

## FAQs – Women

### Cervical Screening Results Delay

April 2019

There is a delay to cervical screening samples being tested by laboratories in London. This means that women are having to wait longer than usual for their results.

#### **What is causing this delay?**

There is a shortage of laboratory staff across the country and the number of samples going to laboratories has gone up. This is causing a backlog to build up.

#### **How long is the delay going to last?**

In the short term, NHS England is in discussions with laboratories about how to clear the backlog of samples to be tested while keeping up with the new samples coming in. More detail will be provided by the end of May to your GP practice.

In the long term, the process of cervical screening is changing to allow women to benefit from more accurate tests. A new way of testing samples is being introduced in the laboratories. There will be fewer, larger laboratories across the country contracted to undertake the testing. These new arrangements will be in place by the end of the year.

This does not mean that women who were tested under the previous process need to be retested as that too was a very reliable method.

#### **Is a woman more likely to get cancer if her screening result is delayed by several weeks and it is then found to be abnormal?**

Cervical cancer generally takes many years to develop so a short delay in the detection of an abnormal sample is highly unlikely to have any long-term consequences for a woman's health.

#### **What advice can be provided to someone who is worried about the delay to a test result?**

Please speak to your GP.