

Screening cannot always identify abnormal cells on a cervical-sample slide because the person may not recognize the abnormal cells. This may happen even if they are very experienced because: sometimes the cells look very similar to normal cells there may be very few abnormal cells on the slides. Colposcopy (a visual examination of the cervix) cannot always identify abnormal areas of the cervix because: the abnormal area might not be visible during the examination the abnormal area might not be taken as a sample in a biopsy the abnormal cells might be hidden higher up inside the cervix some types of abnormality are simply not easy to identify at a Colposcopy.

### Why should women bother to go for cervical screening if abnormalities are missed?

Cervical screening substantially reduces the risk of developing cervical cancer. The cervical screening programme is estimated to save 4500 lives a year nationally and regular screening is the best way to detect early changes to the cervix.

### Further Information

If you have any more questions about your referral or treatment please could you telephone our Nurse Colposcopist on:

**0151 678 5111 Extension: 7360**

or

**Colposcopy Secretary: 0151 604 7130**

### Concerns and Queries

If you have any concerns / queries about any of the services offered by the Trust, in the first instance, please speak to the person providing your care.

Alternatively you can contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

Via phone:

**0151 678 5111 Extension: 8340**

or email:

**wih-tr.PALS@nhs.net**

This leaflet is available in large print, Braille and on tape.  
Please contact 0151 604 7289.

This information is also available in other languages,  
please contact a member of staff for details.



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# Cervical Screening Audit

## Information Leaflet

## **Introduction**

We know that this is a difficult time for you and naturally you will be concerned about your treatment and future health. However, you may also be wondering why you have developed cervical cancer, particularly if you have had screening tests.

Cervical screening reduces the risk of developing cervical cancer. Regular screening is the best way to detect changes to the cervix early on.

The cervical screening process involves many different steps which aim to identify and treat abnormal cells on the cervix to prevent cervical cancer. However, reviewing your previous tests will help identify if anything could have been done differently.

Information we gather from individual cases helps us to improve the programme and also helps us to learn more about how cancers develop and how they are diagnosed.

When we review your cervical screening history, we will check the letters sent to you inviting you for screening tests, your results letters and any previous medical investigation related to cervical screening.

Please fill in the consent form stating whether you would like to know the results of the review of your previous tests and other relevant medical investigations, and return it to the address shown on the form.

If you want to know the results we will contact you when they are available and arrange a convenient time for you to come and discuss the results with your doctor.

## **What does the review involve?**

We review all records connected to the letters inviting you to come for screening, cervical screening tests, results letters, and any previous medical investigations related to cervical screening. A group of professionals then look again at your previous tests, your medical notes related to cervical screening, to ensure our screening history meets national guidance requirements.

## **What will the review show?**

In most cases, the review will show that the correct procedures have been followed and that you received appropriate care. Occasionally the review may find that one or more steps in the process have not worked as well as they should and highlight where we could make improvements. It should be emphasized that even if areas for improvement are identified it does not mean that the screening was undertaken improperly.

## **What happens if I want to know the results of the review?**

If you want to know the results of the review, fill in the form and return it to the address on the form. Your doctor will let you know when the outcome is available. They can then arrange to discuss the results with you.

## **What happens to the information collected for my review?**

We collect screening information as part of an ongoing process. Your information (without your name) goes towards improving

the systems of the programme, and to help discover more about how cancers develop and how they are diagnosed and treated. This is done whether or not you want to know the results of the review.

## **Can my family ask for the results if I do not want to know?**

No, unless you give permission, we cannot give your relatives access to any details of your medical records.

## **What happens if I do not want to know the results of the review?**

It is completely up to you to decide whether or not you want to know the results of the review. It will not make any difference to your care.

## **What happens if I do not want to know the results of the review now but change my mind later?**

We understand that this is a difficult time and you may not want to receive the results of the review now. If you decide that you do want to know the results at some point in the future, please contact your hospital doctor, who will discuss the review with you.

## **Could my cancer have been found earlier?**

In most cases the cancer will have been detected at the earliest possible stages. Although cervical screening prevents a high percentage of cervical cancers (by about 75%), it cannot prevent all of them. Some of the reasons for this are: