

Tell Another Woman

Taking Cervical Screening Awareness into Communities Across Greenwich

Every year, thousands of women are invited for cervical screening. Screening is one of the most effective ways of preventing cervical cancer, but not everyone attends when invited. Earlier work carried out by Healthwatch Greenwich on behalf of Greenwich Public Health found that some women from Global Majority communities who had not responded to screening invitations had questions, concerns and practical barriers that made attending more difficult.

Women told us they wanted clearer information about what happens during screening, reassurance about the procedure, and practical advice about the choices available to them. They also highlighted practical barriers, including fitting appointments around work and caring responsibilities.

These conversations directly informed the development of our Tell Another Woman campaign.

Rather than simply encouraging women to attend screening, we designed a campaign that responded to what women had previously told us. The campaign focused on four simple messages:

- Know the symptoms of cervical cancer.
- Attend cervical screening when invited.
- Find trusted information through the NHS.
- Tell another woman.

Our aim was simple: raise awareness and encourage women to share these messages with friends, relatives and neighbours.



 We're talking to **1,000** women across Greenwich
Helping women share important health messages through trusted community conversations.


TELL ANOTHER WOMAN

 *Small actions. Stronger women. Healthier lives.*

A **Healthwatch Greenwich** community campaign supporting Cervical Screening Awareness Week

1 KNOW THE SYMPTOMS

-  Unusual bleeding
-  Pelvic or lower back pain
-  Pain during sex
-  Changes to vaginal discharge

 **Don't ignore symptoms. Contact your GP.**

2 ATTEND SCREENING WHEN INVITED



Cervical screening can help prevent cervical cancer.

Even if you feel well, attend when invited.

3 TELL ANOTHER WOMAN



Talk to a friend, sister, mother, daughter or neighbour.

One conversation could save a life.

YOUR COMFORT MATTERS – YOU HAVE CHOICES



Ask for a female practitioner



Ask for a chaperone



Ask for a smaller speculum



Ask about appointment times that fit around work or caring responsibilities



FIND OUT MORE

For trusted information about cervical cancer and screening, visit the NHS website: www.nhs.uk/tests-and-treatments/cervical-screening/



Speak to your GP practice if you have concerns or questions about cervical screening.

Taking the Campaign into the Community

Between 9 and 25 June 2026, Healthwatch Greenwich staff and volunteers took the campaign into communities across the borough to support Cervical Screening Awareness Week.

The campaign adopted an equity-focused approach. Earlier engagement had identified particular barriers experienced by women from Global Majority communities, so activities were designed to increase our reach into those communities. However, the campaign did not exclude other women. Information and a conversation was offered to any woman who wished to engage, recognising that cervical screening awareness is important for all women.

Rather than waiting for people to come to us, we took the campaign to places where women were already spending time. Most of our engagement took place in busy public locations including High streets, train stations, libraries and community centres. We also shared our resource with community groups, and charities across neighbourhoods.

Volunteers offered women a campaign leaflet containing key messages about cervical cancer symptoms, cervical screening, where to find more information and we asked them to share the information with other women in their lives. Where women wanted to talk, we answered simple questions, and provided reassurance.

The campaign was designed to complement NHS communications. We encouraged women to attend screening when invited through the NHS and signposted them to NHS information for further advice.

Our Impact

During the campaign we:

- Distributed 1,000 campaign leaflets.
- Spoke directly with 495 women across the borough.
- Every woman received practical information about cervical screening, while almost half also chose to have a conversation with one of our staff or volunteers.

What Women Told Us

Although the campaign was designed to raise awareness rather than collect feedback, the conversations provided insight into the issues some women experience.

Women valued knowing they had choices

Women welcomed learning that they could request a female practitioner, ask for a smaller speculum, or have a chaperone. Some had been unaware these options were available, suggesting that practical information about the screening process is not always reaching women.

Practical barriers remain

Women spoke about the difficulty of arranging screening appointments around work or caring responsibilities. Some also described challenges getting GP appointments or travelling to appointments.

Questions remain about HPV vaccination

Some women asked if cervical screening was still necessary if they had already received the HPV vaccine. This suggests there is still confusion about the relationship between vaccination and screening.

Language and accessibility matter

Some women highlighted language barriers as reasons discouraging them to attend screening appointments, and women attending a learning

disability group described anxiety about screening. These conversations reinforced the importance of providing health information in ways that reflect people's different needs and experiences.

What We Learned

One of the strongest messages from the campaign was that raising awareness looks different in different settings. In busy public places, many women accepted a leaflet or had only a brief interaction before continuing with their day. While these encounters were short, they enabled key awareness messages and trusted NHS information to reach a large number of women. In contrast, community venues created the conditions for longer conversations and more detailed discussion. Together, these observations suggest that different settings contribute differently to public health campaigns: public spaces maximise reach, while community settings maximise opportunities for dialogue.

The campaign also reinforced the value of building on previous engagement. Because the campaign materials had been developed using insight gathered from women who had not attended cervical screening, they addressed concerns that women themselves had identified rather than relying on assumptions about what information women needed.

Finally, the campaign demonstrated how awareness raising and listening can work together. While the campaign's purpose was to share information, every conversation also helped us better understand the questions and concerns some women have about cervical screening.

Healthwatch Greenwich's role extends beyond listening to people's experiences. We use what residents tell us to improve information, influence services and support local priorities. The 'Tell Another Woman' campaign is a good example of this approach.

Conclusion

The Tell Another Woman campaign set out to achieve a simple objective: to raise awareness of cervical cancer symptoms, encourage women to attend cervical screening when invited, direct them to trusted NHS information and encourage them to share these messages with other women. In doing so, it reached 1,000 women across Greenwich and created almost 500 opportunities for conversation. More importantly, it demonstrated how listening to residents can shape practical public health action and how community-based awareness campaigns can both reinforce trusted health information and generate valuable learning about the questions and concerns people continue to have.

This learning will help Healthwatch Greenwich and our partners continue to improve the way health information is developed, communicated and shared within our communities.