



Did you know people living with severe mental illness are less likely to attend for cancer screening?



Scan here

There are inequalities in uptake of cancer screening and in cancer deaths for people with severe mental illness.

In 2021, Public Health England highlighted inequalities in the uptake of national cancer screening programmes for those with severe mental illness (SMI). Those with SMI were less likely to participate in breast, cervical and bowel screening. Analysis suggested between 2016 and 2018 adults with SMI were 2.1 times more likely to die from cancer under the age of 75 than people without SMI.



We worked together to understand the issue more. We engaged with people in the community in ways that worked for them.

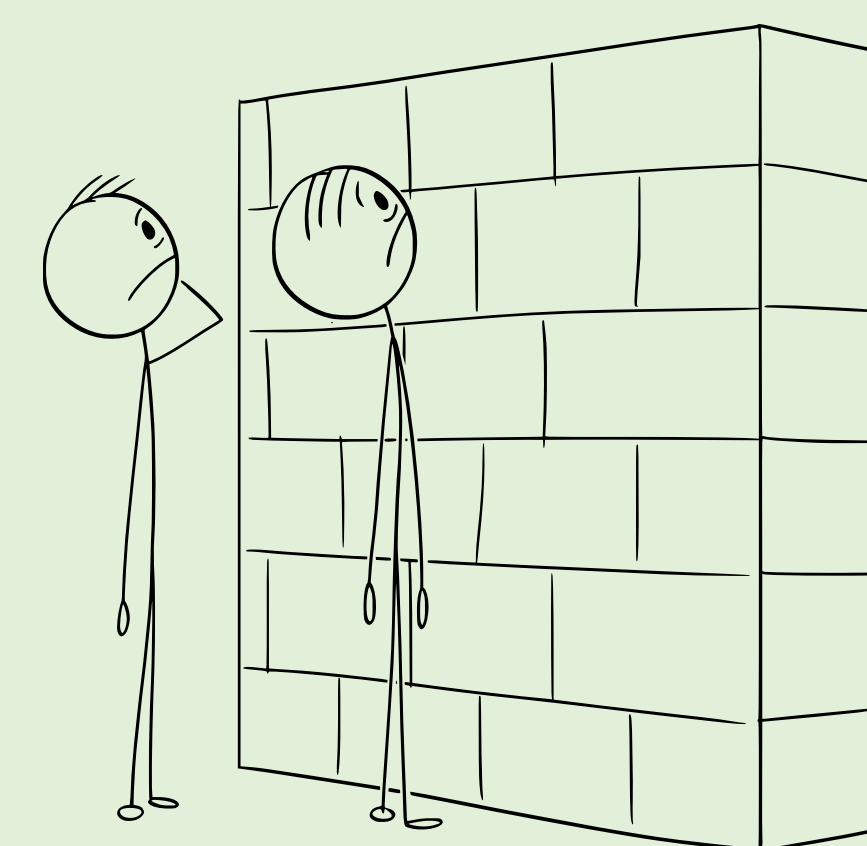


People with lived experience, Sheffield Flourish, Sheffield Health and Social Care NHS Foundation Trust and SACMHA worked together to explore the barriers and fears associated with attending cancer screening. Coproduction sessions were held focusing on three cancer screening processes; breast, bowel and cervical. Additional sessions were held via SACMHA, SayIt and the Gender Identity Clinic. The range of sessions allowed engagement with people who had a range of experiences, including young people, transgender and non binary people, and those from ethnically diverse backgrounds. We used an arts based approach and worked with an illustrator. The image shows artistic representations of peoples ideal screening experience.

We explored what barriers people face in accessing screening, heard peoples stories and imagined our ideal screening experience.

A variety of barriers to accessing screening were identified, including:

- Triggers due to previous trauma
- Wanting to take someone along for support
- Symptoms of anxiety and depression
- Negative previous healthcare experiences
- Fear of the outcome



Together, we created resources and held events to raise awareness.



As part of this project we:

- ✓ Produced resources for breast, bowel and cervical cancer screening
- ✓ Made digital versions with audio narration from those who were part of their creation.
- ✓ Held events raising awareness of inequalities in cancer screening.
- ✓ Heard stories of people attending screening appointments as a result of getting involved.

You can access the resources by scanning our QR code

Thank you to everyone who took part and supported us.

Authors: Jaimee Wylam (Sheffield Health and Social Care NHS Foundation Trust), Lisa Thompson-Cox (Sheffield Flourish), Josie Soutar (Sheffield Flourish)
This project was funded via the Cancer Innovation Award scheme by South Yorkshire and Bassetlaw Cancer Alliance