been contacted for an appointment.

Question 6g: How do you feel access to the Breast Screening service could be made easier?

- GP nurse could conduct a test or test could be given at a GP health check.
- By phone – making call to set up an appointment to suit me.
- Mobile units should be situated in supermarket car parks or similar.
- There should be automatic screening for women over 70.

Question 7f: What would encourage women to participate in screening?

- Incorporate awareness initiatives and activities into yoga sessions, women's health talks, women's cultural groups, day activities etc.
- Create weekend appointments
- Radio, media, local newspapers could all be used to advertise
- The access to the units via the steps is difficult and discriminatory to people with a disability. This is against the spirit of the Equality Act.
- Female GP's to advise in GP surgery.
- Be informed of service
- More flexibility to alter appointment times.
- GP's should encourage patients to take up breast screening. There should be notices in waiting rooms.
- Libraries and other appropriate public places should also display these.

Additional comments:

- The mobile units work well for me. I am very grateful for this service.
- I have no problems with the screening service
- I am very happy with the encouragement to use the service and also the way the appointment system works. I am happy with the mobile units.