



Men's Health: PSA Testing Report

December 2025

healthwatch
Warwickshire

Executive Summary

- Men's health and PSA testing is being looked at nationally to understand the best way to reduce the incidence of prostate cancer.
- Locally there are prostate cancer support groups and charity led opportunities for PSA testing.
- Through our engagement, we heard from men who were eligible for an NHS PSA test but were refused by their GP, highlighting a disparity in access. Others were unaware that the NHS offers PSA tests. Both issues create barriers for those who cannot afford private testing. Addressing this requires raising awareness about how and why men might choose to access PSA tests and ensuring Primary Care consistently follows the NHS Prostate Cancer Risk Management Programme.
- Charity organised PSA testing events are valued by those who use the service, particularly if they have been unable to access PSA tests through their GP or find the booking process more convenient.
- Black men have an increased risk of prostate cancer and are underrepresented at both the support groups and testing event we visited. A targeted approach of awareness is needed to address this.

Introduction to PSA testing

A PSA test is a blood test that measures the amount of prostate-specific antigen (PSA), to check for conditions such as prostate cancer or an enlarged prostate. It is a test not routinely offered by the NHS unless a doctor thinks someone has symptoms of prostate cancer or if they are having regular treatment for a prostate condition. This is because there is a risk a PSA test result may not be accurate and may lead to further tests and treatment that are not needed. ([Read more about the PSA test here](#))

Men over 50 can ask their GP for a PSA test through the [NHS Prostate Cancer Risk Management Programme](#). Their GP will provide clear and balanced information on the potential benefits and risks of having the test. This test is available to anyone with a prostate, including trans women and non-binary people. Men who are black or whose father or brother have been affected by prostate cancer have an increased risk.

The National Picture

The government released a new strategy for men's health in November 2025 [Men's health: a strategic vision for England](#)

This acknowledged that prostate cancer is the most common cancer in men with higher incidence among Black men. The UK National Screening Committee is currently reviewing the evidence for prostate cancer screening programmes and launched a [public consultation](#) on 28th November.

[Prostate Cancer UK](#) have begun a trial to find the best way to screen men for prostate cancer, including PSA blood tests, genetic tests and fast MRI scans. Invitation letters are being sent to selected men aged 45 to 74. More details can be found here: [TRANSFORM trial](#)

The Local Picture

In Warwickshire there are two support groups for those with prostate cancer.

- [South Warwickshire Prostate Cancer support group](#)
- [Coventry & North Warwickshire Prostate Cancer Support Group](#)
(serving Coventry, Hinkley, Nuneaton and Rugby areas)

Healthwatch Warwickshire visited the South Warwickshire Prostate Cancer Support Group in March 2025 and heard feedback from 17 men. We also spoke to the leader of the Coventry and North Warwickshire Prostate Cancer Support Group.

- At the South Warwickshire group, we heard praise for local services. Individuals told us about their specific treatments for prostate cancer, which were varied, depending on their circumstances and preferences.

“ I was unsure about treatment options, so my doctor asked what my biggest fear was and when I said “Incontinence,” he suggested hormone therapy was a good option for me rather than surgery.”

“My surgery provides an excellent service. I've seen more than one GP, and all have been very helpful. They are brilliant – I've got no problems at all”

- Concerns were raised about the disparity between different GP surgeries in providing PSA tests to individuals who are eligible under NHS guidelines. These concerns are replicated across North Warwickshire, Coventry and are heard nationally.

"Members of our support group talk to each other, and it is a well-known fact, we hear anecdotally, that some men struggle to access PSA tests from their GPs. When I am answering the Prostate Cancer helpline, it is the most common thing that people want to talk about. They say, "I can't get a PSA test from my GP," and "Where can I get a PSA test?". It really is quite prevalent. These are national callers and I receive around 2 of these calls a day, 8-10 a week. Even though people may have a family history of prostate cancer their doctors say they can't have a test."

"NICE guidelines say that the PSA test should be offered to men over 50. My experience, and of others in South Warwickshire, is that GPs don't always offer this."

- At the South Warwickshire support group there was a desire to raise awareness of prostate cancer with the Black community and concerns raised on the low uptake of testing and lack of understanding of cultural barriers.

"Black men are under-represented in our support group. We hear that Black men are resistant to the digital rectal exam, and we don't necessarily understand this culturally. There is a very low uptake from Black men for PSA tests. People don't always know that PSA test is not a rectal exam. It can be difficult if there are female clinicians. Tests and treatment can be seen as an attack on masculinity - psychologically. We don't understand why some ethnicities choose to get tested or not."



The members of the South Warwickshire Prostate Cancer support group, including Derek Ford (pictured with Healthwatch Warwickshire staff) have attended many PSA testing events this year handing out around 2,000 information cards providing details of further support. They have also supported awareness raising events at Cemex and JLR.

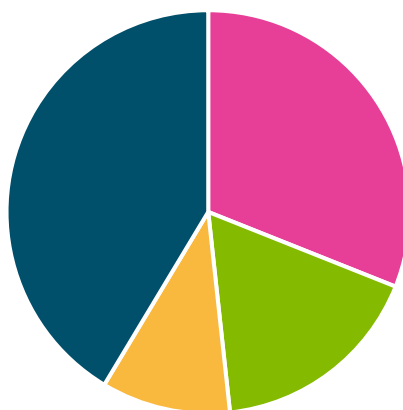
Private PSA Tests

In Warwickshire, there are opportunities for individuals to arrange their own PSA test through a charity, The [Graham Fulford Charitable Trust](#) (GFCT). Results are shared with the individual to follow up with their GP. There is a charge for these tests, and they can be booked by anyone over the age of 40. In some areas these are subsidised by District or Borough Councils.

In November 2025 Healthwatch Warwickshire attended a GFCT testing event, partially subsidised by Stratford-on-Avon District Council in Henley on Arden. We heard from 29 men who shared their experiences of accessing PSA tests. The majority of men we spoke to (23) were from Stratford District, 4 had travelled from neighbouring Solihull, 1 from Oxfordshire and 1 from Warwick District. Most of the men we heard from were between 50 and 79, with only 3 men telling us they were between 45 and 50, below the age the NHS suggests is eligible for PSA testing. Everyone who shared their ethnicity with us identified as White, with 20 men describing themselves as British and 2 describing themselves as Other. We did not speak to any Black men at the testing event.

We wanted to understand the reasons why men, most of whom were eligible to have a PSA test through the NHS had chosen to attend the testing session. We asked:

In the last year, have you experienced any difficulty getting a PSA test through the NHS?"



■ Yes ■ No ■ Difficulties more than 1 year ago ■ I've not asked my GP for a PSA test

- 9 men told us that their inability to get a PSA test through their GP in the last year had contributed to their decision to attend the testing session.

"I was almost dissuaded from asking, told 'It's not routinely done.'"

"I had a blood test at the GP and mentioned/asked about having a PSA test and I felt I was fobbed off. I saw the advert to come to this PSA testing event."

"My GP was not receptive to me having a PSA test. It is hard to get an appointment anyway."

- 3 men described how previous experiences of asking for a PSA test from their GP, over a year ago, had led to them to the testing session.

"It has been difficult in the past, so I only use GFCT. At the recent event in Balsall Common there were 380 men many of whom couldn't get a PSA test from their GPs. This is the way to do it, you are in and out in a few minutes and don't need to call the doctors. This model is efficient."

"At 59 it was previously difficult to get a PSA test from my GP, so I now use GFCT. My GP fobbed me off. I am now 64 and get tested every year, I don't mind travelling."

- 5 men told us they had been able to have a PSA test from their GP in the last year.

"I had a PSA test and the full exam. I had to ask"

"I managed to get a PSA test quickly."

- 12 men told us that they had not asked or approached their GP. This was either because they were not aware that it was offered by the NHS and had seen the GFCT testing session advertised or because they felt the testing session was more convenient for them to book and attend.

"I paid for this test online, I didn't think there was another option."

"I responded to an email advertising testing; it is better to catch it early."

"I didn't want to go to the surgery, I haven't asked my GP and I didn't know when I should get a PSA test from a GP?"

"I haven't asked my GP about a PSA test because I know about GFCT. My colleague had a positive test result, so I get tested. It is more convenient; I can book options online and look a few months ahead for tests."

Following the recent news reports raising the issues around PSA testing ([Read the BBC news article here](#)) and the launch of the national consultation on prostate cancer screening, it has been valuable to listen to 47 men's experiences in Warwickshire. We heard from men over 50, who should have been eligible for a PSA test under the NHS Prostate Cancer Risk Management Programme, but felt this was denied by their GP or were not aware of this option. We heard about the importance of raising awareness, in particular in the Black community. We invite GPs and Primary Care at the ICB to ensure the guidance of the NHS Prostate Cancer Risk Management Programme is being followed.

Healthwatch Warwickshire continue to listen to feedback about men's health and raise awareness about the issues heard in this report.



Response to this report:

"Thank you for your report regarding PSA Testing for prostate cancer in Warwickshire. This is an area where the ICB has undertaken a significant amount of work to raise awareness of the risks of prostate cancer and to reach people who might be more at risk.

As you note in your report – PSA tests are not always the right option for everyone as they are not always accurate and may put people on a pathway to then offered tests and treatment which are not necessary and can carry their own risks. We fully support the work of the Prostate Cancer Risk Management Programme (PCRMP) and every GP in our area should be giving clear and balanced information to men without symptoms of prostate disease who ask about prostate specific antigen (PSA) testing.

Work to improve access to prostate cancer testing is happening at both a regional and local level. Regionally, the West Midlands Cancer Alliance (WMCA) is committed to ongoing collaboration with Integrated Care Boards (ICBs) in response to the latest recommendations from the National Screening Committee. A consultation on the draft prostate cancer screening recommendation has now opened, with outputs set to be discussed at regional groups where ICBs and Trusts, including both primary and secondary care leads, are represented. It is important to note that, while the National Screening Committee provides guidance, the government retains the authority to overrule these recommendations if it chooses.

In the meantime, the WMCA is moving forward with the establishment of a Prostate Case Finding pilot, specifically targeting high-risk groups. This project will continue while national guidance is awaited, and the ICB will consider participating depending on the approach taken by the WMCA.

In Coventry and Warwickshire a range of initiatives have been undertaken to raise awareness of prostate cancer and improve access to information and support for those at higher risk. Primary Cancer Networks have been given opportunities to target high-risk patient cohorts, with the ICB Cancer Transformation team providing guidance and supporting these efforts through dedicated education sessions.

From May until September 2025, the Cancer Bus Tour visited multiple sites, offering healthcare professionals and public health teams a platform to share clinical expertise and advice about PSA testing, as well as to educate the public on early signs and symptoms of prostate cancer. Engagement with Warwickshire Warm hubs further promoted conversations about prostate cancer and the importance of screening.

To address disparities, the West Midlands Cancer Alliance funded four community-led initiatives specifically aimed at supporting black men, who are at higher risk of developing prostate cancer. While these projects are based in Coventry, the information and resources generated have been, and will continue to be, shared across all areas.

Community awareness events during the summer months, such as Pride in Coventry and Leamington, placed a particular focus on prostate cancer for gay and bisexual men. Additionally, Prostate Cancer Awareness Month was actively promoted across Coventry and Warwickshire, helping to further raise awareness and encourage proactive health conversations. [A SPOTLIGHT ON PROSTATE CANCER AWARENESS - KNOW YOUR RISKS & THE SYMPTOMS TO LOOK OUT FOR - Happy Healthy Lives](#)

In summary, we welcome your report and recognise the issues that it raises, particularly in reaching out to men who are black or whose father or brother have been affected by prostate cancer. We look forward to working with Healthwatch in the future to continue to raise awareness to those most at risk."

Dr Imogen Staveley, Chief Medical Officer, NHS Coventry and Warwickshire Integrated Care Board.

With thanks to...

- All who shared feedback with us
- Stratford-on-Avon District Council
- The Graham Fulford Charitable Trust
- The South Warwickshire Prostate Cancer Support Group
- The Coventry & North Warwickshire Prostate Cancer Support Group

[Healthwatch Warwickshire](#) are an independent service for everyone who uses health and social care in Warwickshire. We help people understand the health and social care system through signposting. Together with our volunteers we make your voice heard to help improve NHS and Adult Social Care services, so the care you receive meets your needs.

For further information contact: Caroline@healthwatchwarwickshire.co.uk

healthwatch

Warwickshire

Healthwatch Warwickshire
4-6 Clemens Street
Leamington Spa
Warwickshire
CV31 2DL

www.healthwatchwarwickshire.co.uk

t: 01926 422 823

e: info@healthwatchwarwickshire.co.uk



@HealthwatchWarw



@healthwatch_warwickshire



@healthwatch-warwks.bsky.social