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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.

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Thank you

On behalf of the NHSE/I Screening and Immunisations Team, thank you for everything you are doing for the Cervical Screening programme during this difficult time. We appreciate your hard work, effort and diligence in continuing the delivery of the programme.

Cervical Screening during the COVID-19 Pandemic

Cervical screening was only paused for routine invitations (i.e. patients due to be screened every 3 or 5 years depending on their age) in April 2020. All other patients were still actively invited to be seen with samples taken and sent to the lab. Advice was also given that GPs should screen any woman who was anxious to be screened so long as the woman was due.

From 6th June routine invites have been going out to the backlog of routine patients who would normally have been invited. More invites will be sent out than normal to allow the backlog of patients requiring an invitation to reduce over time. The volume of invites being sent out each week can be reduced if necessary, to ensure the service is able to cope with the volume of samples being sent in.

Please ensure you continue to prioritise cervical screening appointments for women registered at your practice.

PPE Guidance

For current guidance on PPE use during sample taking please follow this link.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/wuhan-novel-coronavirus-infection-prevention-and-control/covid-19-personal-protective-equipment-ppe>

Note: please remember that this guidance may be subject to change.

Training Updates

The Clinical Professional Group for Cervical Screening Education and Training (CSET) has updated this guidance, first published in December 2016. New guidance published in Feb 2020

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cervical-screening-cervical-sample-taker-training>

One of the main changes is the introduction of an interim assessment, conducted by the cervical screening mentor. The trainee must complete satisfactorily before starting their unsupervised clinical practice. For more detail on this and other updates please refer to the link above.

Would you like to be a mentor?

The cervical screening mentor supports the trainee through their practical sample taker training and confirms their achievement for progression to the final evaluation and clinical assessment.

Mentors must be one of the following, a:

- Registered nurse
- Registered midwife
- Registered physician associate
- GMC registered medical doctor

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 mentoring and, or teaching qualification

The training provider makes sure the mentor understands the role, is sufficiently prepared to carry it out and supported for the duration of the training programme.

For further information, please contact your local training provider.

Resuming Sample Taker training

New Starters

Training is due to resume in Autumn 2020. In order to ensure a Covid secure teaching environment the theory training will be taught online or in smaller groups and the practical elements will be organised in accordance with social distancing requirements. Please contact your local training provider for further information on how and when training will resume in your area.

Already in Training

To allow students already in training time to complete the required elements of their clinical practice the training interval can be extended. This will be arranged on a case by case basis so please contact your local training provider for more information.

Sample Taker Register

The CSU manage the sample taker register on a day to day basis and are the point of contact for support and enquiries. They can support practice managers and sample takers with adding and amending sample taker records. Contact them at cervicalsampletaker.scwcsu@nhs.net

Labs Update

Within the South West Region there are 2 laboratories processing cervical samples for the National Cervical Screening Programme (HPV Primary screening replaced Primary Cytology screening in Nov 2019).

1. Southern Pathology - North Bristol Trust, Southmead (NBT): Tel: 0117 414 9889 – email: cellularpathologycytologyadmin@nbt.nhs.uk

2. Berkshire and Surrey Pathology Services (BSPS): Tel: 01932 726622 email: asp-tr.bsps HPV@nhs.net

NBT and BSPS are responsible for ensuring that cervical samples are transported to the laboratories in a timely way. (Cervical Samples taken in Primary Care continue to be collected in the usual way – samples are sorted by the local Pathology Laboratory – samples are then transported to NBT or BSPS)

Both laboratories have needed some time to adjust to the new way of working. This situation was made more challenging by the COVID Pandemic.

There is a national turnaround target (TATs) of 14 days from the time when a cervical sample is collected, to the time the woman gets their results. NBT - TAT is between 5 and 9 days. BSPS - TAT is between 11 and 13 days.

Sample takers are responsible for using the correct process for requesting cervical samples and also checking that cervical samples have been processed and reported in a timely fashion (Sample Taker Guidance).

Reporting a Screening Incident

Many of you will have seen and used this before but just a reminder and link for easy access.

Screening incident guidance: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/managing-safety-incidents-in-nhs-screening-programmes>

Team Contact details

For routine NHS cervical screening enquiries, Screening and Immunisation incidents, and information about Screening Programmes and advice, contact the PHE South West Screening & Immunisations Team england.swscreeningandimms@nhs.net