

Issue 4

National Services Division (NSD)

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www.nsd.scot.nhs.uk



Cervical Screening Programme Newsletter – May 2023

Welcome to the fourth update on the Cervical Screening Programme. We hope you find our newsletters useful for keeping up to date with the Screening Programme, wider developments, training, and other opportunities.

Laboratory Turn-around Time

The current processing time for laboratories to process cervical samples is **10 weeks**, please inform any participants at the time of samples being taken of the potential delay in receipt of Cervical results.

Clinical Information Section

It was highlighted in the recent Sample Takers QA group meeting that there was a high level of variation in how this field is used across all the Health Boards. It was proposed that Sample Takers should be adding any observations of clinical note when taking a sample. This is important if the participants sample should require cytology..

SCCRS Alerts NAPs

Following an adverse event, a short life working group (SLWG) was established to undertake a review of all the alerts within SCCRS. There followed a recommendation to develop Nationally Agreed Procedures (NAPs) for the use of Sample Takers and Primary care colleagues responding to an alert.

Should you wish to join the development please email: nss.nsd.cervicalscreening@nhs.scot

Sample Taker Guidance Document

The Sample Taker Guidance Document was updated in March 2023 and is available on the Sample Takers page of the SCCRS website. **[National-Sample-Taker-Advise-2023.pdf \(scot.nhs.uk\)](#)**

This document will be reviewed on an annual basis, please send any areas of best practice to the team and it will be reviewed prior to the next update.

National Cervical Exclusions Audit

This audit has started in some Boards and will shortly begin in others. It is being carried out in the Cervical Screening Programme because some participants have been removed from the programme in error. These errors relate to hysterectomy operations. Information on the audit can be found at [National Cervical Exclusions Audit – SCCRS \(scot.nhs.uk\)](#)

Primary Care Admin staff are gathering evidence from patient records and adding it to a national audit database. This will allow staff in Health Boards to review the evidence and verify whether the participant has been excluded correctly or not.

Patients will be given a cohort depending on the findings at the Health Board review stage and then sent a letter explaining the outcome of the review, and the next steps they should take. Information can be found at [National Cervical Exclusions Audit – SCCRS \(scot.nhs.uk\)](#). Two of these cohorts (1 and 2) will be seen in Primary Care to have a sample taken. Some Health Boards have started sending letters, so Practices can expect patients in cohorts 1 and 2 to make an appointment over the next year or so. This will however be staggered as the review process rolls out in all Health Boards.

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Patients in cohort 1 have a cervix and so their sample should be taken as normal.

For patients in cohort 2,

it has not been possible to say for certain whether they have a cervix or not.

Sample takers are asked to try and visualise a cervix and take a sample as normal if you can see one.

If you can't see one, or aren't sure if it's there or not, you should take a vault sample.

Vault samples are ONLY to be taken in primary care as part of this audit. All other requests for Vault samples outwith this audit are to be referred to secondary care.

Full guidance has been produced to help you to do this: [Sample-Taker-Guide-No-cervix-Exclusion-Audit-final-v2.pdf \(scot.nhs.uk\)](#)

Sample Taker Quality Assurance Group

A cervical sample taker QA group has been re-established. The role and remit of the group is to review and update guidance documentation to support Sample Takers. This forum can be used to highlight issues facing Sample Takers and to update the Programme Board with these challenges. It is hoped that the communication with the National Cervical Screening Programme and Sample Takers will be improved through this forum to share best practice and supply support accordingly.

Please get [in touch](#) if you would like to be part of the group.

Useful Contacts

We value your feedback please feel free to contact:

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