

May update

New tests provided for women in Wiltshire as part of the NHS Cervical Screening Programme

Women in Wiltshire will benefit from a new test for High Risk Human Papilloma Virus (HR HPV) from April 2012 onwards, as part of the NHS Cervical Screening Programme.

HPV is a common infection and most women get it at some point in their life. In most cases it clears up by itself without the need for treatment, but in some women the virus persists, placing them at greater risk of developing cervical cancer. Clinical studies have identified that almost 100% of cervical cancers show evidence of HR HPV infection, and detecting HPV at an early stage can reduce the risk.

The HPV test will be carried out as part of the routine smear test, and no additional sample is required. Women will be given the results of the screening and HPV tests in the normal way, and will be advised if any treatment is necessary. All women in the eligible age group – between the ages of 25 and 64 – come under the screening programme and are invited for routine screening by their GP.

About 2,900 women are diagnosed with cervical cancer in the UK each year. It is the most common cancer in women under 35 years old and over half of all cases are diagnosed in women under 50. Every year in Wiltshire six women die of the condition. Cervical cancer is unique in that we already know exactly what we have to do to prevent almost every case; effective vaccination and screening programmes could virtually eliminate cervical cancer, so the inclusion of HPV testing in the screening programme makes it even more effective.

Wiltshire welcomes the Government's consultation on plain packaging of tobacco products

Wiltshire's Director of Public Health and Public Protection has welcomed the announcement of the Government's consultation on tobacco packaging. Maggie Rae, NHS Wiltshire and Wiltshire Council's Director of Public Health and Public Protection said:

'Our partners, Smokefree South West, have launched a world first campaign to raise awareness of the dangers of tobacco packaging to children and young people. The shocking facts are that smokers start as children and continue as adults. Two thirds of smokers start before they are 18 and the vast majority while still teenagers. The tobacco industry knows this only too well, and uses trendy,

appealing packaging to help entice young people – who go on to replace the 100,000 people lost every year to smoking related diseases.

‘We have had support from parents and grandparents, from old and young, men and women, smokers and non-smokers. People want to see their children lead a full life free from addiction and from the illnesses and premature death caused by smoking.

The aim of packaging tobacco products in standardised packaging is to reduce the number of children who smoke by:

- Making tobacco packaging look less attractive
- Increasing the effectiveness of health warnings
- Preventing the use of misleading and deceptive colours to create false beliefs of different strength and quality
- Removing the positive association with cigarette brands and image

‘Smoking is an epidemic that affects children and moving tobacco products into standardised, plain packaging is designed to protect them and to help reduce the numbers who begin smoking. The proposals for plain packaging are not about current smoker’s behaviour.’

To date over 25,000 people have given their backing to the Smokefree Southwest campaign at www.plainpacksprotect.co.uk.

Darrell Gale, Consultant in Public Health at NHS Wiltshire and chair of Wiltshire’s Tobacco Control Alliance said:

“Branding of cigarettes encourages childhood experimentation - which leads to addiction. Smoking is still cool to many children and young people - aided by brightly coloured packs; cool brands; packs designed to look like MP3 players or Zippo lighters. Plain packaging removes the tobacco industry’s ONLY remaining legal means of promotion to the young. They know their potential UK market will shrink dramatically if cigarettes are packages in standardised packaging.”

Wiltshire CCG appoints Chairman

Wiltshire Clinical Commissioning Group, the new doctor-led commissioning organisation that will be responsible for buying local health services in Wiltshire, has elected Dr Stephen Rowlands as its Chair with immediate effect.

Dr Rowlands has been the Medical Director of Wiltshire Primary Care Trust since April 2011 and, alongside his work with the emerging Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), has been a Senior Partner GP with the Bradford Road surgery in Trowbridge since 1985. His role as Chair to the CCG will be an interim post until March 2013.

The Health and Social Care Act requires that every CCG has a governing body which must oversee its governance and decision-making, ensuring that it exercises its functions effectively, efficiently and economically. The CCG will work within a framework with other health and social care providers such as the three NHS acute hospitals and Wiltshire Council and arrangements for engaging and involving members of the public, patients, carers and voluntary organisations to ensure they are ready to take up the responsibility for commissioning. They will enter a process for authorisation as a statutory commissioning organisation later this year.

Dr Rowlands said:

“The agenda for the next eleven months is extremely demanding and I am very keen to support the transition from PCT to clinical commissioning as smoothly as possible. I’m honoured to have been chosen as Chair of the Wiltshire CCG, which brings together all GPs in the county to help steer the provision and development of local health services for Wiltshire people. This is an exciting opportunity to build on the good work of NHS Wiltshire”.

“As highlighted in national media, the NHS faces significant challenges in the next few years, especially in terms of its finances. Having local GPs working in partnership with hospital colleagues, other healthcare professionals, NHS managers and patients will ensure that we continue to have local NHS services that really support and meet the needs of people in Wiltshire”.

Ed Macalister-Smith, Chief Executive of the existing Primary Care Trust said:

“I am delighted that Steve has accepted the role, and the people of Wiltshire should feel confident in Steve’s experience, his focus on patient safety and clinical excellence, and his ability to lead such complex changes”.