

# The AAA Team

Newsletter of the Northern Ireland AAA Screening Programme



Issue 16: Produced by the NI AAA Screening Programme for HSC Professionals - June 2019

## Move of Website Content to NI Direct

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### Abdominal aortic aneurysm screening

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- Abdominal aortic aneurysm screening locations
- Abdominal aortic aneurysm screening programme

NI Direct is the official government website for Northern Ireland citizens, initially launched by the NI Executive in 2009. In recent months, content from the NI AAA Screening Programme's website has been migrated across to NI Direct. This is part of an overall government strategy to provide a single point of access for the population of Northern Ireland on information about public sector services. NI Direct aims to make it easier for individuals to find this information about the provision of government services - including health and social care - by working closely with Northern Ireland government departments, and other public

bodies, to collate guidance and details based on users' needs. The content is developed by representatives from an extensive number of government departments which contribute to the site by working closely with a central editorial team.

While a significant amount of key information - including eligibility for screening, clinic locations and video testimonials - has been successfully transferred across, some additional information is no longer available. The dedicated website (previously accessible at [www.aaascreening.info](http://www.aaascreening.info)) has also been stood down. Primary care staff are therefore advised - when seeking information about the programme on their own behalf or that of patients / service users - that the main source for information on AAA screening on the internet is via the NI Direct website [www.nidirect.gov.uk](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk) (see above left) and the Public Health Agency website at [www.publichealth.hscni.net](http://www.publichealth.hscni.net)

The Public Health Agency website continues to host a considerable amount of historical information on the programme and its promotional activities since screening began in 2012; this should be of use to anyone making enquiries about the screening programme. Simply go on to the Public Health Agency website at [www.publichealth.hscni.net](http://www.publichealth.hscni.net) and enter AAA screening in the search box.

HSC Public Health Agency

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### Abdominal aortic aneurysm (AAA) screening

An abdominal aortic aneurysm (AAA) is a widening of the main artery in the body, as it passes through the abdomen. The walls of the artery weaken, causing it to balloon out. It is more common in older men, smokers, people with high blood pressure and people with other cardiovascular diseases.

At the age of 65, about 1 in every 65 men will have an AAA. The aneurysm usually causes no symptoms and most people are not aware they have it. However, about a third of these will rupture (burst) if not treated. This is usually fatal and each year 80-100 people in Northern Ireland die from a ruptured AAA.

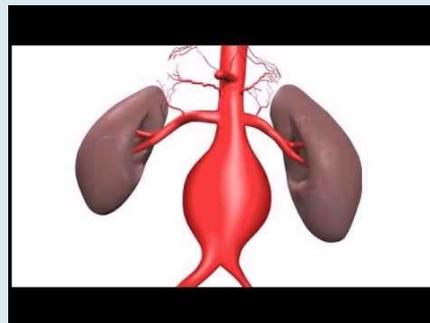
### Existing Information Sources for GPs

Information on the NI AAA Screening Programme is available in the following formats via the above websites or by contacting Jacqueline McDevitt directly on 02895 361505 or e-mailing: [jacqueline.mcdevitt@hscni.net](mailto:jacqueline.mcdevitt@hscni.net)

**GP Information Pack** | **GP Awareness Presentations** | **Promotional Materials** | **Copies or E copies of our newsletter 'The AAA Team'** | **Screening Invite leaflet 'AAA Screening : Things you need to know'** | **Leaflets for men under surveillance for small, medium or large AAAs**

## 2019 Service User Event

This year's Service User Event will be held on the morning of Thursday 27th June 2019. As in previous years, the venue will be the Grosvenor Hall at Belfast Central Mission, which provides excellent transport links to and from the event. Invitations will be extended to all men screen-detected with an aneurysm since the programme's inception who are currently either under surveillance or have been referred for surgery.



The programme will also use this year's event to launch the latest general information video about the programme. Key stakeholders who contributed to its production - including service users from minority groups and HSC staff from health and wellbeing centres - are also invited to the launch. As per our preceding six Service User Events, an invitation is extended to all our primary care and GP colleagues.

The new video profiles the main screening pathways for a man attending for screening, including what he can expect following diagnosis of a small, medium or large AAA. The video is subtitled and can be played with either British or Irish sign language. It is hoped GP practices and health and wellbeing centres will consider playing the video (or any of our additional video testimonials from men who have been through screening) on compatible TV screens they may have available in their venue's reception areas.

If you would like a DVD copy of the video or an electronic link to the video, please contact Jacqueline McDevitt on: 02895 361505 or at [jacqueline.mcdevitt@hscni.net](mailto:jacqueline.mcdevitt@hscni.net)

## New Patient Representatives



Continuing our theme of the key role service users play in the success of AAA screening, we are delighted to announce the appointment of two new patient representatives to the NI AAA Screening Programme's Coordinating Group. Mr Robert Connolly and Mr John Toner have both had an AAA detected through screening and are currently under the care of the surveillance element of the programme. Mr Connolly is pictured left with Deputy Programme Manager, Sarah Louise Dornan, at the 2018 Service User Event. The picture of Mr Toner (below left) is part of a feature run by the Belfast Telegraph last year to celebrate 70 years of the NHS.



The Coordinating Group is chaired by the public health lead of the programme, Dr Stephen Bergin, and is comprised of key members of the programme team at the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust and the Public Health Agency. The main purpose of the group is to monitor, maintain and continuously seek to improve upon acceptable standards of service, performance and quality across all elements of AAA Screening in Northern Ireland. The experience of, and input from, service users is therefore vital in shaping on-going developments and future improvements. We extend a very warm welcome to our new members who attended their first meeting of the group last December.

**Calling all GPs! Don't forget SELF-REFERRAL...**

Men over 65, who have never attended for AAA Screening, can ask to be screened by contacting the Programme Office on: **02890 631828**

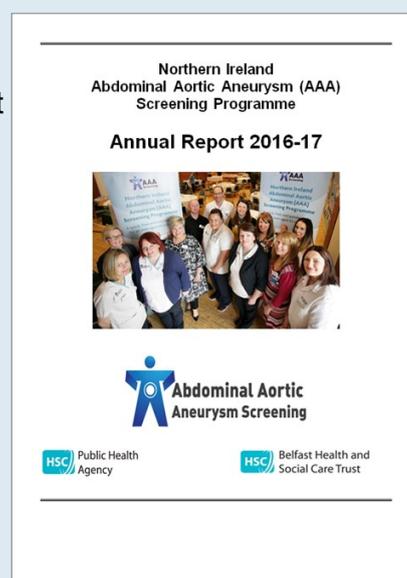


## Programme Performance / Annual Report Highlights

The fifth NI AAA Screening Programme Annual Report (covering the period 1st April 2016 - 31st March 2017) is available to download from the Public Health Agency website ([www.publichealth.hscni.net](http://www.publichealth.hscni.net)). It provides a range of information about how the programme is delivered, and has continued to develop, since it began in 2012. Primary Care staff may find the sections covering the role of primary care and PPI (personal and public involvement) of particular interest. For the first time the 2016 / 2017 report also contains health inequalities data.

The report shows the programme continues to work well and is providing a high quality service for eligible men. It is particularly pleasing to note how uptake rose to 84% (from 81% following the programme's introduction in 2012). As indicated on the back page of this newsletter, uptake remains encouragingly high at 83%.

Since the programme began in June 2012, more than 57,500 men have benefitted from this quick and potentially life-saving scan with over 850 AAAs detected.



## HSC Safety Forum Awards

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### 2018 SAFETY FORUM AWARDS

To recognise excellence in Health and Social Care, the HSC Safety Forum, based at the Public Health Agency, invites you to submit nominations for the

**Northern Ireland HSC Safety Forum Awards 2018**

Take this opportunity to showcase your achievements and inspire others in the field of quality improvement and safety

[Award Categories](#)

There will be 4 category awards for projects which improve quality and safety in:

- Partnership working/Coproduction
- Innovation/transformation in Care
- Integrated Care
- Building reliable care

From the category winners the 2018 PHA/HSC Safety Forum Award will go to the individual/team judged to have made the greatest contribution to quality improvement and safety in Health and Social Care

[Nominations](#)

Your organisation can submit, electronically, a maximum of 5 applications to the regional judging panel. Further information will be sent to your organisation and can be downloaded from: [www.publichealthagency/safetyforum](http://www.publichealthagency/safetyforum)

**Submissions must be received by: 14 September 2018**

The NI Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm (AAA) Screening Programme was delighted to be shortlisted for the 2018 **HSC Safety Forum Awards** which aims to recognise work undertaken across the HSC system to drive improvement in quality of care and strengthen patient safety. Representatives from the programme at the Belfast HSC Trust and the PHA submitted evidence of the programme's ongoing partnership working initiatives and were invited - along with Mr Peter Bullick, a former Patient Representative - to give a presentation to the panel in early November. While the team were not successful in securing an award on this occasion, the initiative provided an excellent opportunity for the programme to showcase many of the PPI (personal and public involvement) and co-production projects it has taken forward, and continues to progress, since the programme began. Our thanks again to Peter for giving of his time and experience so willingly to support the programme.

### Key Contacts : Belfast HSC Trust

**Programme Manager:** Diane Stewart

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**Programme Office telephone:** 02890 631828

**Office E-mail:** [aaascreening@belfasttrust.hscni.net](mailto:aaascreening@belfasttrust.hscni.net)

### Key Contacts : Public Health Agency

**QA Manager:** Jacqueline McDevitt

**E-mail:** [jacqueline.mcdevitt@hscni.net](mailto:jacqueline.mcdevitt@hscni.net)

**Telephone:** 02895 361505

## Staffing Update

The screening programme team has seen some changes since our last newsletter.



We are pleased to welcome **Nicholas Killough** (pictured left) to the team as our new Lead Sonographer. Within the programme, one of Nicholas' main responsibilities is the provision of high quality clinical training and supervision of the screening technicians. Alongside this, he will also be responsible for the ongoing quality assurance for the scanning elements of the regional screening and surveillance programme.

We are similarly delighted to have **Tina Guiney** (pictured right) with us. Tina joined the team last year and has successfully completed her training with Salford University. She is now an accredited Screening Technician and is already out running clinics alongside the other accredited Technicians.



We are also very happy to welcome **Joann McIroy** (pictured above left), **Stacey Todd** (pictured above middle) and **Lesley Thompson** (pictured above right) to our team. Joann joined the team at the start of this year, with Stacey and Lesley joining in April, as trainee Screening Technicians. They are currently working their way through the comprehensive training programme with Salford University and will hopefully gain accreditation later in the year.

In the second half of 2018, we said good-bye to two of our original Screening Technicians, **Ciara Conway** and **Gillian Newell**. Both Ciara and Gillian had been with the programme since it started in 2012. We would like to thank them for all their hard work and dedication to the team over the years and wish them both well in their new roles within the health service.

Since the start of the year, we have also had two new Programme Administrators join the team. **Liz McGrinder** took up post in January and **Louise Masterton** has just joined us this month. We are really pleased to have Liz and Louise join the programme's administrative team. On a day-to-day basis, they will work with the other team members to make sure clinics are booked and send results letters to both men and their GPs. They will also be one of the first points of contact for the programme as they deal with telephone enquiries.

### Overall Data (since programme began in June 2012 - April 2019 )

<b>Total men invited:</b>	<b>66,942</b>	<b>Referrals to Vascular Service:</b>	<b>142</b>
<b>Men screened:</b>	<b>54,181</b>	<b>Men on Surveillance:</b>	<b>606</b>
<b>Self referrals screened:</b>	<b>3,340</b>	<b>Uptake rate (average across all years):</b>	<b>83%</b>