

Urgent Communication

Change to Cervical Screening Intervals for People Living with Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV)



People living with HIV were recalled for annual cervical screening if they tested high-risk HPV (hrHPV) Not Detected on their cervical screening test.

The NHS Cervical Screening Programme has reviewed available evidence and expert clinical advice regarding the optimal screening interval for people living with HIV. This review concluded that annual routine screening for hrHPV not detected individuals with well-controlled HIV is no longer supported.

People living with well-controlled HIV who receive a hrHPV not detected result at their next routine cervical screening will be recalled at the same national cervical screening interval as people who are not living with HIV.

There is no longer a need for people living with HIV to attend for annual screening.

People living with HIV who test hrHPV detected will continue to receive appropriate care through the established NHS Cervical Screening Programme pathways, including cytology triage, surveillance, referral and post-treatment follow-up where needed.

A small cohort of individuals living with HIV that is not well controlled, or who have poor adherence to treatment for HIV, may continue to receive annual clinician taken cervical screening at the request of their managing HIV clinician, with prior agreement from the laboratory.

From Thursday 1st October 2026 CSL will be implementing this change in line with National guidance

This means CSL will:

- remove 'RVI' from all local request forms
- Accept samples from people living with HIV if they have been invited by the Cervical Screening Management System (CSMS)
- Assign routine recall to all hrHPV not detected samples unless the laboratory has been informed the individual has poorly controlled HIV or poor adherence to treatment for HIV by clearly indicating this on the request form using the term "RVI"
- Ask for confirmation/ justification of poorly controlled HIV or poor adherence to treatment for HIV status, as determined by specialist HIV clinician

Key Messages for Healthcare Professionals

People living with well-controlled HIV remain eligible for routine cervical screening.

The change applies only to future recall intervals following a person's next hrHPV not detected result and should not be applied retrospectively to previous hrHPV not detected results.

Sample takers should not assess HIV control status or decide screening intervals.

Individuals who test hrHPV detected continue to follow existing management pathways.

<https://www.hslpathology.com/services/cervical-screening-london/>

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