

Date 18/04/2025
Your Ref
Our Ref 9895

Enquiries to Richard Mutch
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Dear

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION – CERVICAL CANCER

I write in response to your request for information in relation to cervical cancer self-sampling.

Question:

- Has your health board piloted self-sampling as a means of identifying cervical cancer in women?

Answer:

Self-sampling for cervical cancer has not been piloted in NHS Lothian. This is in line with other Scottish Health Boards while guidance is awaited from the UK National Screening Committee (UK NSC). All changes to national screening programmes are decided by the UK NSC and must meet the UK NSC criteria for population screening programmes. Results and recommendations are now available from several pilots and trials conducted in England to assess the feasibility and effectiveness of self-sampling for cervical screening.

The UK National Screening Committee (UK NSC) has consulted on the following recommendation and is expected to make a decision in April 2025.

Self-sampling for HPV testing should be offered to under-screened people eligible for the NHS Cervical Screening Programme in the 4 UK countries, where service commissioners think self-sampling would be a helpful addition to the programme.

If implemented, the HPV self-sampling option would be offered to under-screened people alongside traditional clinician-collected sampling. In preparation for a positive recommendation, the Scottish Cervical Screening Programme has established a group to plan for and implement self-sampling. Information from that group will be routed through already established governance groups that are attended by relevant senior leads for the cervical screening programme in NHS Lothian.

I hope the information provided helps with your request.

If you are unhappy with our response to your request, you do have the right to request us to review it. Your request should be made within 40 working days of receipt of this letter, and we will reply within 20 working days of receipt. If our decision is unchanged following a review and you remain dissatisfied with this, you then have the right to make a formal complaint to the Scottish Information Commissioner within 6 months of receipt of our review response. You can do this by using the Scottish Information Commissioner's Office online appeals service at www.itspublicknowledge.info/Appeal. If you remain dissatisfied with the Commissioner's response you then have the option to appeal to the Court of Session on a point of law.

If you require a review of our decision to be carried out, please write to the FOI Reviewer at the email address at the head of this letter. The review will be undertaken by a Reviewer who was not involved in the original decision-making process.

FOI responses (subject to redaction of personal information) may appear on NHS Lothian's Freedom of Information website at: <https://org.nhslothian.scot/FOI/Pages/default.aspx>

Yours sincerely

ALISON MACDONALD
Executive Director, Nursing
Cc: Chief Executive