

Telephone script for contacting non-responders – Cervical Screening

**Introduction**

“Hello \_\_\_\_\_ (verify who you are speaking with).  
 My name is \_\_\_\_\_ I’m phoning from \_\_\_\_\_ (name of GP practice).  
 There is nothing to worry about. Your GP has noticed you haven’t booked your cervical screening yet.  
 Is it OK to have a chat with you about this? (If not, arrange a convenient time to call back).  
 Can I just check that you received your invitation letter?”

**YES**

**NO**

Can I ask **is there a particular reason** why you haven’t attended your screening?

Check the address is correct

Wants to participate but didn’t get round to it

Had a test privately or abroad

Unsure if still eligible

Does not want to participate

Explain the process to add the test result to their screening history (see information on pg. 2, section 2).

Explain the ‘Cervical Screening Programme’ including benefits of screening, eligibility and discuss any barriers (see information on pg. 2, section 1 and Q&A’s on pg. 3).

Does not want to participate

Wishes to participate

Thank you for your time. You will continue to be invited every 3 or 5 years (explain which dependent on age). If you would like to discuss this further please speak to your GP.

Offer to book an appointment for the patient while on the phone  
 OR  
 Give the practice telephone number

Final question for **ALL**: “Do you have any suggestions to help people take part in screening?”

**Consent to follow up**: “Are you happy for us to contact you again regarding the project?”

**Ending the call**. “Thank you for your time today. We are making this phone call as part of a project funded by Yorkshire Cancer Research which aims to help people in Wakefield take part in cancer screening.”

## Information

### **1. Cervical Screening Programme**

Cervical screening is offered to all women and people with a cervix aged 25–64 years.

- Aged 25-49 invited every 3 years
- Aged 50- 64 invited every 5 years

Cervical screening is not a test for cervical cancer. It helps to prevent cancer by finding early changes in the cervix (the opening of the womb). Finding cell changes early means they can be monitored or treated, so they do not get a chance to turn into cervical cancer.

Most screenings are undertaken by female practice nurses in GP surgeries. 9 out of 10 cervical screening test results come back normal.

During the appointment, a small sample of cells will be taken from your cervix. The sample is tested for changes to the cells of your cervix. You'll get your results, usually in about 2-6 weeks.

Screening saves 5,000 lives a year and prevents 8 out of 10 cervical cancers from developing. Regular screening is your best protection against cervical cancer.

Whether or not to take part in cervical screening is a personal choice.

### **2. Patients who have had a test done privately or abroad.**

Women registered with a GP Practice who have private tests or have tests carried out abroad are entitled to a free NHS test and can still take part in screening when invited. If you want you can have your screening done here.

If you bring a copy of the result into the practice we can update your records. This will help keep your records up to date and stop any letters being sent to you reminding you to complete the test.

### **3. Information for Trans Men**

Any woman who has transitioned from a woman to a man may still have a cervix and if they do, still require screening. If you would like more information please see your GP.

### **Important note:**

If you have any symptoms of any sort please make an appointment with your GP.

## Questions & Answers

- 1. What is HPV?** Human papillomavirus (HPV) is the name for a very common group of viruses. You can get HPV from any sexual activity with a man or women – this includes vaginal, oral or anal sex, any kind of skin-to-skin contact of the genital area, sharing sex toys, with a man or woman, not just penetrative sex.  
Most people will get some type of HPV during their lives. They do not cause any problems in most people, but some types can cause genital warts or cancer. Nearly all cervical cancers are caused by infection with certain types of HPV.
- 2. I'm not sexually active at present/I've only had 1 sexual partner/I've had the same partner, or not had sex, for a long time.** You can get HPV at any one time you are sexually active. You can have HPV for a long time without knowing it and changes in the cervix can take years to develop. It is important to have regular tests if you have ever been sexually active. *See Q1 for explanation of sexual activity.*
- 3. Do I need cervical screening if I'm a virgin?**  
Your risk of developing cervical cancer is very low if you've never had any kind of sexual activity with a man or woman. If you've never been sexually active, you may decide not to go for cervical screening when you are invited. But you can still have a test if you want one. If you start to be sexually active in the future it is important you have regular tests. *See Q1 for explanation of sexual activity.*
- 4. I'm lesbian or bisexual.** You're at risk if you have had any sexual activity with a man or a woman. *See Q1 for explanation of sexual activity.*
- 5. I've had the HPV vaccine. Why do I still need screening?** The vaccine protects against the two human papillomavirus types that cause 70% of the cases of cervical cancer, so screening is still needed to try and pick up cervical abnormalities caused by other HPV types that could lead to cancer.
- 6. I've been through menopause:** Sometimes the test may be more uncomfortable after the menopause. The GP or nurse can give advice on ways to reduce discomfort.
- 7. I've had a hysterectomy so do I still need screening?** You may still have a cervix, depending on the type of operation you had. If you're not sure, we recommend you make an appointment with your GP.
- 8. I don't like coming in for the test and I am probably putting it off.** It's not the most pleasant experience and I understand that it will be the last thing on your mind sometimes. It's the best way to reduce your risk of cervical cancer. Have a think about booking an appointment to come in for the test. You can do this today, or you can ask for an appointment with one of our nurses to discuss it if you are still worried.
- 9. I find the whole thing embarrassing and uncomfortable.** The test only takes five minutes and our trained smear takers will talk you through the test and try to make the experience as comfortable as they can. If you wear a skirt you can keep this on during the test.
- 10. I'm worried about what the test might find.** The screening is not a test for cancer. It's to find changes early that might lead to cancer. This means they do not get a chance to turn into cervical cancer.
- 11. I'm having difficulty getting an appointment.** Would you like me to look for you now and give you your appointment over the phone? If not, explore other options with the patient.
- 12. I don't want to come on my own.** You can bring a friend or relative with you. They could have their smear done as well if they are overdue.
- 13. I don't want to be invited for cervical screening.** I'm really sorry to hear that. I am unable to remove you from the list for invites but if you feel strongly about this please discuss further with your GP.

For more information, visit [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk) and search for 'cervical screening'.