

Recovery of Pre-Covid Cervical Screening Services

What is the current status of cervical screening in London?

The response to the Covid-19 crisis saw healthcare resources appropriately prioritised to meet the acute care needs of the pandemic.

Despite low sample volumes, CSL continued to maintain a minimal service during this time to support colposcopy centres and ensure high-risk women could be screened. The CSL team have also supported Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) Meetings, conducted Cancer Audit Reviews, and continued to perform all necessary laboratory failsafe procedures.

What will be the first steps in restoring cervical screening service?

As we now appear to have passed the peak of the virus, and moves to reduce lockdown measures are cautiously implemented, it is time to begin the process to refocus women on their preventive health routines.

On 20th May NHSE/PHE issued new guidance on restoration of the cervical screening service.

What will be the next steps?

Planning is underway for the Cervical Screening Administration Service (CSAS) to resume the collation and printing of invitation letters. In London, the process to issue letters started on 8th June and will continue, borough by borough, over the week. By Friday 12th June, first invitations will have been issued in all boroughs.

This should see a gradual and sustained growth in screening appointments and HPV sample numbers, which in turn will lead to increased referrals to colposcopy (up to 25% increase over 2019 levels by October).

Impact of social distancing

We are aware that due to social distancing measures and the need for additional cleaning, colposcopy services will be restricted by the number of women who can be seen.

In our new state of the art laboratory at the Halo building, return to working in the 'Covid era' is being assessed to ensure staff safety in line with the current government guidelines on social distancing and enhanced hygiene protocols.



When will CSL courier services be resumed?

Throughout the Covid crisis, cervical screening sample numbers have been below 10% of pre-Covid volumes. The samples received have mainly been taken by colposcopy services.

In primary care, pick-up of the significantly reduced number of samples has been managed during the crisis by phoning or emailing couriers as required.

However, for colposcopy and secondary referral sites, Trust transport and TDL Collect courier services have remained relatively unchanged.

Over the past two weeks, volumes have begun to increase so regular CSL courier services will now be restored from **Monday 8th June**.

For courier pick-ups from all sites, it is important to ensure your CSL location barcode is accessible at the point of collection. Colposcopy services have previously provided CSL with a single point of collection agreed within your Trust.

If you need a replacement location barcode please email couriers@tdlpathology.com.

As per previous instructions, purple CSL sample transport bags should have a barcode label attached at the clinic. This is essential to enable the tracking of the sample bag. Rolls of barcode labels can be ordered online at https://pathologyforms.formstack.com/forms/hpv_surgery_supplies. For enquiries about barcode labels, transport bags or other sample taker supplies please email hpv.supplies@hslpathology.com or phone 020 7307 9440.

What about capacity to do the testing at CSL?

CSL will continue to provide laboratory based testing and associated support services necessary to meet cervical screening needs of the women of London.

What groups are guiding this recovery process?

The CSL management team are working closely with NHSE/I through the London Laboratory Programme Recovery Board which meets weekly to review and monitor the recovery process of the cervical screening service. NHSE/I are also convening a London Cervical Screening Programme Recovery Board (LCSPRB), and CSL will have clinical and operational representatives in attendance.

Some important reminders about labelling and connection to CSL

As we encourage return to routine health checks, it is more important than ever that we do everything to avoid unnecessary tests. To reduce this risk please **check eligibility** before women are seen, and make sure all samples submitted are appropriately labelled with patient first name, surname, DOB, NHS/Hospital number and date of collection. Ensure request information and labelling are complete and aligned.

CYRES update

Please remember to complete weekly uploads of your colposcopy data to London SQAS. CYRES has proved invaluable in helping CSL obtain access histology data and colposcopy appointment information.

Updated key contacts

An updated list of CSL key contacts accompanies this communication. In response to feedback from local programme boards, and as part of CSL's commitment to service improvement, a number of new email addresses have been created for general enquiries, MDT requests, direct referrals and cancer audits. These changes will help streamline enquiries and ensure a prompt response.

MDT update

CSL is in the process of installing and testing video-conferencing using a variety of software products (Microsoft teams, Star Leaf, Blue Jeans, Cisco) in our new laboratory in the Halo building. This will enable CSL to provide consistent support for MDTs across London where there is no resident pathologist. Showing cytological images on screen will help facilitate training and ensure a consistent cytology presence.

An invitation from the Trust colposcopy coordinator is all that is required to enable CSL to join the MDT.

From 1st July we will be implementing a new MDT Standard Operating Procedure. It is important that MDT lists are forwarded to the new dedicated email csl.londonmdt@nhs.net at least 7 days in advance of the MDT to allow the laboratory sufficient time to collate and review the cases.

Direct referrals update

Direct referrals will continue to be made in line with CSP guidance for women who are HPV positive, and with any grade of cytological abnormality.

A new direct referral system is currently being developed and will be tested in North East London before being rolled out across London. The new protocol will be shared prior to the new system going live.

STAY ALERT – CONTROL THE VIRUS – SAVE LIVES

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