

# HPV CERVICAL SCREENING NEWSLETTER

July 2021

CERVICALCHECK wishes to reassure women that they are not automatically removed from its register following hysterectomy procedures, after it emerged last week that a number of women in Scotland were removed incorrectly from Scotland's screening programme following hysterectomy procedures.

According to Scotland's Public and Women's Health Minister Maree Todd, an NHS board audit "discovered a number of women had developed cervical cancer after being wrongly excluded from the screening programme following a hysterectomy". The audit was carried out in December 2020. One woman has since died of cervical cancer.

Fiona Murphy, Chief Executive of the National Screening Service in Ireland, and HSE Chief Clinical Officer Dr Colm Henry, have been in touch with the public health teams in Scotland.

As a precaution, CervicalCheck has paused any requests for removal from the register for any hysterectomy.

Dr Nóirín Russell, Clinical Director for CervicalCheck said, "While we have no reason to believe the Scottish experience will have implications for Ireland, the HSE is examining the Scottish review as we continue to evaluate best practice across international screening programmes." The work will be done closely with the National Screening Service and the National Women and Infants Health Programme on evaluation of the Scottish report.

## **Hysterectomy and screening in Ireland**

Unlike Scotland, Ireland does not automatically remove anyone from the CervicalCheck cervical screening register. We continue to invite people for screening post-hysterectomy, unless we receive confirmation from the participant, in consultation with their GP or hospital doctor, that screening is not required.



**Scotland's Public and  
Women's Health  
Minister Maree Todd**

## Offering reassurance to women

We understand that women, who have undergone a hysterectomy and opted out of the cervical screening programme, may have concerns around their care.

CervicalCheck informs all people who have had a hysterectomy that they may need to continue to have screening tests if:

- They have had a subtotal hysterectomy (uterus removed) and still have a cervix
- Changes in the cells of their cervix were detected before or at the time of surgery
- The hysterectomy was for treating cervical abnormalities (cancer or precancerous conditions).

It should be noted that most hysterectomies carried out are total hysterectomies, which includes removal of the cervix, and therefore the risk of developing abnormal cell changes after hysterectomy is low.

We are letting people know that for more information they can check the CervicalCheck website, [www.hse.ie/cervicalcheck](http://www.hse.ie/cervicalcheck) or contact CervicalCheck's Freephone line on 1800 45 45 55 or contact [info@cervicalcheck.ie](mailto:info@cervicalcheck.ie) We will also be doing our best to answer all their questions via our infoline.

We appreciate, however, that your patients may come to you seeking further information also. We have therefore sent by email and letter; a healthcare professionals FAQ and an information sheet on hysterectomy types, to help you answer any questions your patients may have.

These resources will also be available on the CervicalCheck healthcare professionals website here. If you have a query about your patient's status on the screening register following hysterectomy, please contact CervicalCheck's Freephone line on 1800 45 45 55.

We continue to emphasise to our participants that CervicalCheck is a screening service for well women within the population age range (25 to 65 years) and is not a symptomatic service.

If a person has any concerns or symptoms, we strongly encourage them to contact or attend their GP to ensure that they are given the appropriate advice or referral. A list of symptoms is available on our website here.

For further information participants can see [www.hse.ie/cervicalcheck](http://www.hse.ie/cervicalcheck) or Freephone 1800 45 45 55.

## Welcome Dr Sarah Fitzgibbon, CervicalCheck's new Primary Care Clinical Advisor



Dr Sarah Fitzgibbon has recently taken up the position of the new Primary Care Advisor for CervicalCheck.

Dr Fitzgibbon has been working as a GP in the Northside of Cork City for the past 15 years and is a member of the Deep End Ireland group of GPs, which campaigns for improved primary care services for people living in areas of deprivation. She is also Secretary of the local faculty of the Irish College of General Practitioners (ICGP).

Dr Fitzgibbon is a founding member of *the Women in Medicine in Ireland Network* (WiMIN), an organisation for female doctors and medical students in Ireland. She established the group in 2017 to promote, support and encourage women working or studying in the medical profession. She has presented at events and conferences on gender equity, patient advocacy and doctors' wellbeing.

Dr Fitzgibbon was diagnosed with Stage 4 bowel cancer in 2014 and has written extensively about living with the disease on her blog page: <http://adventuresofasickdoctor.blogspot.com>. She also writes a regular column for the Medical Independent, and she has recently received a Professional Diploma in Clinical Leadership through the RCSI Institute of Leadership.

We welcome you to the team and wish you, Sarah the very best in your new role.

## Colposcopy cyber attack update 25.06.21

Colposcopy clinics are continuing to work to see women referred to them in 2021. Manual work-arounds implemented shortly after the cyber-attack attack have ensured that all colposcopy clinics are proceeding as normal, albeit at reduced capacity.

Expected waiting times vary with each clinic. However, all urgent referrals are being seen within two weeks in all clinics, and the majority of clinics are operating within KPIs for high-grade referrals. Manual data entry is still proceeding, therefore we do not have up-to-date information from all clinics on low-grade and routine appointment waiting times.

**Note:** It is important that you send in a copy of the laboratory screening report with the colposcopy referral form as the report provides essential information for the colposcopy teams. Failure to do so may result in delays of getting an appointment for your patient.

# Cervical Screening Education

Cervical screening education is critical in the provision of a quality assured cervical screening programme. Around 1,880 nurses/midwives are registered as sampletakers with CervicalCheck, the majority of whom are practice nurses employed in primary care.

The Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland (NMBI) is the statutory body for the regulation of nursing and midwifery practice. It plays a key part in the development and continuance of role expansion for the professions.

Nurses and midwives are accountable to the patient, the public, their regulatory body, the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland, their employer and any relevant supervisory authority (NMBI, 2015).

Sampletaking is an extension in the scope of practice for nurses and midwives. 'Expanded practice' is understood as a change in the role of an individual nurse/midwife to include areas of practice that have not previously been within their scope of practice, but are within the overall scope of practice of the nursing and midwifery professions. Nurses and midwives are accountable both legally and professionally for their practice, that is, for the decisions they make and the consequences of those decisions (NMBI, 2015).

Nurses and midwives must be theoretically and clinically competent to expand their scope of practice to provide cervical screening consultations. Health professionals need to engage in continuing professional development in order to give up-to-date, consistent information to women, explain the limitations and benefits of a cervical screening programme and normalise the conversation around HPV infection.

There are a number of supporting documents and educational presentations on the [CervicalCheck](#) website and the [National Screening Service](#) online [eLearning portal](#). CervicalCheck's Education and Training Unit has developed and delivers an accredited education programme for health professionals in line with the recommendations of the Standards for Quality Assurance in Cervical Screening Quality Assurance in Primary Care and Other Cervical Screening Settings (CervicalCheck, 2020) and the CervicalCheck HPV Primary Screening: Eligibility Framework/ Reference Guide for GPs and Clinics (CervicalCheck, 2020).

There is both a theoretical and clinical component in this education programme. The theoretical component is provided in partnership with the Irish College of General Practitioners, the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland, University College Cork and the National University of Ireland, Galway. The clinical component should take place in the clinical area where the trainee sample taker is based. A CervicalCheck appointed Clinical Trainer is assigned to each trainee to support the clinical aspects of education. Please refer to the advisement flyer for course details and the cervical screening education prospectus is available [here](#).



Cervical Screening  
Education Prospectus  
2021-2022



An tSeirbhís Náisiúnta Scagthástála  
National Screening Service



CervicalCheck  
The Cervical Screening Programme

**Did you know  
that there are 1,880  
nurses/midwives  
registered as  
CervicalCheck  
sampletakers - the  
majority of whom are  
practice nurses employed  
in primary care?**

## **Contact Information:**

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and Screening Training Unit  
CervicalCheck, CervicalCheck,  
National Screening Service,  
Mount Kennett House, Henry  
Street, Limerick, V944KN3N.*

**National University  
of Ireland, Galway**



**Course Title: Best Practice in Cervical Smear Taking**  
Level: 9 Credits: 10 Cost: €550

**Commencing Date: 8th September 2021**  
**Closing Date: 15th July 2021**

Contact Name: Catherine Meagher  
E-Mail: [Catherine.meagher@nuigalway.ie](mailto:Catherine.meagher@nuigalway.ie)  
Tel: 091 492829

Administrator: Mari Moran  
E-Mail: [Mari.moran@nuigalway.ie](mailto:Mari.moran@nuigalway.ie)  
Tel: 091 493740

How to apply: The application form needs to be submitted by email to [mari.moran@nuigalway.ie](mailto:mari.moran@nuigalway.ie). Information about the module can be found <https://www.nuigalway.ie/pca/bestpracticeincervicalsmeartaking/>

**University College  
Cork**



**Course Title: NU6158 Evidence Based Cervical Screening**  
Level: CPD Module Credits: 10  
Cost: €550 plus €35 Application Fee

**Commencing Date: 10th January 2022**  
**Closing Date: 30th October 2021**

Contact Name: Dr Serena Fitzgerald, Module Leader  
E-Mail: [serena.fitzgerald@ucc.ie](mailto:serena.fitzgerald@ucc.ie)  
Tel: 021 4901516

Contact Name: Ms Anna O'Leary, CPD Lead  
E-Mail: [anna.oleary@ucc.ie](mailto:anna.oleary@ucc.ie)  
Tel: 021 4901483

Apply on line: <https://www.ucc.ie/en/nu6158/>

**Royal College of  
Surgeons Ireland**



**Course Title: Clinical Nursing Cervical Sample Taking**  
Course Level: 9 Credits: 10 Cost: €550

**Commencing Date: 4th November 2021**  
**Closing Date: 4th October 2021**

Contact Name: Dr Sherly George  
E-Mail: [sherlygeorge@rcsi.ie](mailto:sherlygeorge@rcsi.ie)  
Tel: 01 4028643

Administrator: Anne-Marie Kirby  
E-Mail: [amkirby@rcsi.ie](mailto:amkirby@rcsi.ie)  
Tel: 01 4022206

Apply on line: To be confirmed

**Irish College of  
General Practitioners**



**Course Title: Cervical Screening Education course**

**Commencing Date: 11th October 2021**  
**Closing Date: 11th September 2021**

Contact Name: Dr Noirín O'Herlihy  
E-Mail: [womenshealth@icgp.ie](mailto:womenshealth@icgp.ie)  
Tel: 01 6763705

Administrator: TBC  
E-Mail: TBC

Apply on line: [www.icgp.ie/go/courses](http://www.icgp.ie/go/courses)

Please click on this link [Prospectus – Cervical Screening Training programmes 2021 – 2022 \(cervicalcheck.ie\)](https://www.cervicalcheck.ie/prospectus) to access the Cervical Screening Education Prospectus 2021-2022.

Should you require further assistance please use the following contact details

Senior Training Coordinator: Louise Mc Kee. E-Mail: [Nessa-Louise.McKee@screeningservice.ie](mailto:Nessa-Louise.McKee@screeningservice.ie)

Senior Training Coordinator: Debbie Ramsbottom. E-Mail: [Debbie.Ramsbottom@screeningservice.ie](mailto:Debbie.Ramsbottom@screeningservice.ie)



## LGBT + cervical screening study results

As mentioned in our last newsletter, we recently conducted a study on LGBT+ cervical screening. The study was conducted by our Public Health Department in conjunction with stakeholder and community representatives, and Dr Maria Power, Community Consultants, Ardsallagh, Co. Waterford. It set out to examine the knowledge, attitudes, participation and experiences of lesbian and bisexual women, trans men, non-binary and intersex people with a cervix in cervical screening in Ireland'.

**The findings from the study of approximately 450 people who identify as LGBT+ are now available.** They highlight real experiences and barriers by the current process; a real need for general awareness, sensitivity about the whole screening experience, follow-up process, further research, partnership and training in achieving expectations and standards for all users of population screening.

It established factual opinion as well as direct barriers that affect the overall screening service for clients, for example one finding which stood out across all the literature reviewed from the survey and focus groups carried out in the study is the level of **misinformation being communicated to the LGBT+ community, both by health care professionals and by the LGBT+ community itself.**

### **It recognised:**

A link between receiving a recommendation to attend for screening by your GP, practice nurse, friend or family member

### **The big findings:**

Basic consultation practices were not followed, and in many cases - examples of this are; informing the client about the procedure involved, letting them know what the test results would mean and by what method they would be received was not communicated properly.

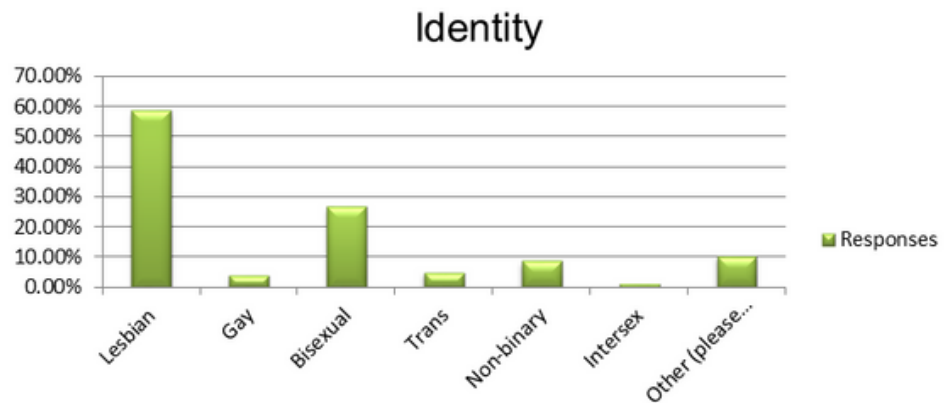
While many service-users reported positive experiences of cervical screening, only 66.5% said they attended screening, which compares to 80% up-take by the general population.

### **Some recommendations were;**

LGBT Friendly Practice (59.5%), being able to book an appointment online (58.7%), being sent a reminder by text (47.6%), specialist LGBT+ Clinic (42.9%), more flexible GP surgery opening hours (41.8%), training and support for sample-takers, inclusion and communication of LGBT+ community in cervical screening. The published report will be available in the coming weeks.

# LGBT+ study results

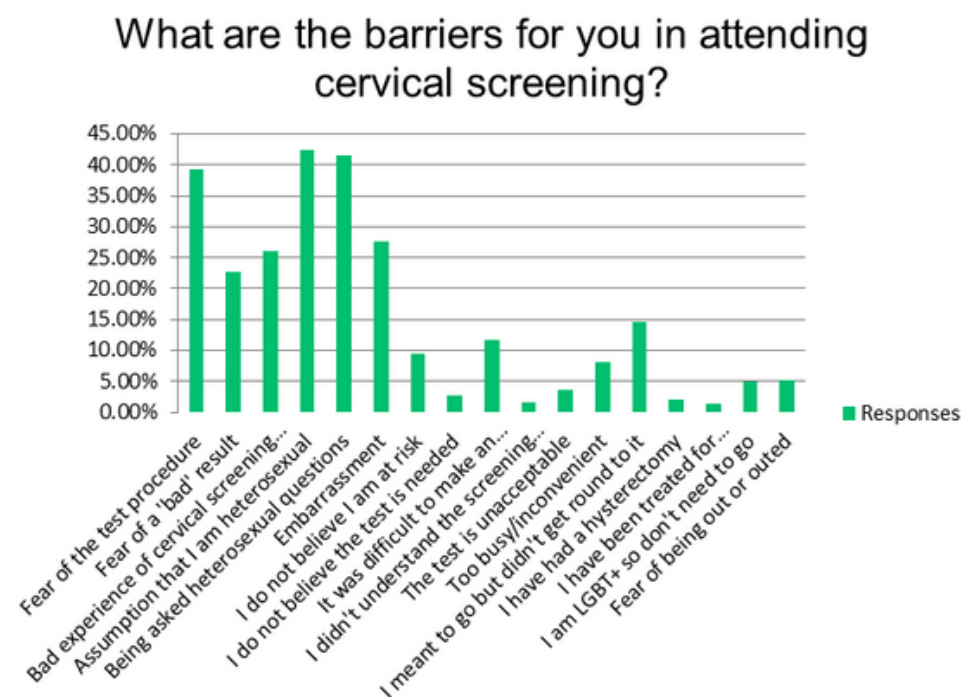
418 people completed the survey which ran for six weeks between February 08 and March 12 2021. Of the 418 respondents, 88.9% stated that their nationality was Irish with a range of other nationalities from across the world making up the balance. In terms of identity, 59% identified as lesbian, 27% as bisexual and the remaining 14% identified as non-binary, trans, pansexual, queer, other. The majority of people who responded to the survey were aged 25-35 (48%) followed by age 36-45 (24%).



## Barriers

When asked about the barriers for attending screening the following were identified as the top four barriers:

- Assumption that I am heterosexual (42.5%)
- Being asked heterosexual questions (41.5%)
- Fear of the test procedure (39.3%)
- Embarrassment (27.6%)



# Interval Cancer Expert Reference Group Reports

Implementation update May 2021

## Background

The Expert Reference Group (ERG) Reports on Interval Cancers in the BreastCheck, CervicalCheck and BowelScreen screened populations give recommendations and guidance for the future management of interval cancers in Ireland. These reports were commissioned as part of the Scally Review in 2018. The reports focus on the need to design interval cancer reviews (patient-requested and programmatic review) which support quality assurance within each programme and which are in line with international best practice.

To implement the recommendations of the ERG reports, a steering group and five subgroups have been established. The subgroups are CervicalCheck; BreastCheck; BowelScreen; Legal Framework; and Communications. The steering group communicate progress to the NSS Quality, Safety and Risk Management (QSRM) Committee and HSE management.

Membership of our groups is diverse, including representatives from patient and public advocacy groups, primary care, cancer screening experts, public health, legal experts, communication specialists, medical ethics and health economics.

## May 2021 update

We are creating a series of engagement exercises which will be key to informing the implementation process, enhancing understanding, and improving trust in our screening services.

- Our CervicalCheck, BreastCheck and BowelScreen subgroups are continuing to develop their project implementation plans, as follows:
- The CervicalCheck subgroup is reviewing the international evidence of interval cancer reviews gleaned from the ERG survey findings.

The programme subgroups are working closely with the National Cancer Registry of Ireland (NCRI) and the NSS Strategic Planning Group. They are reaching out to screening communities internationally to achieve agreement on the definition of an interval cancer. Reaching this international consensus is the first step for us to be able to calculate, compare and benchmark our interval cancer rates.

The Legal Framework subgroup has been established and is chaired by Professor David Keegan. The group has representatives from the Department of Health, health ethics, public health, NSS clinicians, patient advocacy, legal, and health economics. This group is looking at the wider environment in which screening operates.

The Communications Subgroup is designing a large-scale behaviour and attitudes survey to create a "before and after snapshot" of public feeling and approach to screening. The aim of the survey is to provide a benchmark for wider NSS work on increasing trust in, and understanding of, screening. Review of the consent processes of each of the screening programmes is under way.

More information is available on the NSS website [here](#).



## Positive feedback

EF-267

Thank you for getting in touch recently about an appt for the screening test. After consultation with my doctor's surgery nurse, it appears that after certain surgeries I will no longer be in need of any more screening.

Thank you for looking after my needs in the past, I know lots of women will benefit in the future.

EF-240

As always I've recently received my cervical check reminder letter. I just wanted to say Thank you!

I also recently found out that I'll be having a full hysterectomy to stop the cancer found so I won't need the appointment I had made with my practice nurse for the smear. But before I rip up my reminder I wanted to thank you for all your work in the screening programme. Someone told me once she didn't know why I went for cervical check-ups as I was single but look it turns out I have the cancer despite being single! But you, whoever is reading this and all of your team save so many of us.

Thank you, particularly this year when your work lives have been as unimaginable as our home lives now look.

You are appreciated more than you know. Thanks for all your work.

EF-268

Thank you so much for getting back to me, I really appreciate it! As always, I actually received my results a couple of days after I emailed you! But thank you very much and keep up the good work, what you do is so important and valued, I have no doubt that you get lots of criticism at times

EF-239

Hi I got a reminder letter for the programme. I just wanted to let you know that you can take my name off the list. In 2020 I had a hysterectomy so no longer need the service.

Thank you for your good service over the years.

## Translated Videos on HPV cervical screening

The National Screening Service recently teamed up with Translate Ireland to produce multilingual video messages for migrants on CervicalCheck screening.

The video messages, which will be available in a dozen languages, are presented by doctors, nurses and other healthcare professionals in Ireland who come from another country originally.

The video messages explain the importance of screening and what it entails, and it informs women on where and how to book a test.

The script for the video messages is culturally appropriate and clearly explains information which may be difficult for migrants to understand in English.

The video messages on CervicalCheck are available in Polish, Portuguese, Arabic, English, Romanian, Russian, French, Urdu, Spanish, Lithuanian, Latvian and Slovak.

## Ordering Screening Service Resources

# HealthPromotion.ie

The recent cyber-attack is still impacting on some services and the healthpromotion.ie website is one of them and currently down for ordering any screening service resource.

We can reassure you there are currently working to rectify the situation as soon as possible. What to do in the meantime:

### To process an order:

- Please email the Health Information Team on: [healthinfo@hse.ie](mailto:healthinfo@hse.ie)

Or if you have a query about an order already placed, please email: [queries@healthpromotion.ie](mailto:queries@healthpromotion.ie)

## Contact us

### CervicalCheck

Email: [info@cervicalcheck.ie](mailto:info@cervicalcheck.ie)

Freephone: 1800 45 45 55

Website: [hse.ie/cervicalcheck](http://hse.ie/cervicalcheck)

Post: CervicalCheck, Freepost LK407,  
Limerick.

### Primary Care Coordinator

Email: [primarycarecoordinator@cervicalcheck.ie](mailto:primarycarecoordinator@cervicalcheck.ie)

Telephone: 061 406 572