

# HPV CERVICAL SCREENING NEWSLETTER

July 2025

## Programme Updates

### CervicalCheck programme report 2022-2023 shows increasing coverage as more women choose screening

We've published our [CervicalCheck programme report 2022-2023](#).

The figures reported relate to women who attended for cervical screening between 1 April 2022 and 31 March 2023.

- 269,550 women were screened.
- 89% of women screened tested negative for HPV.
- The prevalence of HPV among the screened population is 11%.
- Of those who tested positive for HPV, 49% had no abnormal cells detected and are recalled in 12 months for a follow-up HPV screening test.
- 44% of women who tested positive for HPV had low-grade abnormalities detected; 8% of women had high-grade abnormalities detected.



### CervicalCheck Programme Report 2022-2023



### New guide for carers aims to improve equity and break down barriers to screening

We know that it's not easy for everyone to take part in screening. There are barriers that can prevent some people from taking part. Our new [carers' guide](#) can help carers and the people they support to:

- understand what screening programmes are available and who is eligible
- understand and explain screening
- support people to make their own decisions
- register people for screening
- provide practical guidance to us about how we can make screening more accessible
- contact our screening programmes if additional supports are needed.



### A guide to screening for carers and the people they support



## Colposcopy treatments - biopsies

Approximately 57,000 women attend colposcopy clinics in Ireland each year. If a colposcopy examination identifies abnormal cells in a person's cervix, they may be advised to have a cervical biopsy. Approximately 26,000 biopsies are performed each year. Usually, the first biopsy that is taken is a small diagnostic punch biopsy. An area of tissue the size of the tip of a pen is removed. In line with international best practice, local anaesthetic is not routinely administered but is available on request. Women are often advised to perform a forced cough as there is evidence that this reduces the sensation of a punch biopsy as much as local anaesthetic. Women are supported at all times during the procedure by a trained healthcare assistant or registered nurse. We are updating our colposcopy resources to include this information.

Please note that all 15 CervicalCheck clinics have local anaesthetic available on site. All colposcopists working in CervicalCheck clinics are accredited by the British Society of Colposcopy and Cervical Pathology (BSCCP) as per our quality assurance standards and are trained in the administration of local anaesthetic.

### **Reminder: electronic referral between GPs and colposcopy clinics nationally**

Direct electronic referral from practice management systems to hospital colposcopy units via Healthlink is now available for practices referring to:

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

These units will no longer receive paper copies (facilitated referral form). Contact [support.healthlink@healthmail.ie](mailto:support.healthlink@healthmail.ie) & [support.healthlink@hse.ie](mailto:support.healthlink@hse.ie) if you require support.

*How to use electronic referral:* Attach the cervical screening test result to the electronic referral. The colposcopy unit needs this information to triage the referral and issue an appointment within agreed waiting times. Forms sent without results attached will be returned to you.

We are implementing electronic referral across all colposcopy units. We will provide further updates in the coming months.

### **Reminder: review of use of MCRN on cervical screening forms**

CervicalCheck are continuing a validation exercise of all registered Clinically Responsible Doctors i.e. contract holders and the health professionals who take cervical screening samples under their governance (4000+).

We are doing this validation exercise to ensure our records, which display to the public on the CervicalCheck website, are correct. This also helps us identify sample takers who haven't registered with us.

We have contacted contract holders in 16 counties and are now contacting those in Kerry, followed by Monaghan, Cavan and Louth. Since beginning the validation exercise more than 1,400 sample takers have been made inactive; 291 sample takers moved to another practice; and 47 sample takers remained in the same practice under the governance of a different contract holder. In addition, 137 sample takers have taken the opportunity to become contract holders.

What you need to do:

- Please respond to the email from [ccvalidate@screeningservice.ie](mailto:ccvalidate@screeningservice.ie) within XXx days.
- Ensure that any sample takers under your governance who are not registered with us do not take a screening test.
- Inform us when a sample taker is no longer under your governance.
- Ensure you and the health professionals under your governance have completed the CervicalCheck in Practice Introductory Online Module (1 hour in duration) available on [NSSresources.ie](http://NSSresources.ie)

### **Reminder how to complete failsafes**

We have a failsafe process when a woman with an abnormal result or a discharge recommendation from colposcopy does not attend for her next recommended appointment. Part of this process includes sending the clinically responsible doctor a failsafe letter ('abnormal follow-up' letter) asking for further information about your patient. We use this information to ensure we can keep contact with the woman for her follow-up.

Your actions in the failsafe process:

- Make two attempts to contact your patient about their follow-up appointment.
- Record the dates and types of attempts in hardcopy or via the [online failsafe](#).
- Record if the woman has emigrated, has changed address, has decided to attend private colposcopy or attend for a private cervical screening test
- Submit the failsafe response to us.

These actions are part of our QA standards and are outlined in the [Standards for QA in Cervical Screening in Primary Care & Other Settings](#).

### **Validation exercise of registered contract holders and sample takers under their governance**

Over the last year we contacted around 1,900 registered contract holders and updated our website with their details for women looking to book their screening appointment.

This resulted in:

- 1,639 sample takers made inactive
- 321 sample takers reassigned to another practice
- 149 sample takers recorded as registered contract holders (CRDs – Clinically Responsible Doctor)
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Keeping up with the latest social media trends, we have joined Bluesky, in addition to X (@NSShse) and LinkedIn. If you've joined Bluesky, make sure to follow us: @nsshse.

#choosescreening



- 61 sample takers registered with the same practices under different contract holder (CRD)
- 316 GP Registrars validated to ensure they were registered with the correct contract holder.

Our number of contract holders and registered sample takers has not changed, due mainly to the registrations we received over the same period of time. As of 30 June, in a primary care setting (excluding clinics and PPCCs) there are:

- 1,899 registered contract holders - an increase on May 2024 (1,863)
- 4,102 registered HPs - an increase on May 2024

**Please note: only sample takers registered with us can take CervicalCheck cervical screening samples.** Thank you to everyone who helped with our validation exercise. To ensure we keep our register up to date, please continue to contact the Administration Team on [admin@cervicalcheck.ie](mailto:admin@cervicalcheck.ie) if your or any sample takers under your governance move premises/ change to another contract holder and / or retire.

### Expired vials piece

In early 2025 there was an increase in samples being submitted to the laboratories in expired vials. Please review your stock of vials regularly, particularly when expiry dates are approaching (see table below).

Payment is not issued for tests submitted in expired vials and samples in expired vials are destroyed. The sample result is recorded as 'test not processed' with a 3-month repeat recommendation. Please note the upcoming 2025 vial batch expiry dates, as follows:

Product	Lot Number	Expiry Date
Vial	3269AA	25/09/2025
Vial	4045BA	14/02/2026

### Some recent blogs...

Click on the link below to read some of our recent blogs:

- [A community toolkit for action: Working together to improve equity in screening](#)
- [New videos with Irish Sign Language - supporting the Deaf community to choose screening](#)

### Schedule of learning events: Jan - Jun 2025

We have completed our lunchtime webinars Jan - June 2025. To watch them back please [see here](#). Please let us know if there are any topics you would like to be covered.

### Contact us

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