About this release

This release by Information Services Division (ISD) provides an update of the Scottish bowel screening statistics for the period 1st November 2016 to 31st October 2018 including uptake, laboratory workload and clinical outcomes. A new bowel screening test, the Faecal Immunochemical Test (FIT), was launched on 20th November 2017, replacing the Faecal Occult Blood Test (FOBT). This summary describes one year of data for both the new and old tests.

Main Points

- In the year before and after the introduction of a new, simpler test, uptake of bowel screening increased from 55.4% to 63.9%. This is the first time that national uptake has been higher than the standard of 60%.

- Uptake of screening using FIT remains lower in men (61.6%) than in women (66.1%).

- Uptake using FIT also remains lower among people from more deprived areas (51.7%) compared to people from less deprived areas (72.5%). However, the increase in uptake after the introduction of FIT was greatest among people from more deprived areas. As a result, the difference between the most and least deprived reduced from 23.7% points to 20.8% points.
The percentage of people testing positive was higher using FIT, with those referred for further investigation increasing from 1.9% using FOBT to 3.1% using FIT.

A positive result for FIT was a better predictor of finding pre-cancerous growths (adenomas) during colonoscopy than a positive result for FOBT, with 43.5% of people who tested positive for FIT having an adenoma, compared to 40.0% for FOBT.

A positive result for FIT was a less accurate predictor of having bowel cancer than for FOBT, with 5.2% of people who tested positive for FIT having bowel cancer, compared to 6.8% for FOBT. Nevertheless, more cancers were detected using FIT due to the higher uptake and higher percentage of positive tests, leading to more people proceeding on to colonoscopy.

**Background**

Bowel cancer is the third most commonly-occurring cancer in Scotland. The purpose of screening is to identify bowel cancer at an early stage, when treatment is more likely to be effective. Bowel screening can also identify pre-cancerous growths (adenomas) that can be removed, preventing cancers occurring.

This publication relates to men and women registered with a Community Health Index number and aged between 50-74 years old, who are invited to be screened every two years. Eligible people are posted a test kit which is completed at home. Since 1st April 2013, those aged 75 and over can also self-refer and opt into bowel screening. As people are invited to participate every two years, the entire population of eligible individuals is invited to be screened in a two-year period.

Further information on the new screening test is available from [Cancer Research UK](https://www.cancerresearchuk.org/).

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**Further Information**

The full [Scottish Bowel Screening Programme Statistics publication](https://www.isd.scotland.gov.uk/3.8/Scottish-Bowel-Screening-Programme-Statistics.pdf) (PDF) and [Key Performance Indicators Report](https://www.isd.scotland.gov.uk/3.8/2014-15-Scottish-Bowel-Screening-Programme-Statistics-Report.pdf) (Excel format), which includes a series of measures used to monitor and evaluate the Scottish Bowel Screening Programme are available on the ISD website. For related topics, please see the [Cancer Information](https://www.isd.scotland.gov.uk/3.8/Cancer-Information) pages on the ISD website. You can also find more information on Detect Cancer Early (DCE) on the [DCE section](https://www.isd.scotland.gov.uk/3.8/Detect-Cancer-Early) of the website. The next release of this publication will be February 2020.

**ISD and Official Statistics**

Information Services Division (ISD) is the principal and authoritative source of statistics on health and care services in Scotland. ISD is designated by legislation as a producer of 'Official Statistics'. Our official statistics publications are produced to a high professional standard and comply with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics. [Further information about our statistics](https://www.isd.scotland.gov.uk/3.8/About-Us.html).