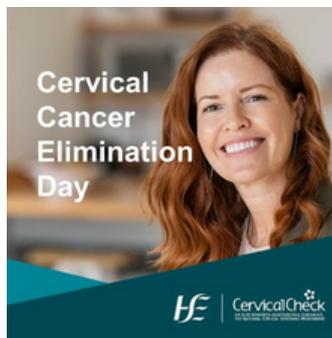


# HPV CERVICAL SCREENING NEWSLETTER

November 2021

## National Screening Service project brings Ireland closer to realising target of cervical cancer elimination



To mark global Cervical Cancer Elimination Day of Action on 17 November, the National Screening Service highlighted a joint project that will bring Ireland closer to realising the aim of eliminating cervical cancer.

In January 2022, the NSS; National Immunisation Office (NIO); National Cancer Control Programme (NCCP); and National Cancer Registry of Ireland (NCRI) will begin working with academics in Australia to develop a model to work towards cervical cancer elimination in Ireland. This will involve using Irish data - for example, on screening uptake and HPV vaccine uptake - to tailor the model for our population and allow Ireland to set a target date for elimination of cervical cancer. The NSS has established a working group with the NIO, NCCP and NCRI to work with the Australian team on this important project.

The model will give the HSE pointers on how to work towards elimination. This will include improving uptake of cervical screening and HPV vaccination to make sure no groups in our society get left behind. It will also advise on how both programmes can adapt and evolve to support the earliest elimination target possible.

Dr Caroline Mason Mohan, Director of Public Health at the National Screening Service, said: "I am delighted that the NSS is in a position to make such a significant contribution not only to the health of the people of Ireland but also to the global effort to eliminate cervical cancer. The forward-thinking implementation of the schools' HPV vaccination programme in 2010, and the HPV primary screening programme in 2020, ahead of many other countries, have put us in a great position to aim for elimination."

## Sampletaking and seasonal post

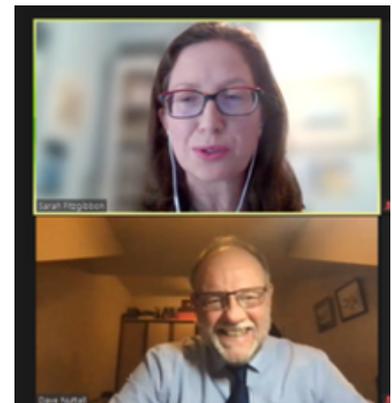
We are asking you, where possible, to post December cervical screening samples by **Friday December 17**, to ensure that their delivery is not affected by the increased seasonal pressures on An Post.

When taking samples, please be mindful of the extra time they will take to reach laboratories over the festive period. This includes ensuring that the sample vial has at least 42 days left before its expiry date, in case there are delays in delivery to the lab.



Normal postage of sampling resumes from **27 December**.

## Key clinical advisors lead update webinar



Over 400 sampletakers recently took part in CervicalCheck's update webinars with key clinical advisors of the programme.

Dr Sarah Fitzgibbon, Primary Care Clinical Advisor, and Dr Dave Nuttall, Clinical Laboratory Advisor (*pictured above*) were joined by Dr Nóirín Russell, Clinical Director CervicalCheck; and Dr John Price, Colposcopy Advisor. Topics including the move to HPV cervical screening, lab processing and colposcopy were discussed.

You can watch the webinar back [here](#).

## Positive development in result turnaround times

We are pleased to report that results are now taking **4 weeks** to turnaround. This is a decrease from an 8 to 10 week turnaround time earlier in the year. If your patient asks when they can expect their results, you can check the website for the most up-to-date times [here](#).



## Next steps for the ERG Interval Cancer Implementation Project

In October the NSS welcomed the publication by the HSE of the Expert Reference Groups' Interval Cancer Reports, and we are now working towards the implementation of the recommendations. The recommendations provide a design for interval cancer review (both patient-requested and programmatic) which supports quality assurance within each programme and which is in line with international best practice for cancer screening programmes.

To implement the recommendations of the ERG reports, a steering group and five working groups have been established, one of which is the CervicalCheck Implementation Group. The CervicalCheck Implementation Group is focused initially on the design of patient-requested reviews and disclosure processes.

The CervicalCheck implementation group is working with the Communication Interval Cancer Implementation Group to support the following:

- To continue to strengthen participant information to help them make an informed choice to consent to participate in screening
- To build understanding and trust in screening programmes, and help the public understand the benefits and boundaries of screening

The CervicalCheck implementation group is also collaborating with the NCRI/NSS Data Sharing Strategic Planning Group to design a methodology process of calculating an interval cancer rate. This will be used as a performance indicator for the programme.

## Videos tailor HPV cervical screening message to Ireland's migrant communities

The National Screening Service recently teamed up with Translate Ireland to produce multilingual video messages for migrants on CervicalCheck screening.

The videos, which will be available in a dozen languages, are presented by doctors, nurses and other healthcare professionals in Ireland who come from another country originally. They explain the importance of screening and what it entails, and it informs women on where and how to book a test.

The script is culturally appropriate and clearly explains information which may be difficult for migrants to understand in English.

The video messages on CervicalCheck are available in Polish, Portuguese, Arabic, English, Romanian, Russian, French, Urdu, Spanish, Lithuanian, Latvian and Slovak.

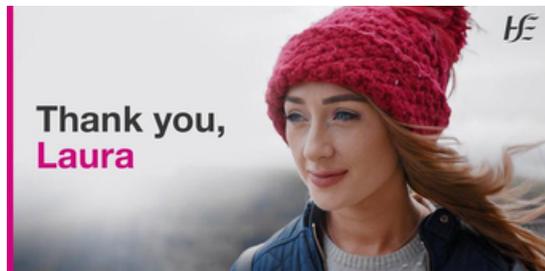
Recently we have also added video messages in Ukrainian [here](#).

Did you know you can access all previous newsletters? Visit [here](#)



**TRANSLATE  
IRELAND**  
MULTILINGUAL VIDEO MESSAGING

## Lancet reports HPV vaccination success in UK



A recent study published in the Lancet showed a substantial reduction in cervical cancer in the UK since its HPV vaccination programme was introduced. This reduction was especially evident in girls who were vaccinated at 12-13 years.

Each year in Ireland, HPV causes 406 cancers in women and men; over 6,500 women need hospital treatment for pre-cancer of the cervix; 300 women get cervical cancer; and 90 women die from cervical cancer.

HPV causes 1 in 20 cancers worldwide. It is one of the leading causes of cervical cancer. The HPV virus also causes: 5 out of 10 vulval cancers, 7 out of 10 vaginal cancers, 9 out of 10 HPV-related anal cancers and 9 out of 10 incidences of genital warts. The more young people vaccinated and women screened, the better the spread of the infection can be controlled. HPV vaccine campaigner Laura Brennan (*pictured above*) was instrumental in increasing vaccine uptake rates before she died of the disease in 2019.

The data showing the impact of vaccination in Ireland is not yet available, however we anticipate seeing a similar outcome to that reported by the [Lancet article](#). This would lead us closer to eliminating HPV-caused cancers in Ireland in the future.

The HPV vaccine has been offered to girls in first year since 2010, in September 2019 first year boys were also added to the programme. The most recent uptake figure shows over 76% of students have completed their HPV vaccination course.

CervicalCheck continues to remind people that even if they have had the HPV vaccine, they should have their cervical screening test each time it's due. This is because the HPV vaccine doesn't give complete protection against cervical cancer.



## LGBT+ community awareness and inclusion

The National Screening Service's [LGBT+ Cervical Screening Study](#) found that only about two thirds (or 66%) of LGBT+ people said they attended cervical screening regularly. This compares to 80% attendance by the general population. In an effort to increase attendance among LGBT+ people, CervicalCheck is encouraging all sampletakers and staff to complete the [HSEland LGBT+ Awareness and Inclusion: the basics](#) module. This module gives an important understanding of LGBT+ identities and relevant health issues, and provides tips on how to be more inclusive of LGBT+ people who use our services. Through this module you can also access activities for your workplace; resources to develop your knowledge; and tools to help you support LGBT+ people.

# Annual call for screening programme submissions

The NSAC is an independent advisory committee that advises the Health Minister and Department of Health on all new proposals for population-based screening programmes and revisions to existing programmes.

The NSAC has announce its first annual call for submissions for:

- new population-based screening programmes
- changes to existing population-based screening programmes in Ireland, (which includes CervicalCheck)

More information can be found [here](#).

## General Practice Nurses

The NSS Communications Team would like to apologise for an error that appeared in September's newsletter, where we incorrectly referred to General Practice Nurses as Public Health Nurses.

We are entirely mindful that GP Nurses and not Public Health Nurses are sample takers, and it is our aim that our wider communications reflect this at all times.



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