



UNITE THE UNION



**'SCREEN
TIME'**

**CAMPAIGN
PACK**



UNITE FIGHTING FOR • JOBS • PAY • CONDITIONS!
UNITETHEUNION.ORG

THE AIM OF THE SCREEN TIME CAMPAIGN IS TO ENCOURAGE OUR MEMBERS TO ATTEND MEDICAL SCREENINGS

1. We are seeking to secure paid time off for workers to attend screening appointments for the prevention and diagnosis of cancer, and other serious medical conditions. Screening would include: cervical screening, mammograms and prostate screening although this list is not exhaustive, as well as attendance at NHS 'well woman' and 'well man' clinics, when invited. This would be a benefit to employers and employees as it is potentially cost saving.
2. We are also asking employers to sign up to deliver an information campaign about health screening (linked to the cancer awareness calendar), and positive healthy living messages, alongside the provision of paid time off. This promotes a culture of good health.

Unite the Union is committed to working with employers to promote the highest possible uptake and highlight the importance of screening and to support this, Unite the Union is asking employers to sign up to our model 'Prevention and Early Screening agreement', and include a clause on paid time off for health screening in an appropriate existing policy.



UNITE THE UNION

'SCREEN TIME' REPS GUIDE

This Rep's pack will give you all the tools you need to introduce the Screen Time campaign to your workplace.

Unite the Union is requesting employers to grant paid time off for employees to attend medical screening (and other relevant medical appointments) in order to prevent and diagnose early cancer and other serious conditions.

Health screening tests are a very personal experience and may be a source of embarrassment when requesting time off to attend the appointments. Unite the Union wants to change this and make the practice of attending regular health screening appointments as routine as attending a dental appointment.

The call for health screening can sometimes be inconvenient due to working shifts, childcare, times of appointments etc. It can be particularly difficult for people (often women) in low-paid and precarious employment to request time off. If members cannot afford to lose pay to attend an appointment, they are put at risk of missing an early diagnosis. Paid time off for screening appointments will save lives.

It is in everyone's interest for employers to promote a pro-active approach to the well-being of their employees and encourage regular screening. The highest uptake of all forms of screening is facilitated by paid time off to attend appointments.

The goal of this campaign is to ensure that everyone is able to access health screening as needed, with paid time off from work to do so.

This is a winnable campaign in your workplace. Enabling their workforce to attend screening appointments is the right thing for employers to do. In addition, early diagnosis prevents more intensive treatment later on and from the employer's point of view, sick leave.

This toolkit will enable you to act, approach your employers to deliver our Screen Time campaign. If you would like any additional information, please contact your Regional Officer.

All documents enclosed can be accessed at www.unitetheunion.org/screentime

Kind Regards,

Karen Reay

Unite regional secretary
- North East, Yorkshire & Humber.

CONTENTS

Overview: Why Screening Matters

5

Action Points For Negotiators

6

Winning The Campaign

7

Model Letter To The Employer

8

Model Membership Survey

9

Model Clause To Be Inserted Into Existing Policy

11

Model Protocol For The Employer

11

Model Policy Launch Statement

12

Cancer Awareness Poster For The Workplace

13

OVERVIEW: WHY SCREENING MATTERS

EVERY TWO MINUTES SOMEONE IN THE UK IS DIAGNOSED WITH CANCER.

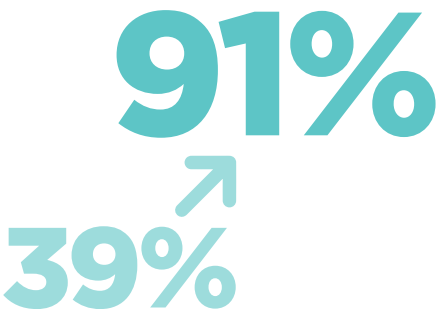
There are now 2.5 million people living with cancer in the UK. By the year 2030, this figure may be as high as four million.

In addition to the obvious health dangers of cancer and other serious conditions, there are additional hidden effects on the patient and their families, including a severe toll on mental health and well-being, and significant financial costs. These can include the unexpected costs that come with a diagnosis, and the impact of sickness on the patient’s earning ability. Alongside the worry of the illness itself, many are left struggling to pay the bills. Women are hit particularly hard, with more than half taking unpaid leave, reducing hours or even quitting work following a diagnosis.

The cost of ill health to employers is also significant. The impact includes: the costs of disruption to work and productivity, sick pay paid to absent employees, and National Insurance paid on sick pay. Research by Demos in 2020 calculated the annual economic impact of cancer to be over £7.5 billion.

For all these reasons, the early detection made possible by NHS screening programmes is vital. The programme includes free tests in pregnancy, cervical, breast and bowel cancer – and many other conditions.

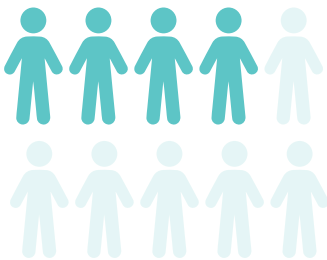
Finding out about problems early – even before symptoms appear – can mean that treatment is more effective. It helps people make more informed decisions about their health, and it reduces the chance of developing a serious condition. In some cases, it literally saves lives.



The survival rate for breast cancer diagnosed early jumps to 91%, compared to 39% for breast cancer diagnosed at a late stage.



Yet, despite this, take up of screening invitations for many conditions is below 70%.



Nearly 4 in 10 women invited for breast screening appointments do not attend.

People from the UK’s Black, Asian and Ethnic minority communities (BAEM) are also more likely to be diagnosed at a late stage for many conditions.

SUPPORT FROM THE EMPLOYER CAN MAKE ALL THE DIFFERENCE.

ACTION POINTS FOR NEGOTIATORS

NEGOTIATE THE INCLUSION OF A MEDICAL SCREENING CLAUSE IN YOUR EXISTING LEAVE POLICY

This clause should include provision for time off with pay for regular cancer and other medical screening (and NHS wellness clinics) for every member of the workforce; and time off with pay for treatment, as needed.

The policy and associated guidance should address the need for confidentiality, recognise that the employee / worker may have limited control over the timing of appointments, and guard against an expectation that the employee / worker is required to share or disclose medical details by providing proof of appointments.

GAIN AGREEMENT FROM THE EMPLOYER TO SIGN THE UNITE CANCER PREVENTION PROTOCOL

The Protocol covers workplace provision around cancer diagnosis and treatment, including awareness-raising, and enabling healthy choices in the workplace.

Negotiate specific agreements for inclusion in the Protocol, as appropriate to your workplace. Examples could include:

- Offering healthy eating options in the staff canteen;
- Ensuring a smoke-free environment;
- Providing paid time for workers to attend smoking cessation programmes;
- Reducing stress at work;
- Carrying out risk assessments and implementing them in relation to shift working;
- Introducing flexible working;
- Negotiating schedules (e.g. for drivers) that allow for adequate breaks and access to canteen and other facilities at all times.

Key Negotiating Demands:

- Paid time off for all health screening and health assessment appointments
- Paid time off for treatment
- Employer commitment to ongoing public health awareness campaigns
- Employer commitment to ensure the workplace is a healthy environment

WINNING THE CAMPAIGN

INVOLVING THE MEMBERSHIP

Your members need to know that this is a Unite win, when it happens, so make sure they are involved from the start. This will also help you gather evidence for the campaign.

Consider: a short survey of the workforce, asking them about their experiences around taking time off to attend screening. A model survey is provided in this pack, which you can use as a paper survey, or as the basis for an online survey (ask your regional officer about access to Unite's online survey software).

Using the results:

- Are there differences in response based on: job role, gender, or any other factor?
- How can interested members help build pressure on the employer?

MAKING THE ARGUMENT

Use the facts about cancer screening provided in this pack.

You can check up-to-date figures at:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/nhs-screening-programmes-annual-report

Encourage the employer to see this a positive opportunity to do the right thing, exercise their duty of care for the workforce, at little or no cost (given the potential for avoiding increased sick leave).

Invite members with stories to tell (if they are willing to share this) to be involved. Seek out positive stories of early detection where you can.

BUILDING PRESSURE

Start the awareness raising yourselves. Use the posters to publicise screening programmes and encourage members (and potential members) to speak to you as their reps if they have any difficulty securing time off work for screening appointments.

PUBLICISING THE WIN!

Use the model launch statement in this pack to make sure members and potential members know this is a Unite win.

Consider a joint launch event, with a confidential health drop-in, to publicise the new right to paid time off.

MODEL LETTER TO THE EMPLOYER

YOUR ADDRESS:

EMPLOYERS ADDRESS:

DATE:

Dear *****NAME OF HR DIRECTOR/MANAGER/CEO*****

Unite the Union has launched a campaign focused on workers' health and wellbeing and the prevention of cancer, as well as other serious health conditions.

Unite believes that employers should facilitate paid time off for their workers to attend NHS screening and other relevant health appointments. By promoting screening, and wider health awareness, this could potentially reduce days lost through long term sick absence, increase morale and wellbeing, and ultimately save lives.

As a member of Unite working at *****enter employer name*****, I would ask for your engagement in and support of this crucial campaign.

You can view more information about the campaign at unitetheunion.org/screentime.

I would welcome a meeting with you to discuss how Screen-Time at *****enter employer name***** can be fully achieved and look forward to receiving a date and time.

Yours Sincerely



MODEL MEMBERSHIP SURVEY

Unite the Union is asking [insert name of employer] to sign up to the Unite Screen Time Protocol.

This includes a commitment to provide paid time off to attend NHS medical screenings and other relevant health appointments and to publicise the importance of medical screening and wider health awareness to the workforce.

You can read a copy of the Protocol on page 12.

Unite believes this campaign is vital for our health and wellbeing, could reduce long term sickness absence, increase morale, and ultimately save lives.

To help us make the case for this important Protocol, please answer the following questions:

How old are you?

☐ Under 30 ☐ 30-40 ☐ 40-50 ☐ 50-60 ☐ Over 60

(We are asking this question because we want to understand whether there is a particular problem for any specific age group.)

Please tell us about your sex and / or gender identity.

☐ Female (assigned female at birth) ☐ Female or non-binary (assigned male at birth)
☐ Male (assigned male at birth) ☐ Male or non-binary (assigned female at birth)
☐ _____

We are asking this question because screening requirements differ according to sex (assigned at birth, rather than gender identity), and because we want to understand if any specific groups of people have a particular problem finding time to attend screening appointments.

What is your job role?

We are asking this question because we want to understand if any specific groups of staff have a particular problem finding time to attend screening appointments.

What shift do you work?

We are asking this question because shift patterns can affect the incidence of certain types of cancer.

Have you ever declined a screening appointment because it was hard to find the time to attend?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, please tell us why you found it difficult to attend, even if it was not because of work.

We are asking this question (and the question below) because we want to know if work is causing difficulties for you, and / or whether the option to attend an appointment in work time would solve other problems you have in attending screening appointments.

Have you ever had difficulties finding time to attend a screening appointment (even if you managed to attend it in the end)?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, please tell us about the difficulties you experienced, even if they were not because of work.

If you have a personal experience relating to health screening, for example, an early diagnosis made through screening, which might help us make the case to the employer, and you are willing to share this with us, please give your contact details here, and a union rep will be in touch.

Name:

Email:

Phone:

If you would like to help with this Unite campaign, for paid time off to attend screening appointments, please give your contact details here, and we will be in touch.

Name:

Email:

Phone:

THANK YOU FOR FILLING IN THIS SURVEY

This survey is for workers of the company identified on page one of the survey form. Any information which might identify you will kept confidential by Unite the Union and will not be shared with your management or anyone else outside Unite the Union. The information you provide on this survey will be used by Unite:

- *To provide information to you and other workers regarding the points raised and other issues that might be affecting or useful to you; to organise support around issues raised by the workforce.*
- *The information provided by you will be stored securely and electronic records will be retained by Unite for the duration of any organising campaign. For full information regarding Unite’s data processing of member information, your information rights and how to contact our data protection team, see Unite’s full privacy policy.*

MODEL CLAUSE TO BE INSERTED INTO EXISTING POLICY

Line managers will agree to paid leave of absence to members of staff for medical or dental appointments, including GP and hospital appointments, tests, check-ups, health clinics, and health screenings for medical conditions, including but not restricted to, all cancer screening. In the event of a confirmed diagnosis, paid time off for treatment will also be granted as needed.

Members of staff should: make the request for time off to attend screening or other medical appointments to their line manager, giving as much notice as possible. We recognise that the member of staff may have limited control over the timing of appointments. If a member of staff finds it difficult to talk to their line manager, due to the nature of the request, they may approach HR or a union representative as an alternative.

Managers should: ensure that requests are dealt with promptly, sympathetically, confidentially, and in accordance with this policy.

Disabled members of staff should refer to the Disability Leave policy for further information on specific entitlements.

Pregnant members of staff should refer to the Maternity Leave and Pay policies for further information on specific entitlements.

MODEL POLICY LAUNCH STATEMENT

[Insert name of employer] enacts Unite Screen Time Protocol

Unite the union **[insert name of branch]** is delighted that **[insert name of employer]**’s has responded so positively to our ‘Screen Time’ campaign, and agreed to ensure paid time off work for members of staff to attend medical screening appointments.

This will make a huge difference to every one of us – reducing anxiety, and ultimately saving lives.

In enacting the Unite Screen Time Protocol, [insert name of employer] has also undertaken to raise awareness of the need for medical screening. This is so important, as many people eligible for NHS cancer screening do not take the opportunity, increasing their own risk of more serious illness.

Unite has been at the forefront of campaigning for equal and stress-free access to medical screening for everyone who needs it.

We really welcome the decision by [insert name of employer] to show their commitment to all our wellbeing by taking this important step.

You can find out more about the Unite Screen Time campaign here:

www.unitetheunion.org/screentime

MODEL PROTOCOL FOR THE EMPLOYER

We value all our employees and as an employer, we make a commitment to doing what we can to help our employees attend health screenings which will enable the early detection of ill health.

Our organisation agrees to:

- Adopt the policy clause to make paid time off for all health screening appointments available to all members of staff.
- Work with Unite the Union to develop a measurable action plan to ensure the highest level of uptake of screening.
- Raise awareness about cancer and medical screening, and encourage health promotion in the workplace, by working with Unite, using relevant staff communication channels, and providing training for managers.
- Remove any existing exposure to all known or suspected carcinogens at the workplace, and not to introduce carcinogens in the future.
- Promote and support cancer prevention, by enabling our workforce to make healthy choices at work.
- Monitor the take-up of screening appointments by staff.

This workplace takes strong action to protect the health of our staff, and to help end unnecessary cancer deaths.

Signed:

cut out and put up in your
workplace
POSTER ON REVERSE

COULD YOU USE MORE



HEALTH SCREENING SAVES LIVES.

Taking time off work to take care of your health can be hard.

UNITE IS HERE FOR YOU

To make things easier, we're calling on every employer to provide PAID TIME OFF for health screenings and medical appointments.

NHS screening is free. Early detection of cancer and other conditions, when treatment is more likely to be successful, can make all the difference.

JOIN US:

- 1. Talk to your GP about the NHS screening programme and book an appointment today! nhs.uk/conditions/nhs-screening**
- 2. Talk to your Unite rep to get involved in Unite's Screen Time campaign or go to unitetheunion.org/screentime.**



UNITE FIGHTING FOR • JOBS • PAY • CONDITIONS!
UNITETHEUNION.ORG

 [@unitetheunion](https://twitter.com/unitetheunion)

 [@unitetheunion1](https://facebook.com/unitetheunion)

 [@unitetheunion](https://instagram.com/unitetheunion)

 [@unitetheunion](https://linkedin.com/company/unitetheunion)