



## Utilising Facebook to improve uptake in Breast Screening

By Health Improvement Practitioners Gina Newman & Jessica Mulroy Johnson

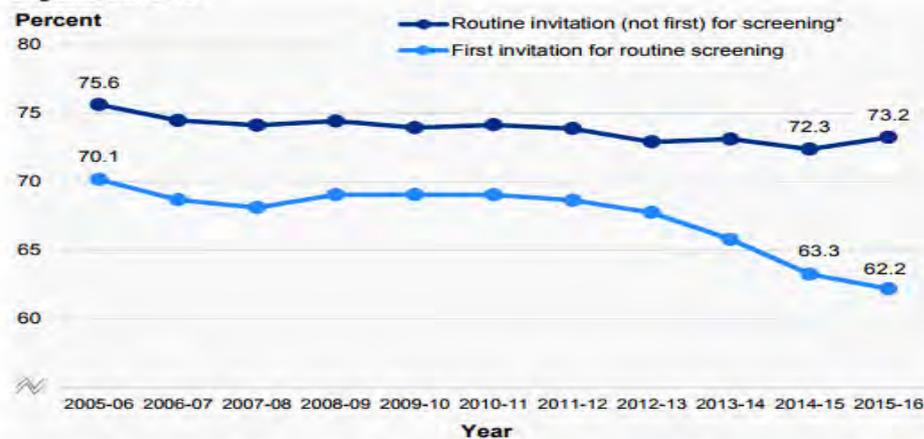
University Hospital of North Midlands

### Background

In 2016, the proportion of eligible women taking up routine breast screening invitations fell to its lowest rate in a 10 year period in the UK; with the largest decline in the prevalent cohort. (NHS Digital, 2018)

**Figure 8: Uptake by women aged 50-70 of routine invitations to screen (first and other)**

England, 2015-16



Data excludes short term recalls and self/GP referrals.

\*Includes routine invitations to previous non-attenders, routine invitations to previous attenders screened within the last 5 years and routine invitations to previous attenders over 5 years since their last screen.

Source: KC62 (Part 1, Tables A to C2) NHS Digital

In view of this evidence the health improvement practitioners sought to identify other avenues in which promotion of breast screening could be rolled out. As funds were an issue, any promotion was required to have minimal financial impact.

Due to the popularity of social media the health improvement practitioners recognised that by utilising Facebook as an additional platform to communicate with service users on screening specific information the reach of this information could be extensive but a minimal cost to the service.

## Aims

*Aim:* To raise awareness and the importance of local screening, and to increase uptake of appointments.

### *Objectives*

1. To identify geographical locations that have an active digital community and groups
2. To undertake regular digital engagement of screening specific information
3. To collaborate with GP's who have a Facebook account
4. To allow peer to peer encouragement of Breast Screening
5. To identify and minimise any inequalities

## Method

A holistic and mixed digital process approach was taken, GP practices were identified that have an active Facebook page and established community groups, to keep costs down to a minimum. Activities included a geographical review, digital Intelligence analysis, utilisation of health promotion best practice and the theoretical guidance of the Health Belief Model.

### **Implementation plan**

Health Improvement Practitioner Gina Newman developed and led on the digital initiative, with Health Improvement Practitioner Jessica Mulroy Johnson. In association with Redmoor Health to utilise their digital skills and obtain funding for engagement posts to maximise reach.

Health Improvement Practitioners were required to liaise with the organisation communications team and adhere to the digital communication strategy and in house standard operation procedure for social media. To ensure cohesion between screening service and trust, each post linked in with the trusts social media page to furthermore increase the reach within the community.

The Health Improvement Practitioners regularly referenced "Digital Healthcare: The essential guide" throughout engagement activities.

### **Evaluation plan**

The North Midlands Breast Screening Service digital engagement initiatives are reviewed with the stakeholder group quarterly to assess a formative evaluation to determine whether the objectives were realistic and achievable, and if objectives need to be revised etc. A final summative evaluation will be undertaken on completion of the three year programme.

## Outcomes

The vast majority of internet users have a social media profile; in particular Facebook, making it the most common social media platform on which to have a profile. In 2016 Ofcom (2017) reported that 86% of adults go online. This report stated that women are more likely than men to have been online and are more likely to use social media for looking at health information.

(Ofcom, 2017)

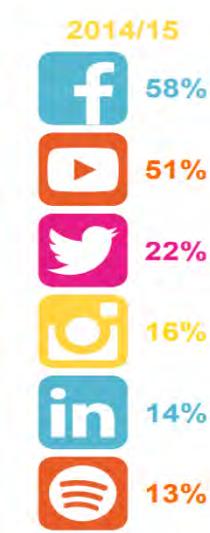
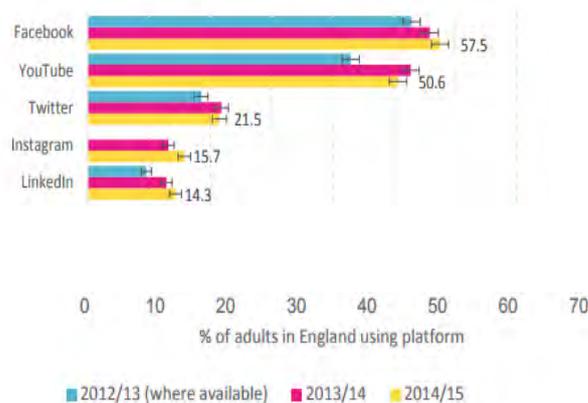


Figure 3: Usage of social media platforms over time, 2012/13 – 2014/15 (labels indicate 2014/15 values)



(Department for Culture, Media and Sport, 2016)

On identifying the benefits of adopting a digital approach, specific geographical locations are identified, investigated, and targeted alongside the screening programme to ensure that relevant information is seen by eligible cohorts. This can be done at very little cost, but can have maximum reach for example we were able to target women aged 45-65+ in 4 specific locations of Stoke on Trent for £3.00. The posts can be scheduled to be posted at the most optimum time so that reach is maximised. Evidence has found that peak time of Facebook usage is between 6 – 9pm in the evening.



(NMBSS, 2018)

The post below, alone reached 676 people all of whom are women of screening age and live in locations where the GP practice was due to invite women to breast screening.

**View results**

- You targeted **women, ages 45-65+** who live in **4 locations**.  
Show full summary
- This ad ran for **4 days**
- Your total budget for this ad was **3.00 GBP**
- Only the person who boosted this post can edit it.

**676** People Reached (?)    **131** 10-second video views (?)    **£3.00** Total Spend (?)

Actions: **People** Countries

**100% Women**    **0% Men**

Age Group	Percentage
13-17	0%
18-24	0%
25-34	0%
35-44	0%
45-54	40%
55-64	38%
65+	22%

DESKTOP NEWS FEED    MOBILE NEWS FEED

**North Midlands Breast Screening Service**  
Sponsored

Remember, it is important to attend your breast screening appointment when invited. Here is a simple video to show what you can expect.

125    26 Comments    414 shares    31K Views

Like    Comment    Share

(NMBSS, 2018)

Links were established with community Facebook pages for example: A Little Bit of Stone (13k followers), The Stunner, Biddulph and Proud etc.

**A Little Bit of Stone** ✓  
November 7, 2017 · 🌐

From mid November, a potentially lifesaving breast screening service is inviting Stone ladies for an appointment

**Breast screening service for Stone residents at Stafford's County Hospital > A Little Bit of Stone**

From mid November onwards, a potentially lifesaving breast screening service is inviting all ladies from the Stone area who are aged between 47-70 years old to a...

ALITTLEBITOFSTONE.COM



Selected GP practices were targeted with a digital approach. All practices saw an increase in overall uptake and an increase in prevalent attendance, therefore reversing the national 10yr decline.

The following tables show 7 GP practices that were targeted with the same health promotion initiatives in both 2014/15 and 2017/18; however in 17/18 these were also targeted with a digital approach.

Practice A – Static site

Year	Overall	Prevalent	Incident
2008	82%		
2011	80%		
2014	76%	49%	84%
2017	78%	61%	85%

Practice B – Static site

Year	Overall	Prevalent	Incident
2008	80%		
2011	79%		
2014	76%	51%	84%

2017	79%	62%	84%
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Practice C – Static site

Year	Overall	Prevalent	Incident
2008	79%		
2011	79%		
2014	75%	49%	84%
2017	78%	64%	85%

Practice D – Static site

Year	Overall	Prevalent	Incident
2009	84%		
2012	80%		
2014	78%	54%	85%
2017	80%	65%	89%

Practice E – Mobile Site

Year	Overall	Prevalent	Incident
2009	79%		
2012	79%		
2015	78%	53%	85%
2018	78%	62%	86%

Practice F – Mobile Site

Year	Overall	Prevalent	Incident
2009	79%		
2012	84%		
2015	80%	51%	86%

2018	80%	58%	86%
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Practice G – Mobile Site

Year	Overall	Prevalent	Incident
2009	79%		
2012	79%		
2015	76%	25%	84%
2018	76%	51%	84%

This digital approach has been recognised nationally and has been show cased at large events such as NHS Expo 2018. Health Improvement Practitioner Gina Newman at the NHS Expo 2018.



Health Improvement Practitioners Gina Newman and Jess Mulroy Johnson explaining the benefits of using a social media approach to engage with eligible cohorts.



## **Positive outcomes from the use of Facebook**

Women who have previously failed to attend for their appointment have contacted us via Facebook. Through this communication their breast screening appointments have been rebooked and attended.

*"Hi do I need a referral from my GP for a screening...I am 60 yrs old and due to unforeseen circumstances missed my appointment about 12 months ago."*

Through publishing community posts to the wider community networks, we are able to highlight breast awareness message and the importance of early detection through screening.

*"Seeing your post made me think about breast awareness and that's what made me contact you. At first I thought should I reply as I was out of the Leek area you were talking about, but I then thought the worst you could say is that you were unable to help. The quick response was very encouraging and I have now made an appointment for [next week](#). I have also discussed this with my colleagues at work and shared your link with them to make them aware. Thanks again for your help"*

*"Thank you so much Gina and Jess for your phone call and prompt appointment. Without that Facebook post I would never have known about it!"*

This approach enables us to engage with "hard to reach" and "perpetual non-attendees" who would not normally contact the service. This is achieved by encouraging women to directly message the page. Through positive conversation we are enabling and empowering women to make informed choices.

*"I am 57yrs old and I had missed two screening appointments, therefore never attending before. I saw your post over the little bit of stone page and decided to get in touch over Facebook. I then went on to have my mammogram."*

We have identified that there is a misconception in the over 70's being entitled for Breast screening. This is highlighted in each published post.

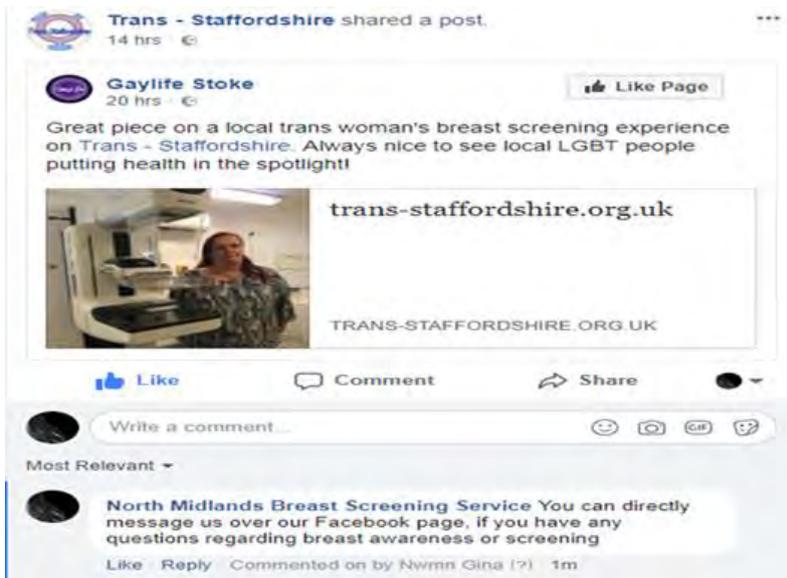
*"Glad I've seen your post and was able to put the question regarding age, you put my mind at ease that I will be seen even though I'm nearly 70."*

Positive peer to peer encouragement has resulted in hard to reach ladies engaging with the page.

Friend tagged in post *"we will definitely go"*

## **Health inclusion cohorts**

Health inclusion groups can share our information and videos and encourage their followers. We are then able to comment on the post, to encourage interaction and break down barriers.



Working closely with GP Facebook pages has had a positive impact on not only the women being invited for screening as they are aware of the dates for screening before their invite letter, but also the GP practices themselves as they can keep up to date with breast screening information such as age cohorts invited and engage with us before and/or after a GP visit has been completed.

*"On behalf of the practice we would like to say a special thank you to you personally. We noticed how you were regularly putting posts on Facebook. I am sure that your actions have had a big impact on achieving the 80% uptake."*

Practice Manager reviewed [North Midlands Breast Screening Service](#) – 5 star [1 October at 20:27](#) · Great staff who are totally devoted to maximising uptake in the North Midlands.

**NHS**

Brinsley Avenue Medical Practice

Home

- Reviews
- Photos
- Videos
- Posts
- About
- Community
- Info and ads

Create a Page

VIMEO.COM

**Support is available through the Healthy Minds Service**  
Mental health support is available through the Healthy Minds Service

Like Comment Share

**NHS** Brinsley Avenue Medical Practice shared a video.  
12 June

5,348 Views

**North Midlands Breast Screening Service**  
Published by Marc Schmid (?) · 12 June

Some powerful personal stories from ladies explaining why it is so important to attend your screening appointment

North Midlands Breast Screening Service and Gill Darlow

Like Comment Share

Write a comment...

Posting information about the number of women who do not attend provokes a lot of emotion and the level of engagement spikes considerably with women sharing their stories of breast cancer/ screening and encouraging women who have either not attended or are due to attend.

**North Midlands Breast Screening Service** is 😞 feeling disappointed.  
Published by Jessica Mulroy Johnson (?) · 14 September at 11:52

So far we have invited all eligible women registered with Brinsley Avenue Practice  
The Surgery at Trentham Mews  
Dr Shah & Dr Talpur at Hanford Health Centre  
And are currently inviting eligible women registered with Hartshill Medical Centre.... See more

University Hospital of North Midlands NHS

**Breast Screening**

So far we have invited 7867 women to attend their breast screening appointment at the Newcastle mobile unit. However 480 have not attended with no notice given.

If you have missed your appointment and would like to attend, please call the screening office on 0300 123 1463, our email nos-tr.northstaffsbreastscreening@nhs.net, or our Facebook page [www.facebook.com/NorthMidlandsBreastScreeningService](http://www.facebook.com/NorthMidlandsBreastScreeningService)

1,227 people reached

Boost Post

██████████ The mobile unit at Morrison's is so convenient. There is no problem parking and I have never had to wait to be seen. Plus the lovely staff are competent and efficient. Thank you all for providing this service.

Like · Reply · 1w

6

██████████ replied · 2 Replies

██████████ Sorry but all these comments sayings yes it's painful but...aren't helping me! I've had a letter, I want to go but I've now idea just how painful it's going to be? Is it just painful 😞 or is it excruciating 😞😞? I know it's better than the worst case scenario but... I know the sensible thing to do it go but part of me thinks that that much pressure/pain on sensitive tissue can't be good anyway?

Like · Reply · 1w

Hide 16 Replies

██████████ folk told me the same when I went for my first one, I was dreading it. It isn't painful a bit uncomfortable but that is mainly down to the awkward position you hold. Just go and don't worry about it, it could just save your life 😊

Like · Reply · 1w · Edited

4

██████████ Don't put it off Hil nothing to worry about and it is over and done with very quickly. Will have a chat later 😊

Like · Reply · 1w

1

██████████ right oh! It really does put me off 😞

Like · Reply · 1w

██████████ see you later x

Like · Reply · 1w

██████████ Its over in minutes, and you feel better when you come out, that you have been screened! NHS is brill! 😊

Like · Reply · 1w · Edited

██████████ no not excruciating, just a slight pressure thats all, over in minutes!

Like · Reply · 1w

### Breaking down barriers

A geographical location was a challenge for the breast screening service. This was because the mobile unit had been decommissioned after 10yrs and local ladies had to travel. Therefore, positive community engagement posts were crucial. The digital approach resulted in an overall increase in uptake for both GP practices, which had been in decline for the last 10yrs. A community Facebook page in the targeted area, which has over 13k followers, published an editorial post on behalf of the service before screening and after to highlight the increase in uptake.



**A Little Bit of Stone** ✓

July 19 · 🌐



The North Midlands Breast Screening has announced that there has been a marked increase in women attending breast screening appointments following a recent campaign



ALITTLEBITOFSTONE.COM

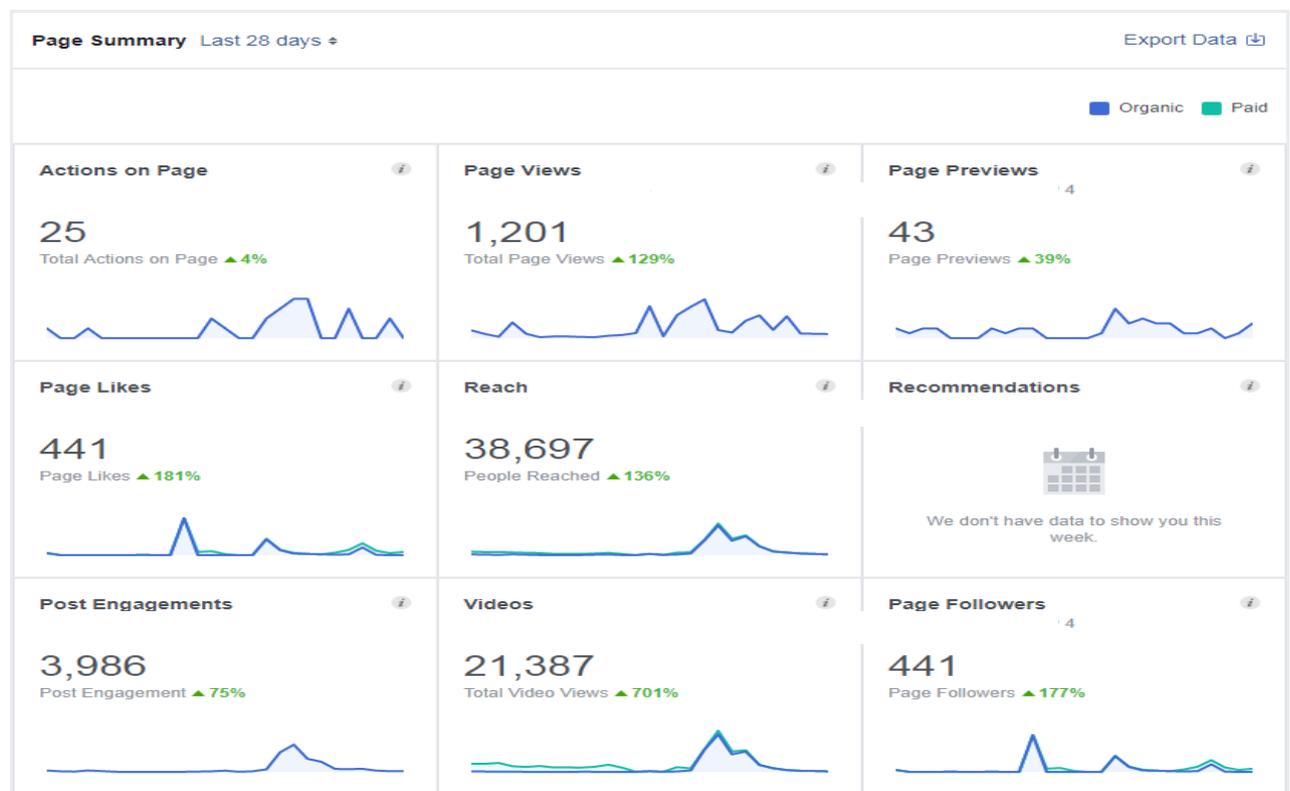
**Stone breast screening campaign a success > A Little Bit of Stone**

### **Going forward**

The digital engagement approach resulted in reversing the 10yr decline for breast screening uptakes. However, it has created an organisational issue for the staff involved. Ladies message the Facebook page out of office working hours and in particular at the weekends. This can then lead to criticism, if they do not get a prompt reply. Therefore the health improvement practitioners are working in collaboration with Redmoor Health and Lancaster University to develop Artificial Intelligence to be added to the messenger. This will then give ladies an automatic response, which will result in improved patient experience of the screening service. There is no cost associated with this facility. Local identifiable person screening specific numbers will be requested for identification purposes; however this will not be stored. No other identifiable data will be requested, this will adhere to GDPR regulations.

# Facebook insight's

Posts	Reach	Clicks/Actions	Published
Please share: All ladies aged 47-73 registered with Hartshill Medical Centre...	2.5K	135	Aug 20, 2018 at 3:47pm Jessica Mulroy Johnson
North Midlands Breast Screening Service shared North Staffordshire Bowel Canc...	564	39	Aug 16, 2018 at 9:40pm Jessica Mulroy Johnson
North Midlands Breast Screening Service shared University Hospitals of North...	463	41	Aug 16, 2018 at 5:48pm Jessica Mulroy Johnson
	2.6K	150	Aug 13, 2018 at 10:18pm Marc Schmid
North Midlands Breast Screening Service shared North Shelton Community ...	225	3	Aug 13, 2018 at 12:57pm Jessica Mulroy Johnson
North Midlands Breast Screening Service shared The wee c's post.	647	60	Aug 7, 2018 at 12:04pm Jessica Mulroy Johnson
Let Dr Beat help check your pulse - please share	139	14	Aug 6, 2018 at 7:24pm Marc Schmid
Registered with Cambridge House Surgery? If you missed your breast...	373	9	Aug 3, 2018 at 12:33pm Jessica Mulroy Johnson
North Midlands Breast Screening Service shared A Little Bit of Stone's post.	132	92	Jul 19, 2018 at 10:42am Nwmn Gina
Can you help? Staffordshire University is after people living in the West Midlands...	242	12	Jul 16, 2018 at 11:53pm Marc Schmid
All ladies who are aged 47-70yrs old and are registered with Dunrobin Street...	669	26	Jul 13, 2018 at 1:44pm Jessica Mulroy Johnson
https://youtu.be/QR5IRNI7mCg	671	28	Jul 13, 2018 at 12:48pm Nwmn Gina
North Midlands Breast Screening Service shared Park Medical Centre's post.	53	29	Jul 10, 2018 at 8:12pm Jessica Mulroy Johnson
70 years of the NHS! Congratulations to all the wonderful, dedicated and caring...	1.1K	99	Jul 5, 2018 at 5:00pm Marc Schmid



(NMBSS, 2018)

## Conclusion

Facebook has been a major factor in assisting us to reverse the national 10 year decline for screening, in particular with the prevalent cohort. It has also had a positive impact on patient experience and has increased positive screening experiences. A digital engagement approach will be utilised and implemented in each targeted area in the future, but best practice is still being evolved.

Social media is not a panacea for all the difficulties we face in recruiting women to screening. The following still raise a number of challenges:

- Extending our engagement reach to challenging diverse areas
- Health literacy levels
- Engaging with women who do not have access to social media
- Time spent 'out of hours' on social media

## References

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