



# HPV CERVICAL SCREENING NEWSLETTER

May 2024

## Programme Updates

### New CervicalCheck programme report shows positive impact of the change to primary HPV cervical screening

We recently published our [CervicalCheck programme report](#) for the period 01 April 2020 to 31 March 2022. This is the first CervicalCheck programme report to be published since the introduction of primary HPV cervical screening in 2020.

The report shows the impact of COVID-19 restrictions on the delivery of cervical screening, including pausing screening for 3 months in 2020. When we began sending invitations again in July 2020, we first invited women we considered to be at higher risk, while carefully managing the capacity available to deliver follow-up care to women who attended screening.

Over the 2-year period we focused on delivering our service safely and to as many people as possible. Despite the challenges, by the end of 2021 we had screened the same number of women in the 2-year period of the pandemic as in any other 2-year period. You can read more about the report [here](#).

Publishing the report, Clinical Director of CervicalCheck Professor Nóirín Russell said:

“This report tells the story of the first 2 years of primary HPV cervical screening and of the women who chose screening amid all the pressures brought by a global pandemic. It details the continued work done by all our screening partners, the dedicated CervicalCheck staff and National Screening Service teams, each making a valuable contribution to improving the health of our nation. I look forward to working collaboratively to achieve Ireland’s commitment to the World Health Organization’s cervical cancer elimination goal to make cervical cancer rare in Ireland by 2040.”



CervicalCheck programme 2020-2022



## Reminder: Screening people who are normally resident in the Republic of Ireland

We offer screening to women and people with a cervix aged between 25 and 65 who are normally resident at a home address in the Republic of Ireland. To be eligible, the person must have a home address in the Republic of Ireland.

### Addresses on the cervical screening register

It is essential to use the correct (current) address on the cervical screening form. The address on the form updates the person's address on the Cervical Screening Register and overwrites any address previously changed via the website or information line.

**Save the date!**



The poster features a dark green background. On the left, the text 'Save the date' is in large white font, followed by 'CervicalCheck Conference 2024: *'Fostering Partnerships in Cervical Screening'*' in white. Below this, the date 'Date: Saturday 19 October 2024' and venue 'Venue: Limerick Strand Hotel, Ennis Road, Limerick, V94 03F2' are listed in white. On the right, there is a photograph of a castle at night with lights reflecting in the water. Below the photo, it says 'We look forward to welcoming you in Limerick'. Logos for HSE, CervicalCheck, and the National Screening Service are present.

We are pleased to announce the upcoming CervicalCheck Conference 2024 on the theme of 'Fostering Partnerships in Cervical Screening' on 19 October 2024. The conference is dedicated to fostering collaboration among all our stakeholders, including sample takers, laboratory, histology and colposcopy colleagues. Keep an eye on this newsletter for more information in the coming months.

## CervicalCheck project demonstrates patient-centred approach as thousands of women over 60 take up invite for HPV screening test

An equity-driven project inviting women aged over 60 for one HPV cervical screening test is expected to increase coverage in this age range; and with over 26,000 women responding to the invitation from CervicalCheck, the project has yielded interesting clinical results. You can read more about the results [here](#).



The poster has a light blue background. On the left, a photograph shows a person wearing a blue glove holding a small white container. On the right, the text reads 'Equity-driven project sees thousands of women over 60 take up invite for HPV cervical screening test'. Logos for CervicalCheck, HSE, and the National Screening Service are at the bottom, along with the hashtag #choosetoscreening.

# Vial expiration

Please note the upcoming 2024 vial batch expiry dates, as follows:

Product	Lot Number	Expiry Date	Remove from stock
Vial	2186BE	14/06/2024	03/05/2024
Vial	2269AA	26/09/2024	15/08/2024

These vials should be reviewed as expiry dates near. Payment will not issue for tests submitted to the programme laboratory in expired vials. Samples may also have to be destroyed and tests repeated. The vial ID sticker must be placed by the requesting sample taker on the cervical screening form.

## Latest update: electronic referral between GPs and colposcopy clinics nationally

Rollout of direct electronic referral from your practice management system to the hospital colposcopy unit via Healthlink has been completed in:

- University Hospital Kerry
- North East Regional Hospital Louth
- Rotunda Hospital Dublin
- Wexford General Hospital

The aim of electronic referral is to help prevent delays for screening participants, ensure a robust referral process and optimise use of resources. This is now the preferred method of referral for the above units and it is requested that paper referrals are no longer used. The result of the cervical screening test must be attached to the electronic referral. If there is no result attached, it will be returned to you. This information is required by the colposcopy unit to triage the referral and issue an appointment within agreed waiting times.

We are delighted to announce we are rolling this out to the rest of the country on a phased basis. We will be providing further updates over the coming months.

For those involved in the rollout of the project please contact [support.healthlink@healthmail.ie](mailto:support.healthlink@healthmail.ie) & [support.healthlink@hse.ie](mailto:support.healthlink@hse.ie) directly if you have issues submitting the electronic referral or attaching the screening report to colposcopy.

## Updated four programme factsheet

We have recently updated our four programme factsheet available [here](#) which will soon be available on [healthpromotions.ie](http://healthpromotions.ie) to order.



Our screening programmes are for people who do not have any symptoms of cancer or retinopathy (eye diseases). Some people will still develop cancer or retinopathy despite regular screening. Screening does not find all cancers or retinopathy. Cancer can develop between screenings (interval cancers). We can help you if you have access needs, please contact our access officers. Details on programme websites below.



Breast screening helps to find cancer at an early stage before people have symptoms. If it's found early, it's easier to treat and you have a better chance of recovery. BreastCheck is for women aged between 50 and 69. Your first invitation depends on when screening is available in your area. You may be 12 weeks old when you get your first invitation due to COVID-19 delays. Breast screening takes place at a BreastCheck clinic or a mobile screening unit. There are now trained to collect phobias in breast. During breast screening we take an x-ray called a mammogram of your breasts. It looks for cancer earlier than it's too small to feel or see. Breast screening won't find every cancer. However, it lowers the number of breast cancer deaths from breast cancer. You can check your breast yourself to know what is normal for your breasts. If you notice any unusual changes or symptoms of breast cancer including a lump or a thick breast, contact your GP without delay. Do not wait for your next screening test. Check, update or join our online breast screening register or find more information. Freephone: 1800 45 45 45 Email: [info@breastcheck.ie](mailto:info@breastcheck.ie) Website: [www.breastcheck.ie](http://www.breastcheck.ie)



Cervical screening helps to find cancer at an early stage before people have symptoms. CervicalCheck offers a free HPV cervical screening every three years to women aged 25 to 69. It offers a free Pap test to those aged 25 to 49. If you have any HPV and you can attend any GP or clinic registered with CervicalCheck. If you need any follow-up, we'll tell you know. Having regular cervical screening, getting the HPV vaccine if you are eligible and having timely treatment for abnormal cells reduces your risk of cervical cancer. If you have symptoms of cervical cancer do not wait for your next screening test. Symptoms may be abnormal bleeding or pain in your pelvis. Contact your GP without delay. Check our online register to find out when your next screening test is due or to update your contact details. To register with CervicalCheck or find more information. Freephone: 1800 45 45 45 Email: [info@cervicalcheck.ie](mailto:info@cervicalcheck.ie) Website: [www.cervicalcheck.ie](http://www.cervicalcheck.ie)



Bowel screening looks for signs of cancer at an early stage before people have symptoms. BowelScreen offers a free home test kit to people aged 50 to 74 every two years. If cancer is found early, it's easier to treat and you have a better chance of recovery. We'll send you an invite. If you choose to get the test kit, you'll receive it by post. The test is easy to do and only takes a few minutes. Have the result of your test done so you have it the next time you have to go. Take a sample of your poo about 100g and send it to us for free test. If you need any follow-up tests, we'll tell you know. If you have symptoms of bowel cancer do not wait for your next screening test. Symptoms may be blood in your poo or in your stool, blood in your pee or pain in your gut. Contact your GP without delay. To register with BowelScreen or find more information. Freephone: 1800 45 45 45 Email: [info@bowelscreen.ie](mailto:info@bowelscreen.ie) Website: [www.bowelscreen.ie](http://www.bowelscreen.ie)



Diabetic RetinaScreen aims to find and treat a serious eye disease called retinopathy in people with Type 1 and Type 2 diabetes. When retinopathy is found early, treatment can prevent or reduce damage to your sight. Diabetic RetinaScreen is free to people aged over 12 who have diabetes, and if you need treatment it is also free. We offer screening every year. If you get a test result showing no retinopathy two years or more, we will offer you screening every 2 years. During retina screening we will put drops in your eyes and use special digital photos. Drops to dilate your pupils. You have pain free screening in our network. Your GP or healthcare professional can refer you for screening. You can also self-refer to our online self-referral form. When you are pregnant and you have diabetes, need more regular screening. Your midwife team can register you. If you notice changes to your sight, or have any concerns about your eyes, contact your GP, optician or eye doctor without delay. Do not wait until your next screening test. To register with Diabetic RetinaScreen or find more information. Freephone: 1800 45 45 45 Email: [info@diabeticretinascreen.ie](mailto:info@diabeticretinascreen.ie) Website: [www.diabeticretinascreen.ie](http://www.diabeticretinascreen.ie)

## **Update on CervicalCheck's validation exercise**

The CervicalCheck Programme is currently undertaking a validation exercise of health professionals (sample takers) registered with the CervicalCheck programme.

This exercise is being conducted on a county by county basis and you may have been already been contacted by email about this validation.

It is imperative that we receive a list of all health professionals (sample takers) who come under your governance while undertaking cervical screening on behalf of the CervicalCheck Programme. This is to ensure that all health professionals are registered correctly with their corresponding Clinically Responsible Doctor (Contract Holder) on the CervicalCheck register in compliance with your requirements under the national cervical screening contract. If a sample taker is not registered they should not be undertaking cervical screening.

When requested to do so, please confirm the names together with registration details (MCRN / NMBI) of all health professionals who come under your governance by replying to the email sent from [ccvalidate@screeningservice.ie](mailto:ccvalidate@screeningservice.ie) before the requested date.

Health professionals currently registered under your clinical governance who are not included on your validated list will then be removed from the CervicalCheck register of health professionals.

We would like to thank all those who have replied to us and we look forward to hearing from you all over the coming weeks.

### **Reminder: Screening for women not registered at your practice**

It is a principle of CervicalCheck that women can book a screening test with any practice or clinic contracted with the programme. This means women do not need to be a registered patient of your practice or clinic to have their screening test. When a woman's test is due or if she is a new participant, she can have a free cervical screening test with any contracted provider. So far this year, the programme has received a number of complaints and queries from women who have not been able to secure cervical screening appointments at practices and clinics where they are not registered patients. All complaints are followed up individually with practices and clinics to ensure they are offering appointments as per their contractual obligation.

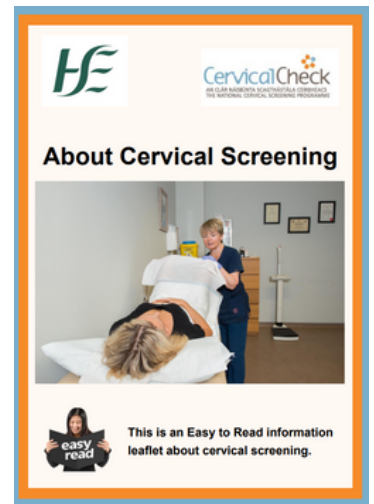


## CervicalCheck easy reads

We have recently published a suite of [accessible cervical screening information](#).

This guidance on supporting women with disabilities to use the cervical screening programme includes 'About Cervical Screening - Easy to Read leaflet' and 'Going for a Cervical Screening Test - A Photo Story'.

For more information please contact our access officer by email [access@cervicalcheck.ie](mailto:access@cervicalcheck.ie) or Freephone [1800 45 45 55](tel:1800454555).



## Update on Cervical Cancer Elimination



Representatives from across cervical cancer treatment services discuss the development of a national action plan for Cervical Cancer Elimination

We have been busy progressing the consultation and engagement phase of developing Ireland's Cervical Cancer Elimination Action Plan. Thank you to all our colleagues and stakeholders who took the time to complete our consultation survey or participated in the CCE Screening or Treatment workshops.

The CCE Consultation Survey was launched on HPV awareness day and ran for a total of 5 weeks. Following this, the CCE Screening Workshop was held on 22 March and had an equity focus. Participants included members of advocacy organisations and public representatives who were invited to express their views. We also held a CCE Treatment Workshop on 19 April with representatives from specialities across cervical cancer treatment pathway who took part in a cervical cancer patient journey mapping workshop.

We want to take this opportunity to once again **thank** everyone who participated in our consultation process and look forward to sharing our Action Plan later in the year.

# Patient and Public Partnership network provides opportunities for your screening participants and patients

## Opportunity for screening participants to join our PPP



We want to hear from people of all backgrounds.

We're looking for new members to volunteer on our Patient and Public Partnership (PPP) network. Our team of active volunteers work with us to help develop and evaluate our four screening programmes. Our volunteers are people you meet in your daily work who have time to share their opinions, ideas and life- experiences. Encouraging them to join our PPP network will give your screening participants and patients opportunities to:

- choose projects or committee work that interest them to help us deliver internationally-leading, quality assured screening programmes.
- improve our information materials to inform people about screening, its benefits and limitations.
- get involved and have their say, regardless of differences and diverse backgrounds.
- take part in training and learning opportunities.

Our strong team of Patient and Public Partnership volunteers are people:

- interested in improving screening services for everyone and not just for themselves or their organisations.
- who want equal opportunity and access to screening for everyone living in Ireland.
- who are open to sharing opinions and respectfully listening to others.
- who meet in person and online – they decide what's right for them.
- with lots or little time to give.

Please share this network opportunity with your screening participants and patients, for further information email [ppplead@screeningservice.ie](mailto:ppplead@screeningservice.ie)

# In conversation with colposcopist Natasha Mahon

Natasha Mahon, Clinical Midwife Manager (CMM2) and accredited colposcopist at The National Maternity Hospital, Holles Street, Dublin, tells us how she has rooted herself in women's health, from training initially in midwifery and post-natal care, to finding a real interest in colposcopy and cervical cancer prevention and treatment. Read our conversation with Natasha [here](#).



**“I’m proud to be supporting Ireland’s goal to eliminate cervical cancer by 2040.”**

Natasha Mahon  
Clinical Midwife Manager and colposcopist  
National Maternity Hospital, Holles Street, Dublin



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[#choosescr](#)



## Schedule of learning events: January - June 2024

The Screening Training Unit (STU) team are continuing their lunchtime webinars into 2024. For more information about January to June dates and topics, please see [here](#). Recordings of previous webinars are available [here](#).

MAY 2024	SPEAKER	DATE AND TIME	LINK TO REGISTER
Making informed choices: Identifying situations where screening tests may not be necessary.	Dr Sarah Fitzgibbon Primary Care Advisor, CervicalCheck	Tuesday 07th May 1-2pm	<a href="#">Making informed choices: Identifying situations where screening tests may not be necessary</a>
Sample to result: The journey of a screening sample inside the Screening Laboratory	Ms Aisling O'Connor Laboratory Manager, National Cervical Screening Laboratory	Monday 20th May 1-2pm	<a href="#">Sample to result: The journey of a screening sample inside the Screening Laboratory</a>
JUNE 2024	SPEAKER	DATE AND TIME	LINK TO REGISTER
Recognising the link between Cervical Cancer and smoking and offering referral pathways	Dr Paul Kavanagh Specialist in Public Health Medicine, Public Health Adviser to HSE Tobacco Free Ireland Programme	Tuesday 04th June 1-2pm	<a href="#">Recognising the link between Cervical Cancer and smoking and offering referral pathways</a>

## Contact us

### CervicalCheck

Email: [info@cervicalcheck.ie](mailto:info@cervicalcheck.ie)  
Freephone: 1800 45 45 55  
Website: [hse.ie/cervicalcheck](https://hse.ie/cervicalcheck)  
Post: CervicalCheck, Freepost LK407, Limerick.

### Primary Care Coordinator

Email: [primarycarecoordinator@cervicalcheck.ie](mailto:primarycarecoordinator@cervicalcheck.ie)  
Telephone: 061 406 547 or 061 406 567