Guidance Note 4

Cervical Screening in relation to Pregnancy/Breastfeeding/Miscarriage

• Women with a negative screening history or women who have never been screened may defer their smear test until they are three months post-natal.

• If a previous test was abnormal and in the interim the woman becomes pregnant, then the repeat test should not be delayed but should be taken in mid-trimester, unless there is an obstetric contraindication.

• If the woman has received a ‘refer to colposcopy’ recommendation, she should always be referred to colposcopy and she should be encouraged to attend her appointment.

• If a woman has had a miscarriage, it is advisable to delay the smear test until three months after the miscarriage.

• If the woman is breast feeding and is due a smear test, wait until she is 3 months post natal. Document on the cytology form that she is breast feeding.

Points to remember

• A woman does not require a smear test when she is postnatal unless she is due to have a smear test within her call, re-call recommendations.

• Pregnancy has no adverse effect in the progression of abnormal cells or the development of cervical cancer. Occasionally, women may experience slight bleeding after having a smear test in pregnancy but a smear test will not increase the risk of miscarriage.

Guidelines and Reference Material

• European Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Cervical Screening – Section 1.2 & Section 6.9.1

• NCSS CervicalCheck – Guide for Smeartakers.

• Colposcopy and programme management - Guidelines for the NHS Cervical Screening Programme; NHSCSP Publication No. 20 – Section 10.1