Introduction of more-sensitive testing process in cervical screening

Following the UK National Screening Committee recommendations for the NHS cervical screening programme, cytological screening will be replaced this year as the first line of testing with the Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) primary screen.

The decision is based on the increased sensitivity of the test, longer protection of a negative result and better outcomes. With HPV the cause of 99% of all cervical cancers, this could prevent around 600 additional cancers a year.

To support the rollout of HPV primary screening by 2020, NHS England and NHS Improvement has recently undertaken a national procurement to secure service providers across nine lots across the England.

Following this process, we are pleased to confirm that North Bristol NHS Trust (NBT) will be the new lab provider for the South West, covering all practices and providers in Cornwall, Devon (including Plymouth and Torbay), Somerset, North Somerset, Bath, North East Somerset, Bristol, South Gloucestershire, Swindon and Gloucestershire, as well as all acute hospital and sexual health providers and relevant armed forces/prison sites that fall within the geographical area.

The service will also cover Wiltshire practices currently linked to Royal United Hospital Bath laboratory.

In the south west primary HPV screening has already been established in the following areas due to existing pilot and risk mitigation arrangements: Gloucestershire, BNSSG, Cornwall and Devon.

Commissioners are now working closely with existing cervical screening providers across the South West to ensure a safe consolidation phase to NBT. All relevant organisations and partners will be kept updated on the timing schedule for these changes once confirmed.

It is planned that full geographical coverage of primary HPV will be achieved across England by the end of December 2019 and that the full consolidation of laboratories from 46 to nine will be completed by the end of March 2020.

We would also like to emphasise that for women taking up their screening invitation, samples will continue to be taken and the results returned in the normal way. This change affects only the way in which the sample is tested.

We would like to thank you for your continued support with the wider changes to the programme and as we move towards full implementation of HPV primary screening into the system.

Overleaf you will find some further information about the changes. Last week’s bulletin had details for sample takers of potential delays, although this is not affecting the south west at present.

If you have any queries, please contact: phcontractssouthwest@nhs.net.
About the implementation of HPV primary screening

1. Why is HPV Primary Screening being implemented into the NHS Cervical Screening Programme?

NHS England and NHS Improvement is introducing a more sensitive test as part of the cervical screening programme. By the end of December 2019 samples will firstly be tested for Human Papilloma Virus, which causes over 99% of all cervical cancers. The new test will identify more people at risk of cervical cancer and could prevent around 600 additional cancers a year.

Background notes:

- In July 2016, the National Screening Committee recommended that the NHS Cervical Screening Programme should replace cytology with HPV testing as the primary screen within the NHS Cervical Screening Programme.
- We are on track to deliver full coverage of HPV primary screening by the end of December 2019. As this will require few cyto-screeners in the future there is currently a delay in some people receiving their results due to ongoing recruit and retention issues within this area of pathology.
- Replacing cytology with Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) testing as the primary screen within the NHS Cervical Screening Programme, will increase efficiency and save more lives. As more than 99% of cervical cancers are caused by the Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) this could prevent around 600 cancers a year.

2. What is the timeline the implementation of HPV Primary Screening?

The plan is for HPV Primary Screening to be implemented across England by December 2019.

3. Which labs have been selected to support the delivery of HPV Primary Screening pathway within the NHS Cervical Screening Programme?

Following an open procurement process the following laboratories have been selected to support the delivery of HPV Primary Screening pathway in the NHS Cervical Screening Programme:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lot</th>
<th>Successful provider</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lot 1 - London</td>
<td>Health Services Laboratories LLP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lot 2 - North East</td>
<td>Gateshead Health NHS Foundation Trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lot 3 - North West</td>
<td>Manchester University NHS Foundation Trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lot 4 - South Central</td>
<td>Berkshire &amp; Surrey Pathology Services at Frimley Health NHS Foundation Trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lot 5 - South East</td>
<td>Berkshire &amp; Surrey Pathology Services at Frimley Health NHS Foundation Trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lot 6 - South West</td>
<td>North Bristol NHS Trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lot 7 - East Midlands</td>
<td>University Hospitals of Derby and Burton NHS Foundation Trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lot 8 - East</td>
<td>Norfolk &amp; Norwich University NHS Foundation Trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lot 9 - West Midlands</td>
<td>The Royal Wolverhampton NHS Foundation Trust</td>
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4. What happens during an HPV test?

Samples will continue to be taken in the same way. The only difference is that the sample of cells taken from a person’s cervix will be screened for HPV in the first instance, instead of for abnormal cells.