

HPV CERVICAL SCREENING NEWSLETTER

April 2023

CervicalCheck now providing personal cervical screening reviews

The National Screening Service has launched a new review process for women who develop cervical cancer after screening, called personal cervical screening reviews.

Personal cervical screening reviews are being made available on request for all women who have had a cervical cancer diagnosis, and a CervicalCheck screening test in the 10 years before their diagnosis.

The review process was recommended by the 2020 Expert Reference Group Interval Cancer Report (CervicalCheck), which set out a new and comprehensive approach to reviews of interval cancers in people who have been screened by Ireland's cervical cancer screening programme.

The personal cervical screening review process has been designed with input from women from the 221+ group. The design was overseen by a multi-disciplinary implementation committee with representatives from our NSS Patient and Public Partnership, the Irish Cancer Society, clinical experts, communications and programme staff.

Aim of personal cervical screening reviews

Every year in Ireland, around 290 women are diagnosed with cervical cancer, 170 of whom have previously attended for screening. Each of these 170 women diagnosed with cervical cancer is eligible to request a review.

The aim of personal cervical screening reviews is to help women (or their families) if they are looking for answers or ways to understand how and when their cancer developed. Reviews will provide women with an opportunity to ask questions about their screening journey, using a restorative approach tailored to each person's circumstance.

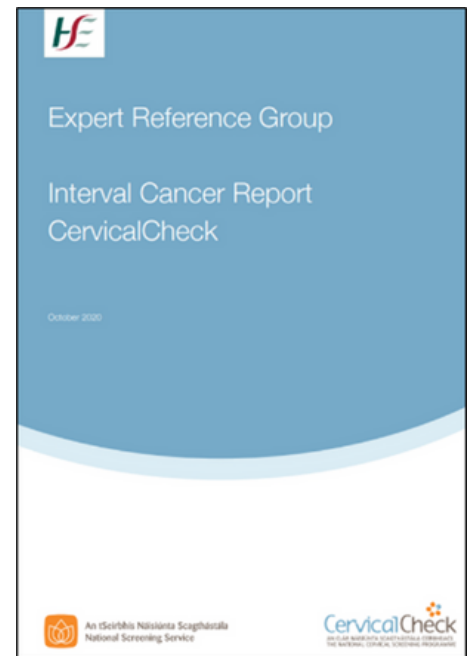
About the review process

The review process will take about 18 months to complete and includes a review of how women were invited to their screenings; their screening test results; their colposcopy care, and their histology (biopsy) test results. For each part of the review

we will explain if there is anything we should have done differently.

In addition:

- women will have a designated contact person throughout the review process
- women will be able to engage independent advocacy support during the review
- screening slides, colposcopy care and diagnostic slides will be independently reviewed by external reviewers
- we will meet women twice during their review and give them a copy of the review report to take away
- we will ask participants for their feedback on the process.



Information about personal cervical screening reviews is also available on our website, www.hse.ie/cervicalcheck/PCSR or watch back on our [personal cervical screening review webinar](#) by Dr Sarah Fitzgibbon. As we build this new service we will develop our wider communications in conjunction with patient groups.

When we complete the review process for the first group of women and families, we will begin processing new review requests. People who are interested in a review can register their interest by emailing review.request@screeningservice.ie or by writing to:

Client Services
National Screening Service
King's Inns House
200 Parnell Street
Dublin 1
D01A3Y8

Sample processing pause at The Coombe Hospital

The Coombe Hospital has paused HPV and cytology sample processing for CervicalCheck while it completes necessary accreditation documentation, as required by the Irish National Accreditation Board (INAB).

The hospital had been granted INAB accreditation for HPV and cytology sample processing in November 2022 while the outstanding documents were being filed. While the hospital has worked to complete the documentation, it is with regret that it reports it has not met its filing deadline.

What does this mean for the Coombe lab?

While the quality and safety of the hospital's laboratory services are not affected by this issue, the hospital's INAB accreditation for HPV and cytology sample processing has been suspended pending the completion of this process.

The Coombe Hospital, in conjunction with the HSE, has therefore decided best practice is to pause its laboratory services to CervicalCheck until all documents are filed and accreditation restored.

This means that at COB Tuesday March 28 The Coombe stopped accepting HPV & cytology samples. Samples currently in the screening process at The Coombe Hospital will continue to be reported, and results issued in the usual way. Results turnaround times are not affected.

What does this mean for women who come for screening at this time?

CervicalCheck samples go to 1 of 2 quality-assured lab providers. These are: Quest Diagnostics Inc in the US and the National Cervical Screening Laboratory at The Coombe Hospital in Dublin. With sample processing at the Coombe Hospital currently paused, all CervicalCheck samples are being tested in Quest Diagnostics Inc. in the US.

Women can be reassured that there will be no change in the way that samples are processed. Sampletakers can continue to send their samples to the programme in the usual way, and women and their GPs will receive their CervicalCheck results in the same way and within the usual timeframe.

We are grateful to our quality-assured US laboratory provider for their support at this time, ensuring the new National Cervical Screening Laboratory can continue to work towards its aim to be processing 10% of CervicalCheck programme samples by the end of this year.

When will sample processing at The Coombe Hospital be back online?

The work to respond to INAB's suspension of accreditation is already under way and is being treated with the highest priority. The Coombe Hospital is working with INAB to ensure all administrative matters are addressed in the shortest possible timeframe. This will enable the HPV and cytology screening service to resume at the hospital in a timely manner. When service resumes we will update our website on www.hse.ie/cervicalcheck

Provision of cervical screening services

The National Cervical Screening Programme is available to women aged 25 to 65. Women can check their eligibility for screening [online](#). Women participating in the programme can arrange an appointment to have a free test with a CervicalCheck registered sample taker (doctor or practice nurse) of their choice. Eligible women do not need to have a copy of their invitation letter to make an appointment.

The HSE National Screening Service engage General practitioners and medical practitioners are engaged by the HSE to carry out cervical screening tests for eligible people in the primary care setting. Screening tests are submitted to the laboratories designated by the HSE's National Screening Service. On 01 September 2022, [new nationally-agreed contracts](#) for the provision of cervical screening in a primary care setting were implemented.

If you are requesting registration with CervicalCheck for the first time, please email admin@cervicalcheck.ie stating that you wish to be a contract holder with the programme. It is important that you provide your name, MCRN, practice / clinic name and address. The required registration documentation will then be issued via email for completion. This will include information on how to complete the mandatory training modules on [NSS Resources](#) prior to beginning as a CervicalCheck sampletaker.

If you have any queries in relation to completing the registration documents, please contact CervicalCheck on 061 406 500 or email admin@cervicalcheck.ie. Forms with incorrect details will be returned to you resulting, in a delay in the registration process. You must satisfactorily complete registration as the Clinically Responsible Doctor (CRD) before any doctor or nurse in your practice/ clinic can be registered as sampletakers under your governance.

If you are currently registered as a Qualified Persons (registered sampletakers) and wish to continue in this role, you are not required to complete a Contract Acceptance Form. However, if your contact details or details of the practice you are working with have changed, please forward the new details to admin@cervicalcheck.ie without delay. All CervicalCheck-registered contract holders and sampletakers are obliged to engage in regular CPD. Details of [education courses](#), [clinical updates](#) and [webinar recordings](#) are available at the above hyperlinks.

Next vial batch expiry date

Practices should note the upcoming vial batch expiry dates, as follows:

Lot number	Expiry date	Use by	Remove from stock
1120AA	28/04/2023	17/03/2023	Immediately
1201AA	20/07/2023	08/06/2023	08/06/2023
1299AA	25/10/2023	13/09/2023	13/09/2023
2011AA	11/01/2024	30/11/2023	30/11/2023
2186BE	14/06/2024	10/05/2024	10/05/2024
2269AA	26/09/2024	15/08/2024	15/08/2024

These vials must be removed from use in your practice as per the above table. Payment will not issue for tests submitted to the programme laboratory in expired vials.

The vial ID sticker must be placed by the requesting sampletaker on the corresponding request form.

Schedule of learning events: January - May 2023

Since June 2022, over 2,000 sampletakers have attended the Screening Training Unit's facilitated bi-monthly lunch-and-learn webinars on a variety of topics related to cervical screening.

You can watch back previous webinars including 'HPV Latency & Infection' and 'Assessing barriers and best practice in providing cervical screening to autistic people' [here](#). For more information about January to May dates and topics, please see [here](#).

Review of registered sampletakers

We will be writing to each CRD in the coming months to confirm the details of all sampletakers (Qualified Persons) working under their remit.

We look forward to your support in completing this request in a timely manner. We will use the email address provided during your contract registration process for this purpose.

Screening people who are normally resident in the Republic of Ireland

Some people are registered on the CervicalCheck cervical screening register with an address outside the Republic of Ireland. We offer screening to women and people with a cervix aged between 25 and 65 who are **normally resident** in the Republic of Ireland. This means that the person must hold a Republic of Ireland home address to take part in our screening programme.

If the person attending for screening has a Republic of Ireland home address, they can update their address by emailing us at info@cervicalcheck.ie or on our website on www.hse.ie/cervicalcheck/updatedetails

Importance of Eircodes

We are reminding all sampletakers of the importance of having the full, correct address on screening forms. Remember, this is the address used by the laboratory to send the woman her result. An Eircode by itself is insufficient for this purpose and may lead to the woman not receiving her result by post.



Screening Training Unit launches new cervical screening education programme

Cervical screening education is critical to enable sampletakers to provide a quality-assured cervical screening programme. All sampletakers engaged in cervical screening should be appropriately educated by completing an accredited evidence-based training programme. It is the duty of the doctor with clinical responsibility to ensure that all sampletakers in their service are appropriately educated and competent.

The STU now offers two pathways to completing the cervical screening education programme - a free cervical screening education programme which is tailored to both the novice and experienced sampletaker; and a cervical screening education programme delivered in partnership with the three Higher Education Institutes. See [here](#) to view a 5-minute presentation which explains your options. You can download the [Cervical Screening Education prospectus 2023](#).

Did you know? You can access all previous newsletters on the CervicalCheck website [here](#).

Cervical Screening Education Provider Name	Programme Duration	Award on Successful Completion of Education Programme	Application Link
CervicalCheck STU Cervical Screening Education for Novice sampletakers	3 months – 1 year	Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland (NMBI) Category 1 Approval, 30 Continuing Education Units (CEUs)	Final Novice Application Form.pdf (nssresources.ie)
Sampletakers Cervical Screening Education for Experienced Sampletakers	3 months – 1 year	NMBI Category 1, 24 CEUs ICGP 24 CPD credits	Application form for experienced sampletakers
Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland	Academic year	10 European Credit Transfer System (ECTS), Level 9 Irish National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ)	https://www.rcsi.com/dublin/professional-cpd/nursing-and-midwifery
University College Cork	Academic year	10 European Credit Transfer System (ECTS), Level 9 Irish National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ)	ENU6158 Evidenced Based Cervical Screening University College Cork (ucc.ie)
University of Galway	Academic year	10 European Credit Transfer System (ECTS), Level 9 Irish National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ)	Best Practice in Cervical Smear Taking - University of Galway

Maintaining Continuing Professional Development

As per the national contract for delivery of a cervical screening service, all sampletakers must maintain continuous professional development by completing a CervicalCheck clinical update at least once every three years. Currently, we have three standalone clinical updates, see [here](#). All new sampletakers must now complete CervicalCheck In Practice (CCIP) in order to register as a CervicalCheck sampletaker.

The Screening Training Unit plans to conduct a survey in April to ascertain what clinical updates sampletakers want, ensuring there is a suite of clinical updates to offer a comprehensive choice, reflecting the changing needs of the women of Ireland. Keep an eye on the CervicalCheck health professionals [website](#) for updates.

Launch of the National Screening Service's Twitter handle

The Communications Team is delighted to announce the launch of our new Twitter page, [@NSShse](#). In line with our Strategic Plan 2023-2027, we will use the platform to connect and engage with people online, improve communications with our stakeholders, and broadcast and highlight the activities of the NSS to our followers.

Our conversations will be driven by the central message of our new strategy - [#ChooseScreening](#)



We encourage all the avid tweeters in our sampletaker community to follow and support us to amplify our voice by retweeting our content.

Have you questions about HPV infection or HPV testing?

Dr Laura Heavey, Specialist in Public Health Medicine, National Screening Service (NSS); Ms Gráinne Gleeson, Programme Manager, CervicalCheck; Dr Judi Lynch, Clinical Microbiologist, National Cervical Screening Laboratory (NCSL); Dr Rachael Comer, Education and Training Manager, CervicalCheck; and Prof Nóirín Russell, Clinical Director, CervicalCheck co-wrote 'Cervical screening: Frequently asked questions in 2023' for *Oncology and Haematology*. See [here](#) to read more about frequently asked questions in 2023.

Contact us

CervicalCheck

Email: info@cervicalcheck.ie
Freephone: 1800 45 45 55
Website: hse.ie/cervicalcheck
Post: CervicalCheck, Freepost LK407,
Limerick.

Primary Care Coordinator

Email: primarycarecoordinator@cervicalcheck.ie
Telephone: 061 406 547 or 061 406 567