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## **Factsheet: Uptake of cancer screening amongst under-represented groups<sup>1</sup>**

The participation in cancer screening programmes has been shown to vary with a number of factors. Most is known about breast and cervical screening, as they have both been established over 20 years. But knowledge is growing about bowel cancer screening which is less than 10 years old. A major difference also with the bowel cancer screening programme is that it invites both men and women, whereas the older programmes are both women only.

All three screening programmes show higher participation in more affluent areas. While breast cancer is more common in more affluent areas, it is a common disease in all socio-economic groups. In addition, there is less variation in survival rates across the different groups in society if a woman's breast cancer is detected at screening. Research shows women are more likely to attend for breast screening if they have access to a car which suggests delivering breast screening locally is important in addressing poor uptake in less affluent areas

Cervical cancer is more common in less affluent areas and uptake is greater amongst more educated women, but research suggests that for cervical screening, ethnicity is the most important predictor of participation. Offering and delivering cervical screening in a culturally appropriate manner is likely to be important here.

Bowel cancer screening is delivered to men and women from the age of 60. Men are less likely to accept an invitation to participate than women, even though men are at higher risk. There is also some evidence that people from some minority ethnic groups and smokers are less likely to participate in this screening programme.

People who have other health problems are less likely to participate in cancer screening. In particular there is concern that people with learning disabilities are not accessing screening. This applies to all three cancer screening programmes. However, differences in screening rates between those with and without learning disabilities were less pronounced in more socially deprived areas where general participation rates are low.

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<sup>1</sup> Information provided by Public Health England