

Our Ref: BD/CK

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2 July 2014

Dear Chaand

Cervical Screening Training

Thank you for your letter of 22 April about cervical screening training.

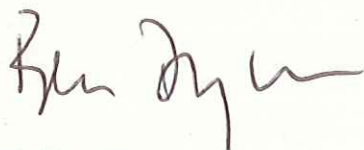
I can confirm that NHS England supports the position set out in Dame Barbara Hakin's letter of 15 December 2011 (issued in her then capacity as National Director for Commissioning Development, Department of Health) and the points agreed between you, the Department of Health and the NHS Cancer Screening Programme in 2012, namely:

- sample takers need to be fully competent and appropriately trained in sample taking and cognisant of the latest developments;
- the GMS contract places a responsibility on practices both as providers and employers to be satisfied this is the case;
- the NHS Cervical Screening Programme supports practices both as a provider and employer through its training and update programme;
- individual training needs will differ between practices and between health professionals, and clinical governance systems should be in place to identify the training needs of all clinicians involved in the screening programme (nurses and GPs).

The service specification to which you refer sets out the agreement between the Secretary of State for Health and NHS England as to how NHS England will commission cervical screening services, including the indicators that should be used to provide assurance of high standards of service. This includes the long held aspiration that 100 per cent of sample takers have completed appropriate training courses in liquid based cytology.

NHS England wishes to ensure that all practices providing screening services are aware of guidance on training to support delivery against this standard. We also monitor the quality of cytology services, so that we can take action if there is evidence of any shortcomings. However, the public health service specification does not impose requirements on contractors that go beyond the position set out above.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Ben Dyson', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Ben Dyson
Director of Primary Care