Those invited for screening are told in their invitation letter that their sample may be tested for human papillomavirus (HPV). However, it is very important that smear takers also advise them at their appointment, to ensure that they are giving informed consent.

**All persons attending for a cervical smear should be informed about HPV & HPV testing:**

- HPV is a very common virus, of which there are many types. Some can cause cancer of the cervix
- It can pass from person to person through any sexual contact
- Most people clear the virus through their immune systems
- It can lie dormant for many years without causing any problems, it doesn't cause symptoms, and there is no treatment for the virus

**HPV Test of Cure** is done for any person having an early repeat smear following:

- Any type of treatment for any grade of CIN
- Treatment for complete excision of CGIN
- A referral smear showing high grade dyskaryosis or worse, whether treated or not
- A biopsy showing CIN 2 or 3, whether treated or not

**HPV Triage** is done for any person whose cervical smear shows borderline or low grade changes. It helps to decide who needs referral to a colposcopy clinic and who can have their next smear in three or five years time.

Information for smear takers is at [http://howis.wales.nhs.uk/screeningprofessionals/hpv](http://howis.wales.nhs.uk/screeningprofessionals/hpv)

Information for individuals is at http://www.cervicalscreeningwales.wales.nhs.uk/testing-for-human-papillomavirus-hpv-in-

**Informed Choice** also means that individuals understand the risks and benefits of screening:

**Benefits**

- **Cervical screening can save lives.** This is because:
  - some cancers can be prevented from developing
  - cancers found by screening are found and treated earlier than without screening

**Risks**

- **Screening does not prevent all cervical cancers.** The cytology test misses about 1 in 5 cell changes. This may be because the cells that have changed were not collected, or there are very few abnormal cells, or they might look nearly normal.

- **Screening finds changes that would never have caused a person harm.** Most mild cell changes go away on their own and so are not treated. If changes are moderate or worse, treatment is offered, because of the higher risk of progression to a cervical cancer. However, this means that some people will be treated for changes that would never have become a cervical cancer.

- **Other risks.** Going for a screening test can cause worry or distress. Some treatments may affect future pregnancies, as they may increase the chance of miscarriage or early labour.

**Choice**

Screening is a choice. Individuals can choose to attend, to ignore invitations or to withdraw from the screening programme. Whilst we would always encourage individuals to attend for screening, if they do wish to withdraw from the programme they should contact their local CSW Administration Department to obtain a disclaimer form.