

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 evidence of Human papillomavirus (HPV) infection and changes to the cells in your cervix that needs further investigation.

HPV is a common virus and most people will have it at some point in their life without knowing. Certain types of HPV are associated with an increased risk of cervical cancer. In most cases, your immune system will get rid of HPV without it causing any problems. However, occasionally HPV can cause changes to the cells of your cervix that, over time, can turn into cancer if left untreated.

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**.

Dr XXXXXXXXX XXXXXXXXXX