

South West Public Health Cervical Sample Taker Newsletter



Issue 5: 24th May 2023

About this newsletter:

We have created this newsletter to keep you informed with the latest news and information regarding sample taker training, sample taker register, recruitment, incident reporting and advice on becoming a mentor or assessor.

If you have any questions or wish to provide feedback, please contact the Screening and Immunisations Team using: england.swscreeningandimms@nhs.net

Please circulate to all members of staff who might find this newsletter useful.

Contents:

- LBC Vial Expiry Dates
- SMI Training for Gloucestershire Sample Takers
- Reporting a Screening Incident
- Are Doctors Taking Cervical Samples? Are They Registered as Sample Takers?
- Updates and Reminders from the Labs
- Open Exeter & Next Test Due Dates
- Cervical Screening Awareness Week: 20-26 June 2023
- Sample Taker Training

LBC Vial Expiry Dates

LBC vials need to be 'in date' at the time of HPV testing, not just in date at the time the sample is taken.

The [National Acceptance Policy](#) states:

Check the vial to make sure that it has not passed its expiry date and that it has at least 14 days remaining. HPV testing cannot be carried out on expired vials.

SMI Training for Gloucestershire Sample Takers

On 21 April 2023, Gloucestershire's cervical sample takers were invited to attend a webinar focussing on improving access and support for people with a serious mental illness (SMI).

The event was hosted by Annette McHardy (Screening & Immunisations Co-ordinator), Gail Oliver (Senior QA Advisor, Nurse Colposcopist and Sample Taker Trainer) and Rajvinder Dhillon (Consultant Colposcopist). The topics covered were:

- **Cervical Screening and SMI – a review of the screening programme and the invitation process:** Looked at where in the screening programme support is of most value and tools that can support with the invitation process.
- **Making It Count:** Explored the issues faced by some individuals accessing screening and what we, as professionals, can do to make reasonable adjustments and considerations to enable that access.
- **Best Practice in Colposcopy:** Looked at best practice in colposcopy and a scenario workshop to support and inform healthcare professionals when conducting best interest meetings.

You can access the webinar recording and the presentation slides on our Future NHS site here: [SMI Training for Cervical Sample Takers](#). If you do not have access to the South West Screening & Immunisations Inequalities workspace, please follow the link above and then follow the on-screen instructions to request access.

Reporting a Screening Incident

We would like to first thank providers for continuing to report incidents using the Screening Incident Assessment Forms (SIAF). To make the process easier for providers, SQAS and screening and immunisations teams we would like to offer the following advice:

- When reporting a SIAF, please use the most recent version of the form which can be found at [Managing safety incidents in NHS screening programmes - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#).
- Please send this form to:
 - SQAS: england.SouthQA@nhs.net
 - Screening & Immunisation Team: england.swscreeningandimms@nhs.net

Are Doctors Taking Cervical Samples? Are They Registered as Sample Takers?

Medical staff who would like to undertake cervical sample taker training will need to get a sample taker code in order to start practising. The Sample Taker code is your individual code on the Sample Taker Register and is used when filling out the cervical sample request HMR101 forms. The GP practice should have a cervical register lead who is responsible for creating an account on the register. You will receive a username and password and will be able to update your profile including contact details and training. You will also need access to Open Exeter. Your practice should have a Primary contact for Open Exeter. This is usually the practice manager. They can create user accounts for staff members generating a User Code and a password to access the account. As sample takers, you can view patients' cervical screening history including previous results and their current recall status and produce a prepopulated HMR101 form to be sent with the Cervical sample.

It is not mandatory for qualified medical doctors to undertake a recognised theoretical course followed by a period of supervised training however we recommend that they undertake the cervical screening training as described in this guidance [Education pathway - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#) to enhance their specialist training. As a minimum it is advised that they

complete the e-learning sample taker training [HEE elfh Hub \(e-Ifh.org.uk\)](http://HEE_elfh_Hub_(e-Ifh.org.uk)) in order that they have the required level of knowledge and understanding of the cervical screening programme, and clinical skill, to safeguard the individual.

All UK registered health professionals involved in cervical screening must keep up to date with developments in the programme and meet their professional obligations for continuing professional development.

For additional guidance and information you can refer to the [standards and guidance](#) for healthcare professionals and managers working in the NHS CSP.

Updates and Reminders from the Labs

Bristol (NBT) lab only:

- Please print Open Exeter HMR 101 forms in A4 format to send with sample
- Please do not print on 'ICE' forms with labels attached as these get stuck in our scanners
- Please do not write in the patient details boxes as this interrupts the scanning technology
- Please place all sample in the orange swirly bags and ensure the top of all bags are sealed
- Please ensure only cervical screening samples are placed in the orange bags (other samples in the bag will cause delays in diagnosis)
- Please check expiry dates on LBC pots and handle stock accordingly
- The contact email address for the lab is cellularpathologycytologyenquiries@nbt.nhs.uk (this was incorrect on a previous newsletter)

Berkshire & Surrey (BSPS) lab only:

- If for any reason you are unable to use ICE, please ensure that your sample taker code is written clearly and legibly on the form
- Please ensure that you logon to the BSPS sample taker register (CSTD) to check your training details and update any expired training dates. You can also run performance audits on the CSTD to see how many samples you have sent, the number that were HPV negative/HPV positive and how many of your samples have been rejected:
 - Link for practice managers/admin users: [CSTD | Berkshire & Surrey Pathology Services \(asph.nhs.uk\)](#)
 - Link for sample takers: [CSTD | Berkshire and Surrey Pathology Services \(asph.nhs.uk\)](#)
 - The helpdesk email for the BSPS CSTD is asp-tr.bspssampletakers@nhs.net

Open Exeter & Next Test Due Dates

We wanted to highlight that the call/recall process for cervical screening patient is still currently on the Open Exeter system. As a sample taker you should use the Open Exeter system to check the next test due date for a patient and ensure they are due for screening before undertaking the test itself. The next test due for a patient can be found in the 'Cervical Screening Report Screen' in Open Exeter, and you should ensure the screen is not being undertaken before this date to ensure the sample will still be processed by the laboratory. If you are unsure if a sample can be taken or not we advise you contact the lab directly to confirm before taking the sample. The patient history screen can be used to review previous

appointments the patient had had, but this does not always provide an accurate reflection of when the next test due date for the patient is and the **Cervical Screening Report** screen should be used instead.

Going forward the Open Exeter system will be replaced by a new cervical screening management system and we will confirm when the new system will be going live as soon as it is confirmed. Until this new system is live however you should still continue to use Open Exeter.

If you would like more information on how to access Open Exeter, reset your password, etc. further details can be found [here](#).

Please note: On 15th May a change was implemented to Open Exeter to increase the length of password expiry from 30 days to 6 months. This should improve system access for cervical screening users of the Open Exeter system. Once users next update their password a further update will not be required for 6 months.

Cervical Screening Awareness Week: 20-26 June 2023

For more information on the event and any available resources, please visit [Cervical Screening Awareness Week | Jo's Cervical Cancer Trust \(jostrust.org.uk\)](#).

Sample Taker Training

Cervical sample taking is one element of a complex screening pathway. A cervical screening test is a consultation and clinical examination. A cervical sample taker must have the required level of knowledge, understanding of the cervical screening programme and clinical skill. The following UK registered healthcare professionals are eligible to train to undertake the role of cervical sample taker:

- Registered nurses
- Registered nursing associates* (see national guidance for more information)
- Registered midwives
- Physician associates who are registered on the Physician Associate Managed Voluntary Register (PAMVR)
- Registered healthcare professionals working in integrated sexual health (ISH) clinics
- General Medical Council (GMC) registered medical doctors to become a cervical sample taker, you must complete the full two-day training course with a local accredited training provider.

National guidance [Cervical screening: cervical sample taker training - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#) describes the post registration education pathway which must be followed for new cervical sample takers in the NHS Cervical Screening Programme (NHSCSP). This is the minimum standard and no cervical samples should be taken independently without completing this training in its entirety.

What is involved in the training?

- Theoretical training course which will cover the following topics;
 - Topic 1: the NHS Cervical Screening Programme
 - Topic 2: background to cervical screening
 - Topic 3: organisation of the NHS Cervical Screening Programme
 - Topic 4: equality of access to cervical screening

- Topic 5: cervical screening sample requests
 - Topic 6: understanding the test results
 - Topic 7: anatomy and physiology of the pelvic organs
 - Topic 8: practical aspects of taking cervical samples - Practical training of at least 3 hours is required with your local training provider, adhering to social distancing measures.
- A visit to a colposcopy clinic
 - A visit to a cervical screening laboratory (where logistics permit) or a virtual tour and laboratory presentation (a laboratory presentation must be included in the theoretical course)
 - To observe the mentor taking at least 2 cervical samples
 - Practical training (supervised and unsupervised clinical practice)
 - To take at least 5 cervical samples directly supervised by the mentor
 - Satisfactory completion of the interim assessment before starting unsupervised practice (conducted by the mentor)
 - To take 20 acceptable cervical samples without direct supervision and no more than 25 up to the point of final assessment
 - A final clinical assessment of a minimum of 3 samples (observed by the assessor)
 - Submission of the completed training record (verified by the trainee, mentor, assessor and training provider)

The theoretical and follow on training needs to be completed within 9 months from the date you enrol.

Additional actions required before undertaking training:

Staff will need to contact their local training provider, to ensure that there are places available for you to undertake the training (If you are unsure of who your local training provider is for cervical sample taker training please contact your ICB, LMC or Screening and Immunisation Team) - A suitable cervical sample taker mentor* will need to be identified (an experienced cervical sample taker) to support the trainee throughout their training.

- Trainee sample takers, mentors and employers need to be aware of the time commitment for the training (do not underestimate the amount of work and involvement needed to support the trainee)
- A learning plan is agreed with the trainee, their mentor and employer before the trainee attends the theory course.

* Mentors must be practising sample takers with at least 12 months continuous experience, having taken at least 50 cervical samples following completion of their own initial training. Mentors must have effective communication skills and ideally hold a relevant teaching qualification.

Required update training for cervical sample takers (for those already qualified):

Sample takers must undertake a minimum of 3 hours update training every 3 years. The national eLearning resource for sample takers meets the programme requirements for update training. Where face to face update training takes place, it must equate to a minimum of 3 hours of learning and fulfil the requirements of this guidance in addition to any local training requests. Training providers should link to their local screening and immunisation teams for the purposes of local update training.

