Introduction

“The evaluation phase of the primary HR HPV screening implementation study, that commenced on 1st April 2017 following approval by Welsh Government, concluded at the end of 2017, and we are very pleased to be able share the headlines of the findings with you in this newsletter.

The early adopter phase ahead of full rollout in September 2018 continues to run very successfully due to the efforts and dedication of our early adopter practices and CSW teams, and has involved an intense period of training for both CSW staff and staff within primary care and Health Board Colposcopy units. We would like to express our sincere thanks to all the practices and clinics who agreed to be early adopters and also to those who helped with collecting Service User Experience feedback – it has all contributed to helping us ensure a smooth transition to full rollout of HR HPV screening on 17th September 2018.

We hope the briefing will help keep you abreast of developments and please do not hesitate to get in touch with us on the contact list below if you have queries or feedback”

Louise Dunk Head of Programme, Cervical Screening Wales

Full roll out of HPV primary testing is just around the corner!

I would like to express my thanks to all those individuals and teams who have contributed to making this happen; the dedication of all staff to deliver this change project, inside and outside of Public Health Wales, has been nothing but amazing, thank you all.

Full roll out will be accompanied by our communications campaign which I’m very much looking forward to #loveyourcervix!

Please join us in spreading the message of the benefits of cervical screening, more details on page 5.

Heather Lewis, Consultant in Public Health for Cancer Screening Services, Public Health Wales

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HPV early adopter phase - key findings

The main purpose of the ‘early adopter’ phase during April – December 2017 and consequent evaluation was to inform the process of full rollout of HPV Primary Screening towards September 2018. Whilst formal publication of the evaluation report is planned, we wanted to share with you at this stage a number of key findings:

- 99,585 samples were processed during the evaluation period (April – Dec 2017), of which 18,058 (18.1%) were from ‘pilot’ practices.
- 12% of samples from early adopter practices had high risk HPV detected. High risk HPV positivity rates varied from 25.7% in the 20-24 age group, to 4.6% in the 60-64 age group.
- High risk HPV primary screening showed an increase in detection of CIN 2+ compared with primary cytology screening, which was approaching statistical significance in the evaluation period.

- Although most women rated the information sent to them about HPV primary screening as good to excellent, their understanding was improved by explanation from the sample takers, and reinforced the need for good quality training of sample takers.
- Communication of the changes to the public will be essential. Several women said that they had not heard about the changes in the media and were surprised about this. In the run-up to full rollout there will need to be a concerted campaign to raise awareness of the changes to the screening test.

- Sample taker training itself received high ratings, with most of those trained feeling that face-to-face sessions were the most useful, and cascade training did not give them the same degree of confidence. Requests were made for online training. It is planned to have an audio-described version of the presentation available online.
- Stressing confidence in the test results (especially a ‘negative’ test and the lack of need for cytological examination in this case) will be very important, both as part of training of sample takers and in CSW public information.
Mitigation phase: May-July 2018

Conversion to HPV Primary Screening will bring about a reduction in the need for cytology by at least 85%. With a reduction in cytology screening capacity materializing early 2018, Cervical Screening Wales had to call into effect their mitigation plan and convert additional practices to HPV Primary Screening prior to the planned implementation date. During the mitigation phase (May - July 2018) an additional 129 practices converted to HPV Primary Screening across Wales. Selection of those practices was based on volume of activity so as to best mitigate against the reduction of cytology capacity. Following this process, we now have 207 practices remaining to convert to HPV Primary Screening in September ’18.

HPV Primary Screening pilot & mitigation phase – number of GP practices

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PATIENT AND PUBLIC INFORMATION

Easy Read Information

A new easy read leaflet about HPV and HPV primary screening has been developed. The leaflet has been developed with help from women with a learning disability and ESOL (English Speakers of Other languages) learners. The A4 pictorial based leaflet is aimed at women with low health literacy and helps to explain the new way of testing cervical screening samples. The leaflet will be sent out to all primary care teams in-line with the launch of HPV primary screening.

The Screening Engagement Team is supporting the development of the new cervical screening invitation leaflet and letter in readiness for the implementation of HPV primary screening implementation in September.

Engagement sessions have been held with women across Wales to find out what information is important to women to be included within their invitation information to help them make an informed choice about cervical screening.

The new information will be available in a range of accessible formats.
New Invitation Leaflets and Letters

From August 2018 women being invited for cervical screening will be sent a new leaflet explaining cervical screening. You can see the leaflets [here](https://www.cervicalscreening.gov.uk). There will also be new invitation and reminder letters.

The leaflet has a QR code which takes the user directly to the website, and will be available in Easy Read, British Sign Language, Audio and large print formats from our website in the very near future.

The letters now include a box which contains the ‘call to action’ message for women – this tells them what they need to do.

The website address is included and the letter will be bilingual and larger print than currently.

The leaflets and letters were all developed with help from women, who told us what they wanted us to say and how they should look. We are currently developing a poster which should be available soon.

Our results letters will be updated in the near future, following the same format.

We will also be updating the website to make sure the information on there is accurate.
Getting Social: Campaign Plan for HPV Primary Testing

The public announcement of the change to primary HPV testing will take place on **Tuesday 18 September**. As well as telling the media about the changes in testing, it will also mark the start of a four month-long social media campaign to encourage women to have their smear test. The campaign is aimed at women in their 20s as research from Jo’s Trust shows that this age group are the least likely to attend their screening appointment due to issues around embarrassment and body shame. The campaign will include the following features:

- **September**
  - Selected **Welsh lifestyle bloggers** will share their support and call for women to have their smear test. We will be giving them access to a smear taker with whom they can chat through issues, myths and how the test is done – all in their own voice to speak to their followers.

- **October**
  - Short film of **Welsh beauty therapists** talking about how they see vaginas on a regular basis when doing bikini waxes, so women don’t need to be embarrassed about having their smear test

- **November**
  - **Short animation** showing the different perspectives the patient and the smear taker have during the appointment. The woman is worried about how she looks and what the smear taker thinks of her private parts, while the smear taker is thinking through her training to make sure she’s covering everything.

- **December**
  - **Open letter** through the media to **Stacey Solomon** combatting the shame she felt after being diagnosed with HPV. The letter’s tone will emphasise that HPV is very common and nothing to be ashamed of, and having your smear test can help prevent high risk HPV causing cancer.

- **January**
  - Using the launch of the new CSIMS (replacement for NHAIS Exeter Call / Recall database) as a **message ‘refresher’**; we will be able to record the results and re-invite all people who identify as a man yet still have a cervix who have attended for screening. This will be done in conjunction with LGBTQAI charities.

All of the above content will be shared extensively on social media through the Public Health Wales Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat and Instagram channels using the hashtag #loveyourcervix. If you would like to get involved in any elements of the campaign please contact Jo Black, Communications Officer for Public Health Wales, on jo.black@wales.nhs.uk or 02920 104320.
Good to know

- Women invited for the first time will receive their invite at approximately 24 years and 7 months, this means that woman can have a smear test just before aged 25
- When full roll-out of HPV screening is implemented on 17th September 2018, practices who are already HPV primary screening can revert to using either pink or green request forms
- Women with an incidental finding of normal endometrial cells in their cervical sample will no longer receive a letter to suggest they see the GP; the information is still on the results form for the GP to decide if the woman needs to be reviewed
- If you’ve not been able to attend an HPV Primary Screening training session, or just want to refresh your knowledge, our presentation is now available online at http://howis.wales.nhs.uk/screeningprofessionals/smear-taker-training

Upcoming events

5th September 2018
Cervical Screening Wales – All Wales stakeholder meeting

7th September 2018
21st Annual BASHH conference for SAS doctors working in sexual health

Local contacts – HPV Primary Pilot

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Linda Wood, Lead Nurse Specialist, Linda.wood@wales.nhs.uk - 01352 803520
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