

# HPV CERVICAL SCREENING NEWSLETTER

September 2022

## Provision of cervical screening services

We are delighted to inform you that a new national three-year contract for the provision of cervical screening services (as part of CervicalCheck, the National Cervical Screening Programme) has been agreed between the Irish Medical Organisation (IMO) and the HSE. You will be aware that there have been several extensions to the existing contract while negotiations were ongoing. The contract provides for a new fee of €65 per eligible screening test as well as additional obligations under the contract which we will set out below. Please note that the programme will not commence active monitoring and reporting against the sample dispatch requirement until January 2023. This will allow for the necessary arrangements to be made within each practice to comply with this requirement.

The following are the main changes in the contract:

- Dispatch the screening test samples and associated cervical screening forms within three working days (previously five) of conducting the screening test. This is to prevent deterioration of samples and to avoid having to take repeat samples. The below table may be helpful in processing of the samples. Ideally it is best to avoid samples being stored in practices over the weekend.
- Remember, the cost of delivery of the samples to our accredited labs is included in the increased screening fee of €65 per test. Delaying the delivery of samples to reduce practice costs is not in line with our QA Standards.

Samples taken on:	Latest day for dispatch	Suggested day for dispatch*
Monday	Thursday	Tuesday
Tuesday	Friday	Wednesday
Wednesday	Monday	Thursday
Thursday	Tuesday	Friday
Friday	Wednesday	Friday (pm)

\*to avoid samples being stored over the weekend

- New contract holders (i.e. those who have not previously held a CervicalCheck contract of any kind) are required to undertake and complete an introductory module through online learning that outlines the requirements and operation of the programme as part of their registration process (online, e-learning based). All those providing the service should also undertake this course. The course takes approximately 40 minutes (maximum 1 hour) and is free of charge.
- Existing contract holders (i.e. those who currently hold a CervicalCheck contract), will, where not already completed, be required to complete an introductory module through online learning that outlines the requirements and operation of the programme (online, e-learning based) on or before the 31 August 2023. The course takes approximately 40 minutes (maximum 1 hour) (and is free of charge). The course is particularly useful with the move to HPV testing.
- The contractor and nurse (where relevant) are required to participate in a CervicalCheck clinical update at least once every three years. Clinical updates may be delivered through face-to-face meetings (national, regional, continuing medical education (CME) or CervicalCheck-led) or through the National Screening Service Learning Portal. The required introductory module mentioned above will satisfy this requirement.
- Under the old contract the GP has always been obliged to provide counselling to those women who have had an abnormal result. Under the new contract the specific requirement is to have a follow-up consultation in the event of an abnormal result, which is encompassed by the fee above. This consultation should discuss the test result in detail and explain the subsequent actions to be taken with regard to testing and the clinical pathway. This consultation is for the instances where referral for colposcopy is required. There is no change to the current referral process which includes automatic generation of referral letters.

Following the signing of the Statutory Instrument in early August, the implementation period for the new contract has been necessarily short and therefore signed acceptance forms should be returned as soon as possible to **[admin@cervicalcheck.ie](mailto:admin@cervicalcheck.ie)**

Please state your MCRN in the subject bar and ensure that all fields of the form are completed in full with correct information. We have created a 'How to complete the contract acceptance form' guide available [here](#). If you have any questions please contact **[admin@cervicalcheck.ie](mailto:admin@cervicalcheck.ie)** or call 061 406 500.

GPs/practices whose contract acceptance forms are received by close of business Friday 23 September 2022 will be paid the new fee for work done since 01 September 2022.

As the old contract will expire, it is essential that those GPs and practices who wish to continue to provide this service and receive the new increased fee, sign up to the new contract.

## Staying up to date

*If your colleagues wish to be added to our stakeholder list, email [communications@screeningservice.ie](mailto:communications@screeningservice.ie) with their name and MCRN.*

## CervicalCheck and age extension

With the introduction of HPV primary screening in 2020, the programme implemented a screening age extension from 60-65 years. This extension only applies to women who were under the age of 61 on the date of the extension (30th March 2020). Any woman who had already completed her screening journey and received a goodbye letter from the programme before that date is not eligible for further screening.

This means that not all women between the age of 60 and 65 are eligible for cervical screening. It is important to note that tests taken on ineligible women will be returned from the laboratory and will not receive payment.

Please check the eligibility of any woman who has not received a screening invite letter (and in particular those aged 60-65 years) prior to undertaking a screening test. You can check this on our website at: [www.hse.ie/cervicalcheckregister](http://www.hse.ie/cervicalcheckregister)

We understand this may be confusing for women and appreciate your help in explaining the situation. We still encourage you to speak about cervical screening with your post-menopausal patients and encourage eligible uptake. A woman who has never had a screening test within the programme may still present for a CervicalCheck programme test until their 66th birthday.

As always, if a woman is presenting with symptoms of cervical disease or is worried about cervical cancer, then it is not appropriate to take a screening test and she should be referred to colposcopy or gynaecology services following a pelvic examination if indicated.

## Next Vial Batch Expiry Date

Practices should note that screening vials with the Lot Number 0339AA has an expiry date of **4 December 2022**. Vials from this batch must not be used after **Friday 21 October 2022**.

Payment will not issue for tests submitted to the programme laboratory in vials which have expired.

## Change to predicted number of CervicalCheck tests in 2022

The National Screening Service's Programme Evaluation Unit has changed its predictions for the number of cervical screening tests CervicalCheck will process in 2022. More information can be found [here](#).

## Reminder: Registering Healthlink ID

We would like to remind all healthcare professionals to use their Healthlink ID on forms that correspond to the address they registered with the programme. This only applies to the contract acceptance form. If you are changing addresses or registering with Healthlink at a different address, it is imperative that the programme is notified of this. Failure to do so can mean cervical screening results are not being delivered due to differing Healthlink IDs.

Please be aware that you can only register one practice/Healthlink ID with the CervicalCheck programme.

## Colposcopy referrals - an update

### ***Self-sampling HPV tests***

A referral to colposcopy should never be made if a self-sampling screening device has been used to take the sample. There are no CervicalCheck accredited laboratories processing self-samples, and therefore the screening test should be repeated with a registered primary care sampletaker if it is due and the person is eligible for screening. There must be at least three calendar months between the date the self-sample was taken, and the date of the cervical screening test taken with a doctor or nurse.

### ***Non-CervicalCheck programme screening test results that recommend colposcopy referral (private or tests taken in other countries)***

- Women who meet the clinical criteria for a referral to colposcopy: the referral will be accepted by the colposcopy unit as CervicalCheck acknowledges a person's right to access healthcare outside of the programme. Since these tests have been processed in laboratories not accredited by CervicalCheck, the advice to the colposcopy units is to perform diagnostic tests before embarking upon treatment. It may also be necessary to repeat the screening test. This is to reduce the possibility for women of over- or under-treatment and ensure quality within the programme.
- Women who do not meet the clinical criteria for a referral to colposcopy: the referral will not be accepted by the colposcopy unit. The advice in these circumstances is for patients to return to their primary care team where a repeat test may be indicated to determine if a referral to colposcopy is appropriate. When tests have been processed in laboratories not accredited by CervicalCheck, repeating the test ensures that the programme quality standards are followed. If patients have any symptoms, it is important that these are discussed with their primary care team, as a referral to gynaecology may be indicated.

## Colposcopy and the use of Healthmail

Using Healthmail is not recommended as part of the colposcopy referral process. This is increasing the workload for colposcopy staff and has an impact on a woman's waiting time for her appointment. We are working with Healthlink towards implementing the colposcopy e-referral, and in the interim we would appreciate your support by using the referral form issued to you by the programme.

## Update: Colposcopy wait times and inclusion of telephone numbers

- A woman may choose to attend a different colposcopy service but please note that deviation from the recommended unit, on the referral, may result in longer waiting times.
- It is imperative also that the woman's telephone number is completed on the referral form so the clinic can contact the woman to complete the pre-visit health questionnaire, and also assist to reduce the incidence of not attended and cancelled appointments.

## Cervical Screening Forms - July 2022

Discrepancies on Cervical Screening Forms represented 84% of the total discrepancies reported by the programme laboratory to CervicalCheck for tests submitted in July 2022. There were 460 discrepancies reported on Cervical Screening Forms.

Missing or incorrect Medical Council Registration Numbers (MCRN) in the 'Clinically Responsible Doctor ID or Clinic ID' field accounted for 73%, almost three quarters, of the discrepancies in that period.

It is imperative that the correct MCRN is used on the form to identify the Clinically Responsible (contracted) Doctor. This means that for:

- doctors who have contracted with CervicalCheck, it is their MCRN that should be used in the 'Clinically Responsible Doctor ID or Clinic ID' field.
- clinics that have contracted with CervicalCheck, the CLIN code provided by the programme should be used in the 'Clinically Responsible Doctor ID or Clinic ID' field.

The 'doctor/nurse ID' field on the form is used to identify the sampletaker only.

Please ensure that the clinically responsible doctor and sampletaker information on your practice management system is up-to-date. Your GPIT provider can help you to update this information when required.

Previous versions of the Cervical Screening Form contained a field for the GMS number but this field was removed from the form. The GMS number must not be used to complete the 'Clinically Responsible Doctor ID or Clinic ID'. If a GMS number is used, the payment for the test could be made to a different doctor or clinic.

## LGBT+ resources and webinars update

In this edition's update we would like to highlight two webinars: [SPHeRE's Summer Seminar: Health & Wellbeing in the LGBTQI+ Community](#); and Australia's Centre for the Prevention of Cervical Cancer; [Meeting the Cancer Screening Needs of the LGBTQA+ Community](#).

We have also updated our website content in line with recommendations from the LGBT+ Cervical Screening Study.

## Accessing the healthcare professional CervicalCheck website

In our recent webinar, Dr Rachael Comer talked through how to access the healthcare professional website of CervicalCheck and pointed out some key links and documents. You can watch back [here](#).

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

# Schedule of learning events: September - December 2022

Following the success of the Screening Training Unit (STU) team's lunchtime webinars during the summer, the team has planned another series of webinars for the autumn and winter months.

STU held an evening webinar in September to facilitate those whose schedules didn't suit the lunchtime slot.

SEPTEMBER 2022	LEARNING EVENT	DURATION
Monday 12 <sup>th</sup> September 07.30 -8.30pm	<a href="#">What is Screening? What the public needs to know</a>	1 hour

The training events in the months ahead are:

OCTOBER 2022	LEARNING EVENT	DURATION
Wednesday 12 <sup>th</sup> October 1-2pm	<a href="#">LGBT+ awareness for cervical screening</a>	1 hour
Wednesday 26 <sup>th</sup> October 1-2pm	<a href="#">Increasing participation in cervical screening in primary care</a>	1 hour

NOVEMBER 2022	LEARNING EVENT	DURATION
Monday 07 <sup>th</sup> November 7.30-8.30pm	<a href="#">Cervical Cancer Elimination Project</a>	1 hour
Wednesday 30 <sup>th</sup> November 1-2pm	<a href="#">Supporting the trans community to participate in cervical screening</a>	1 Hour

DECEMBER 2022	LEARNING EVENT	DURATION
Wednesday 07 <sup>th</sup> December 1-2pm	<a href="#">CervicalCheck Operations Webinar for Administration Support Staff</a>	1 Hour
Thursday 15 <sup>th</sup> December 1-2pm	<a href="#">An overview of Colposcopy care: What to tell women being referred and receiving care</a>	1 Hour

For more information about September to December dates and topics, please see [here](#). To watch video recordings of previous webinars, please see [here](#).

## Contact us

### CervicalCheck

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### Primary Care Coordinator

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