

Cervical Screening FAQ

1. Have invitations been sent out for cervical screening in South East London?

Yes, from the 6th June individuals in South East London started to receive their cervical screening invitations. However, in order to support providers to respond due to the impact of COVID 19, the intervals at which invitations and reminder letters are issued have been extended.

Invitations have been issued 12 weeks (rather than the usual 4) after the prior notification lists were sent to practices and reminder letters will be sent 30 weeks after the initial invite rather than the usual 18.

2. When will text reminders recommence?

NHS England have confirmed that text reminders will start to be sent to non responders from 20th July, reminding them to book an appointment, the text will also remind them to wear a face covering when attending their appointment.

3. Appointments affected because of COVID-19 and Non-responders

You should review your local records to identify individuals whose screening may have been affected by COVID-19 (cancelled screening appointments or no available appointments because of the pandemic), contact them about their screening, giving them an opportunity to attend.

There will be a cohort of people who received reminder letters before COVID-19, but were unable to book an appointment. These individuals will **not** receive any further correspondences from the cervical screening programme and therefore deemed “**non – responders**” (non – responders are individuals who have not responded to their first invitation letter 32 weeks after it was sent).

Practices should review their non – responder notification lists and contact these individuals, confirming that cervical screening appointments are now available and where necessary book an appointment. Guidance on how to access the non – responder notification lists can be found here <https://www.csas.nhs.uk/support/pnl-guide>

Research conducted by Jo’s Trust found that **1 in 8 women** feel they are less likely to attend their appointment now than they would have been before the pandemic, when inviting women for screening it’s important for practice staff to highlight the measures that have been put in place to keep them safe during their appointment.

4. Has the laboratory been notified that invitations have been sent to women and how will samples be collected by the laboratory?

Yes, NHS England has notified the laboratory and they are prepared for an increase in samples. Practices no longer need to contact the laboratory for courier collections, the courier collection schedule has reverted back to pre COVID arrangements.

5. Is there guidance on what level of PPE I should wear?

Yes, practices should follow the guidance released by Public Health England for primary care. Cervical screens are not deemed aerosol generating procedures, therefore direct patient care PPE guidance should be followed e.g. single use disposable gloves, single use disposable plastic apron, single or sessional use fluid resistant (TYPE IIR) surgical mask and a single or sessional use eye/face protection.

Setting	Context	Disposable Gloves	Disposable Plastic Apron	Disposable fluid-repellent coverall/gown	Surgical mask	Fluid-resistant (Type IIR) surgical mask	Filtering face piece respirator	Eye/face protection ¹
Any setting	Performing an aerosol generating procedure ² on a possible or confirmed case ³	✓ single use ⁴	✗	✓ single use ⁴	✗	✗	✓ single use ⁴	✓ single use ⁴
Primary care, ambulatory care, and other non emergency outpatient and other clinical settings e.g. optometry, dental, maternity, mental health	Direct patient care – possible or confirmed case(s) ³ (within 2 metres)	✓ single use ⁴	✓ single use ⁴	✗	✗	✓ single or sessional use ^{4,5}	✗	✓ single or sessional use ^{4,5}
	Working in reception/communal area with possible or confirmed case(s) ³ and unable to maintain 2 metres social distance ⁶	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓ sessional use ⁵	✗	✗

Further information on cervical screening including practical tips to engage patients to attend their screening can be found here:

https://www.cancerresearchuk.org/sites/default/files/engaging_primary_care_in_cervical_screening_final.pdf