

DATE]

[H&C NUMBER

[DOB]

Dear \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for attending for your recent cervical screening test.

I am writing to let you know that your recent cervical screening result showed changes to the cells in your cervix. These changes sometimes happen, they are not cancer and, in most cases, do not lead to cancer. The cell changes can indicate infection with the Human papillomavirus (HPV) which can cause cervical abnormalities.

The laboratory also tested your screening sample for HPV and reported that there was no evidence of HPV infection.

Due to the changes to the cells in your cervix, a further investigation called colposcopy is needed to find out whether any treatment is required. Colposcopy is a simple examination of the cervix using a colposcope (a type of magnifying glass). It is carried out at your local hospital and they will contact you directly about an appointment.

It is important that the changes to your cervix are checked now, in case they need treatment. If you need treatment after colposcopy you will usually be treated as an outpatient and there will be no need for you to stay in hospital.

Please note temporary changes to the way cervical screening samples are processed in the laboratory were introduced from March 2023. This has been done to manage the current backlog. Under the new temporary process, cervical samples sent to laboratories as part of the Screening Programme are being ‘co-tested’. This means that samples, firstly, undergo a test to check for the presence of HPV and, secondly, the samples are examined by a microscope (cytology) to check for the presence of cell changes.

After the first step, those samples that test positive for HPV are prioritised for cytology. All cervical samples are being examined by cytology in due course. The new temporary process aims to manage the clinical risk caused by delays in cytology investigations by identifying those patients who are at higher risk of cervical cell changes. Testing samples by both cytology screening and HPV testing (co-testing) is an effective and safe screening method.

The PHA website contains details about the temporary laboratory changes, as well as general information about the Cervical Screening Programme in Northern Ireland:

<https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/directorate-public-health/service-development-and-screening/cervical-cancer-screening>

Specific information on Human papillomavirus can be found here:

<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/conditions/human-papillomavirus-hpv>

If you have any questions about your result or would like more information please contact your GP or **XXX XXX**.

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Yours sincerely

Dr XXXXXXXXX XXXXXXXXXX