

South West Vaccination & Screening Team

Cervical Sample Taker Bulletin


South West Collaborative
Commissioning Hub



Issue 6: 6th September 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.swvast@nhs.net

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

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NEW: Good Practice Guidance for Sample Takers

Originally published in 2011, the [NHS Cervical Screening Programme good practice guidance for sample takers](#) has undergone a complete re-write to reflect developments in the NHS Cervical Screening Programme. The updated version was published on 31 July 2023.

The guidance supports cervical sample takers and enhances practice by providing key information in one place. It also promotes good practice that is consistent with national policy and programme guidance in key areas including cervical sample taker training to help to mitigate risk around sample taking incidents. All cervical screening sample takers are encouraged to access and read the publication.

The Cervical Screening Programme guidance for sample taker training:

- Details the training requirements for all sample takers working in the NHSCSP
- Ensures, via completion of the training, that sample takers meet the competency framework standard CHS37 'Obtaining cervical cytology samples from women'

The sample taker education pathway sets out:

- Which registered health care professionals are eligible to undertake the sample taker role
- The requirements for trainee cervical sample takers
- The required 3 yearly updating for qualified sample takers to maintain competency and meet their clinical and professional responsibilities for continuing professional development and revalidation

It is important to ensure:

- Training is accessed through an appropriate training provider.
- Check that the training provider holds current accreditation for their theory course.
- Training for sample takers includes a theory course, a period of practical training and a final assessment.

A trainee must:

- Successfully complete all elements of the training described in the guidance on cervical sample taker training
- All training should be completed within a nine-month period from enrolling on the initial course through to their final clinical assessment
- Book to visit a local colposcopy clinic early in their training due to the variation in local availability
- Factor in protected time for the visit and any follow up visits if necessary
- Attend for the duration of a clinic

REMINDER: Cervical Sample Taker Register Server Upgrade and Discontinuation of Historical Codes

In order to future proof the Cervical Sample Taker Register, the website's support team have upgraded the underlying server used by the website. This upgrade took place on the weekend of the 12th/13th August 2023. Users of the register will now need to use a [new website link](#) in order to gain access to the new register. The old website has been taken offline and all information from the old register has been transferred across to the new register automatically.

The support team emailed out the new register link and an FAQ pack in early August to all colleagues on the register asking them to:

- Use the [new website link](#)
- Reset their password

If you have any questions about the change to the new website, or need assistance with your password reset, please contact the support team via the following email address:
cervicalsampletaker.scwcsu@nhs.net.

Practice Managers / lead sample takers please note:

Following this upgrade to the register the lab will only be able to accept samples using codes that have been allocated to individuals on the sample taker register. **Historical codes will no longer be accepted and the sample may be rejected.**

ACTION REQUIRED – Please ensure that all sample takers in your practice / Trust, including GPs and hospital doctors, are on the register and that their training is up to date. Please refer to the attached guide to the sample taker register should you require support with this.

REMINDER: Check for Patients Who Should be Deferred or Excluded

As explained in the [call and recall best practice guidance](#) for cervical screening, GP practices have a responsibility to check their prior notification list (PNL). The PNL is a list of individuals from the GP practice who are due to be called or recalled for screening and provides an opportunity for practice staff to consider deferral or ceasing of individuals if appropriate.

If deferring a patient, the GP practice must specify:

- How long the deferral is for (anything up to 18 months is acceptable)
- The reason for deferral

It is really important that practices check the PNL to ensure patients who should be excluded or deferred (e.g. pregnant patients) do not get invited for screening unnecessarily.

UPDATE: Changes to the SIAF Form

There have been several updates to the SIAF form to incorporate changes for the bowel and breast programme. The form does see updates from time to time so please ensure you always use the version from the website: [Managing safety incidents in NHS screening programmes - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk).

UPDATE: Early Adopter Testing of NHS Cervical Screening Programme Opt-In Solution (Transgender and Non-Binary People Access Project)

CSMS (Cervical Screening Management System) which is replacing Open Exeter for cervical screening is due to go live towards the end of this year. This will have the ability to record if a patient is transgender or non-binary. If a patient has a new NHS number there will be availability, with patient consent, to bring their cervical screening history over to their new NHS record.

In July, we asked practices for expressions of interest to take part in early adopter testing of this solution. The expressions of interest process has now closed – thank you to all practices who got in touch. The start date for the testing is still to be confirmed, but it is expected to begin either upon CSMS launch or from 2nd January 2024.

UPDATE: Extended Intervals for Cervical Screening

The UK National Screening Committee (NSC) has recommended the extension of the screening intervals from 3 to 5 years for individuals aged 24.5 to 49 who test hrHPV negative as part of their routine screen test. See here for more details: [1. Introduction and programme policy - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

It is anticipated that this will be implemented at the same time as the CSMS (Cervical Screening Management System) which is replacing Open Exeter for cervical screening and is due to go live later this year.

UPDATE: Self-Sampling Pilot

Progress continues on work to enable an 'In Service Evaluation' of HPV Self-sampling as a primary screening offer to be undertaken. The first element of this is the HPVValidate study, which aims to clinically validate three vaginal self-sampling devices with the two HPV testing platforms currently used in the NHS CSP, and second is the planning processes for the wider In Service Evaluation.

HPVValidate:

The academic evaluation team at King's College Hospital are busy collating the results of this validation exercise and are evaluating the performance of HPV testing in vaginal self-samples compared to clinician taken samples. Outcomes for all five device/HPV test combinations are expected by December 2023, and will feed into the planning for the In Service Evaluation of HPV self-sampling. More information about HPVValidate can be found here: [HPVValidate cervical screening self-sampling study nears completion - UK National Screening Committee \(blog.gov.uk\)](#)

In Service Evaluation:

Planning for the In Service Evaluation (ISE) of HPV self-sampling as a primary screening offer has commenced. This work is led by screening colleagues at the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities in the Department of Health and Social Care, in partnership with NHS England, and in liaison with the UK National Screening Committee. The National Institute for Health and Care Research will fund the academic element of the ISE through their Health Technology Assessment Programme, and has recently published a call for an academic provider to design and evaluate the ISE: <https://www.nihr.ac.uk/documents/23106-the-use-of-hpv-self-sampling-within-cervical-screening-programme/33704>. It is anticipated that an academic provider will be selected in July 2024 and the ISE will commence in Autumn 2024. Some early market engagement work is being carried out nationally to understand the potential market and inform commissioning work for the HPV self-sampling kit design and logistics.

NEW: Consultation on the Use of Digital Pathology Now Open

The UK National Screening Committee (UK NSC) is consulting on the use of digital pathology in the analysis of cancer screening samples, including cervical screening samples.

They are consulting on whether providers and commissioners can safely use digital pathology in existing cancer screening programmes, excluding cytology, as an alternative to light microscopy.

- **To find out more:** [Consultation opens on use of digital pathology in breast, bowel and cervical cancer screening - UK National Screening Committee \(blog.gov.uk\)](#)
- **To take part in the consultation:** [Use of digital pathology in analysis of cancer screening samples - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Please note that the **consultation closes at 5pm on 15th September.**

UPDATES FROM BRISTOL LAB

- Labelling specifications: please ensure all forms and pots have three separate patient ID items – there should be a matching NHS number, date of birth, first name and last name on each. Samples without the correct PID will be rejected as per National guidance.
- Open Exeter is continuing as usual until the new CMAS system is brought in later in the year – please print an editable HMR 101 for all samples. We use scanning technology for accuracy of data and it is programmed to read the HMR101 forms.
- When a patient has address changes, please blank out old address on the HMR101 form. If a patient does not want post sent to their home address, please blank out home address on the form and clearly write where the letter needs to go.
- Please use the clear 'minigrip' zip seal bags for each sample – please do not use the bags that have self-adhesive for form attachment.
- Please place all samples in the orange Cytology transport bags – please do not place any other Pathology samples in these bags as this will delay diagnosis and possibly require a repeat sample. Only Cervical Cytology for the area is carried out at Bristol – all other Pathology samples are tested at the local Hospitals.
- If you require changes to your standing orders of Cervical Sampling kits, please contact hpv@cellpath.co.uk.
- The Cellular Pathology handbook is available on the website [Severn Pathology | North Bristol NHS Trust \(nbt.nhs.uk\)](#).

The contact information for the laboratory in Bristol is cellularpathologycytologyenquiries@nbt.nhs.uk – please contact us if you have any questions.

UPDATES FROM BSPS LAB

BSPS would like to remind all practice managers that they must add locum nurses to the CSTD before they start taking cervical screening tests. There has been an increase in agency nurses not having local sample taker codes and this is delaying results.

Please see the attached guide for details on how to add a sample taker to the register.