

Declining breast cancer screening must be addressed

8 Oct 2019



Only 7 out of 10 of eligible women in Scotland are currently being screened for breast cancer according to the latest statistics published today.

The Scottish Breast Screening Programme Statistics published by ISD Scotland shows that this is the lowest level since 2008/09 – 2010/11 when it was almost 3 out of 4, or 75 per cent.

In addition, between 2015/16 and 2017/18, four NHS Health Boards did not meet even the minimum standards of 70 per cent screening.

These were NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde (65.8%), NHS Lanarkshire (68.0%), NHS Lothian (69.2%) and NHS Fife (69.7%).

Most worryingly, women from the more deprived areas are even less likely to go for breast cancer screening than their more affluent counterparts, with under 6 in 10 women from deprived areas going for screening compared with almost 8 in 10 women living in least deprived areas.

Miles Briggs, Scottish Conservative shadow health secretary said:

“This declining breast cancer screening rate is particularly concerning given that the earlier cancer is caught, the better the outcome.

“There cannot be any excuse for health boards not to meet this important screening target.

“The SNP government must ensure that all women have access to early breast cancer screening, regardless of where they live.

“We have seen repeated incidents of Health Boards getting into difficulties in a number of areas while the SNP has sat back and watched.

“The SNP must not wait until more women’s lives are at risk, they must take steps to work with NHS boards and ensure screening programmes are working effectively now.”