



## **Bowel Cancer Screening Programme**

Report 279/2006      South Devon Bowel Cancer Screening Centre  
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### **BOWEL CANCER SCREENING PROGRAMME**

The South Devon Bowel Cancer Screening Centre at Torbay Hospital is one of the very first that will go into action as part of a new National Screening Programme to combat Bowel cancer. The NHS Bowel Cancer Screening Programme is being introduced gradually and there will be national coverage within 3 years for the population in the 60-69 year age range.

The Endoscopy Unit at Torbay Hospital is already one of ten Regional Endoscopy Training Centres in England and has been training hospital consultants and other healthcare professionals in endoscopic techniques for the past five years. It was chosen to be in the first wave of centres to offer this programme because of its already proven high service standards and training centre status, and is only the third in England to "go live".

Initially it will serve the eligible population for the Torbay & Teignbridge PCTs and three practices within the South Hams PCT. It is planned that in July 2007 Derriford Hospital will come on line as a "screening site" for the South Devon centre and will cover the eligible population for Plymouth and West Devon PCTs and remaining practices within the South Hams PCT.

The centre will be responsible for offering follow-up for those people who receive abnormal test results. This includes support for patients through nurse clinics, colonoscopy and referring on for treatment where necessary.

Over the course of the next two years, letters and an explanatory leaflet will be sent out to people in this area who fall in the eligible age range, inviting them to take part in the screening programme. They will then be sent a free test kit, which is simple to use in the privacy of their own home. A specially-designed pre-paid envelope is provided to return the kit for analysis at the screening programme's laboratory. If any follow-up investigation is required this will be provided at the screening centre based at the Torbay Hospital Endoscopy Unit.

The first test kits were sent out on Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> October, the first nurse led clinic was held on Monday 16<sup>th</sup> October and the first screening colonoscopy will be performed in the week commencing Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> October.

Bowel cancer affects more than one in 20 people, but figures indicate that 90 per cent can be successfully treated and survive if it is caught early.

Currently, around 16,000 people die as a result of bowel cancer each year, and it is the second most common cause of cancer deaths in the UK, but earlier diagnosis and treatment as a result of the new screening programme should mean thousands of lives are saved. Research has shown that screening for bowel cancer can reduce the death rate among those screened by up to 16 per cent.