# Feargal Sharkey highlights surge in prostate cancer as UK cases surpass breast cancer



Feargal Sharkey, the renowned singer and environmental advocate, recently shared his cancer journey after receiving a diagnosis of prostate cancer last year. Initially seeking medical consultation for a sore throat, Sharkey’s experience took an unexpected turn when his doctor, upon realising his patient was of age, decided on a full spectrum of tests. Just two days later, Sharkey learned of his diagnosis, highlighting the critical nature of proactive health checks, particularly for men over the age of 50.

In an interview with the Daily Express, Sharkey stated, "Now, for one in eight of you, you will be put in the same journey I’ve had, and it’s quite astonishing to think that in this country right now, one in eight men have prostate cancer." This statistic bears significant weight within the context of ongoing health campaigns aimed at encouraging men to consider their prostate health more seriously. In 2022 alone, there were over 50,000 newly diagnosed cases of prostate cancer in England, a figure that has climbed steadily and underscores the growing prevalence of the disease.

Prostate cancer has officially surpassed breast cancer as the most commonly diagnosed cancer in England, a trend that is attributed to a 25% increase in diagnoses observed from 2019 to 2023. Recent NHS data revealed that in 2023, 55,033 men were diagnosed with prostate cancer, compared to 47,526 cases of breast cancer. This upward trend has been strengthened by heightened awareness stemming from public health campaigns, which have successfully led to approximately three million men using online resources designed to assess their risk. Despite these advancements, the fact remains that there is currently no national screening programme for prostate cancer, which places further emphasis on the need for men to take personal initiative in seeking diagnostic tests.

Additionally, amidst this surge in diagnoses, it is worth noting that many men missed essential health checks during the COVID-19 pandemic, leading to a significant backlog in diagnoses. It is estimated that over 14,000 men who should have been diagnosed and referred for treatment were lost within the health system due to pandemic-related disruptions. Experts warn that this delay often results in more advanced, and potentially more severe, cases being diagnosed at later stages, which can considerably affect prognosis and treatment options.

Diagnostic procedures for prostate cancer encompass a variety of tests, including digital rectal examinations, blood tests, biopsies, and MRI scans. Although the prostate-specific antigen (PSA) test, often regarded as a frontline approach, offers some insight into potential prostate issues, it is not part of routine NHS screening due to its reliability concerns. Nevertheless, men over the age of 50 are encouraged to discuss PSA testing with their general practitioners, enabling earlier detection and intervention.

Through his advocacy, Sharkey aims to inspire other men to prioritise regular health evaluations and take control of their health destinies. His personal experience stands as a profound reminder of the importance of awareness and vigilance regarding well-being, especially amidst a backdrop of rising cancer statistics.

In conclusion, the narrative surrounding prostate cancer in the UK is one of urgency and increased awareness. With statistics illustrating a marked increase in cases and a significant number of men potentially unaware of their condition, the call to action has never been more relevant. Encouraging men to seek medical advice and undergo necessary screenings could potentially save thousands of lives.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/health-and-families/prostate-cancer-feargal-sharkey-diagnosis-b2757111.html), [[2]](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/health-and-families/prostate-cancer-feargal-sharkey-diagnosis-b2757111.html)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/health-and-families/prostate-cancer-feargal-sharkey-diagnosis-b2757111.html), [[5]](https://www.cancerresearchuk.org/health-professional/cancer-statistics/statistics-by-cancer-type/prostate-cancer), [[4]](https://www.theguardian.com/society/2025/jan/28/prostate-cancer-becomes-most-common-cancer-diagnosis-in-england)
* Paragraph 3 – [[3]](https://www.prostatecanceruk.org/about-us/news-and-views/2025/01/most-common-cancer-england), [[6]](https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2024/10/17/prostate-cancer-diagnoses-record-increase-pandemic/), [[7]](https://www.urologynews.uk.com/news/post/prostate-cancer-now-england-s-most-common-cancer)
* Paragraph 4 – [[4]](https://www.theguardian.com/society/2025/jan/28/prostate-cancer-becomes-most-common-cancer-diagnosis-in-england), [[6]](https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2024/10/17/prostate-cancer-diagnoses-record-increase-pandemic/)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/health-and-families/prostate-cancer-feargal-sharkey-diagnosis-b2757111.html), [[2]](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/health-and-families/prostate-cancer-feargal-sharkey-diagnosis-b2757111.html)
* Paragraph 6 – [[3]](https://www.prostatecanceruk.org/about-us/news-and-views/2025/01/most-common-cancer-england), [[5]](https://www.cancerresearchuk.org/health-professional/cancer-statistics/statistics-by-cancer-type/prostate-cancer)

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/health-and-families/prostate-cancer-feargal-sharkey-diagnosis-b2757111.html> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/health-and-families/prostate-cancer-feargal-sharkey-diagnosis-b2757111.html> - Feargal Sharkey, the singer and environmental advocate, has confirmed that he received a cancer diagnosis last year. Sharkey said he initially sought medical attention for a sore throat, which led to the diagnosis. He told the Daily Express the health issue was 'resolved' a year ago. The water campaigner is now encouraging other men to undergo testing and seek medical advice when needed. Sharkey emphasized the importance of regular health checks, especially for men over 50, to detect potential health issues early.
3. <https://www.prostatecanceruk.org/about-us/news-and-views/2025/01/most-common-cancer-england> - Prostate cancer has become the most common cancer in England, with a 25% increase in cases between 2019 and 2023. NHS data shows the number of prostate cancer diagnoses has been higher than breast cancer for two consecutive years following a surge in cases after the pandemic. The latest figures demonstrate the impact of awareness campaigns, leading to thousands more men getting early, life-changing diagnoses. Despite the increase, there is still no national screening programme, and NHS guidelines currently prevent GPs from proactively discussing the option of a free PSA blood test with men at highest risk.
4. <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2025/jan/28/prostate-cancer-becomes-most-common-cancer-diagnosis-in-england> - Prostate cancer is now the most commonly diagnosed cancer in England, surpassing breast cancer for two consecutive years. In 2023, there were 55,033 prostate cancer diagnoses compared with 47,526 breast cancer diagnoses, according to Prostate Cancer UK's analysis of NHS England data. The increase in diagnoses and awareness can be partly attributed to the awareness campaign launched with the NHS in 2022, which led to 3 million men using its online risk checker tool. More than 14,000 men who should have been diagnosed with the disease and referred to treatment were not due to the pandemic, but by April 2024 this gap had been closed.
5. <https://www.cancerresearchuk.org/health-professional/cancer-statistics/statistics-by-cancer-type/prostate-cancer> - Prostate cancer is the most common cancer in men in the UK, with around 55,100 new cases every year (2017-2019). It accounts for 28% of all new cancer cases in males in the UK. Incidence rates for prostate cancer in the UK are highest in males aged 75 to 79. Each year, around a third (34%) of all new prostate cancer cases in the UK are diagnosed in males aged 75 and over. Since the early 1990s, prostate cancer incidence rates have increased by more than half (53%) in males in the UK.
6. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2024/10/17/prostate-cancer-diagnoses-record-increase-pandemic/> - Prostate cancer diagnoses have risen by a quarter in one year, after cases were missed during the Covid pandemic. Experts said the increase of more than 11,000 cases reflected a large decrease in men receiving tests after Britain entered lockdown. This means many cases are being diagnosed at a later stage, when the disease can be more deadly. The surge of more than 11,000 cases is the biggest annual increase on record. It follows a campaign to find the 'missing men' who did not come forward or struggled to access GP care during the pandemic.
7. <https://www.urologynews.uk.com/news/post/prostate-cancer-now-england-s-most-common-cancer> - Data from the NHS in England shows that 50,751 men were diagnosed with prostate cancer in England in 2022, compared to 48,531 breast cancer diagnoses in the same year. The following year (2023), 55,033 men got a prostate cancer diagnosis, while there were 47,526 breast cancer cases. The UK's leading men's health charity also reveals today that prostate cancer cases shot up by a quarter (25%) between 2019 and 2023. Prostate cancer was impacted by the pandemic more than any other cancer. Because people were less likely to visit their GP at the height of the pandemic, more than 14,000 men who should have been diagnosed and referred for treatment were missing from the health system.