

Primary Care Briefing:

# New Scottish Cervical Screening Campaign

## Background

In Scotland, uptake of cervical screening (smear tests) is on a downward trend, with latest national figures showing that just under 70% of eligible women attend for screening, compared to 80% attending 10 years ago (ISD Scotland, 2016).

Uptake is lowest amongst 20-30 year olds (ISD Scotland, 2016).

Research shows that there are many barriers to uptake - the main one being that screening is generally not seen as a priority for many young women. Fear, pain and embarrassment are also common.

The campaign aims to:

- Raise awareness of the benefits of cervical screening
- Encourage women to attend when invited
- Empower women who missed their last appointment, or who have never been screened, to contact their GP practice to book an appointment
- Generate talkability on the topic of cervical cancer/screening amongst younger women.

## What and when?

NHS Health Scotland and the Scottish Government have joined forces to start breaking down the barriers women have to attending, and to educate them on the benefits of taking part in cervical screening when invited.

The campaign will be live for five weeks from 8 February 2017. The campaign will be very targeted – using predominantly digital channels (Facebook, Instagram etc.) and cinema advertising – as opposed to a mass awareness campaign. Digital channels also enable activity to be up-weighted to areas with low uptake.

## Who is it aimed at?

Women from lower socio-economic groups, and areas of low uptake, aged 25-35 years in Scotland.

## What is the main message?

**Don't ignore your next smear invite. And, if you missed your last smear test, contact your GP practice to find a time that suits you.**

## Will my surgery experience an increase in demand?

Due to the call to action for the campaign, it's likely that you could see women who missed their last appointment, or who have never attended, get in touch with you. This is the first time that the NHS or Scottish Government have rolled out a cervical screening campaign, so the exact impact it will have is unknown.

However, given that the campaign is targeting a small percentage of the eligible cervical screening population, and targeted channels are being adopted to do so, we don't envisage that you will feel a significant impact or pressure in your practice. If this however isn't the case, please do get in touch with the Campaign Manager (details below).

## Toolkit

A primary care toolkit has been developed to provide information and practical resources to help you raise awareness of the benefits of cervical screening and remove barriers to uptake in your local area. This will be available at [www.healthscotland.com/cervicaltoolkit](http://www.healthscotland.com/cervicaltoolkit) from 30th January. A printed version will also be sent directly to your practice prior to the campaign launch.

You may choose to hook any activity in your practice, using the toolkit, onto the campaign period when it's more likely to be on women's radars. Alternatively, your activity can happen at any point during the year.

## How will we know if the campaign has had the desired impact?

We will look at a range of measures to help build a picture of impact. These will include reviewing laboratory and referral statistics, pre and post campaign awareness tracking with women in Scotland and campaign engagement figures. If you have any anecdotal feedback or comments to feed into this evaluation process, please do get in touch with the Campaign Manager.

## What you can do

- Ensure that all staff are aware of the campaign and its timings in case eligible women in your practice enquire on the back of seeing/hearing the campaign.
- Support the campaign in your practice environment. This could be by displaying posters or campaign visuals for your waiting room screens/website. Posters were sent out in June 2016 but there is also a copy in the cervical screening toolkit pack. All materials will be made available ahead of campaign launch at [www.getcheckedearly.org/resources](http://www.getcheckedearly.org/resources) or requested from the Campaign Manager.
- Ensure that staff in your practice are aware of the cervical screening toolkit, outlined above.

## Contact

For more information contact the Campaign Manager at [nicola.backler@nhs.net](mailto:nicola.backler@nhs.net) or via the Healthier Scotland Marketing team on **0131 244 7789**.



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