

Suffolk & north east Essex Cancer Programme

NEWSLETTER

February 2025

Aims of Our Newsletter

This newsletter aims to keep you informed of all that is happening within the Suffolk & north east Essex Cancer Programme. Our aim is to put the patient first in all that we do whilst enabling excellence to develop throughout our programme. We need to listen to service users & providers alike, to co-produce services that support those affected with cancer first, whilst enabling excellence in service delivery. We invite you to join in or feedback on any developments through multiple routes, including this newsletter.

If you have any questions or would like to be involved, please email: cancer.programme@snee.nhs.uk

Screening Programmes

Cervical Screening

Cervical Screening Cervical screening, also called a smear test, is a routine procedure to check the health of the cervix & reduce the risk of cervical cancer.

During the test, a small sample of cells is collected from the cervix using a soft brush. This sample is then sent to a laboratory to check for high-risk human papillomavirus (HPV) & any abnormal cell changes. HPV is a virus that can cause cervical changes, which, if left untreated, may lead to cervical cancer over time.

Eligibility for Screening

Age: People with a cervix, typically aged 25 to 64, are eligible for cervical screening.

Frequency: Aged 25–49: Every 3 years; Aged 50–64: Every 5 years; Over 64: You will generally stop receiving invitations at age 65. However, if you have never had a screening or have had abnormal results in the past, you may still be eligible for screening. Some individuals may need more frequent screening depending on their test results.

Missed or Never Been Screened? If you have missed cervical screening or never been screened, it is not too late to start. It is important to catch up, as regular screenings are crucial for detecting early signs of cervical cancer & preventing serious health issues.

How to Get Screened

1. Check Eligibility: Make sure you are in the eligible age group for screening. If you are unsure, you can ask your GP or contact Very Important Invitation at sgpfed.veryimportantinvitation@suffolkfed.org.uk, a project offering support & education about cervical screening.

2. Receive an Invitation: You will receive a letter from the NHS Cervical Screening Programme when you are due for screening, inviting you to book an appointment.
3. Book an Appointment: Contact your GP surgery or use Very Important Invitation to complete a booking form.
4. Attend Screening: On the day of your appointment, your healthcare provider will explain the procedure, answer any questions, & discuss any concerns you may have. The test itself usually takes just a few minutes & is typically not painful, though you might experience some discomfort or pressure. Remember, you are in control of the process & can stop at any time.
5. Results: You will receive your results in 2–4 weeks. If you have not received them after 6 weeks, contact your GP.

Special Considerations

Pregnancy or Recent Birth: If you are pregnant or have recently given birth, or if you have had any gynaecological surgery or intervention, inform your healthcare provider. They can advise you on the best time to schedule your test.

Transgender or Non-Binary Individuals: If you are a transgender male or non-binary individual with a cervix, cervical screening is still important. Your healthcare provider can ensure the test is conducted in a sensitive, affirming way.

Additional Support: If you need further support, advice, or guidance, you can speak with your GP or contact Very Important Invitation for assistance. sgpfed.veryimportantinvitation@suffolkfed.org.uk

Breast Screening

ESNEFT is the Host Trust for two breast screening services.

Chelmsford & Colchester Breast Screening Service provides screening for an eligible population of approximately 115,000 women. They operate from two static locations at Colchester Hospital & Broomfield Hospital & three mobile units covering 12 different locations across North & Mid Essex including Clacton, Braintree, Brentwood, Halstead, Harwich, Maldon, Manningtree, South Woodham Ferrers & Witham.

East Suffolk Breast Screening Service has a static location at Ipswich Hospital alongside the Breast Care Centre. The service also has a breast screening mobile that visits 6 locations across Suffolk including, Leiston, Eye, Hadleigh, Stowmarket, Felixstowe & Woodbridge. The East Suffolk Breast Screening Service provides screening for approximately 57,569 women.

The NHS breast screening service aims to save lives from breast cancer by using an X-ray test called a mammogram to detect cancers at an early stage. Women aged between 50 & 71 registered with a GP are invited to have a screening mammogram every three years & should be invited for their first screening before their 53rd birthday. Women over the age of 71 will not continue to be automatically invited but can still have breast screening every three years by contacting their breast screening unit to make an appointment. Women who attend the screening will receive a letter with their results within two weeks & a copy of this result will also be sent to their GP. Anyone who thinks they should have breast screening but isn't invited automatically can talk to their GP or contact their screening service.

Both Chelmsford & Colchester & East Suffolk Breast Screening Services also offer screening to women who have been assessed to be at high risk of breast cancer at an earlier age than women from the general population. Anyone wishing to contact the Chelmsford & Colchester Breast Screening Service can call us on 01206 748339 or email us at FCObreastscreening@esneft.nhs.uk & for East Suffolk Breast Screening Service: Appointments & Enquiries Tel: 01473 703344 or 702698 or email us at breast.screening@esneft.nhs.uk

Bowel Screening in East Suffolk & north east Essex.

Bowel cancer screening - East Suffolk & north Essex NHS Foundation Trust

Bowel cancer screening at Colchester & Ipswich hospitals - Screening can help detect bowel cancer at an early stage when it is easier to treat. It can also be used to help check for & remove small growths in the bowel called polyps, which can turn into cancer over time. www.esneft.nhs.uk

Currently, anyone registered with a GP will receive a home test kit every two years by post when they become eligible & locally the service currently covers those aged 54 to 74, with an opt-in service after this age. Roll out of the programme for 54-year-olds went live in March 2024 locally & this will be extended to the final 2 age groups (50 & 52 year olds) from April 2025. Please note the test kits are not sent retrospectively so people will receive them after they reach the next qualifying age group.

This marks the final phase of the NHS ambition to offer everyone aged 50-74 the screening test to help detect bowel cancers or polyps at an earlier stage. The faecal immunochemical test kit (FIT) checks for blood in a small poo sample, which can be a sign of bowel cancer, polyps, or other bowel conditions. It is easy to use & return & results are sent back to you with information about any further tests (which are currently needed for around 2 in 100 of the people who send kits back).

The NHS is encouraging people to take up the potentially lifesaving offer, as uptake is lower in those aged 54 – 59 – less than 60% of 54-57 year olds currently take part compared to over 70% returning their FIT kits in the 60-74 range.

If you do have any symptoms including blood in the poo, pain in the abdomen, or changes in your bowel habits (such as diarrhoea, constipation, or going more or less often) you should speak to your GP.

The FIT home testing kit is sent centrally by the NHS Bowel Cancer Screening Programme. People aged 75 & over can request a kit by phoning the NHS Bowel Cancer Screening helpline on 0800 707 60 60.

For local guidance or assistance in East Suffolk & north east Essex:

Contact the ESNEFT Bowel Cancer Screening team on tel: 01206 742076 or email: bowelscreening@esneft.nhs.uk

Bowel cancer screening - East Suffolk & north Essex NHS Foundation Trust

The NHS Bowel Cancer Programme helpline as above (they will help with queries about when your test kit is due). Please do come & speak to the team if you see us at any health promotion events including the SOS bus or Be Well bus or in local surgeries.

Community Partnership Funding Programme

The Community Funding Partnership Group was formed in 2023 by the Integrated Care Board (ICB). Its primary role is to oversee the allocation of funds from the cancer programme to communities within SNEE. This funding aims to help the Integrated Care System (ICS) achieve timely cancer presentation & early diagnosis for its patient population, aligning with the NHS Long Term Plan objectives. The Cancer Community Partnership fund was launched in September

2023, its purpose is to support the achievement of an increase in the proportion of those diagnosed with cancer at stage one & two. The way in which this is proposed to be achieved is through the following four indicators:

Increased uptake of National Screening Programmes

Early Cancer Diagnosis; Improve signs & symptoms awareness for cancer.

Reducing health inequalities & improving access for Inclusion Health across SNEE as relating to earlier diagnosis

Personalised Care

Since the launch of the Community Cancer Partnership Funding in 2023, the panel has approved total funding of £300,000 between various voluntary charities & communities. Below are some who were awarded funding & a brief overview of how they have used that funding etc...

Cancer Support Suffolk. Helping Communities Before, During, & After Cancer...Is dedicated to addressing the needs of individuals & communities at every stage of their cancer journey. From raising awareness about early signs & symptoms to offering support during treatment & providing a safe space for post-treatment recovery, the organisation aims to educate, empower, & assist those affected by cancer. In March 2024, Cancer Support in Suffolk was awarded a £126,450 grant from the fund to support a 2-year initiative focusing on cancer awareness & screening & included funding for a cancer specialist educator, interactive educational tools, digital campaigns, and a monthly podcast. Several key events were attended which included:

- Suffolk College Freshers' Fair
- Suffolk Constabulary Family Fun Day
- Community Action Suffolk & SNEE Cancer Networking Event
- Breast awareness sessions for women with learning disabilities via ACE Anglia
- 'Know Your Breasts' educational event
- Rural Coffee Caravan's Ways to Wellness programme

Suffolk Refugee Support (SRS) is the sole provider in Suffolk of advice, advocacy & practical support for around 2,600 Asylum Seekers & Refugees (ASR) living in Suffolk. A grant of **£17,780** was awarded in April 2024 to fund a 2-year project to significantly increase the **uptake of National Screening Programmes & awareness of the signs & symptoms of cancer among refugee & asylum seeker (RAS) communities in Suffolk.**

Project Summary : This new project focuses on improving cancer awareness & screening uptake among individuals with low engagement levels. SRS will deliver the project through the following approaches:

- **Holding at least 2 International Women's Group annually**
- **Sewing Group**
- **Advice Service**
- **ESOL Classes**
- **Resettlement Work**

At the "Know Your Breasts" community event, held in The Key Café in Ipswich, 2 bilingual advice workers, fluent in Dari & Ukrainian, supported female clients, 2 nurses from Ipswich Hospital addressed participants' questions, dispelled **breast cancer myths, & demonstrated breast self-examination techniques** using mannequins. One client, who had previously experienced a breast polyp, found the event particularly beneficial & received personalised support from the nurse. Informative leaflets were also distributed to raise awareness among clients unable to attend.

a cancer awareness session was attended by 32 women in person, with a few joining online due to remote locations or childcare commitments. The event was supported by staff & volunteers providing translations in Kurdish, Arabic, Afghan languages, & Albanian. Topics included bowel & cervical screenings, breast self-examination, & support services for booking appointments. Female advice workers & the GP Federation were highlighted as resources for

arranging private screenings, translations, & evening appointments. A Q&A session with Kimya, from Cancer for Suffolk, allowed attendees to ask further questions.

In online sessions, a presentation delivered information about screenings & resources in participants' respective languages. The key themes included:

Encouraging attendance at screenings

Educating participants on what to expect during screenings

Raising awareness of requesting female staff & translators

Providing guidance on accessing GP/hospital services & booking appointments

Discussing symptoms, preventive measures, & early detection

The sessions equipped clients with valuable knowledge about cancer prevention, screenings, and local healthcare services. This was especially beneficial for newly arrived individuals who were hesitant about undergoing screenings. Group discussions helped build a sense of community, where peer support encouraged open dialogue and the sharing of personal experiences. Culturally sensitive delivery ensured attendees felt comfortable discussing health-related topics, helping reduce stigma around cancer & screenings. The sessions introduced clients to vital healthcare resources, demystifying the process & making it more accessible. Through the advice service, five clients received support with cancer screening, including booking two first-time screening appointments in the UK & assisting one individual with understanding their NHS bowel test kit.

Participant feedback indicated that while discussing health screenings initially felt awkward, the right support and encouragement fostered meaningful questions and conversations. Several women openly shared their experiences with screenings, with many having previously undergone smear tests. However, some, particularly those newly arrived in the UK, expressed fears and hesitations.

It was encouraging to see women supporting one another in taking proactive steps toward scheduling their screening appointments. Follow-ups are planned for those who were more apprehensive, providing additional information and support to encourage them to book their appointments.

University of Suffolk: On October 15, 2024, the University of Suffolk hosted its inaugural Early Cancer Diagnosis Conference, focusing on advancing early detection and increasing screening uptake in local communities. Expert speakers shared insights on topics such as prehabilitation in cancer care, patient experiences, and the importance of ongoing support.

Key Highlights

Student Poster Competition: UoS students were invited to design posters promoting early cancer diagnosis and screening. The winning design has since been printed and will be displayed locally to raise awareness.

Attendance & Engagement: While 45 participants attended, many more had registered. Delegates received conference packs with materials from cancer charities to further promote early diagnosis.

Networking & Exhibitor Stands: Local organizations, including Cancer Support Suffolk, showcased their initiatives, fostering connections for future collaborations in cancer prevention and care.

Impact & Outcomes: The event had a wider regional reach, welcoming representatives from Essex and Norfolk, with Norfolk attendees exploring similar initiatives in their communities. Rebecca Marsh and Dr. Cushen-Brewster have since been invited to present their work to other organisations, reflecting the conference's broader impact.

Positive Feedback:

96% of attendees rated the content as excellent, emphasizing its role in raising awareness about early diagnosis and screening.

Comments such as "thought-provoking" and "a great mix of medical and social insights" highlighted the event's success.

The poster competition had a profound impact, inspiring students. One participant shared her personal story of an early breast cancer diagnosis detected through routine screening—an experience she credits with saving her life. Next steps will be to build on the momentum of the event which sparked new initiatives, including community education efforts, discussions on increased funding for prehabilitation research, and HPV vaccine awareness. Continued collaboration with local organizations and stakeholders will help drive long-term impact in cancer prevention and early diagnosis.

Looking ahead, an application for additional funding for 2025/26 has been submitted to enable the University of Suffolk to host future conferences. Thank you for your support in making this important event possible.

Breast Friends is a support community for women affected by breast cancer in the region. We support our community via an online Facebook hub, & regular in-person meetings, wellness walks, art workshops, & more. The Cancer Community Partnership Fund has enabled Breast Friends to reach women both in person, & virtually, via information stands across the region, & via a number of informative & tailored Zoom meetings within our community. We also work to promote greater awareness of early screening, & regular breast checking via our campaign of feel on the first. Recently we have worked with some secondary schools in the region to provide an informative 'boob camp' to six form students to raise breast health awareness from a young age.

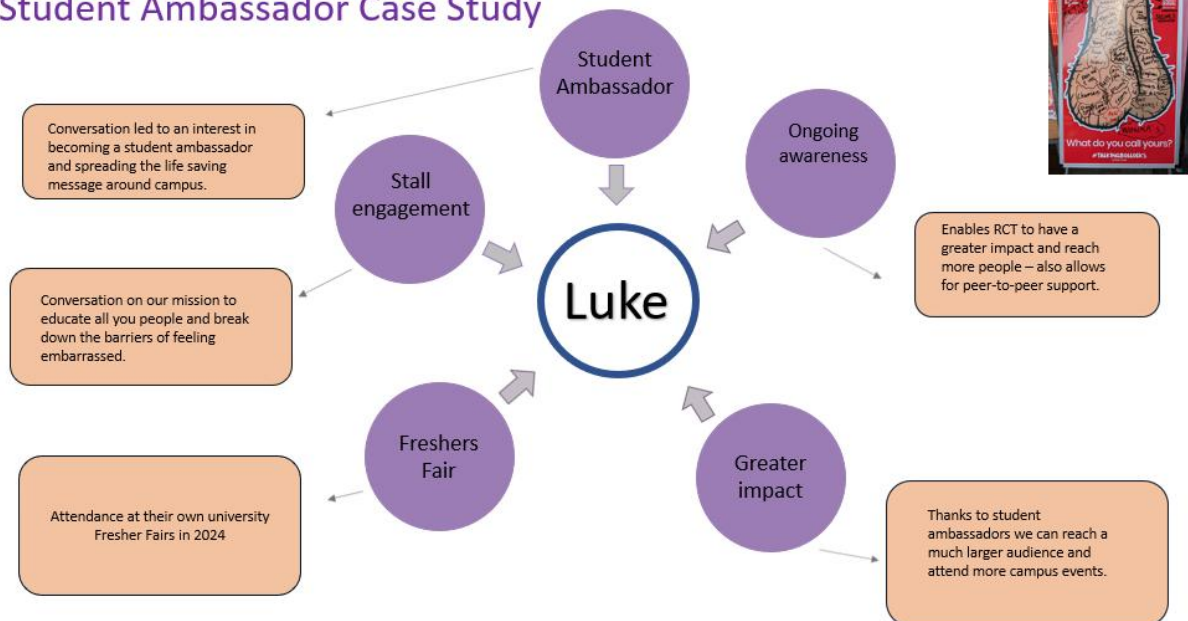


Robin Trust: a grant of £6,828 was awarded in 2024 to fund a Community Engagement Manager 0.5 day per week for one year, office costs (phone; print; IT; finance) - leaflets, printed materials & engagement & take away resources printed & digital education materials (including cancer awareness cards; signs & symptoms coasters, etc). Staff & volunteer travel costs. Backdrop banner (supporting outreach events & awareness raising activity). 4 x Foamex awareness neck signs for use at community events. Fee for attending Fresher Fair & Pride event. Activities/Outcomes/Goals Delivered: We participated in 5 Freshers Fairs & Colchester Pride 2024, engaging with over 4,092 people. Distributed materials including stickers, tattoos, beer mats, & provided photo opportunities with themed props ("balls & ovaries"). Achieved the key goal of raising awareness about the signs & symptoms of ovarian & testicular cancer through meaningful interactions. We had a total of meaningful interactions with approx. 4,092 individuals, distributing materials made up of 883 awareness cards; 214 leaflets; 745 tattoos; 1,412 stickers; and 585 beer mats.

Hundreds of conversations & photos taken. Notable success in reaching young people through a fun & approachable delivery style, creating a comfortable environment for discussing sensitive topics.

We know Early diagnosis matters: Testicular cancer is 98% curable if detected early, meaning a survival rate of 10 years or more Ovarian cancer is 90% curable if detected early, meaning women surviving 5 years or more. However, almost 60% of ovarian cancer cases are diagnosed at late stage. A woman dies every 2 hours from ovarian cancer in the UK. Although it's very hard to show the impact we are having with our support tending to be one-off interactions. We do however believe that through education, engagement & empowerment we will save lives. We want all young people to know what's normal for them, have the confidence to visit a doctor if they are concerned & to live their best life if they have been affected by cancer.

Student Ambassador Case Study



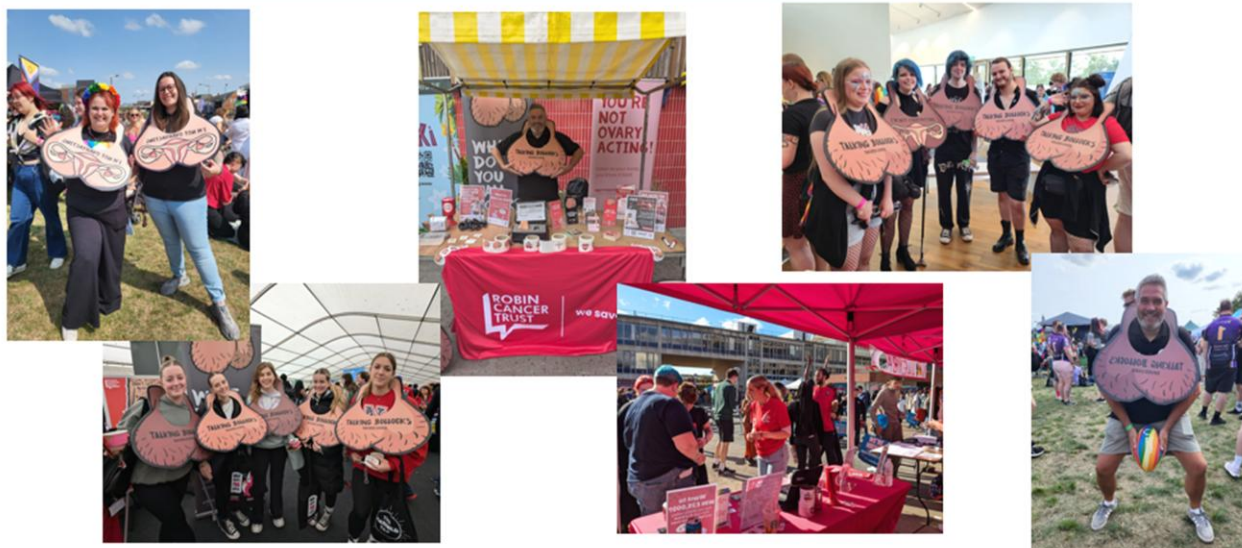
Photos – with permission!

Freshers Instagram posts:

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Further updates from other charities/communities will be featured in future newsletters, please get in touch with the cancer programme team or with the charities directly, if you would like any further information

Monthly Cancer Awareness

Cancer awareness calendar

January	February	March	April	May	June
 Cervical Cancer Prevention Week  Less Survivable Cancers Awareness Day (11 January)*	 Kidney Cancer Awareness Week  Oesophageal Cancer Awareness Month  World Cancer Day (4 February)	 Brain Tumour Awareness Month  Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month  International HPV Awareness Day (4 March)  Kidney Cancer Awareness Month  Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month  Prostate Cancer Awareness Month	 Bowel Cancer Awareness Month  Testicular Cancer Awareness Month	 Bladder Cancer Awareness Month  Melanoma Awareness Month  Skin Cancer Awareness Month  Sun Awareness Week  World Ovarian Cancer Day (8 May)	 Cervical Screening Awareness Week  Myeloma Awareness Week
July	August	September	October	November	December
 Sarcoma Awareness Month  World Head and Neck Cancer Day (27 July)		 Blood Cancer Awareness Month  Childhood Cancer Awareness Month  Gynaecological Cancer Awareness Month  Hereditary Cancer Awareness Week  Thyroid Cancer Awareness Month  Urological Cancer Awareness Month	 Breast Cancer Awareness Month  Liver Cancer Awareness Month  Myelodysplastic Syndromes (MDS) World Awareness Day (25 October)	 Gastric Cancer Awareness Month  Lung Cancer Awareness Month  Mouth Cancer Action Month  Movember**  Pancreatic Cancer Awareness Month	

*Less Survivable Cancers Awareness Day encompasses brain tumours, liver cancer, lung cancer, oesophageal cancer, pancreatic cancer and stomach cancer **Movember is often used to raise awareness for prostate cancer

cruk.org/healthprofessional

Together we will beat cancer

Future Events

ESNEFT on behalf of the Cancer patient panel are holding 2 x **Patient & Carer Information & Feedback Events**, both events will have guest speakers talking about innovations in cancer & quality of life after treatment. Explore a marketplace of community services & have your say through an opportunity to feedback on your care. A light lunch & drinks will be provided on the day. If you would like to attend, please reply via the online form by scanning the relevant QR code for the venue/location below or clicking the link or venue/location by 28 February 2025

The first is being held on **Thursday 24th April 0945 to 1400 @ Kingsland Church, 86 London Road, Colchester, CO3 9DW**



Kingsland Church, Colchester

<https://forms.office.com/e/P1XtydRuUR>

The second is being held on **Friday 23rd May 0945 – 1400 @ Kesgrave War Memorial Community Centre, Twelve Acre Approach, Kesgrave, Ipswich, IP5 1JF,**



Kesgrave War Memorial Community Centre, Ipswich

<https://forms.office.com/e/FFnnyBNGmV>

If you don't have digital access & would like to confirm your attendance, please call Morven Hurding on 07831 502183

Alternatively, please return by post to Morven Hurding, Cancer Wellbeing & Information Centre, Turner Road, Colchester, CO4 5JL or request a pre-paid envelope by calling the telephone number above.

Developing new services for our cancer patients in West Suffolk

West Suffolk Foundation Trust (WSFT) has introduced new cancer services such as complimentary therapies which are now being offered to cancer patients who are undergoing cancer treatment at the WSFT. A specialist team at Bury Physiotherapy Clinic is offering free holistic therapies including Specialist Cancer massage, Reiki & Back Neck Shoulder massage. Patients are delighted by the new service.

Here is an example of patient feedback "I can't thank you enough for my massages at Bury Physio, I have felt a different man, didn't realise what a difference this would make to me."

After the success of the free counselling service for cancer patients, a new Family Counsellor has been introduced. A cancer diagnosis affects the whole family, The Family Counsellor service supports husbands & wives, partners & adults & young children. Group, individual, online sessions & school visits are available. Patients must have a Clinical Nurse Specialist at the WSFT to access the service. For complimentary therapies & counselling referrals please contact the Cancer Information Centre at West Suffolk on 01284 713023 or email cancer.infocentre@wsh.nhs.uk

The Cancer Navigators are extending their regular non-clinical support into the communities. WSFT cancer patients can now see Cancer Navigators locally. If a GP surgery would like to hold Navigator Clinics or if patients want to have a face-to-face appointment, please call the Navigator helpline on 01284 713595 or email macmillan.navigators@wsh.nhs.uk

Future publication dates :

May 2025
September 2025
January 2026

Subsections/Topics for future publication...

1. Awareness & prevention
2. WS Screening info
3. Early diagnosis & innovation
4. Quality & performance
5. Secondary care perspective
6. 'Living with' & beyond
7. Ad hoc -including events across IES, NEE & WS
8. Updates from community ambassadors

<https://suffolk&northeastessex.icb.nhs.uk>

email : cancer.programme@snee.nhs.uk
