

National Screening Service (NSS) update – January 2023

Ireland's roadmap to eliminate cervical cancer

To mark Cervical Cancer Prevention Week (23-29 January), the NSS has joined forces with the National Cancer Control Programme and National Immunisation Office to launch Ireland's roadmap to eliminate cervical cancer.

[Ireland's roadmap](#), shows the strides made so far towards this global goal, and signposts the future direction we will take, breaking this ambitious journey into achievable stages.

The global goals have been developed by the [World Health Organization](#) and set key targets that all countries are asked to strive towards in HPV vaccination, cervical screening and early treatment.

Meeting these targets will put us on course to achieving our goal of eliminating cervical cancer as a public health problem in Ireland. Modelling work is already under way on setting Ireland's specific target date to reach elimination, and this will be unveiled later this year.

The key message for this Cervical Cancer Prevention Week is to **#GetInformed about cervical cancer elimination**.



How you can support cervical cancer elimination:

- Find and share our messages using #getinformed on Facebook (www.facebook.com/cervicalcheck), Twitter (@HSELive), and TikTok (@hselive)
- Watch and share our video [Introduction to cervical cancer elimination in Ireland 2023](#) with Dr Sarah Fitzgibbon, Primary Care Clinical Advisor, CervicalCheck
- The [HPV](#) vaccine is a key pillar in achieving elimination, visit HSE.ie for information. Anyone aged between 16 and 25 and who missed out on the vaccine can now get it through the [Laura Brennan HPV vaccine catch-up programme](#)
- Screening will not find all cancers, but regular screening along with vigilance and knowledge of symptoms can ensure many cancers are found at an earlier stage – which will save lives. Read about CervicalCheck, Ireland's free, national cervical cancer screening programme, [here](#)
- Be aware of the [symptoms of cervical cancer](#)
- Read the WHO [Global strategy to accelerate the elimination of cervical cancer as a public health problem](#)

High participation in Diabetic RetinaScreen for 2022

Diabetic RetinaScreen figures for 2022 show the programme screened a little under 113,000 participants in 2022. This represents the largest number of participants screened in a year since the programme began in 2013. The programme also welcomed 18,000 new registrations, which is also the largest number since 2013.

Equity Strategic Framework: We want to hear from you

Our Public Health team is developing an Equity Strategic Framework which will set out how to understand and improve equity in our screening services. The team want to give all our stakeholders a chance to be heard, and so in February and March they will invite stakeholders from across the community, voluntary and statutory sectors to attend consultation workshops. The Framework is expected to be published later this year.

If you are not already on our equity stakeholder mailing list, and would like to be added, please email equity@screeningservice.ie. To read more about this initiative, keep an eye on the NSS News section of screeningservice.ie, [here](#).

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National Cervical Screening Laboratory opens

In a hugely positive development for cervical screening in Ireland, the new National Cervical Screening Laboratory (NCSL) has opened and is processing CervicalCheck programme samples. The lab, which is on the grounds of The Coombe Hospital, opened in December 2022. It is commissioned by CervicalCheck and is being led by Dr Cillian De Gascun as Interim Director and Lead Pathologist Dr Aoife Doyle; both pictured, left.

The aim for the publicly-owned and operated lab is to build towards processing the majority of CervicalCheck samples over time.

You can read more about the NCSL [here](#).

Recruits sought for NSS Patient & Public Partnership

We are launching a Patient and Public Partnership (PPP) recruitment campaign to increase the diversity and inclusivity of the network, by ensuring it represents people from different backgrounds, with different perspectives, experiences and interests. The campaign was co-designed by existing PPP Reps and NSS staff, and will see posters and leaflets circulated to stakeholders and through our PPP networks.

It will also feature new videos, *left during recording*, where patient representatives describe their experiences.

For more information, please look out for our PPP blog, coming soon in the News section of screeningservice.ie, [here](#). If you, or someone you know, is interested in joining our PPP, please email ppplead@screeningservice.ie for more information.



Read more about our work

- We have published three new blog posts that provide more insight into our work: NSS specialist in public health medicine, Dr Alan Smith, explains what we mean by the limitations of screening in [Why screening doesn't always work – but remains a good thing to do](#). In [Understanding CervicalCheck laboratory quality assurance](#), NSS Chief Executive Fiona Murphy discusses cervical screening laboratories; while in [How we deal with errors, incidents and disclosure in screening](#), Fiona explains our Incident Management Framework, and how we react when something doesn't go according to plan.
- The CervicalCheck Screening Training Unit (STU) has published its *CervicalCheck Education Strategy 2022-2025*. It outlines the development of high-quality, accessible education for all healthcare professionals involved in delivering cervical screening in Ireland. Read the report, [here](#).
- The *BreastCheck Statistical Report 2020*, detailing the performance of the programme, has been uploaded to the Publications section of screeningservice.ie, [here](#). During 2020, 57,836 women took up their invitation for BreastCheck screening, which reflects a screening uptake rate based on the eligible population of 74.4 per cent. By the end of 2020, the programme had provided more than 2 million mammograms and detected over 15,000 cancers.

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