

Dear Carer/Learning Disability Provider,

National Cervical Screening Campaign: launching March 2019

I am writing to advise you about a National Cervical Screening Campaign that is launching in March 2019 and, to provide information about how you can help promote the inclusion of women with a learning disability in this campaign.

Information about the Campaign:

On Tuesday 5th March 2019, Public Health England, with support from NHS England, will launch the first ever national cervical screening campaign targeted at women who are eligible for screening (those aged 25 – 64).

Around 2,600 women are diagnosed with cervical cancer in England each year and two women a day die from the disease. It is estimated that if everyone attended screening regularly, 83% of cervical cancer cases could be prevented; however, attendance is at a 20-year low, with one in four women in the UK not attending their cervical screening.

The campaign will:

- Highlight the risks of cervical cancer
- Highlight the preventative benefits of the often misunderstood screening test
- Encourage women of all ages to respond to their screening invitation
- Encourage women to consider booking an appointment if they have missed previous invitations
- Aim to tackle barriers to screening highlighted by research, issues such as fear and embarrassment.

The campaign will run on TV, Social media and Digital display.

How you can promote the inclusion of women with a learning disability in the campaign:

The uptake of cervical screening (smear tests) in women with a learning disability is even lower than the national average and, women with a learning disability can experience particular challenges and barriers in relation to cervical screening.

The campaign provides an excellent opportunity to raise awareness of cervical screening and think about what you can do as a carer/learning disability provider to promote the campaign messages with women that you support.

Below are some suggestions about how to include women with learning disability and links to useful resources developed specifically for women with a learning disability:

- Use the campaign media coverage as an opportunity to start a conversation and/or provide information about cervical screening to women that you support.

There are plenty of resources available to help. Including:

Information:	Links to information:
<p>“Jo’s Cancer Cervical Trust” an excellent website with a section focusing on women with learning disability. It has easy read leaflets and a YouTube video about what happens at a cervical screen:</p>	<p>https://www.jostrust.org.uk/about-us (main website) https://www.jostrust.org.uk/about-cervical-cancer/cervical-screening/cervical-screening-learning-disability (learning disability section of website with easy read information and YouTube clip).</p>
<p>Cancer Research UK has a section about cervical screening and learning disability including information about consent:</p>	<p>https://www.cancerresearchuk.org/about-cancer/cervical-cancer/getting-diagnosed/cervical-screening-for-people-learning-disability</p>
<p>Gov.uk website provides information to support women with learning disabilities to access cervical screening.</p>	<p>https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cervical-screening-supporting-women-with-learning-disabilities</p>
<p>Cornwall has produced an easy read information sheet about cervical cancer and screening.</p>	<p>https://pdinet.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/EASY-READ-Cervical-Cancer-Information-Leaflet-01.2015-cpf.pdf</p>
<p>Macmillan support has an easy read booklet about cervical</p>	<p>https://be.macmillan.org.uk/be/p-23355-cervical-screening.aspx</p>

cancer and what happens during cervical screening (a smear test). The easy read booklets use simple language and pictures.	
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- **Think about, and arrange any reasonable adjustments that might help women to have a cervical screen. Examples of reasonable adjustments include:**
- Use easy read resources to help explain what a cervical screen involves and why it is important.
- Arrange a pre-visit to the GP practice to meet the sample taker (health care professional taking the smear test) and get familiar/comfortable with room and equipment used.
- Book a longer appointment time to allow more time for the cervical screen.
- Arrange to attend for cervical screen at a time when the practice is less busy if this will help.
- Make sure a carer who knows the women well supports her to cervical screen (where appropriate)
- Think about any relaxation techniques that might help e.g. mindfulness, breathing exercises, relaxing music

For more information about reasonable adjustments click on link below:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/656258/Social_care_staff_supporting_reasonable_adjustments_in_learning_disabilities.pdf

- **Learn about signs and symptoms of cervical cancer.** This is particularly important when supporting women who are unable to have a cervical screen.

Information about signs and symptoms can be found by clicking on the following links:

<https://www.jostrust.org.uk/about-cervical-cancer/cervical-cancer/symptoms>

<https://www.macmillan.org.uk/information-and-support/cervical-cancer/understanding-cancer/signs-symptoms-cervical.html>

<https://www.cancerresearchuk.org/about-cancer/cervical-cancer/symptoms>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cancer-screening-and-people-with-learning-disabilities/cancer-screening-making-reasonable-adjustments>

If you have any concerns about signs and symptoms of cervical cancer in relation to a woman you are supporting please arrange an urgent GP appointment.

- **Include Cervical Screening in Health Action Plans and use the Learning Disability Annual Health Check as an opportunity to discuss cervical screening with the person's GP practice.**

Not all women with a learning disability will have capacity to consent to cervical screening. If you think that a woman lacks capacity around screening it is essential that a current capacity assessment is carried out, with every effort made to provide the information in a way that the woman can understand. If she still lacks capacity then a best interest decision must be made about whether the woman should undergo the cervical screen or not.

Remember that it may be in a woman's best interest to have the procedure even if she cannot consent to it and reasonable adjustments can be made.

Please note that the Community Learning Disability Team can also provide advice, information and direct support (where appropriate) around cervical screening.

If you have any questions or would like more information please contact Trafford Community Learning Disability Team on 0161 912 2810 (ask to speak to Melissa Perry, Lynda Thompson or Louise Stott).

Yours Sincerely,

Melissa Perry
Health Facilitator