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Breast Cancer Awareness Month – October 2018

To: All Branches

Dear Colleagues,

October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month. Did you know Breast Cancer is the most common cancer in the UK?

The three main risk factors for breast cancer:

- 1. Being a woman – over 99% of new cases of breast cancer are in women.**
- 2. Getting older – more than 80% of breast cancers occur in women over the age of 50. Most men who get breast cancer are over 60.**
- 3. Significant family history – this isn't common, around 5% of people diagnosed with breast cancer have inherited a faulty [BRCA1 or BRCA2 gene](#).**

Breast cancer diagnosis:

Breast cancer is the most common cancer in the UK, **one person is [diagnosed](#) every 10 minutes**.

1 in 8 women in the UK will develop breast cancer in their lifetime.

This Breast Cancer Awareness Month around **5,000** people will be diagnosed.

Breast cancer and survivorship:

Breast cancer survival is improving and has doubled in the past 40 years in the UK.

Almost **9 in 10 women** survive breast cancer for five years or more.

Every year around **11,400** people die from breast cancer in the UK.

An estimated **691,000** are alive in the UK after a diagnosis of breast cancer. This is predicted to rise to **840,000** in 2020. For many the overwhelming [emotional and physical effects](#) of the disease can be long-lasting.

A Breast Cancer Care survey found **1 in 4** women (26%) found the end of treatment the hardest part of breast cancer and only **1 in 10** (10%) said they felt positive and ready to move on when they were discharged from hospital treatment. More than **half** (53%) struggled with anxiety at the end of treatment and nearly a **third** (31%) with depression.

Breast cancer signs and symptoms:

Knowing the [signs and symptoms](#) of breast cancer can lead to diagnosing the cancer sooner. This can be crucial in providing more effective treatment and, ultimately, saving lives. A Breast Cancer Care survey found a **third** (33%) of women aren't regularly checking. A **fifth** (20%) say it's because they don't know how to check their breasts.

Breast cancer doesn't always mean a lump. Other less well known symptoms include a nipple becoming inverted or a change in texture of the skin. See attached Signs and Symptoms infographic.

Breast cancer and younger women:

Around **5,600** women aged 45 and under are diagnosed with breast cancer every year in the UK.

A Breast Cancer Care survey found just over **half** (53%) of [younger women diagnosed with breast cancer](#) have no discussion with healthcare professionals about fertility preservation options, which include freezing embryos or eggs.

Breast cancer and men:

[Breast cancer in men](#) is very rare with just **370** new cases in the UK each year, compared to nearly **55,000** new cases in women.

More than **half** (55%) of male breast cancer deaths in the UK are in men aged 75 and over.

A Breast Cancer Care survey found nearly **three-quarters** (73%) of men don't check their breasts for signs and symptoms of breast cancer, even though the same number (73%) know that men can get the disease.

Secondary breast cancer:

[Secondary breast cancer](#) is when breast cancer cells spread to other parts of the body, most commonly the bones, brain, lungs or liver. It cannot be cured but it can be treated, sometimes for a number of years.

Two thirds (66%) of Hospital Trusts in England do not know how many of their patients have incurable secondary breast cancer, according to Breast Cancer Care findings. It's estimated there are around **36,000** people in the UK living with the disease, but with such incomplete data collection, we can't be sure.

Close to **half** (42%) of NHS Trusts and Health Boards surveyed by Breast Cancer Care do not provide specialist nursing care for people with incurable breast cancer.

Get involved, help raise awareness and fundraise:

[12th October is Big Pink Day](#). Have a Big Pink Party on 12 October. Gather your friends, family or colleagues for a Big Pink party and raise money to help support anyone affected by breast cancer.

Whether you have a pink clothes day at work or a pink night in, your Big Pink can help make a difference. Sign up for your free kit at: <https://www.breastcancercare.org.uk/get-involved/do-your-own-fundraising/the-big-pink>

[13 October is Secondary Breast Cancer Awareness Day.](#) Most women are still not receiving the ongoing, specialised support they need when they are diagnosed with this disease.

On Wednesday 24 October Breast Cancer Care is hosting a reception in Parliament to mark Secondary Breast Cancer Awareness Day, as part of their 'Secondary. Not Second Rate' campaign.

Invite your MP to the Breast Cancer Care Event so they can find out how they can ensure that people living with secondary breast cancer access the vital support they need.

For care, support and information, call Breast Cancer Care's free Helpline on 0808 800 6000.

Access further information from the Breast Cancer Care Website:

<https://www.breastcancercare.org.uk/>

Contact Details:

Breast Cancer Care
Chester House
1-3 Brixton Road
London SW9 6DE

T: Main switch board: 0345 092 0800

Email: info@breastcancercare.org.uk

Attachments:

- Breast Cancer Signs and Symptoms Infographic

Yours sincerely



Dave Joyce
National Health, Safety & Environment Officer