

# **NHS Lothian restarts Breast Screening service**

**NHS Lothian has today, 3 August 2020, welcomed back patients to the Breast Screening service.**

**Appointments were temporarily paused earlier in the year in response to Covid-19.**

The team, which is based at Ardmillan House in Edinburgh, is running clinics throughout the week. There will also be additional Saturday appointments to ensure that they can screen those patients whose appointments were cancelled as soon as possible. Once these patients have been screened, the service will open up more widely.

Similar to other areas across NHS Lothian, changes have been made to help protect both patients and staff from Covid-19. Patients will be asked to arrive as close to their appointment time as possible, waiting areas will have reduced capacity to allow for social distancing, patients will be asked to wear a face mask or a face covering and staff will be in PPE.

Despite the introduction of these adaptations, the screening itself will remain the same, and staff will be on hand to offer both assistance and reassurance to patients.

Mary Tait, Health Promotion Facilitator, Breast Screening, NHS Lothian said: "We are delighted to welcome back patients to the Breast Screening service. The team have done a huge amount of work to ensure that we can deliver the service in a way that is safe for both our patients and our staff. When patients arrive for appointments, they may notice that things are little different to normal, but we want to offer

reassurance that the actual screening hasn't changed."

Breast Screening aims to find breast cancers early, by using an X-ray test called a mammogram that can spot cancers when they're too small to see or feel. As the likelihood of getting breast cancer increases with age, all women aged from 50 to their 71st birthday who are registered with a GP are automatically invited for breast cancer screening every three years.

Mary added: "Breast Screening can help detect early cancer, but regularly checking your breasts and knowing what is normal for you is also really important. If you do notice any changes, make sure you see your doctor, in most cases it won't be cancer, but it's best to get it checked out."

Janet Clarke, Clinical Lead for Breast Screening, NHS Lothian, said that screening teams have adapted how they are working to ensure they can reach those people whose appointments were cancelled as soon as possible.

She added, "We understand that for those patients who had screening appointments cancelled, there may be a degree of apprehension. Ensuring we see these patients as soon as possible is a priority for us, which is why the service will be operating extended hours, including offering Saturday appointments. We hope that by adopting this approach, we can ensure that screening returns to normal, albeit a new type of normal, as quickly as possible."