



Peer Support Workers break barriers to screening among the Roma community in Ireland

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#choosescreeing



An tSeirbhís Náisiúnta Scagthástála
National Screening Service

- Cairde is a community development organisation working to reduce health inequities among minority ethnic groups in Ireland



- In 2025, the HSE National Screening Service (NSS) partnered with Cairde to deliver a screening promotion initiative.



- Working with Cairde's Roma Programme, this partnership **aimed to reduce barriers and improve equity in screening** by enhancing awareness and access among Roma in Ireland.

- NSS provided tailored on-line training sessions to the Cairde's five Roma Peer Support Workers on: BowelScreen, BreastCheck, CervicalCheck and Diabetic RetinaScreen
- As part of the training, the NSS provided bespoke resources including videos in Romanian and other languages
- The Roma Peer Support Workers carried out outreach for four months sharing screening messages
- Following this, the NSS conducted a focus group with the Roma Peer Support Workers to gather feedback on the initiative, their outreach activities, barriers and NSS resources



The Roma Peer Support Workers supported community members to

- understand screening
- register and update their details on the screening register
- translate appointment letters
- identify and contact local GPs
- and attend screening appointments



Focus Group with Roma Peer Support Workers

There is often a language barrier, and in my role, I'm able to learn about screening and share the information with my peers

I explained the HPV vaccination to my mother. My younger sister received paperwork from school, and I could help my mother understand the purpose of the vaccination.

There were good explanations. The right information and level. It was precise and clear. More images and videos.

More translated leaflets. More health staff to mention screening messages.

There is over-crowding in some houses as people are staying with someone temporarily and they don't want to give out this address.

There is a fear that the sample taker is not a female, which she says would be a barrier in her culture.

- The NSS and Cairde partnership has contributed to disseminating information about screening programmes among the Roma community who might otherwise not have participated
- The Roma Peer Support Workers identified barriers and made recommendations to further improve the design and delivery of screenings among the Roma population in Ireland